

INTERVIEW: Rahier, Grossi & LaPorte!

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TESTS:

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SUZUKI'S

SCHOOL OF

MOTOCROSS



**SUPERBOWL
COVERAGE!**



Sweden's Super Screamer

THE HUSQVARNA CR 125 GP

The 1977 model gets more trick innovations, much to the dismay of the competition.

Last year Husqvarna sold all of their 125 CR GP machines. Most of the bikes went to the midwestern and eastern portions of the country. Although they had limited production on the machine (to see how the new version would be accepted), every bike seemed to be pre-sold before it got to the dealer.

Now the 1977 model is here, and it looks as though Husky dealers throughout the country are again going to have problems keeping a 125 CR GP on the floor for any extended period of time.

To give you a quick synopsis of the machine, there are a few highlights of the 125 CR GP that we'd like to clue you in on. First of all, it's the coolest-running engine that Husky offers today. When put on an engine dyno it retains more horsepower when hot than any of the other machines. It's got the slickest gearbox in the entire industry, and more suspension than you know what to do with.

The biggest highlight of the Husky 125 is the top end design. The cylinder, head and intake system were all changed last year. Now you've got a

radial head, reed valves and a good porting job.

This year, all of these were retained, but with the exception of some subtraction in the way of port material. Through experimentation in porting design, Husky came up with a design that allows the machine to have better mid-range and a stronger top end powerband. They've added about 2.4 horsepower to the 125cc engine without sacrificing anything.

Another major change in the CR 125 is the engine cases themselves. Last year they were made of the same material as just about any other engine, your basic aluminum out of a rough cast. Now the 125 joins the rest of the Husky ranks in offering you a magnesium engine, including the two outer cases. It's lighter, lasts longer, and because of the way Husky designed it, isn't as prone to breakage as the aluminum sets were.

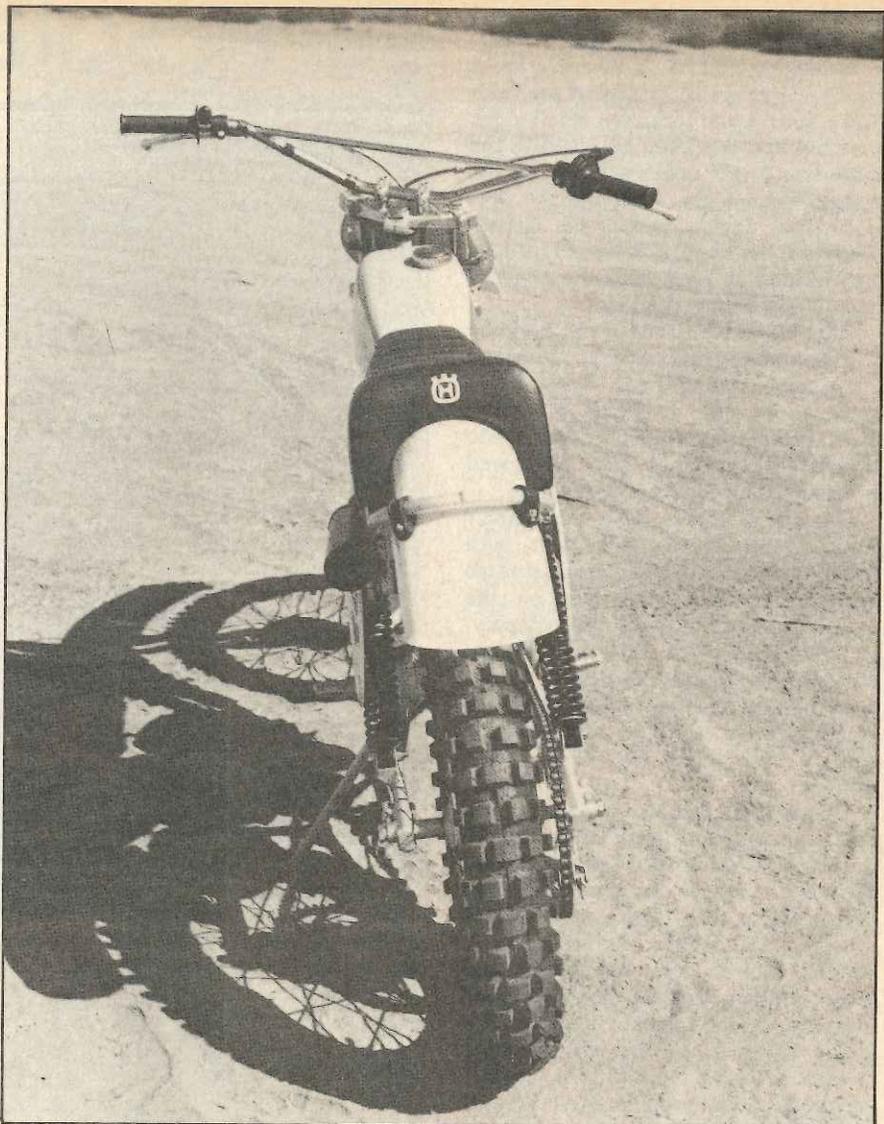
A new pipe has come out on the 1977 model. Last year's machine was a tad too noisy and had a very high powerband due to the pipe configuration. Husky went back to the drawing board and came out with a pipe that is not only quieter, but aids the engine in the mid-range department, giving you the best of two worlds. You're not going to get an abundance of low end power, but if you're shopping for a 125cc machine, low end is out of the question anyway.

