

# CYCLE CC 02 795 ILLUSTRATED U.K. 35p

## **7** DIRT BIKE **TESTS** FROM MIGHTY TO MINI

**CLEWS 600 cc TRAILBIKE • HUSQVARNA 250 WR  
HONDA XL-350 • SUZUKI TM-75L • HONDA XL-175  
HUSQVARNA 125 CR • YAMAHA DT-100**

**Those  
Wild  
Motocross  
Sidehacks**



**HONDA'S  
NEWEST BIG SINGLE  
THE XL-350 FOR  
STREET OR TRAIL**

# HUSQVARNA

# 250 WR

Husky's new six-speed, go-fast woods bike for the serious enduro or ISDT rider

By Ross Watson

■ For many years the serious dirt rider has turned to European manufacturers when purchasing his new machine. Be it observed trials, scrambles, motocross or enduro type competition the Germans, Swedes, Spanish, etc. always had it first and always had it best. Now that the Japanese have become a major challenge in all the above fields, it would seem imperative that the Europeans redouble their efforts.

Husqvarna, manufacturer of fine vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, rifles and motorcycles, has always been recognized for its quality. It is the only marque to have won world motocross championships on both four-stroke and two-stroke machines. The various Baja runs have been dominated by Huskies since their inception. Last year's AMA National Enduro Championship was taken by Husqvarna. Obviously the Swedes must be doing something right.

The subject of our test, the 250 WR is an apparent paradox. For the "street/trail" crowd Husqvarna developed the rather strange 250 RT sort of a Scandinavian Suzuki, a machine with all the D.O.T. requirements and little of the polish we have come to expect from such a renowned company. The MXers got the fantastic 250 CR, a 210-pound bullet that is trickier than trick; magnesium motor, reed valve and exotic rear suspension add up to a definite threat to the YZs, Elsinores et al.

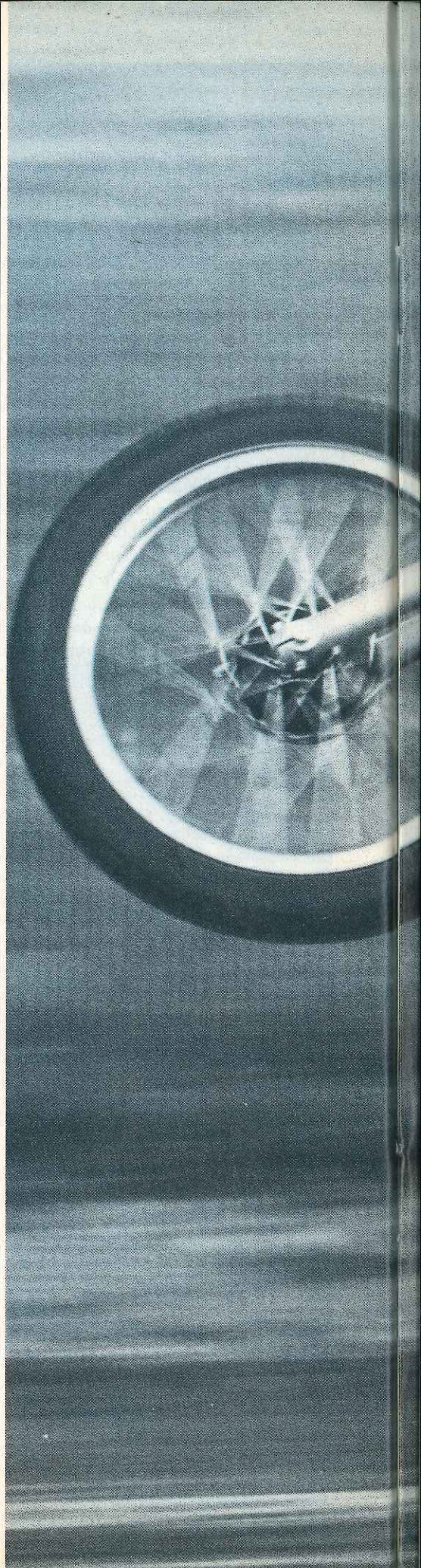
The 250 WR (for wide ratio) is an evolutionary step up from last year's motocrosser but its apparent purpose is vague except to the really knowledgeable. Delivered with number plates yet lacking the muscle of the real motocrosser, minus any street amenities that make it an enduro bike. Then why the hell did they build it?

