

5000 MILES ON A '750 HONDA FOUR

APRIL 1972 47378 K 60¢

SUPERCYCLE

FOR THE BIG BIKE ENTHUSIAST



COMPETITION COVERAGE

Ontario: What Happened and Why?

AMDRA National Drag

Championships

Big Bad Baja 1000

KAWASAKI

MACH III

HOP-UP

DIRT BIKE BATTLE

400 Husqvarna

VS.

360 Bultaco

Retailers: see page 66 for Retail Display Offer

SUPERLIGHT SPACE AGE MOTOCROSS SETUP

**SUPERCYCLE ROAD TEST:
400 Husqvarna Motocross 8-Speed**

SWEDISH HEAT

You don't think of heat when you talk about Sweden. That is, unless the conversation involves a 400 Husky



photos by Tom Bailey

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ABOUT TEN YEARS ago you could fit into one description any competitor in the 500cc class at a motocross race. He would be very big, very strong and have a hairy chest. In those days, the riders had to be tough. The machines they rode generally weighed about 350 pounds and handled poorly. All that changed when BSA and Jeff Smith won the World 500cc Championship with a motorcycle which was basically a 250 bored and stroked to 441cc.

Today you don't have to be quite as big or quite as strong or quite as hairy chested to ride the 500cc class. In fact there was even a girl riding the open class a while back. She was riding a CZ and not going too fast. But she showed that a girl can do it.

The 400 Husqvarna 8-speed is a different story. It is a machine designed for a man. A man who has a hairy chest or at least thinks like a hairy chested man, and who is one of the top motocross riders in his area. It is more powerful than any 400 we have previously ridden, except for the 400 Husky Motocross we road tested in our December, 1970 issue. And it handles well. But in order to use it to its fullest potential, you have to be a very good rider. There is just too much power available for the average competitor. A person like Barry Higgins, Gunnar Lindstrom or Jim Weinert needs and uses the power but riders not in this class will probably find themselves going slower than if they were riding a 250.

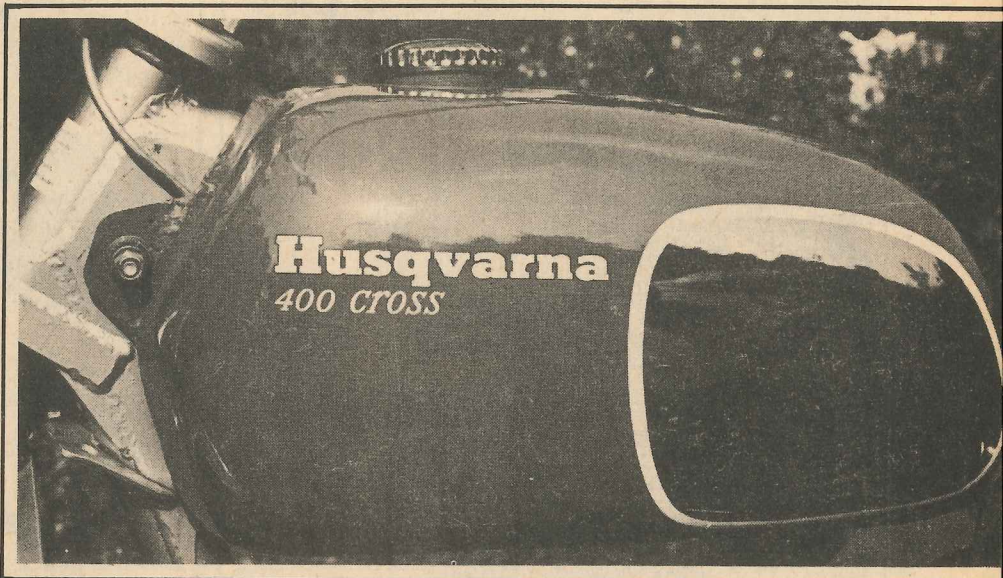
We had two machines for our test. Both were made available by Sal Mangiamele of the House Of Power in Nyack, N.Y. One machine was brand new and had never been ridden before. The other was about a week old and had been equipped with a silencer, taillight and license plate. It was being ridden to and from work by Sal's parts man, Lenny, in an effort to loosen it up before an upcoming race. Both machines were equipped with the 8-speed transmissions. And both performed faultlessly throughout our entire test.