The ignition system is still a Motoplat, one of the finest ways to get the spark down to your plug. You'll see a lot of guys using the Motoplat in Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha machines. The Husky comes stock with one, along with the added wires for hooking up a lighting system.

The frame on the new 125 Husky is the first to come over this year. A lot of previous Husky owners have complained that the machine doesn't turn. On Kent Howerton's machine the front end is pulled in slightly, allowing the Texas Flash to turn quicker. The Husky 125 is the first of the Swedish models to come with the new pulled-in rake. You can expect the same treatment on the other machines.

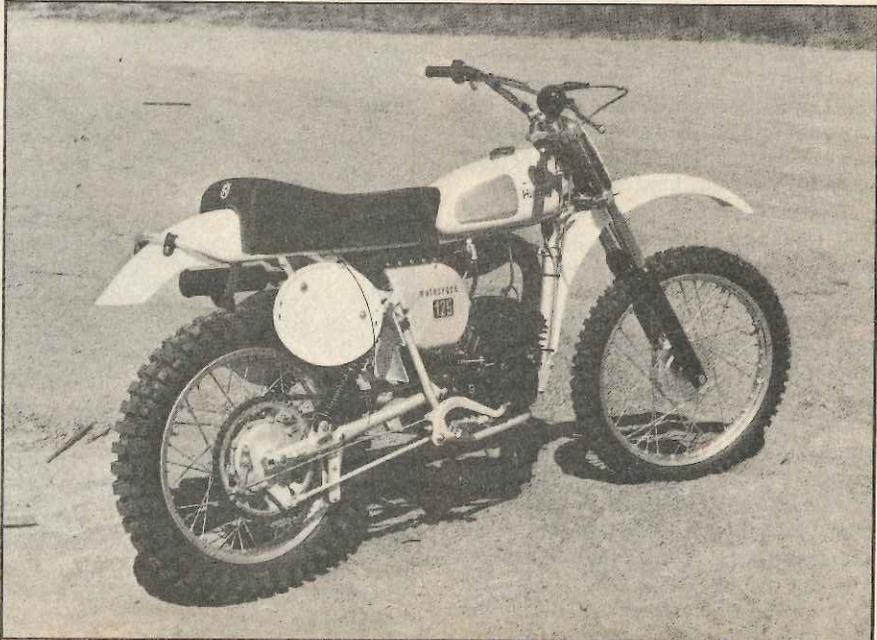
While we're on the subject of front ends, the 125 has two new systems that will please a lot of potential buyers. First of all, there is a new set of forks on the bike. Last year's front end was nothing to complain about in the first place. If you put in some very light fork oil they worked well.