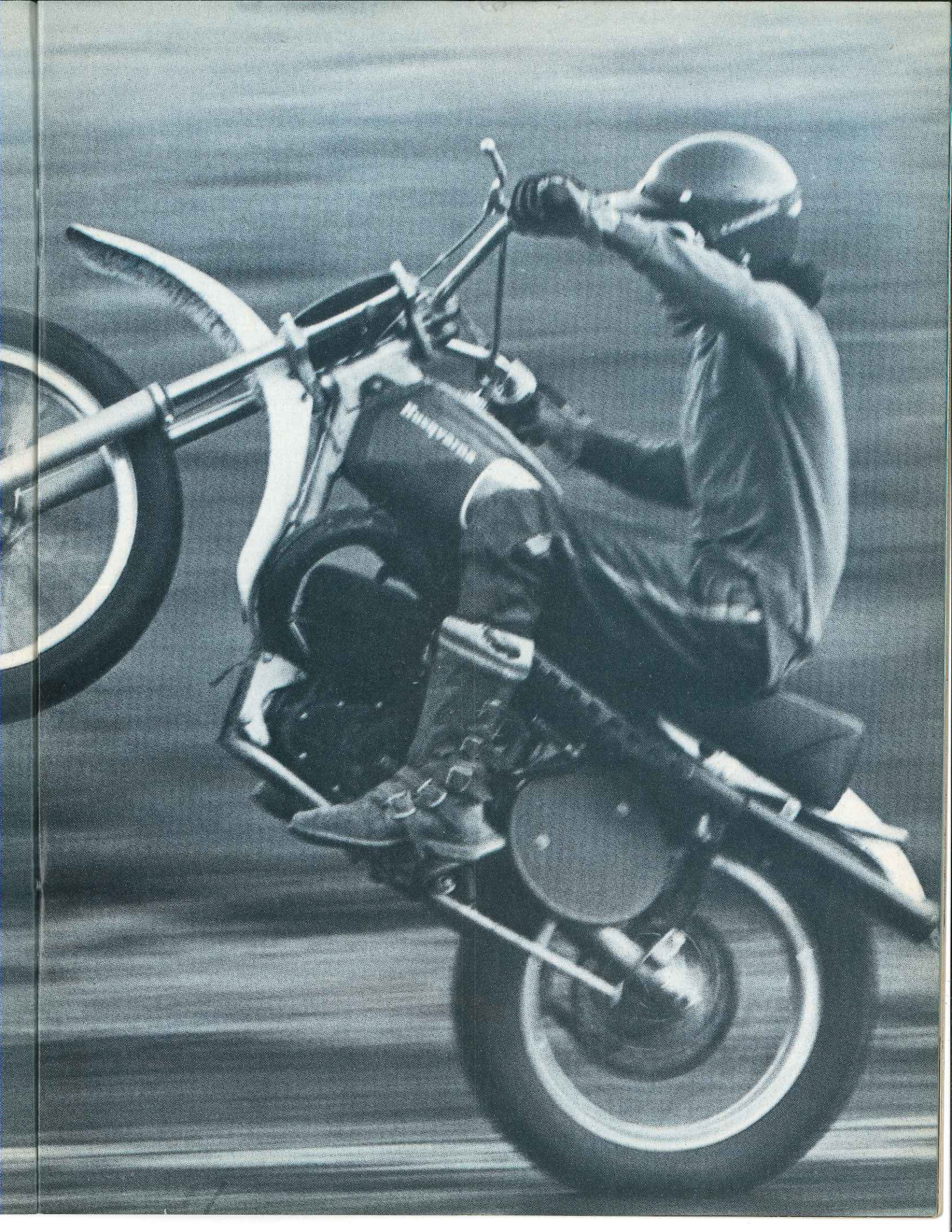
The answer is simpler than might be expected. The addition of a Hi Point enduro kit is all that is required to make this machine into a go-fast trail bike to be envied. A three inch headlight, miniscule tail light and Penton tool bag, along with a VDO speedometer (still rear-wheel driven, unfortunately) equal a worthy mount for many a purist rider.