Upon looking over the bikes for the first time, our initial impression was one of weight. The fins on the engine's cylinder seemed enormous and the air cleaner canister looked bulky and heavy. A short ride on the bike quickly erased this impression. The bike felt very light. The front end could be lofted with only the slightest effort and the rear end had a tendency to come off the ground whenever you hit a bump as you were shutting off the throttle. There are many mo-

torcycles on which the back end will bounce off the ground, but that is not what we are talking about. We're talking about full scale rear wheels, riding on the front wheel only for about 20 or 30 feet.

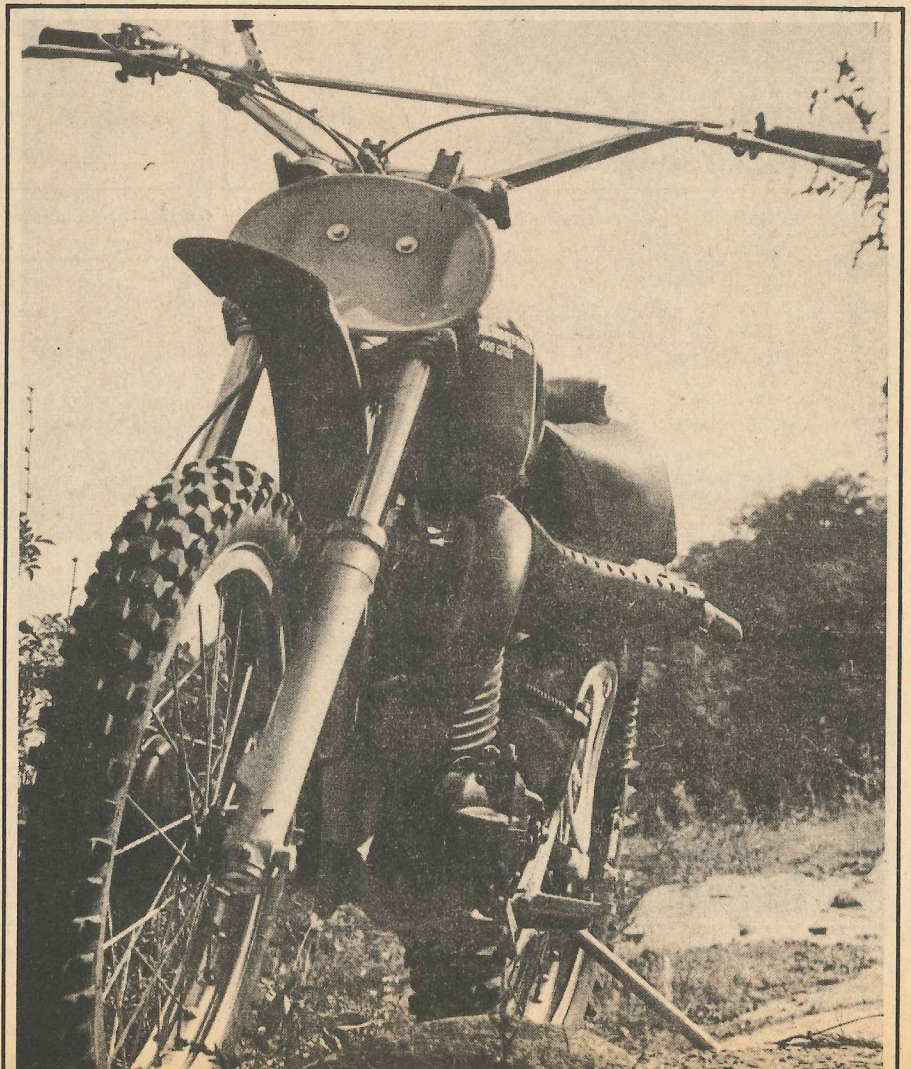
The suspension on the rear of the machine is by Girling shocks. The

front forks are made by Husky and they look similar to Ceriani forks but they function much better. Ours leaked a slight bit of oil, but when considered in light of how well they work, it is not objectionable. The forks have over six inches of travel. During our test which included sev-



Humped gas tank makes sliding off the seat a risky business.

Front knobby measures 3.00x21.



eral front wheel landings off jumps, they never bottomed.

The engine, which actually displaces 395cc, is painted black on the theory that black engines dissipate heat faster than unpainted engines. Carburetion is by a single 38mm.