This year the down dampening and rebound characteristics of the forks have been changed due to the new design. They work much better than last year's forks. If you have the 1976 model, you wouldn't know that there was anything superior in Husky forks, until you rode the new 125. The slight



It's one of the slimmest machines on the market today. Note the new seat design and the wider fender on the rear.

Boasting about 8 inches of travel on each end, the Husky has about the best suspension in the 125 field. A floating rear brake and good brake rod design keep the rear wheel from hopping.



pumping-up feeling has gone away and the fork travel is quicker and smoother.

Something that has bothered a lot of Husky 125 riders is the size of the front brake hub. It just looks too small. This year the hub has been enlarged to the same size as the ones found on all the bigger WR models. Although the best all-around design would be conical (found on the larger CR series), Husky has decided to stick with the conventional brake hub on the 125.

The rims on both ends of the machine are the new Akront models, designed for heavy competition. You aren't going to be able to bend or flatten these beefy rims without doing some serious curb bashing. They work well and should last you a good long time.

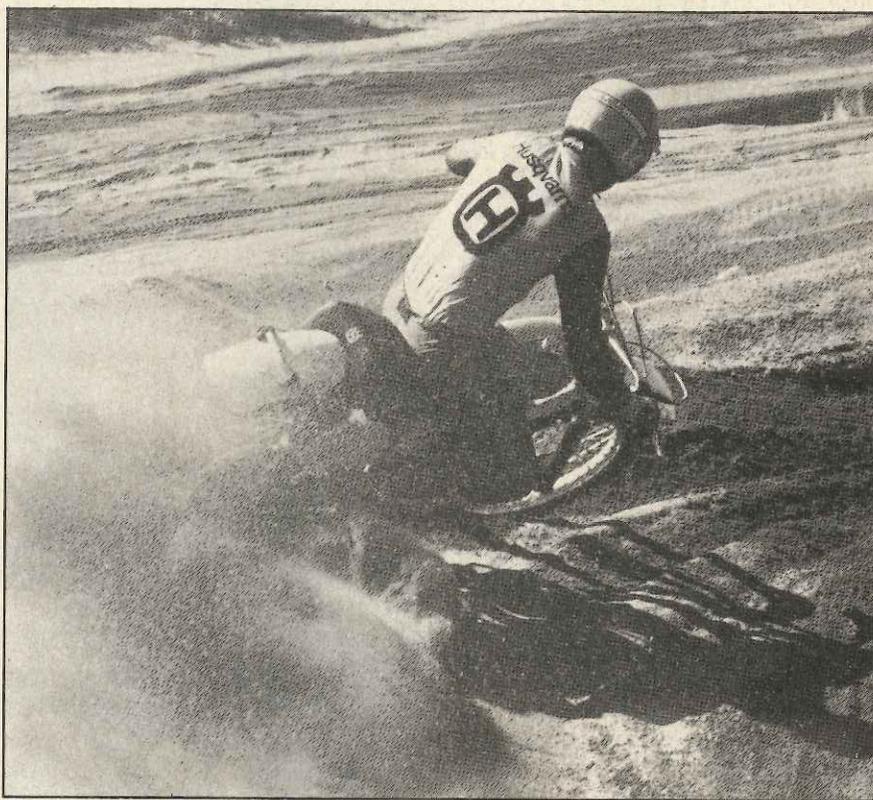
The new footpegs have made their debut on the 125. The older pegs, with those small drops of weld on the surface designed to keep your feet on the machine when the going got slippery, just didn't work well. Now the footpegs are serrated slightly and have square holes punched in the middle, both for better grip and to allow any water or mud to clean itself out while you're riding.

The rear hub has also been changed. Last year many prospective buyers eyed the hub and figured that it would break. We didn't hear of any owners having that problem, but Husky nevertheless went to a new design. The brake hub is slightly conical now, has better and larger braking surface internally, and bolts up to the sprocket just like the larger machines. Anyone who was worrying about breaking a hub in the past can discount that problem from their list of "things that keep you awake at night."