When we picked up our test model we were also given a small assortment of spare parts; two different countershaft sprockets, a flywheel puller and a couple of tools as well as a spare plug. With the warning "be sure to check the nuts on the mag and the countershaft after a half hour" echoing, we headed off for Moto Mecca, a Pennsylvania cycle park.

After doing some stationary photography and looking the machine over we prepared to fire it up for the first time. Unfortunately somehow the front tire had gone flat so we had a lesson in wheel removal, tube repair and replacement. Wasn't so bad really and gave us some time to observe the whole thing more carefully.

First impression is that it looks like all the other new generation 5-speed Huskies until you notice the two major changes. The first has been the long neglected air intake system. Previously you could lead a stock Husqvarna to water but you could rarely get it to cross. The filter was protected by a metal canister open on the left side and mounted too low. There were some pretty exotic home remedies attempted and finally the factory has come up with a plastic air box which draws from just under the seat. It is well designed but seems a little flimsy in construction and is much wider than some of the after-market accessories.



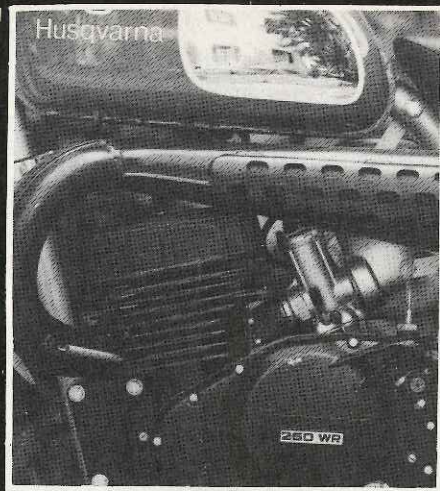


Neo-prene biscuits should be sandwiched between fins to reduce engine noise.

Excess width is also part of the second major modification. Since first being brought into this country, Husqvarna has been cursed at for excess noise. Gears whining, piston slapping, fins ringing, most of all a really loud expansion chamber. The first factory silencer for the MX bikes was a joke; some racers, unmuffled, were quieter.

The Husky has a characteristic bark unlike any other dirt bike and obviously has been difficult to quiet down. The New England Trail Riders, the sanctioning body for northeastern enduros, are really coming down hard on noisy machinery and it looked as though there could be no Huskies running there due to their inability to pass the strict sound test.

Consequently we were pleased to see a newly designed system on the 1974 model. Although it was considerably wider the pipe was integral with the si-



lencer and had a replaceable element retained by a large snap ring. Great move, we thought, until we fired it up.

Somehow, despite supposed technological advances, the new set up is incredibly loud; if anything, more obnoxious than before. There is no way this will pass a 92db limit, much less the 86db maximum which is due.

Shrugging our shoulders we looked over the bike for further details. Tires are Metzlers, rims Akront with shoulders, hubs and brakes lightweight and beautiful, seat long and deep, bars a lit-