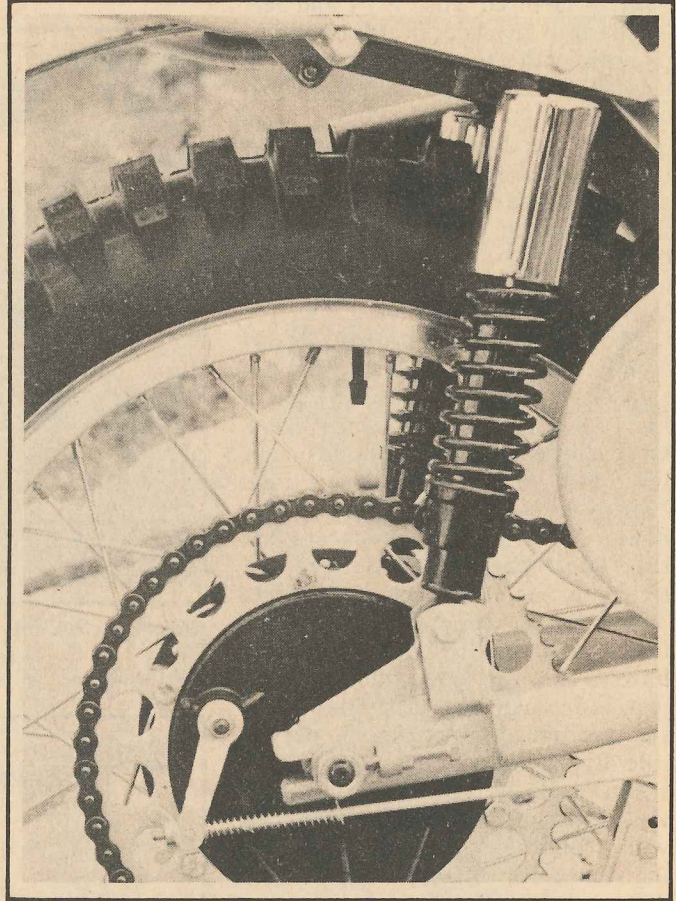
Bing and it is very smooth. The engine responds to every slight turn of the throttle instantly.

The power of the bike is awesome. It is not cammy or snappy at all. It comes on almost from the instant you open the throttle and then con-

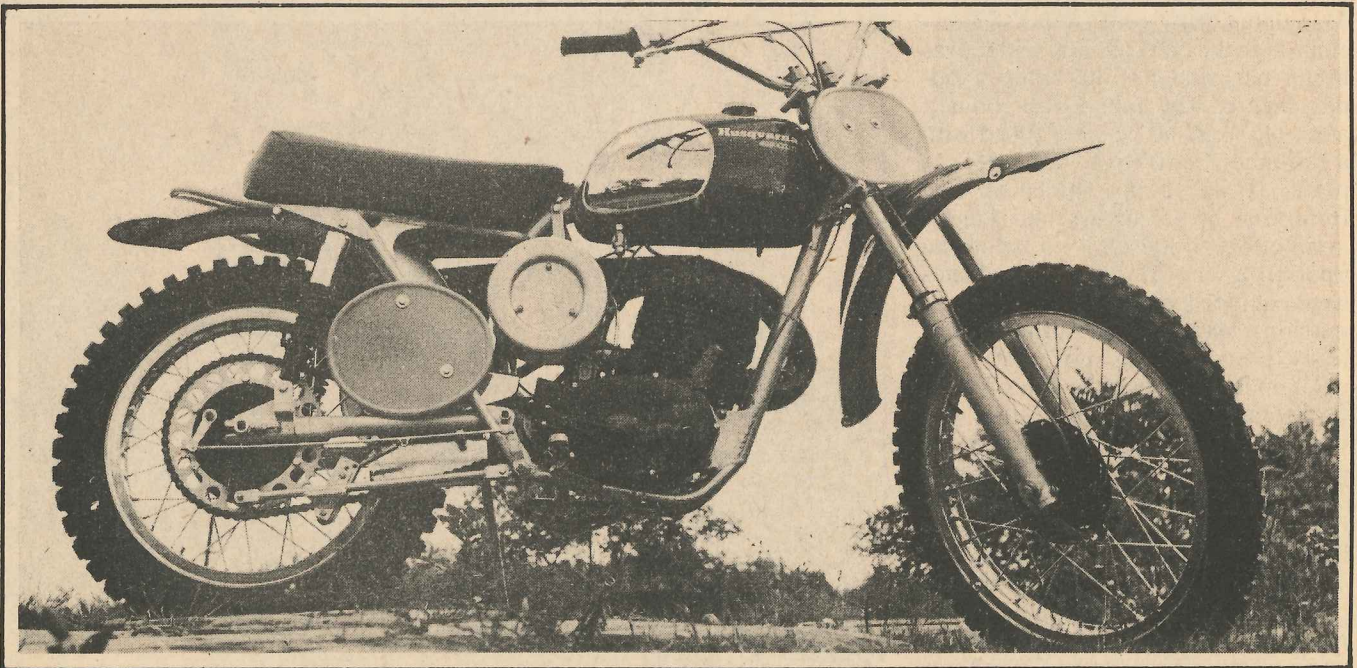
tinues to gush out as you open it wider. As we went through the gears on the bike we continuously found ourselves hitting fourth where we were used to being in third and going so much faster than we'd meant to go that we would miss the next corner.