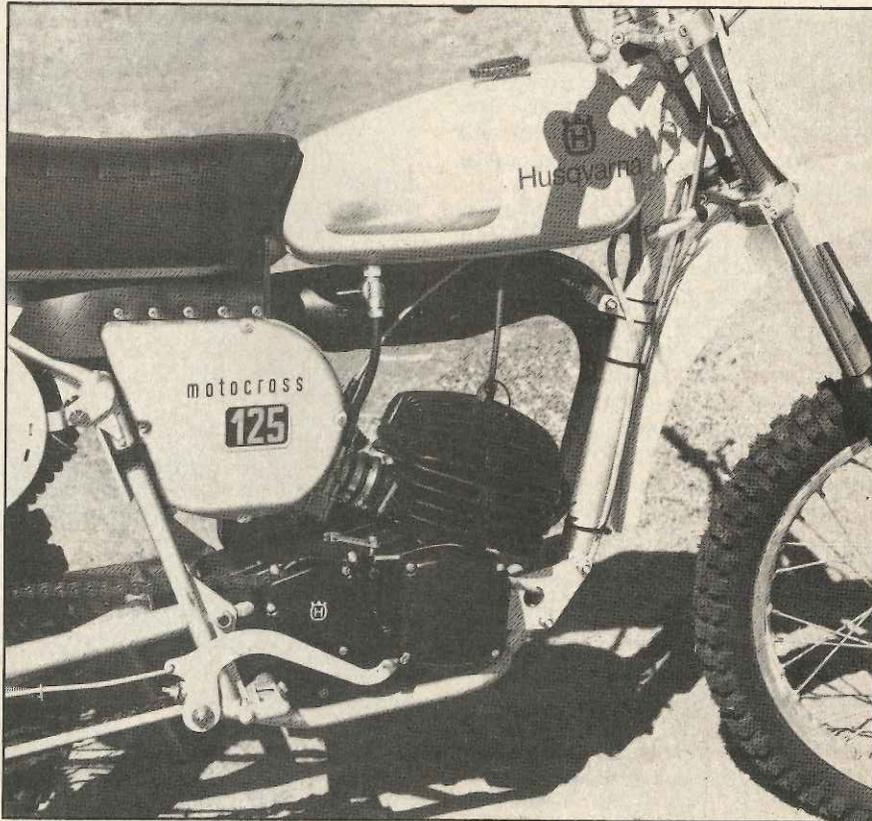
Some riders did come across the problem of eating up the swingarm bearings. No machine, regardless of size or engine displacement, is going to live very long on bushings in the swingarm pivot area. The new Husky CR 125 has a needle bearing arrangement, with enough needle surface and large enough needles to keep it living. If you can destroy this system, you should probably get some kind of an award.

Just above the swingarm you'll find that rectangular piece of plastic that constitutes the lower hand of the rear fender. Just about every Husky owner has gone out and bought at least two of these little gems because the rear tire grabbed onto it, turned the edges down, and rendered it useless. The Husky 125 is the first machine of the 1977 series to come with the new fender piece. It's designed to go up higher into the frame, eliminating the possibility of having the wheel peel it back when you bottom out the suspension. You shouldn't have to buy any replacements any more. For those of you who now own a Husky with the older plate, we'd suggest that you

SUPER SCREAMER



In a lot of instances you can go into a corner and come back out with just one gear change, thanks to the good powerband and excellent gear ratios.



With new mag cases, more horsepower and a differently designed airbox, the Husky will run with the Japanese models on a smooth track, and go blasting away from the pack when the going gets really rough.



A new carburetor comes on the Husky 125. It does a better job of passing the right air/fuel mixture to the cylinder. You're still hampered by the strange kick-starter, which really takes some getting used to.



The new forks on the 125 are a dream. Great down dampening combined with good rebound makes them a pleasure to ride with. New front fender, rim and a larger brake are also included in the package.



