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DIRT BIKE

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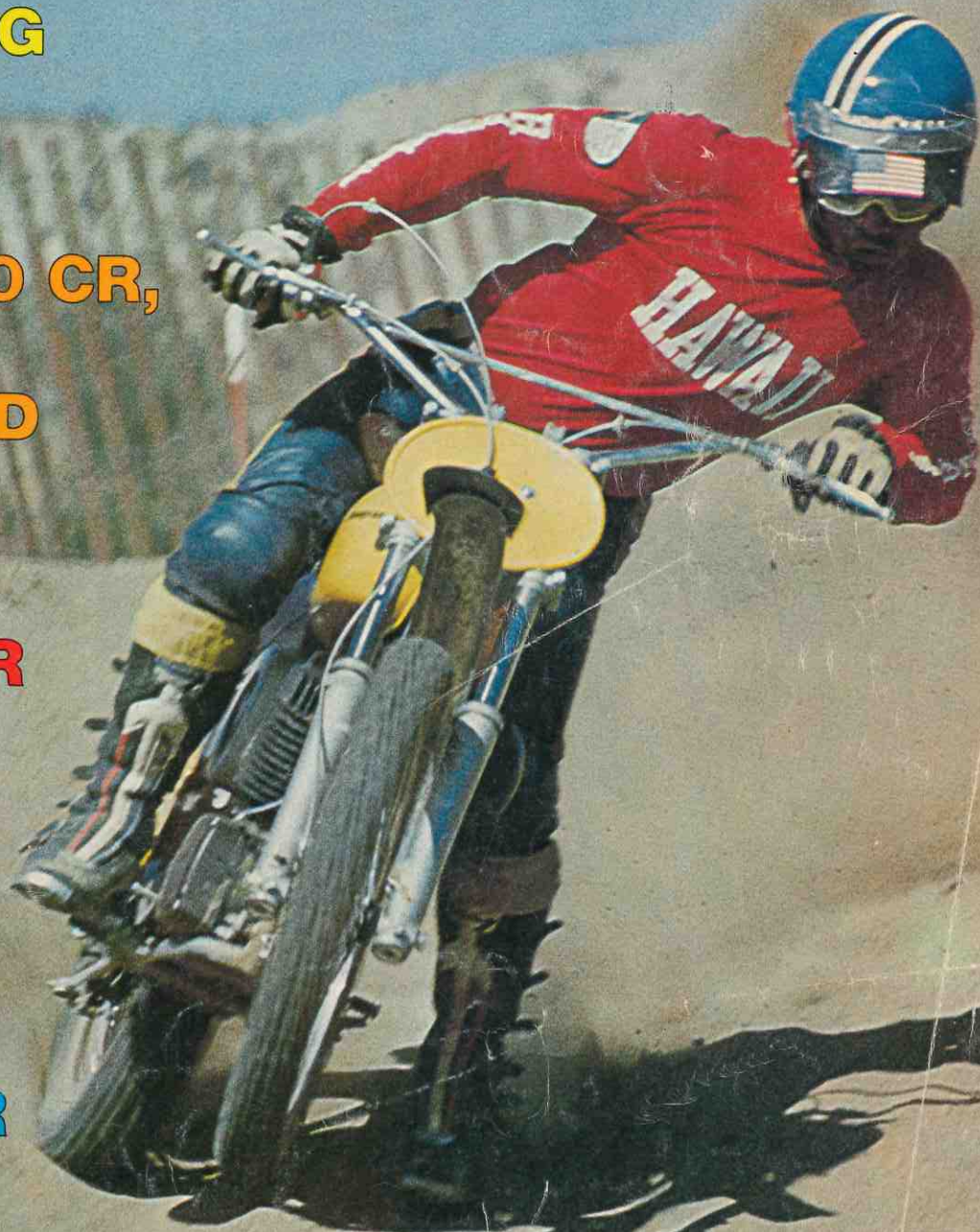
34355 FEBRUARY 1974 75¢

**HUSKY 450 CR,
TESTED...
AND CURED**

**TRICK
FORK KIT
FOR UNDER
TEN
BUCKS**

**250
PENTON-
A
JACKPINER
IN HEAT**

**YAMAHA 250 ENDURO-FOR THE
BURGER KING OR THE BERKSHIRES**



Saga of the hump-backed whale

HUSKY 450 MOTOCROSSER

by the Staff of DIRT BIKE

Being in the business that we are — testing and reporting — we must as a matter of course deal with a certain amount of paranoia. People don't like to get their feelings hurt — and when their particular motorcycle is the recipient of a few bad words, it's only natural that some resentment be felt.