Massive fins aid in cooling a very "hot" machine.



Rear suspension is via Girling shocks.



Flat black paint makes the bike look extra "bad." It may look bulky standing still but it feels amazingly light underway.

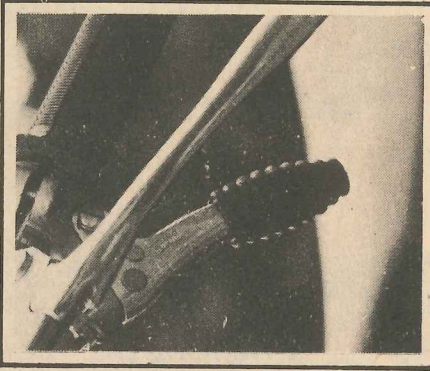
The power of the bike intimidates you. When coming out of corners, a slight turn of the throttle can start the back wheel spinning and several times we found ourselves exiting corners rear wheel first. It takes awhile to feel comfortable on the bike. But once you have become accustomed to the power you begin to realize how well the bike handles. Despite the fact that the bike bounces around a lot, it always seems to be in control. It floats over bumps and ruts and as long as you don't give it too much gas or try to shut down, it works like a dream.

The bike is virtually identical to the 400 Motocross model except for its 8-speed transmission. The footpegs are solid and perfectly spaced to allow the rider to get into standing position and remain there in comfort. The bars, too, are about as near to perfection as we've seen. Everyone who rode the bike felt that the handlebars were just right for him.

The seat is long and comfortable. It is padded the proper amount and it

looks good. The tank, however, is a different story. It has a capacity of 2.2 gallons and is painted bright red with chromeplated knee panels. The tank humps up immediately in front of the seat. Should the rider hit something solid enough to stop the bike instantly, forcing him to slide forward off the seat and into the tank, he will be one sorry lad.

The 8-speed trans is not really an 8-speed trans. It is a 4-speed trans with an overdrive which is capable of act-



Short, rubber tipped lever handles overdrive.

ing on each gear. To activate the overdrive unit you pull a small lever which is located on the handlebars below the clutch lever.

With the overdrive off, the range of the bike is just right for motocross racing. With it on, the bike could be used for desert racing, which along the enduro riding is what the Husky brochures say the bike is for. In overdrive, the speed range is amazing. We couldn't find any dirt trails with a straight long enough to get the bike into forth in overdrive. We can understand the bike being recommended for desert racing. But enduro riding? The track we were testing on was dry and, as we said, we had no trouble spinning the rear wheel in corners in any gear. Most of the enduros held here in the east are held in the mountains on tree lined muddy trails. We can't picture anyone wanting to try to keep that much power under control on a muddy trail, with trees to punish him if he can't quite do it.

New to Husky for '72 is a Moto-



A twist of the throttle sometimes brings both wheels off the ground.



Husky front forks look similar to Cerianis. Nowadays whose forks don't?