Husky motorcycles have always been leaders in desert events. The 125 CR, although a little close in the gearbox ratios, is still competitive in that field. If you're really serious about desert, the same machine is available with the WR (wide ratio) gearbox.

stumble on down to your dealer and order a new one.

If you were to go into any Husky owner's garage you'd probably find a chisel and a hammer. Most riders have found that the little splash plate that covers the airbox was restricting the air flow too much, not allowing their machine to run properly. Many just chiseled off the pop rivets and picked up about two horsepower. There is a newly designed splash guard this year that eliminates the need for removal. Although it does help keep water out of the engine, it no longer restricts the air flow pattern.

Around the airbox there is a new rubber shroud. You can ride the Husky in extremely wet conditions and not have the engine drown out because of water in the carburetor. Rubber guards on both sides of the airbox intake system eliminate the problem now.

New fenders can be found on the little motocross machine. They're wider, looking almost like the old CZ fenders, but are tipped at different angles. The fender in the front works extremely well in keeping mud off the rider. The only thing we didn't like was the fact that you couldn't see the whole front wheel. If you're the type of rider who has to see the wheel in order to put it exactly where you want it, this might be a problem. But you're never going to have your vision interrupted by mud or water slung up by the 21-incher.

The rear fender has gotten the same treatment. It's wider, just a tad longer, and has vertical edges which aid in draining the water and mud off the system to the outside of the wheel, so that it isn't continually flipped back up by the wheel, similar to how a steam-powered paddlewheel boat works. The Husky fenders route everything out through the outer perimeters of the wheels and back onto the track.

Finally, in the new design department, you'll find the seat. It's just as comfortable as the one found on last year's machine, but now it doesn't get slippery when you're in the slosh. Because of the ribbing and stitching running from left to right on the seat design, your leathers make better contact on the seat and eliminate most of the problems of sliding back and forth, to and fro on the bike while riding in the rain.

In the "slightly modified just because" department, the carburetor has been revamped, allowing more fuel and using a better metering system. There's a choke lever now, along with the traditional tickler. The rear engine mounting system has also been changed, eliminating a lot of unneeded bracketry, amounting in less overall weight.

So how does all of this work when you get out on a motocross course and start

flying around a track? That depends. Last year we told you that although the '75 Husky wasn't the fastest machine, it was still the quickest. That still holds true with the new model.

On a track where horsepower is the only deciding factor and the bumps are inconsequential, the Husky is going to have to hustle along with the rest of them. Last year's machine was a bit down on horsepower. Thanks to the new cylinder design, pipe and carb work, the CR 125 is competitive with the Japanese brands. You're about even on a track that seems to be made of dusty concrete, like Carlsbad or Saddleback.

On courses where the going gets rough and suspension really comes into play, you'll find that the Husky is going to get away from the pack and run alone in front. When you're working with about 8 inches of travel in both the front and rear, you'll find that most of the bumps disappear, being absorbed by the suspension.

Take a course like Unadilla, for instance. You've got a rough, natural terrain track, the type of course that the Europeans are used to running on. The 125 Husky is going to be very hard to best. The suspension system is a lot more sophisticated than what is found today on the Japanese brands. They may also have 8 inches of travel in their machines, but it seems that you lose 2 to 3 inches once you sit on the bike. The Husky has the suspension, both in spring rate and dampening, set up properly for the 125. It works the way suspension is supposed to work.