And, some of the folks we deal with get mad at times.

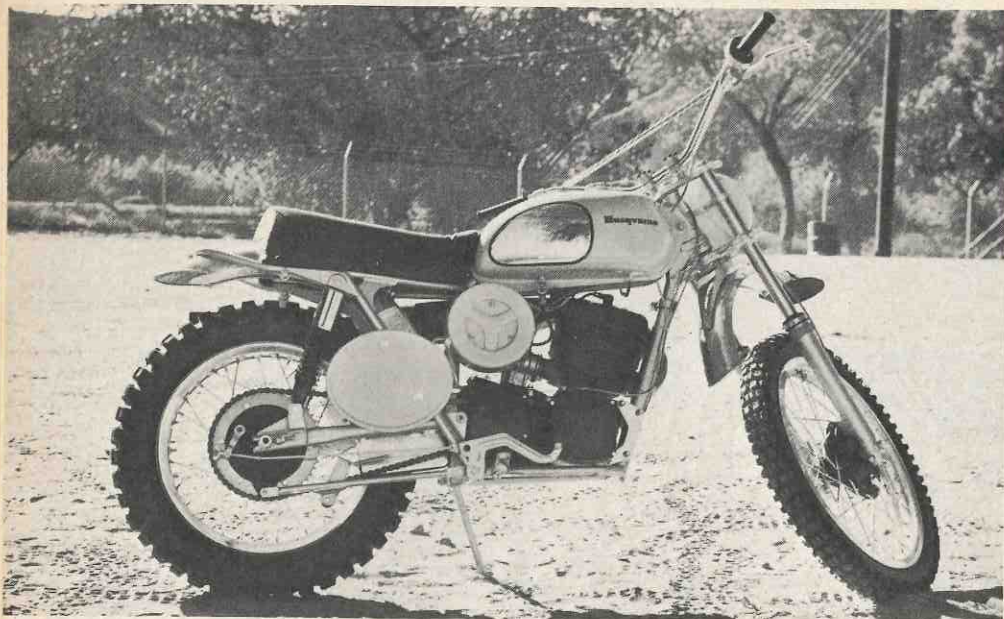
Some get very mad.

Then there's Husqvarna.

They simply go bananas.

It seems it's not too difficult to





procure a Husky for a test if you've given their marque good words. But woe be unto the motorcycle magazine that has the bad taste to mention a shortcoming or two about one of their models.

You do not get any more motorcycles to test.

Your phone calls do not ever get answered.

Your letters get ignored.

You, in Husky's eyes, don't exist anymore.

But, the readers of DIRT BIKE want to know about motorcycles, and, like we said earlier, that's the business we're in. We tell facts and give information they cannot get anywhere else. Which made our readers write in and *demand* some info on the 450 Husky. There have only been a handful of tests on the biggest Husky — and those by traditionally "friendly" magazines.

So, we went out and bought one of the things. Just like you might.

The price made even the wealthy young Encino businessmen who run DIRT BIKE wince as the check was written out. \$1559 is the suggested retail, plus tax, graft and whatever else you pay in your area. But we got it for a few bucks off retail. Most of these expensive bikes *can* be bought at a discount if the customer is willing to shop around a bit — and haggle.

We bought ours from Jerry at Valerians's Two Cycle City, in Westwood, near Los Angeles. He kept muttering something about changing the carb under his breath. Said we wouldn't like it too much



John DeSoto gasses the 450 in its element — deep sand.

with the Bing carb.