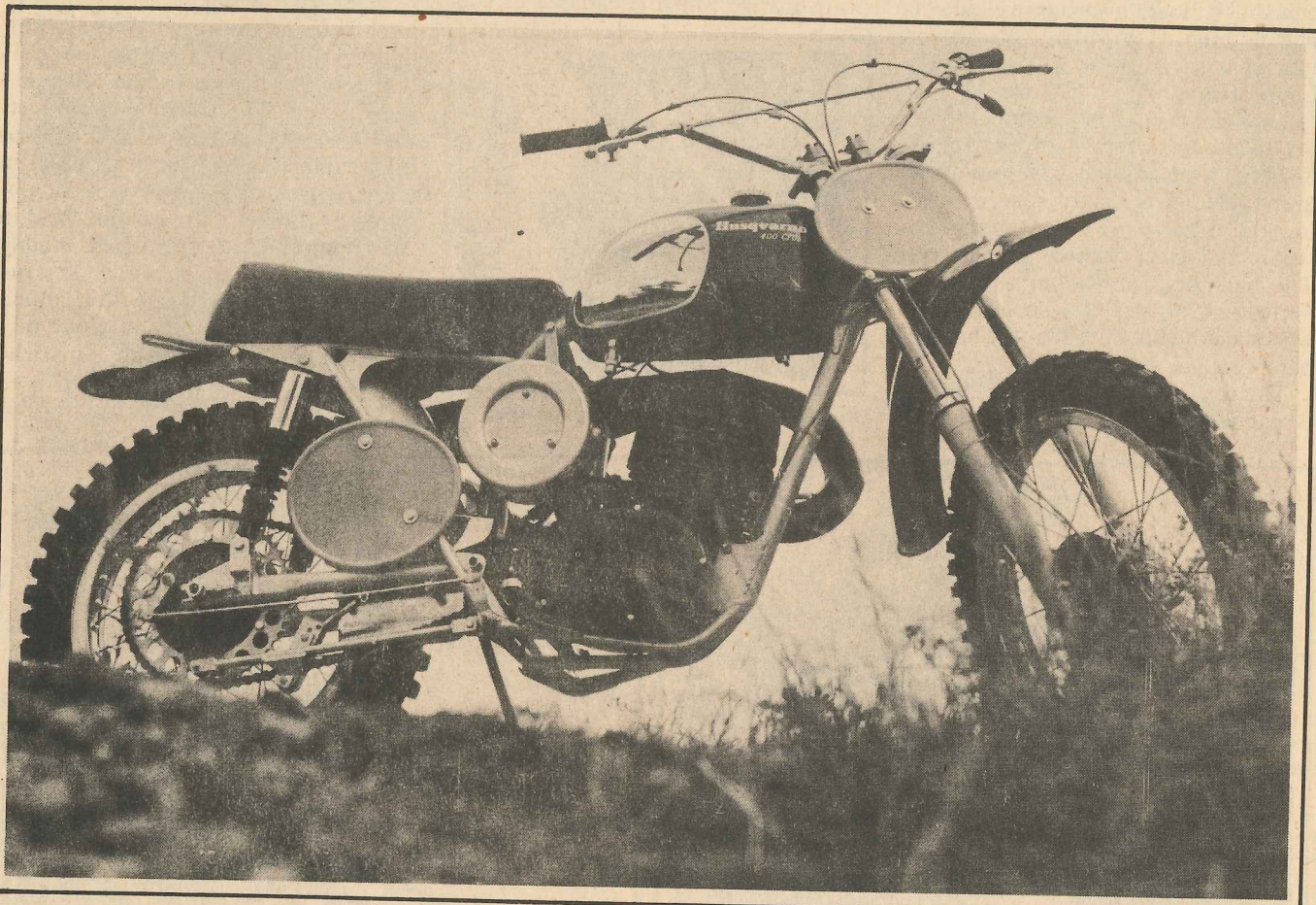
plat ignition system. This system uses no points and makes the bike as easy to start as any 2-stroke street machine. Even after a spill, the bike started up on the second kick, and it generally started on the first or second kick when cold.

There is no doubt that the 400 Husqvarna Motocross is overwhelmingly impressive. It is more expensive than some of the Japanese 360 and 400cc scramblers, but it is worth

the extra money. Every weld and drop of paint on the bike is faultlessly applied and the machine performs excellently. There are few bikes which handle as well as the Husky and we *can't* think of one with more power.

If you are one of the top motocross riders in your area, or you feel that you could be, then the Husky 400 8-Speed is for you. If you're not one of the top riders, you better read the

Husky literature carefully. Ad writers have a tendency to get carried away now and then. They may tell you that anyone could win a race riding their machine. The Husqvarna writers didn't get carried away at all. They told the truth. In the Husky brochure, they describe the 400 as "the bike that's almost too hot to handle." And after riding the bike for awhile, we know that that line is not a description but a warning.



The Husky 400 has plenty of heart. The guy who buys it should have at least as much.

400 HUSQVARNA MOTOCROSS 8-SPEED

Base price	\$1400
Engine type	2-stroke single
Bore and stroke	81.5 x 76 mm
Displacement	395cc
Compression ratio	10.5 to 1
Horsepower	NA
Carburetion	One 38mm Bing
Transmission	4-speed with overdrive giving eight ratios
Clutch	Multidisc, wet plate
Primary drive	Gear
Final drive	Single-row chain
Brakes	Drum
Tire size, front/rear	3.00 x 21/4.00 x 18
Lubrication	Oil-gas mix (manual)
Fuel capacity	2.2 gallons
Dry weight	231 pounds
Wheelbase	54 inches
0-60 mph	NA
Standing start quarter	NA
Topspeed	NA