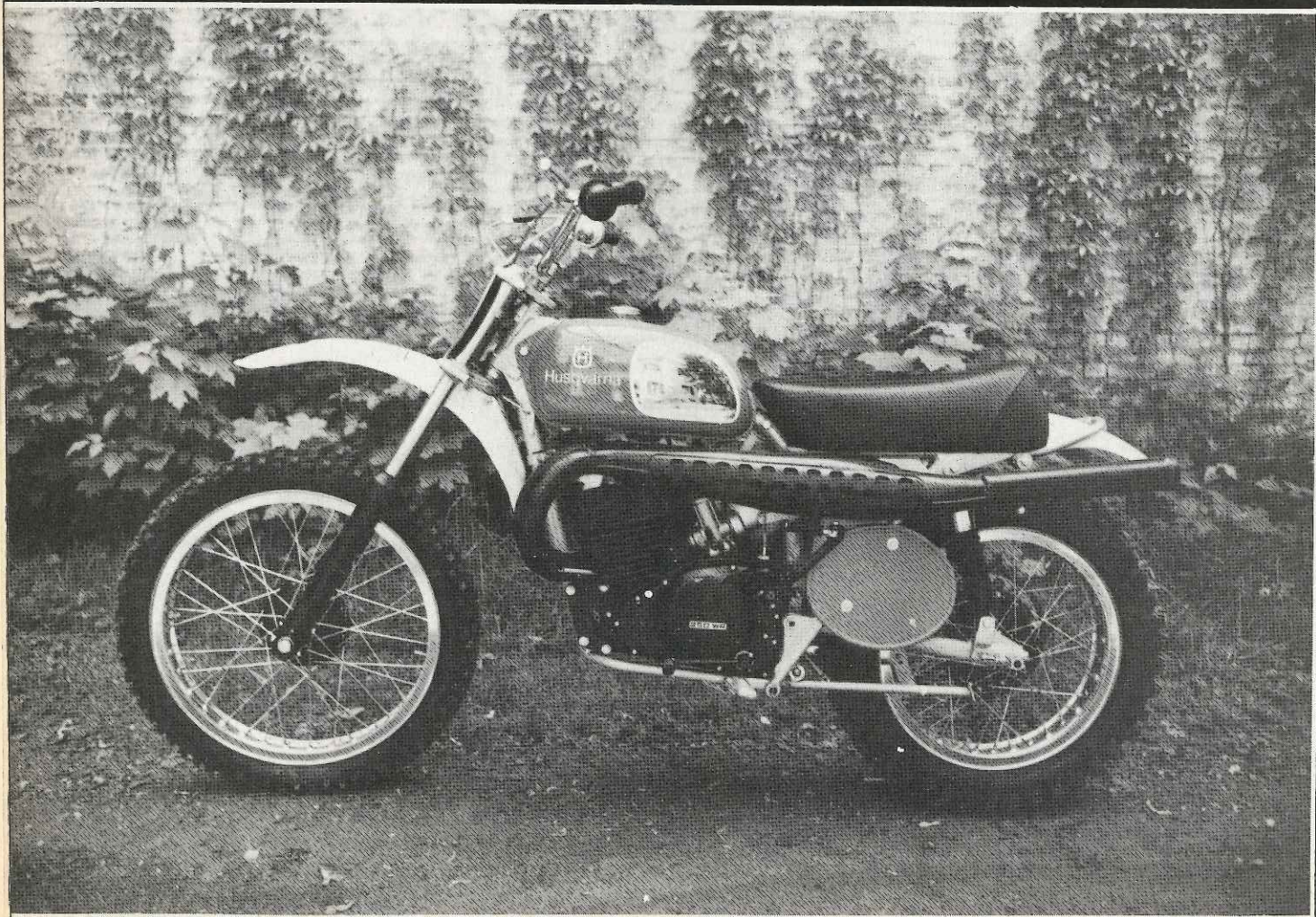


Turned down fork sliders are four pounds lighter than last year.

tle too wide. In sum the components are all top drawer and we were anxious to ride it for the first time.

With the front wheel back on we were ready to go and prepared for the famous Husky starting drill. First step is to turn on the gas tap which proved to be a problem. Due to the new air box the lever tends to hit and we had to rotate the petcock before we could turn it all the way down.

the 250 WR represents fine Swedish design and engineering.