Balderdash, we replied. Why, the Staff of DB is known far and narrow for their skill in jetting the fabled Bing vergasser. Jerry warned us that it would be too rich as delivered; then tried to hype us on his Mikuni carb conversion kit once more.

Out to the test track. We unloaded the big yellow Husky and did the traditional "walk-around-and-kick-the-tires" routine. Then we tried to start it. Thirty kicks and much foul language later, we had the Husky running. Jerry was right — way too rich. We rode it around for a minute, but it would do nothing more than blubber. Out came

the toolbox and our assortment of Bing jets that is second only to that of Mr. Bing himself. We had enough brass to jet everything from a Reo lawnmower to the Queen Mary.

But getting to the carb was no easy task. First, off came the air cleaner cover, then the top of the carb had to be removed — then the slide had to be taken out — then (whew) the two screws loosened and the carb rotated and the float bowl dropped. If you don't feel like taking the top of the carb apart, then you can always remove the exhaust system — which is about a 15-minute job.

It took us about six different tries to get the jetting right — each and every try meant that we had to go through the same maddening ritual. Each and every infuriating time. No wonder so many Huskies are running around improperly jetted. It takes at least a half-day of diddling to jet this bike. Time that could be spent riding.

Whatever. We finally got the machine to where it would start reasonably well and run cleanly through the gears. Our final jetting combo (for your information) was a 280 needle jet (with the needle in the center position) and a 170 main jet. Actually, if you can get a 173 Bing main jet (very rare), this would do the trick even better. We had a hint of tingling on top. Of course, it could have been the float bowl running low — as the Bing only has one gas line and a very restrictive Magura petcock. You might read our article on the Bing a few months back — just to play it safe.

We put some easy time on the machine, then turned it over to one of our test riders. Fella by the name of John DeSoto.

While John appeared to be traveling around the track at a "brisk" pace, he also appeared to be fighting the bike. On several corners, the front end washed badly and he had to plant a foot down and gas it in order to keep from falling. In fact, later in the day, during one of the photo sessions, he dumped the Husky several times.

The big culprit seems to be that it's nearly impossible to get enough weight on the front wheel — making the rider helpless to get decent bite. And that giant tank is what keeps the rider from shifting his weight forward. It's wide and high,



DeSoto found varying degrees of success in the corners; good . . .



. . . not so good . . .



. . . wipe out . . .



. . . Oh, the hell with it . . .

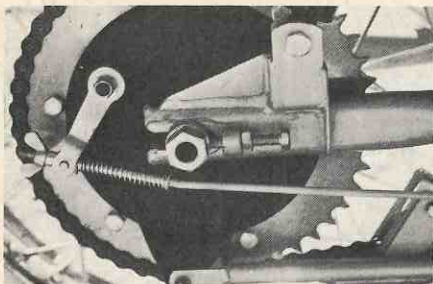
right where the seat meets the tank. Any attempts to rest the old groin against that ill-shaped slab of sheetmetal are sure to result in howls of anguish.

Because of this, the rider is forced to sit there — more or less — bolt upright and let the bike do what *it* wants to do. Standing is possible — for a while. Then, the pipe will start to roast the rider's leg. How long you can stand up depends largely on how much you can stand pain.

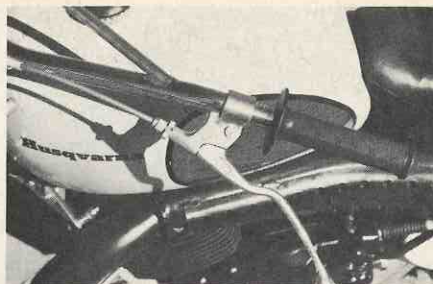
Once we realized this was *how* the Husky was, we rode it that way. And, in doing so, we found out that the big 450 was only happy at fairly high speeds across moderately choppy ground or smooth terrain. Really bumpy ground demanded

that the rider stand, but the genuine discomfort dampens enthusiasm after a few minutes.

As of late, we've been sniveling about Girling shocks quite a bit. Enough so, we've attempted to look into the matter to find out about the disparity from one set of shocks to another. We took the shocks from the Husky and removed the springs. Then we pumped the shocks up and down and felt a noticeable difference in the rebound damping between the two. This led us to check out the Girlings on several other bikes around. Same story. We never found two that really felt the same to our highly sensitive hands.



