FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1983 Moto Guzzi Le Mans III Restoration Guide

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Moto Guzzi Big V-Twins

1983

Model year 1983 only — one model year, one guide

Models in production this year

- 850 Le Mans III
- 850 T3 California

Engine	Transverse 90-degree air-cooled V-twin
Final drive	Shaft
This guide	Covers model year 1983 only

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Read this first — what this guide is

This guide is a restoration companion to the Moto Guzzi factory workshop manual, not a replacement for it. It covers **model year 1983 only** — every big transverse V-twin Moto Guzzi built that year. It gives you what the manual doesn't: the correct sequence, the model-year change points, what to measure before cleaning, what not to do, finishes and markings, parts interchange, and honest value guidance.

The spec tables are the law of this guide: every numeric value carries its source. Where the literature is silent, the cell says **[UNVERIFIED]** instead of guessing. Procedures are written from the tables only.

Manufacturer history

Moto Guzzi of Mandello del Lario began its big V-twin era with the V7 of 1966–67 — Giulio Cesare Carcano's transverse 90-degree V-twin with shaft drive, first built for police and foreign markets, then sold to Italian civilians in 1967. Lino Tonti, arriving in 1967, expanded the range: the V7 Special (1969), the V7 Sport (1971, the first Guzzi cafe racer), and the sporting line that led through the 750 S/S3 to the 850 Le Mans (1976) and its II and III evolutions. After the 1972 De Tomaso takeover, the 850 T series (1974–1987) carried the touring side. This guide covers the classic era, 1967–1985, ending with the final year of the 850 Le Mans III. (Marque references.)

Model history — the big V-twins

1967–1970: V7 700. 1969–1972: V7 Special. 1971–1974: V7 Sport. 1972+: 850 GT and California. 1974–1975: 750 S. 1974–1987: 850 T series (T, T3, T3 California, T4, T5). 1975–1976: 750 S3. 1976–1978: 850 Le Mans (Series A/B). 1978–1982: Le Mans II. 1981–1985: Le Mans III. The 1000 cc Le Mans 1000 arrives in 1985 and is outside this guide's 850 scope. (it.wikipedia; de.wikipedia; en.wikipedia.)

What makes 1983 a 1983

Le Mans III continues; T3 California listed through 1983 (parts compatibility data).

Year-change register — 1983

Carryover	Le Mans III continues with detail changes.

Next year: 1984: penultimate year of the 850 Le Mans III.

Model notes — 1983

- Verify model-year details against the spec tables and the factory workshop manual — mid-run years reward careful dating.

Identification

Verify model year from the frame and engine numbers against factory records; do not trust registration paperwork alone. Key 1983 identifiers:

- Model variant: 850 Le Mans III; 850 T3 California.
- Engine: capacity, bore x stroke, and carburettor type in the spec table identify V7 vs V7 Special vs Sport vs 850.

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- Brakes: drums vs discs vs integral linked system is a model-year marker (see chassis table).
- Le Mans: Series A (round CEV taillight, silver fork legs), Series B (rectangular taillight, black sliders), II (Spada-style fairing), III (squared cooling fins, sump spacer).
- Gearbox: 4-speed (early V7s) vs 5-speed; right-hand shift on the V7 Sport.

Verified specifications — engine

SPEC	VALUE	UNIT	SOURCE
Capacity	844 cc		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Bore x stroke	83 x 78 mm		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Compression	9.8:1		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Power	76 PS @ 7700 rpm		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Carburettors	Dell'Orto PHF 36 B		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Gearbox	5-speed		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Final drive	Shaft		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Fuel capacity	25 litres		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Weight	206 kg dry / 238 kg fuelled		de.wikipedia (850 Le Mans tech table)
Total production	9,866 built 1981-1985		en.wikipedia (Le Mans III)
Valve clearances	[UNVERIFIED — not in factory literature]		Factory manual only
Torque settings	[UNVERIFIED — not in factory literature]		Factory manual only

Verified specifications — chassis and cycle parts

SPEC	VALUE	UNIT	SOURCE
Brakes	Triple-disc with Guzzi integral linked system (from 1975 T3/S3)		it.wikipedia (750 S3)
Final drive	Shaft		de.wikipedia (850 T series)

Electrical

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Consult the factory workshop manual's year-correct wiring diagram for your 1983 model — this guide does not reproduce wiring diagrams. Supplemental inspection checklist:

- Harness: check for brittle insulation and corroded connectors before applying power.
- Charging: verify alternator output and rectifier/regulator function per the factory manual.
- Ignition: points condition and timing per the factory manual — values here are [UNVERIFIED — not in factory literature].
- Switchgear: De Tomaso-era standardized instruments and switchgear (from 1975) — check function, not just appearance.

Restoration sequence

Work in this order. Each step's checkpoint must pass before the next begins.