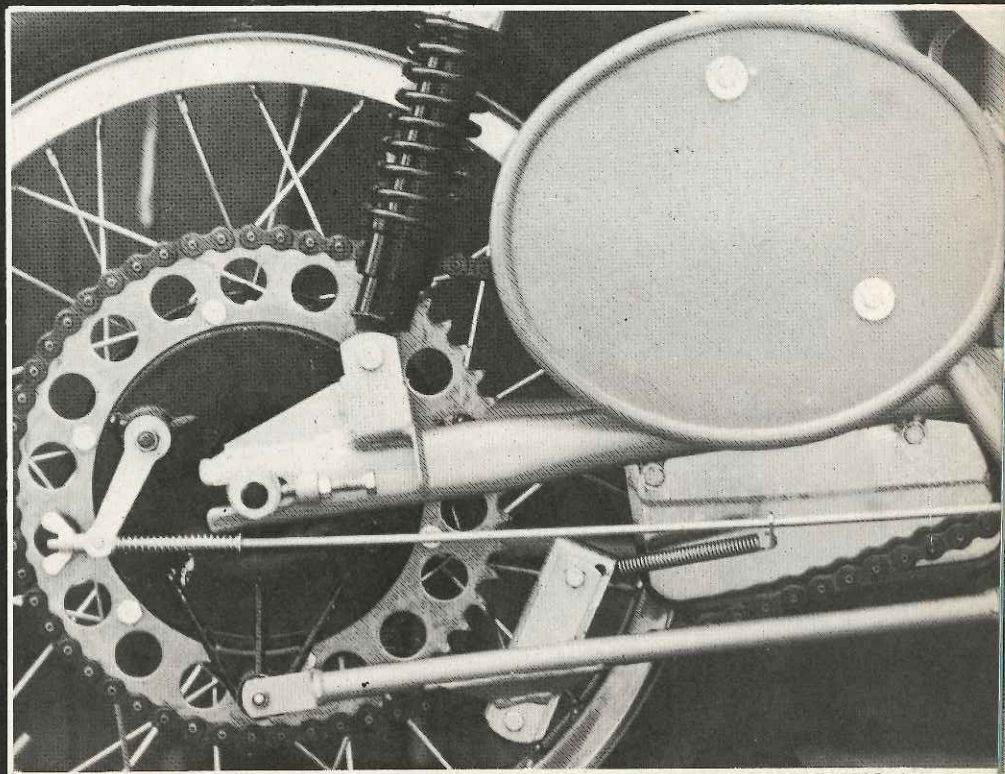
photography: Douglas Mellor



Floating rear hub is the finest in the industry.

This problem solved, we depressed the tickler, cracked the throttle a little and gave it a healthy boot. Surprisingly enough it lit on the second kick and we were off. Low gear is really low and proved useful only in very tight or rocky going; otherwise it was possible to ride in the higher gears all the time.

Moto Mecca late on a Saturday afternoon had only a few diehards left practicing so we had the place pretty much to ourselves. Along with the '74 250WR we had brought along two '73 WRs, one standard and one with a reed valve. One of the tracks is quite smooth with a 70 mph straight which made for an ideal drag strip. Time after time the late model would get three bike lengths going into the corner with the reed valve running second.



The six-speed gearbox worked beautifully either with or without the clutch although it still has the traditional long throw. This engine seemed to be ported a little more radically than earlier ones and came on the pipe dramatically at what seemed to be about 5000 rpm. The front wheel could be popped up even in fourth gear, which made for a few exciting moments.

Over the motocross track bumps the rear end bounced from side to side but never seemed to be totally out of control. Through any type of turn the only fast way seemed to be to drive it hard, use both brakes hard and then gas it hard squaring the apex. It was also necessary to slide far forward against the tank in order to keep the front wheel tracking. Although there is plenty of power the Husky is not a slider and is known for its nasty tendency to high-side the unwary hotshoe.

In spite of this peculiarity it's not a hard bike to get used to after several hours of practice, but we did find it not really competitive in raw horsepower compared to some of the best racers.

Our next step was to enter it in an enduro held in the mountains. Race day oozed out of a gray morning mist preceded by almost two inches of rain the night before. The time of 8:22 a.m. came early and a brisk ride along a clay river bank became a real eye-opener. The bike steered well and responded nicely over some medium fast washouts but we were still falling behind schedule.

Luckily a road section came along and we were able to check out the top end. At 80-plus mph, common sense won out over curiosity and we backed off but it was still pulling hard in sixth gear. From a wet road we hit a fire trail, which was fun but too slippery to go fast, and then came a rocky uphill hiking trail. Here we found it hard to do well because the power curve was so abrupt. Backing off for a 12-inch granite step and then dialling it back on resulted in wheelspin and usually a stalled engine. The secret to success seemed to be an aggressive riding style — charging all terrain obstacles as fast as possible while hoping the excellent suspension would handle them. This worked for a while but after the tenth time up 50-degree slopes, each of which wound uphill for a half mile or so, ones concentration began to wander.