Be sure to cotter pin or safety wire the axle nut — or lose it.



First-class controls — the new Maguras were on our bike.



One of the strongest rear hubs in the business.

The reason for all this distasteful work on our part was the substandard performance of the ass-end of the 450. It simply moved around too much — and was far too harsh over bumps and whoops.

Perhaps much of the woe is due to the pork the Husky has attached. Our outrageously accurate and highly official DIRT BIKE scales showed the Husqvarna to weigh in at a flabby 269 pounds with 2/3 of a tank of gas. Much of the poundage is situated in the engine — which comes in at 95 pounds all by itself. Compared to a 501 Maico engine, which is 82½ pounds, and a 500 Yamaha engine, which pushes the needle to 92 pounds — the Husky simply does not justify the extra baggage. Both motors put out more and better horsepower in the normal state than does the Husky.

It seems that Husqvarna has picked up extra weight in *all* of their bikes in the last few years. And, again, all of it in the engine. We can recall putting a 400 Husky on the scales about three years ago and, with a full tank of gas, the bike weighed in at 239 pounds. Much less than the other “super” bikes in its field.

The forks on our test bike, as with most Huskys, leaked from day one. Ours didn't bottom, except on the severe bumps, but they did top annoyingly. The oil level was checked once and it was down a few cc. But, even after refilling, the topping-out sensation stayed. Several Husky owners suggested that a 50-weight oil does the trick. We never got around to trying it. If you did, and it worked for you, drop us a line and we'll pass on the information to our readers.

Once the Bing carb was jetted in the proverbial ballpark, the Husky proved to have a strong, wide powerband. But one could not, in all honesty, call it a smooth powerband. Right off of idle, the power pulses came out: bang — bang —



John struggles to get weight over front wheel.

hesitate — bang, bang, bang. Jerky. Lurching.

Definitely chain-snatching-type power. Once the 450 got some revs under its belt, the annoying popping and banging went away, and the bike revved strongly to its peak, then abruptly flattened out. No one could even entertain the thought of calling the Husky weak, but it will not run with the rest of the bikes in the Open class. A 450 Maico will easily pull it; a 360 Yamaha MX will edge it slightly in a drag to the first turn; a 400 CZ and a 400 Husky will pull it to 60 mph or so; and a 501 Maico will rip its paint job off — without over-revving.

About a half-dozen people rode the 450 and we compiled their opinions and weighed them with ours.

General agreement: Shifting throw was too long. Rear brake was too touchy and the foot had to be lifted from the peg to work the pedal. Front brake was very good. Heat shield burned. Pegs were lousy. Uncomfortable to stand on pegs. Bike was difficult to ride — especially with the pronounced front end washout. High-speed handling was the bike's strong point.

Split opinions: Some liked the forks — some did not. All agreed they were on the firm side. All riders noticed the topping-out noise. A few riders thought the bike had enough low end — the rest did not. All but one rider expressed intense dislike for the kickstarter. Two riders thought they might buy a 450 “if the price was right” and the rest did not want it at any price.

All things considered, we were disappointed with the performance; especially from a 450. Back to Valerians's Two Cycle City, and we asked Jerry how they (the fast guys) make them run. He suggested (with dollar signs in his eyes) that we try the Mikuni carb kit.

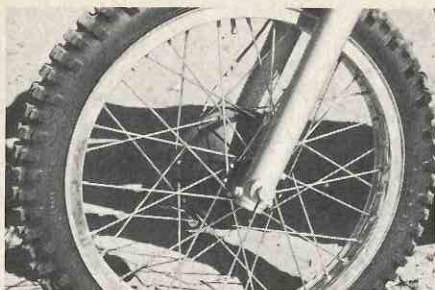
We did.

Back to the track.

Guess what?

It works.