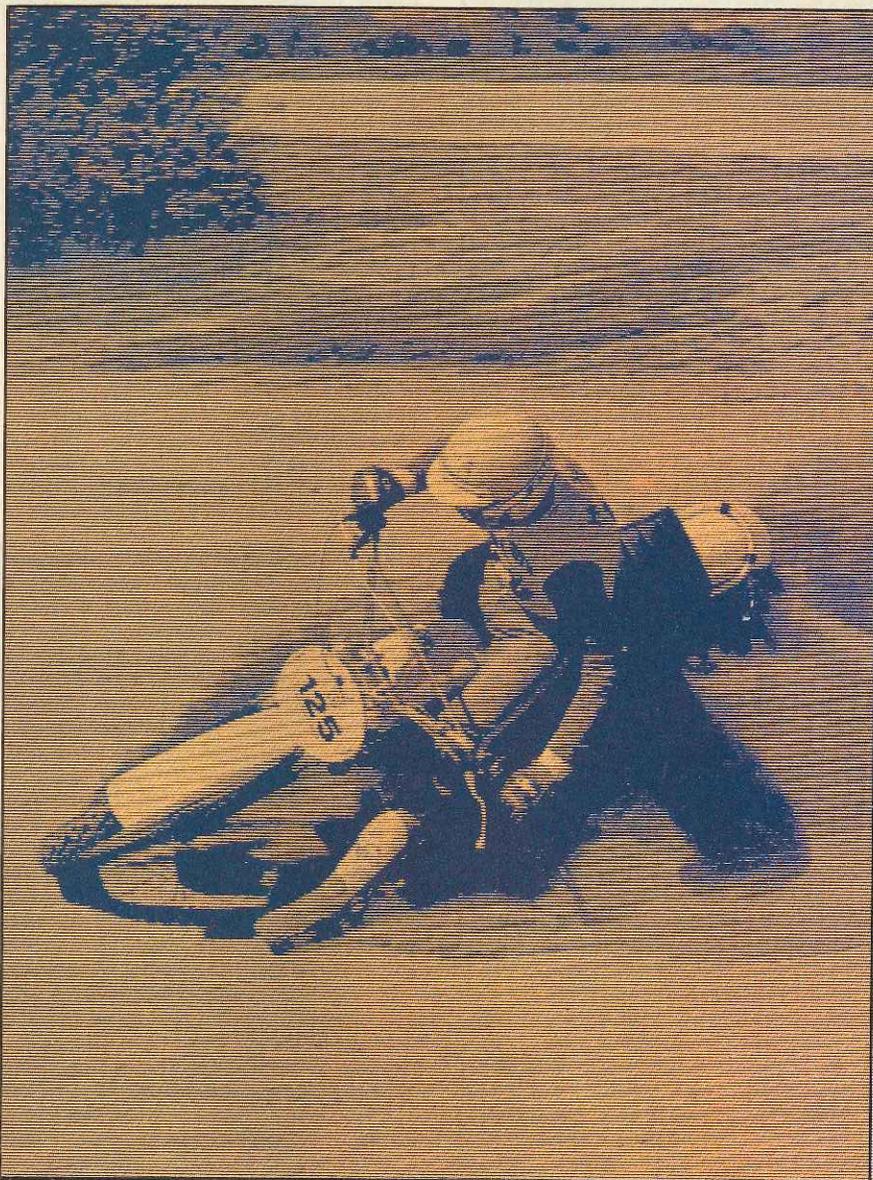
With the new fork angle, turning the 125 is even more of a pleasure. In the past you really had to have confidence to throw a Husky into a berm, because they weren't really inclined to cooperate. The machines would turn, but you had to hair it out the first time.

Now, with the new fork angle, the bike pivots quicker, and is a lot more secure in the corners. You don't have to close your eyes the first few times you go berm-bashing. The bike turns better, is a lot steadier, and doesn't give you the impression that you're fighting against it all the way.

One of the most outstanding features of the 125 Husky is the gearbox. First of all, the cogs are perfectly matched to the powerband. Whoever designed the machine must have stayed up a lot of nights with the engineering figures. You find too many motorcycles these days that have a beautiful powerband but are hindered with a gearbox ratio that doesn't even come close to coinciding with the engine. The 125 Husky is an exception. When the powerband drops off due to over-revving and you shift to the next gear, there isn't any lag or bogging of the engine.

Another highlight is the fact that once the machine is broken in, you can shift it

SUPER SCREAMER



The kicked-in front end of the new Husky allows the rider to pivot the machine better. Different forks and other models with improved turning abilities will also be appearing soon.