It became apparent that the 250WR was a real enthusiast's machine and that said enthusiast had better be in good shape if he wanted to go fast for long periods of time. We admit that we went slower and slower as the day wore on

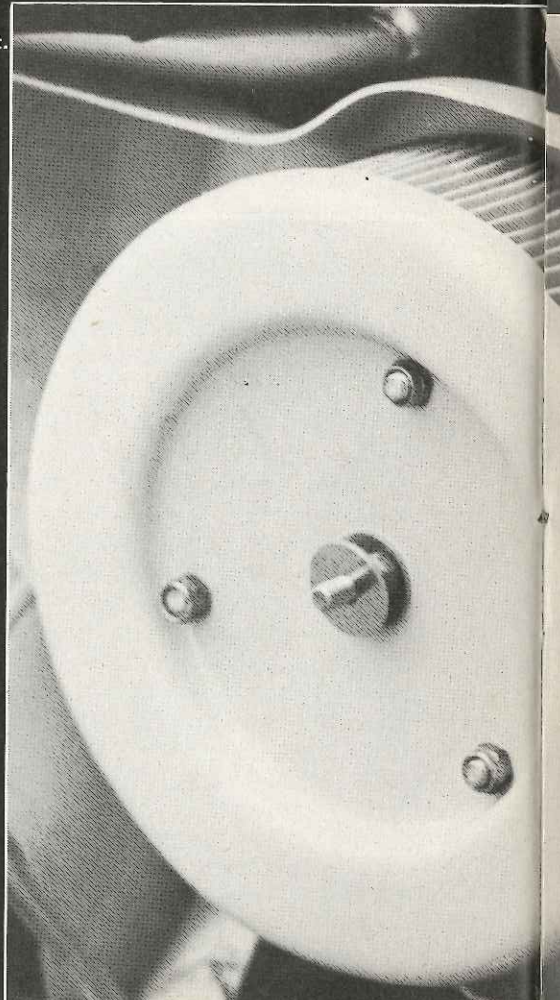
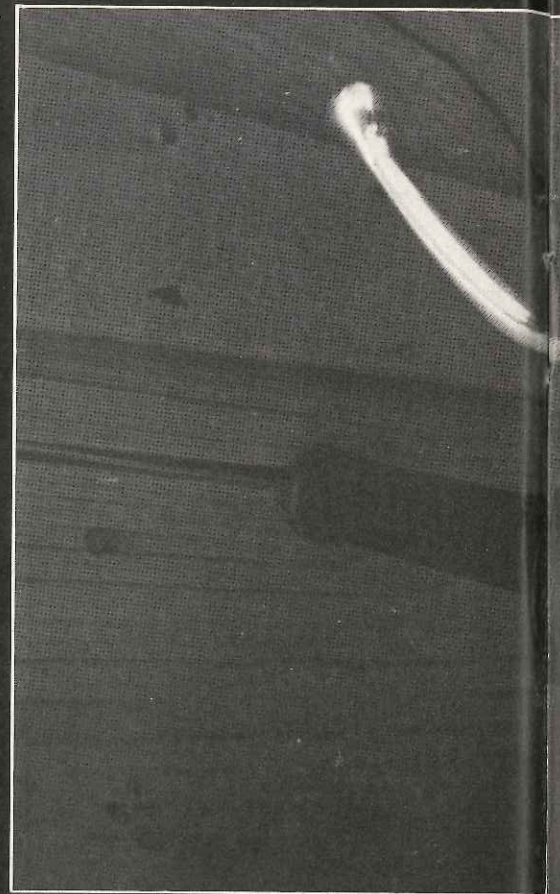
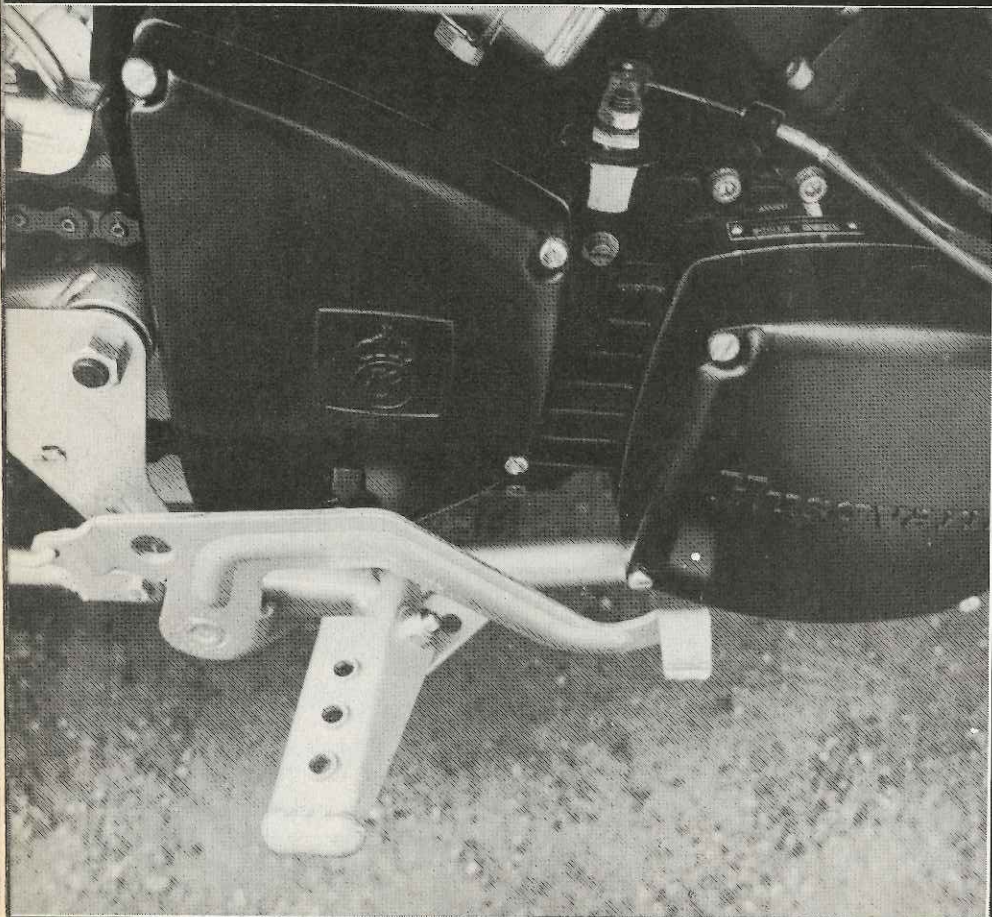
and the rain came down. As long as we were fresh there was nothing that would stop us, although slow sections with large boulders were tedious.