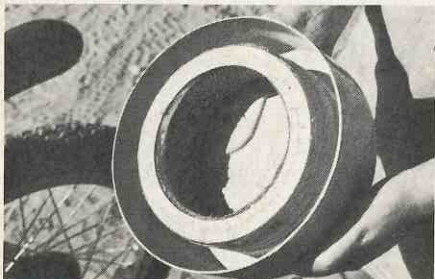
Yes, with the Mikuni in place of the Bing, all of the snap-crackle-pop syndrome went away. Nothing but smooth, steady power from idle to peak revs. Suddenly, the Husky took on a fresh personality. It was now a strong bike — one that didn't seem to care what gear it was in. The handling quirks still were there, but the spiffy power almost



Front brake was strong, easy to use and light.



Common breakage point on stock exhaust system. In California, a Skyway is standard from the dealers.



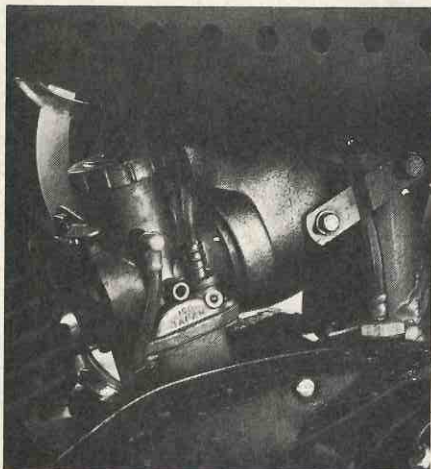
Our bike had a Filtron — standard paper filter got the axe.

nullified that.

One additional plus from the Mikuni was precision at the throttle. Small increments could be dialed in with no trouble — and lofting the front end became much easier. Over bad bumps, the Husky was happiest with its front end waggling in the air, and the new carb gave much better control for



We talked to several Husky owners and asked them to ride our Mikuni-equipped machine. They liked it.



Our carb conversion looked like factory stock.

this sort of gymnastics.

Starting also became easier, but still took several kicks from the rider to get the metal moving inside. Oh yes, with the Mikuni, the 450 would actually idle. Another small, but important point: When the bike was dumped, the Mikuni allowed easy restarting, instead of the usual loading up most Husky owners have come to know and dread.

All things considered, the carb gave the machine a new personality. If you're going to ride a 450 Husky, we'd suggest that the carb conversion kit is a must. If not, you'll quickly learn to hate the bike.

450 HUSKY

PRICE: \$1599, suggested retail
 ENGINE TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke
 DISPLACEMENT: 454cc
 BORE & STROKE: 84mm x 82mm
 COMPRESSION RATIO: 8.8:1
 CARBURETION: 36mm Bing
 HORSEPOWER @ RPM: (claimed) N/A (actual) 29.6 @ 6100

CLUTCH: Wet multi-plate disc
 PRIMARY DRIVE: Straight cut gears
 FINAL DRIVE: Chain
 GEAR RATIOS: 1. 19.65 (1.00)
 2. 13.41 (1.00)
 3. 9.50 (1.00)
 4. 7.30 (1.00)
 5. 5.65 (1.00)

AIR FILTRATION: Paper element
 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM: Flywheel magneto

LUBRICATION: Pre-mix
 RECOMMENDED FUEL: Premium
 RECOMMENDED OIL: Pennzoil Two-Stroke

FUEL CAPACITY: 3.8 gallons
 FRAME: Chrome moly
 SUSPENSION:
 (Front) Husky telescopics
 (Rear) Swingarm with Girling shocks

TIRES: Front: 3.00x21
 Rear: 4.00x18

WHEELS: Front: 21-inch Akront
 Rear: 18-inch Akront

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase: 54 inches
 Ground Clearance: 8¾ inches
 Seat Height: 31½ inches

Weight: (claimed) N/A
 (actual) 268 pounds with ⅔ tank of gas
 On front wheel: 119.5 pounds
 On rear wheel: 148.5 pounds

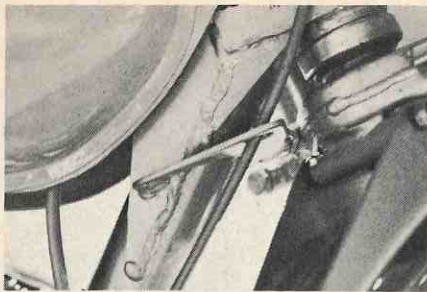
BRAKES: Front: Conical drum
 Rear: Conical drum

