

With the camera in the paddock

Photographs with a lot of atmosphere from 1961 until 1975.

Klaas Tjassens

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INTRODUCTION

The composer of this booklet, Klaas Tjassens, was born in Assen, Holland. He made the photographs in this booklet and wrote the accompanying texts.

From his early years he was already fascinated by road racing in general and Grand Prix racing in particular. As a child he was sitting on the roadside waving to the competitors of the Dutch TT when they rode their racing-machines along his house to the marketplace in Assen for scrutineering.

In his youth he already made photographs of the stars during scrutineering in Assen town and during practice at the circuit of Drenthe. Later on, as an organizer of bus- and plane-trips to foreign Grands Prix, he could enter the paddocks because he wrote articles in a Dutch motorcycle magazine.

But it was always with simple cameras that he made his pictures. He did not care that he was sometimes standing together with professional photographers with huge tele-lenses.

Tjassens had a feeling for remarkable moments, that makes his photographs unique. He took pictures that most professional photographers did not make. His photographs show the atmosphere in the paddocks, a place where many admirers of the riders and their machines are not allowed to come. The wonderful technics, the glamour and (to nowadays standards comparative) richness of the works-riders, the hard life of the private riders and always the stress and tension. And, unfortunately, sometimes photographs which show the hardness of the sport. It is all part of it.

During all those years he made hundreds of photographs. And they were nice memories. That's why he decided to scan his pictures from the period 1961 – 1975 and gather them to publish in this booklet.

When this booklet sometimes causes you a smile of recognition, Tjassens has succeeded in his intention.



This photograph from 1961 symbolises the arrival of the Japanese factories in the roadrace Grands Prix. In 1959 Honda carefully put their first steps in the world-championship by participating with rather simple two-cylinder racers in the TT-races on the Isle of Man. But in 1960 they even came with four-cylinder bikes, which also participated in other GP's. And what an impact these bikes had! The high revving shriek of the small machines peared the fans to the very marrow. Here you see the unloading of some machines for scrutineering in Assen.



In this photograph, also taken during scrutineering in Assen in 1961, we see a bunch of Japanese racing bikes. In the background the first Yamahas and the jewels of Honda for riders like Tom Phillis, Mike Hailwood, Bob McIntyre, Jim Redman and Dutchman Jan Huberts. Closest to the camera one of the first Suzukis.



In 1961 the first Suzukis came to Assen. The bikes were simple 125 singles. Unfortunately they did not make any impression because they finished 14th., 15th. and 17th. Later in the season the future for Suzuki looked brighter because East-German MZ toprider Ernst Degner, who defected to the West, walked over to Suzuki, taking a lot of knowledge of two-stroke engines with him to Japan.

Nevertheless Suzuki's team-presentation was marvelous. The bikes were transported in a team-truck that would not have been unbecoming in a nowadays MotoGP-paddock.



This is Ernst Degner during scrutineering in Assen in 1963. Here with his 50cc. Suzuki. He became world-champion in this class.



A Suzuki-mechanic pushes a 125cc. twin back from scrutineering to the team-truck. The bikes were transformed into splendid machines now and were much better in speed and technology than the bikes of the year before. This was the bike of Austrian Bert Schneider. In this picture you can clearly see the attractiveness of the Dutch TT for the Assen youth.





Dutch TT, 1963.
Jim Redman, left, and
mechanic Nobby Clark
and other mechanics during the
scrutineering in Assen.



A works mechanic brings a
250cc. Honda four-cylinder to
scrutineering in Assen, 1963.

The Honda-125 of Cees van Dongen; with this bike he finished 7th. in de Dutch TT of 1963.

He was the only private rider who was not lapped by winner Hugh Anderson.



Dutch TT 1963.

Two supersimple but very fast Spanish Bultaco single two-strokes. These bikes were successful in the hands of riders like Salvador Canellas and especially wild monkey Ramon Torras (who later on sadly died in a race). But also riders like Ginger Molloy and even Barry Sheene became well-known by Bultaco.





Italian Tarquinio Provini with his fast 250cc. Morini fourstroke single during scrutineering in Assen 1963. In the race Provini finished 3rd. behind Redman (Honda) and Sunako (Yamaha). Even a protest against the Hondas did not give him more championship points.



Unloading in Assen of a 1963 250cc. Yamaha RD56 racer, which was very fast; 2nd on the Isle of Man, 2nd in Assen and a week later victory by Fumio Ito at Francorchamps.

Dutch TT 1964.
Phil Read (Yamaha)
starts some more
practice laps.
Tarquinio Provini
(Benelli) and Mike
Duff (Yamaha) are at the
pits.



Mike Duff and
Tommy Robb,
both on Yamahas,
in front of the pits
(Assen 1964).