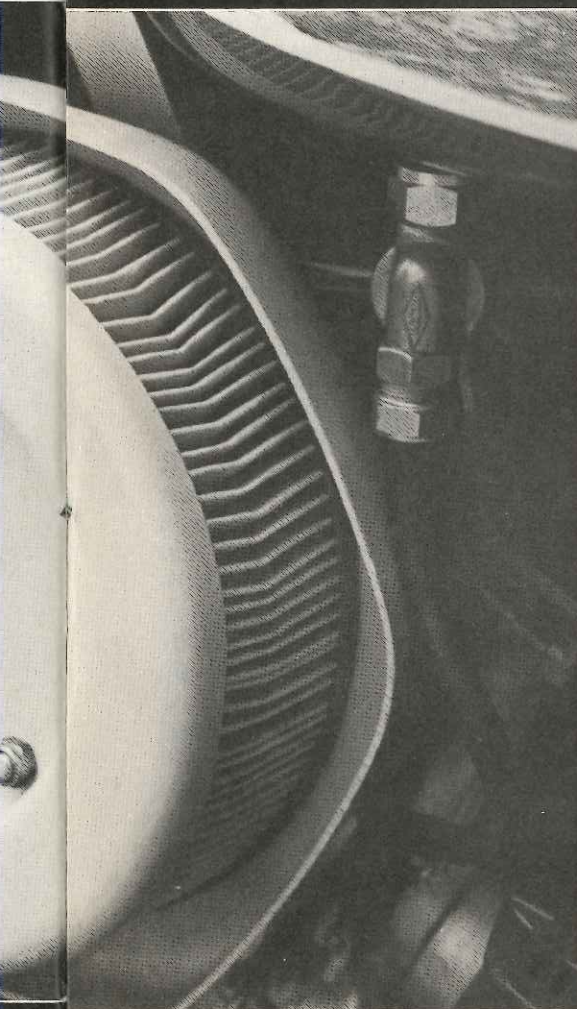
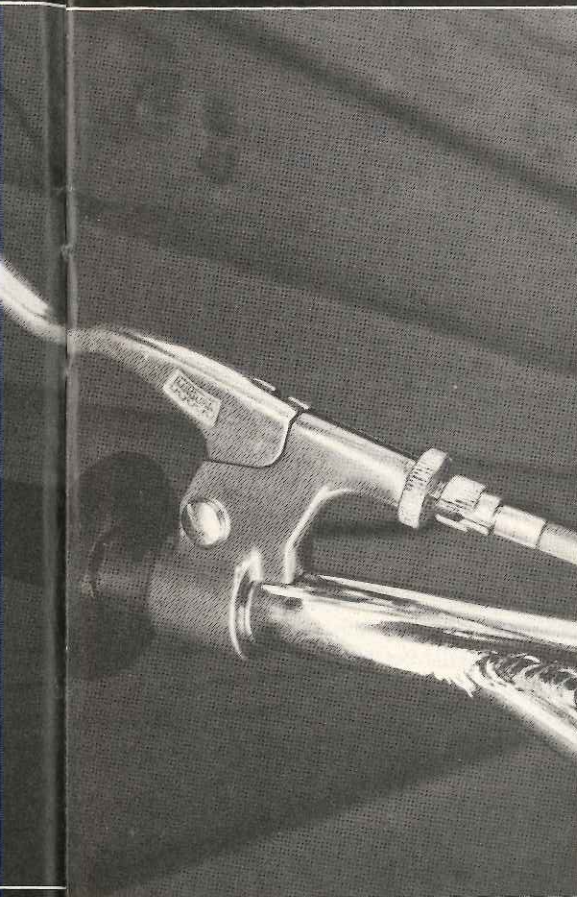
Fast and medium fast sections were the most fun, and blowing past other 250s on uphills and good trails restored some of our flagging good spirits. Throughout the entire 100 miles the bike ran well and conquered some awful mud as well as a 600 feet ride down a river which was always deep enough to cover the cases and had one hole which briefly submerged us to the gas tank. Certainly proved the efficiency of the new air box system as the engine never quit.