INSTRUMENTS: None
 SILENCER: Muffler/with spark arrestor
 PRIMARY KICK: No

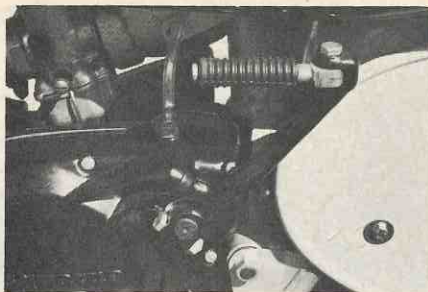
PARTS PRICES, suggested retail, approx. (Items subject to frequent replacement through wear or breakage):
 PISTON: \$34.95
 RINGS: \$7.20
 CLUTCH CABLE: \$4.62
 THROTTLE CABLE: \$3.05
 BRAKE SHOES: \$10.92/pair (front)
 \$10.92/pair (rear)

CYLINDER: \$138.30
 CYLINDER LINER: \$37.40
 SHIFT LEVER: \$8.70
 REAR BRAKE PEDAL: \$9.56
 FRONT BRAKE LEVER: \$3.40
 CLUTCH LEVER: \$3.40

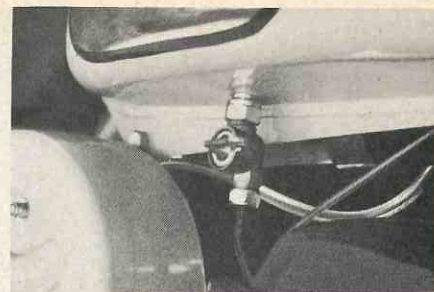




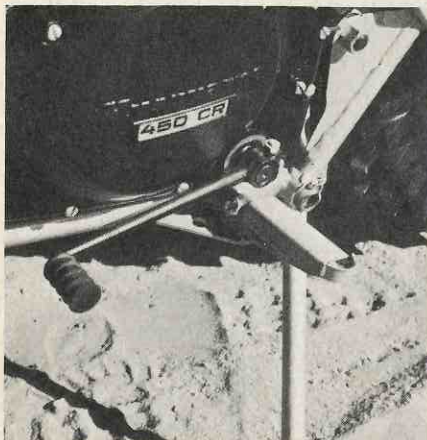
Welds looked like they came out of a tube of trampled toothpaste.



Kickstarter was short, high and awkward to use.



Single Magura petcock supplied gas to carb.



Long shift lever stuck out in breeze. Pegs? Trash.

BITS AND PIECES

Getting to the center plug is a bit awkward — you'll need a compact plug tool. There is already a hole for a second plug. Some owners run a cold plug in the center hole for normal riding and a hot plug in the side hole for starting.

Most riders like the saddle — just enough padding and not too wide.

Gas cap, forks and motor all leaked, steadily and maddeningly.

We had some rear end chatter-and-hop under braking. Most riders felt it was the inferior shocks, not the braking assembly, that caused the problem.

Several riders caught their boot on the rear brake actuating lever. Pegs were trash; slippery and non-spring loaded.

