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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## The Legend of the Mach III

*With an audacious three-cylinder engine and the dragstrip wizardry of Tony Nicosia, the 1969 Kawasaki H1 immediately became a performance icon.*

**IRVINE, Calif. (April 29, 2016)** – When it comes to performance, few motorcycles in the last 50 years created the impact that Kawasaki’s 500 Mach III two-stroke triple did in 1969. Coming right on the heels of the 350cc A7 Avenger, the Mach III (also known as the “H1” model) vaulted performance to new heights, at an equally amazing price of just \$999. Sharpening its point, the H1 quickly set acceleration records, with Tony Nicosia making a ¼-mile run of 12.96 seconds at 100.7 miles per hour aboard the raging triple. A highly accomplished drag racer, Nicosia was also a Kawasaki service technician and development rider for the H1, which had been tested extensively in the Southwest – including near Nevada’s secret military base Area 51.

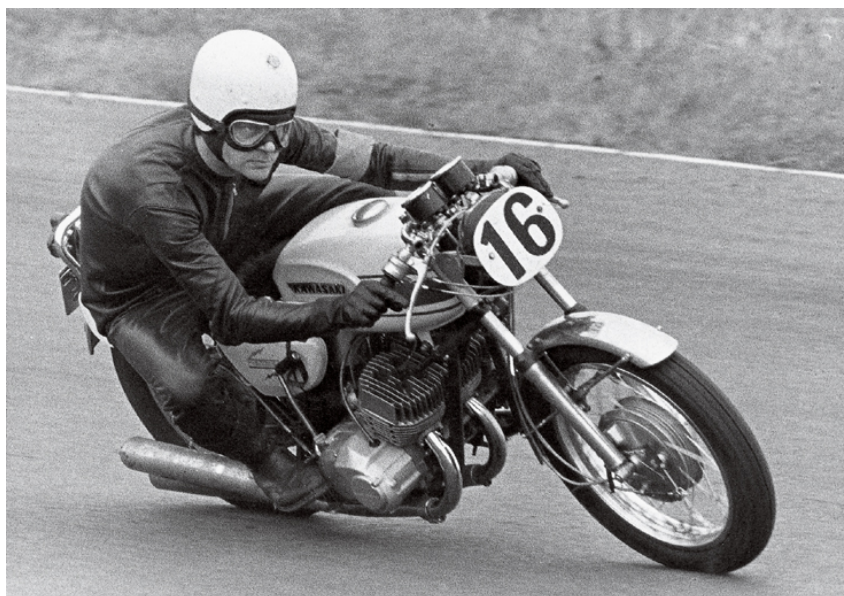
Such rider talent is essential in wringing the most out of a bike on the dragstrip, but the underlying machine has to be capable. The Mach III was. Its 499cc piston-port triple was like three highly tweaked two-strokes ganged together, with three Mikuni carburetors, three separate inductive pickups for its hot CDI ignition, and three individually tuned exhausts producing a kind of high-intensity acceleration no other production bike could match. As a result, the language of the H1 – actually a rapturous howl! – immediately became spoken in high-performance motorcycle circles. And the H1 just as quickly became known to car guys, as many a Corvette, GTO and Mustang owner learned after encountering a Kawasaki Mach III.

The H1 model run lasted eight years, from the first drum-brake 1969-71 H1 and H1A versions through the disc-brake KH500 swansong in 1976. Finally, the triple became a casualty of emissions laws and was replaced by the four-stroke KZ650 model. But what a run it was. Among its high points were those blistering early runs that Nicosia made at a special press demonstration at Lions Drag Strip in Southern California. Here personnel uncrated a brand-new H1 and put Nicosia aboard, where he soon scorched to the world’s first sub 13-second 1/4-mile run on a production bike. Although brand-new, the H1’s legend was already secure.

In time, the audacious H1 became known by a number of nicknames, some of which are not repeatable here. However, all recognized the incredible performance of its seething three-cylinder two-stroke engine, which helped make motorcycling an incredibly exciting sport in 1969 and beyond. Long live the Kawasaki Mach III.



1969 H1 500 Mach III



Rider on H1

## **ABOUT KAWASAKI**

Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. (KHI) started full-scale production of motorcycles over a half century ago. The first Kawasaki motorcycle engine was designed based on technical know-how garnered from the development and production of aircraft engines, and Kawasaki's entry into the motorcycle industry was driven by the company's constant effort to develop new technologies. Numerous new Kawasaki models introduced over the years have helped shape the market, and in the process have created enduring legends based on their unique engineering, power, design and riding pleasure. In the future, Kawasaki's commitment to maintaining and furthering these strengths will surely give birth to new legends.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. (KMC) markets and distributes Kawasaki motorcycles, ATVs, side x sides, and Jet Ski® watercraft through a network of approximately 1,100 independent retailers, with close to an additional 7,700 retailers specializing in general purpose engines. KMC and its affiliates employ nearly 3,100 people in the United States, with approximately 300 of them located at KMC's Irvine, California headquarters.

Kawasaki's tagline, "Let the good times roll.®", is recognized worldwide. The Kawasaki brand is synonymous with powerful, stylish and category-leading vehicles. Information about Kawasaki's complete line of powersports products and Kawasaki affiliates can be found on the Internet at [www.kawasaki.com](http://www.kawasaki.com).