In conclusion, the '74 Husky doesn't seem to be as much of a play bike as previous models and is really suitable only for a rider who wants to go fast almost all the time. Added width caused by the pipe and air cleaner cover make it hard to grip the tank but, despite this and the high noise level, it still is one of the top ISDT contenders and should be considered by riders of this caliber.

Finally Husky has done something to keep a rider's wet boot on the peg.

New air box drains from directly under seat.





#### ENGINE

Type .....	two-stroke single
Displacement .....	245cc
Bore & Stroke .....	.69.55 x 64.50mm
BHP @ rpm .....	NA
Advertised c.r. ....	12:3
Carburetion .....	Bing 36mm
Overall gear ratios	
First .....	29.50
Second .....	20.12
Third .....	15.47
Fourth .....	13.00
Fifth .....	11.00
Sixth .....	9.24

#### RUNNING GEAR

Frame .....	chromemolybdenum steel single cradle
Rake & trail .....	NA
Suspension .....	Telescopic forks (F) swing arm (R)
Tires	
front .....	3.00 x 21"-knobby
rear .....	4.00 x 18"-knobby
Brakes	
front .....	140mm s.l.s. drum
rear .....	160mm s.l.s. drum
Electrics .....	Femsa electronic 6 volt no lighting

#### GROSS MEASUREMENTS

Weight .....	240 lbs.
Wheelbase .....	54 inches
Seat height .....	31½ inches
Ground clearance .....	8¾ inches
Handelbar width .....	34½ inches
Fuel capacity .....	2.09 gallons

#### COMFORT RATING

1. Vibration .....	.6
2. Suspension .....	.9
3. Noise level .....	.3
4. Seat .....	.9
5. Handlebars .....	.9
6. Start mech. ....	.8
7. Controls .....	10
8. Stand .....	.9
9. Shift mech. ....	.7
10. Switches and instr. ....	.7

Overall rating .....77

#### PERFORMANCE

¼ mile .....	NA
0 to 60 mph .....	NA
braking dist. from 60 mph .....	NA

#### SUMMARY

Husky's 250 WR is fast, quick-handling and light. Not up to motocross performance, it is best for fast trailriding or enduro work, though only a pro will be able to get the most from the 250 WR in the woods.