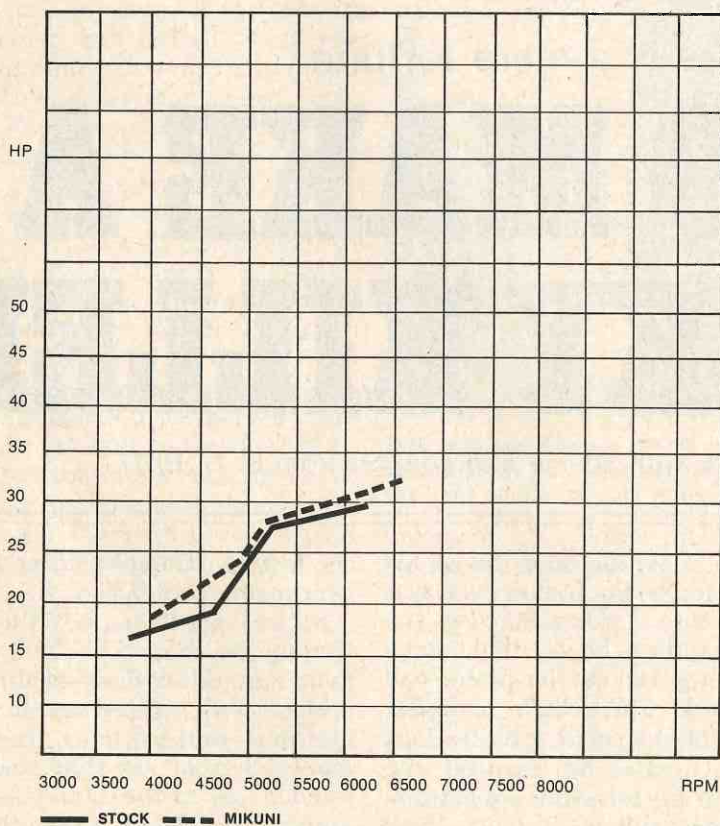
This Husky, like all of them, is poorly waterproofed. They have needed a decent stillair box for nearly a decade and have refused to give the buying public one. You *will* drown out the Husky in a water hole. If not the first time, then the next. Several outlets offer a plastic shield that seems to help. Torsten Hallman is one of them.

We had no difficulty with our countershaft sprocket slipping. It's not keyed; so much depends on how careful the dealer is on the set-up as to whether or not it'll slip. Obviously, Two Cycle City is careful. And they sell a lot of Huskys.

This 450 sported the new Magura "bent" levers that are very good items, though another Husky we rode had the Lucas things.

Most Husky 450 owners drop a tooth on the countershaft sprocket — and are happier with the bike's performance. Watch out when changing, though — we have had trouble and many readers have reported that the gear puller breaks easily.

Bars are shaped well and have a
Cont'd. on page 88





S & W competition shock absorbers and springs from Webco

The name of S & W is synonymous with quality high performance motorcycle products for more than 25 years. They have built a solid reputation for dependability, performance and integrity. The all new S & W motorcycle shock absorber was designed to fill the gap that presently exists in accessory shocks . . . proper damping/spring combinations together with complete reliability. ■ The most efficient and precise damping action obtainable is the result of extensive testing on a specially built shock dyno, plus thousands of miles of all forms of racing. S & W shocks show the least amount of damping variance at either temperature extreme or under extended duration testing. This damping action coupled with a complete variety of both true-progressive and single rate springs (a total of 18), offers the best rear suspension package possible. Ideal for both the professional racer or the occasional trail rider. All S & W shocks are sold in pairs; with each shock color coded to assure a matched set. ■ Units are available in lengths of 12, 12½, 13 and 13½ inches. Special shocks with narrow mounting eyes are available for Yamaha dirt singles, Honda XL250 and 350. Suggested retail price is \$20.95 per shock (without spring) at authorized Webco dealers everywhere. ■ Send 50c (to cover cost of handling) for a detailed brochure on how to choose the proper rear suspension system for you and your motorcycle.

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C. The Suzuki is just like the one Joel Robert rides.

D. The 501 has already maimed both riders.

E. The Suzuki dude is taking off his gloves to fondle the front tire of the Maico, but his hand is stuck.

F. The whole photograph is patently absurd.

G. Spiro Agnew is also patently absurd.

H. And worrying about the right answer to this question is patently absurd.

I. I'd rather be watching *Columbo*.

J. I'll take the curtain, Monty.

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450 HUSKY OR

Cont'd. from page 29

long cross-brace — should hold up under impact well.

Akront rims are standard — the kind that gather mud.

Spokes held up well and did not loosen much. The wheels appear to be at least as strong as anything on the market — and the hubs (front and rear) are super-strong.

We had two motor mount bolts come loose — then kept a close eye on them for the duration of the test. No more trouble.

We recommend that Husky owners drill their rear axle nut and safety wire it in place. There have been too many instances of this critical piece of metal going astray to ignore the problem.

