

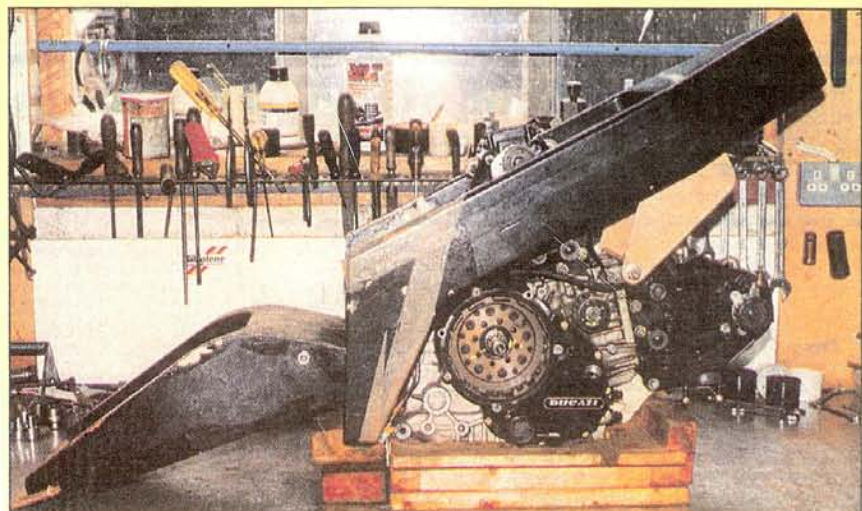
LIGHT FANTASTIC!



ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KEOGH

■ RACE EQUALITY: How Hejira's race-inspired superbike could look

The world's first carbon fibre-framed production superbike will be ultra-light and incredibly fast



■ POWER PACK: A Ducati engine in the lightweight carbon frame will give the Hejira a terrific power-to-weight ratio

BY TERRY SNELLING

THE first carbon fibre-framed production bike will roll out of a tiny British firm's

workshop in the Spring – at a cool £25,000.

Leading race-bike technology firm Hejira has taken its new super-light race chassis and plans to fit it with a choice of Ducati motors – including the potent 916 – to create one of the most exclusive machines ever built.

Hejira boss Derek Chittenden said the firm is likely to produce less than a dozen of the lightweight Ducati-powered superbikes at its Buckingham workshop.

Super-lightweight carbon fibre material is at the heart of the machine and is used for the frame, swingarm and bodywork.

The frame and swingarm weigh an astonishing 8.6kg (19lb)

– little more than half the weight of a similar-performance aluminium-framed superbike.

The weight-saving will give the race-bred Hejira a huge power-to-weight ratio.

Chittenden will offer the bike with the eight-valve, fuel-injected version of the 916 or the four-valve, air-cooled version of the 900SS. The first machine is being fitted with the air-cooled model.

Chittenden said: "The 900cc engine goes in very neatly, in either the two valve or four-valve form. It's no problem adding a radiator."

With the multi-valve, water-cooled engine, Hejira's carbon-fibre version will be a 916-beater, thanks to a carefully-designed

fairing and power-boosting ram-air induction.

Race experience has taught Chittenden even the shape of the front mudguard can aid engine efficiency by boosting the cooling.

Air scoops from the fairing nose will add carb intake pressure and thus boost power via an under-seat airbox.

Hejira's cutting-edge technology will include carbon-fibre wheels, to be launched on the racing scene next year.

Chittenden said: "We may not use the carbon wheels initially on the road bike, but I don't see why we shouldn't use them at a later date."

He added: "It will be an expensive bike, up to £25,000, but there is a market for a very exclusive machine."

'Potent 916 motor will give stunning power'