- **1. Document and strip.** Photograph everything; bag and tag fasteners. Checkpoint: every part photographed in place.
- **2. Frame.** Inspect the tubular cradle frame for crash damage and straightness. Checkpoint: frame straight, steering head bearings serviceable.
- **3. Engine.** Measure bore, crank, and bearing clearances before ordering parts; confirm capacity and carburettor type from the spec table. Checkpoint: measurements recorded, parts ordered to measured sizes.
- **4. Gearbox and shaft drive.** Inspect gears, bearings, and the bevel box; check backlash. Checkpoint: no excessive play, correct oil.
- **5. Cycle parts.** Forks, shocks, wheels, brakes — rebuild to the chassis table; verify the brake system is correct for the year. Checkpoint: correct brake type fitted.
- **6. Electrics.** Harness inspected or renewed; charging verified. Checkpoint: correct function before bodywork goes on.
- **7. Bodywork and finishes.** Paint and finishes per the finishes section. Checkpoint: correct finishes for the model variant.
- **8. Assembly and shakedown.** Torque to the factory manual ([UNVERIFIED — not in factory literature] for torque values). Checkpoint: 50-mile retorque and oil check.

Pre-purchase inspection checklist

Use this on any 1983 Moto Guzzi before money changes hands. Every item is a price negotiation point.

- Frame and engine numbers present, legible, and consistent with a 1983 model-year 850 Le Mans III; 850 T3 California.
- Engine: cold-start behavior, oil pressure, and evidence of regular oil changes — the big twin rewards maintenance.
- Gearbox: all five (or four, per the spec table) gears engage cleanly; check for false neutrals.
- Shaft drive: check the bevel box for leaks and backlash; listen for whine on the test ride.
- Carburettors: Dell'Orto condition and correct type per the spec table (notably the Le Mans' 36 mm pumpers).

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- Brakes: correct system for the year (drums vs discs vs integral linked) — see the chassis table.
- Front forks and rear shocks: seals, stanchion pitting, damping action.
- Wheels: rim condition, spoke tension or cast-wheel cracks, bearing play.
- Electrics: charging output, harness condition, switchgear function.
- Bodywork: tank for internal rust; Le Mans fairing for cracks and missing mounts.
- Exhaust: correct system for the model; Le Mans silencers are expensive to replace.
- Paperwork: history file and rebuild receipts — documented bikes outperform shiny unknowns.

Finishes, fasteners, markings

- Correct brake system for the year is a concours deduction point (drums vs discs vs integral linked).
- Le Mans bodywork: factory colors (red, white, metallic grey on the III) matter to collectors.
- Zinc/cadmium fastener finishes per original; stainless substitutions are a rider concession, not factory-correct.
- Exact paint codes and decal placement are [UNVERIFIED — not in factory literature] — verify against an unrestored reference bike or the factory literature.

Tool list

- Full metric spanner and socket set.
- Micrometers, bore gauge, dial gauge for engine measurement.
- Clutch and gearbox tools per the factory manual.
- Dell'Orto carburettor tools and synchronisation gauges.
- Torque wrench (settings per the factory manual — [UNVERIFIED — not in factory literature] in this guide).
- Bevel-box and shaft-drive tools per the factory manual.

Troubleshooting

- False neutrals or jumping out of gear: gearbox wear — inspect per the factory manual.
- Shaft-drive whine or leaks: bevel box wear or seal failure — check backlash and oil.
- Dell'Orto flooding: float height and needle/seat condition per the factory manual.
- Charging faults: alternator and regulator/rectifier per the factory manual test sequence.
- Integral-brake imbalance (1975+): proportioning valve and linkage per the factory manual.

Parts sourcing

- Moto Guzzi Classics / marque specialists for new-old-stock and pattern parts.
- Dell'Orto carburettor parts: marque carburettor specialists.
- Guzziology and marque literature for model-year verification.
- Moto Guzzi owners' clubs: spares schemes and technical archives.

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- Le Mans bodywork and fairings: specialists — verify series correctness (A vs B vs II vs III).

Honest value guidance

Condition and originality separate the riders from the investments.

This is editorial judgment based on the collector market, not a cited specification. Buy the best-documented, most-original bike you can; a correct-numbers Guzzi with history outperforms a shiny unknown.

What this guide doesn't cover

- 1000 cc models (Le Mans 1000/IV/V, 1000 SP beyond its 1978–79 run context, V1000 Convert) — outside the 850 scope.
- Small-block Guzzis (V35, V50, V65) and later fuel-injected models.
- Full engine machining procedures — these are in the factory workshop manual.
- Wiring diagrams — consult the year-correct factory diagram.
- Non-factory custom or race modifications.

Sources and authority

- Moto Guzzi factory workshop manuals — V7 / V7 Special / V7 Sport / 850T series / Le Mans (year-correct edition for the model) [Factory]
- Technical data tables per it.wikipedia (Moto Guzzi V7 700, V7 Special, V7 Sport — 'Fonte dei dati: Manuale') [Marque reference]
- Technical data table per de.wikipedia (Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans — 850 I / II / III specifications) [Marque reference]
- Technical data per de.wikipedia (Moto Guzzi 850 T series, 1974–1987) [Marque reference]
- Moto Guzzi V7 Sport production data per en.wikipedia (1971–1974) [Marque reference]

This guide passed IronHead's final three-gate verification process (spec-table check, constrained draft, Muse audit) l

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