Fenders are aluminum and appear to be very sturdy — and a bit on the heavy side.

The kickstarter will start to sag early in the game, and more than likely will allow your foot to slip off and blow your shin to shreds.

Sidestand is nice and tucks out of the way.

Rear tire is too narrow and should be a 4.50 or a 4.60, instead of the 4.00x18. Front is fine.

Welding looks like it was done in a kindergarten sandbox by the dumbest kid there.

The standard Husky silencer doesn't silence well, and in some states, a Skyway is standard. While this works acceptably, it is very long and vulnerable to damage. The stocker usually breaks its bracket by the muffler bolt hole, we're told.

The steering lock is on the fragile side and a *really* good fall is going to result in the triple clamp bolt punching a hole in the gas tank.

Suzuki

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The bike is good looking and does not appear to be as heavy as it actually is.

SUMMATION

Husky offers two versions of the 450 — the CR and the WR. We cannot see any reason for the CR's existence. With the spread of power that is present (properly setup with the Mikuni), there is simply no reason for a close-ratio gearbox. A close-ratio gearbox indicates the machine is to be used for MX. If so, then why the humongous tank?

No doubt, with the WR gearbox and a few hundred bucks spent on lightening and suspension mods, the 450 can be an effective cross-country winner. To make the CR an effective motocross winner, the owner will have to spend a great deal more.

Quite frankly, it's time for Husky to take a long hard look at current machinery — and incorporate what they see. And also, quite frankly, we can see why they were reluctant to let it out for testing . . . it's certainly painted the right color: lemon yellow.



Our CURVES build power

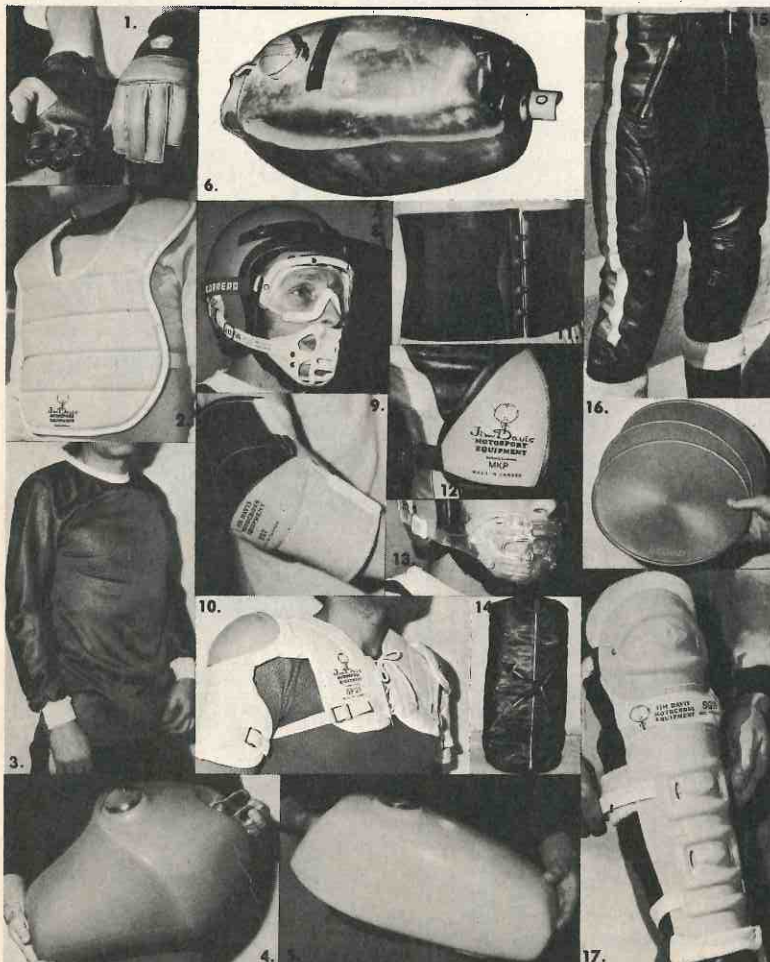
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