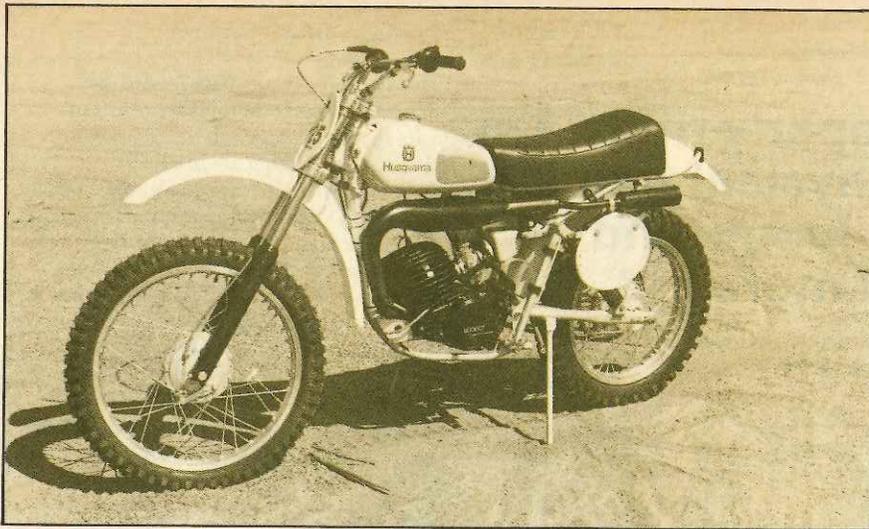
under power. In our interview this month you might have noticed that Gaston Rahier's Suzuki is one of the few machines that will allow the rider to shift up a gear without letting off the throttle or using the clutch. The Husky CR 125 is the same way. You don't even have to think about it. Just leave the throttle wide open, ignore the clutch, and pull the shift lever upward. It will snick into the next gear so quickly that you'd think you had nothing to do with the idea.

Out of the starting gate, it's first gear, with the throttle wide open. Once over the pipe, you can just ignore the throttle, feel the acceleration, and shift at the appropriate moment. It makes for a lot of holeshots.

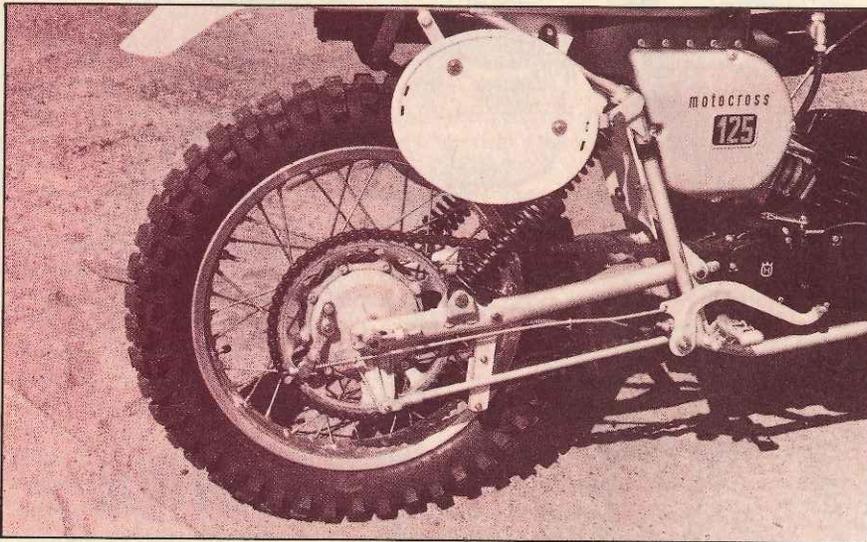
Overall, we really enjoyed the Husky. Like we mentioned before, it has gotten a needed boost in the horsepower department and is capable of running with the Japanese machinery on the average Southern California, slippery-smooth type of motocross track.

But the real surprise will come when the courses get to the point where they should be. High whoop-dee-dooos, tight turns and a basically masochistic type of course is where all the hard-earned bucks that you poured into buying the machine are going to pay off twofold. You'll be pleasantly surprised at what the Swedish factory has to offer this year in the 125 class. So will your competition, although they probably won't be all that pleased.

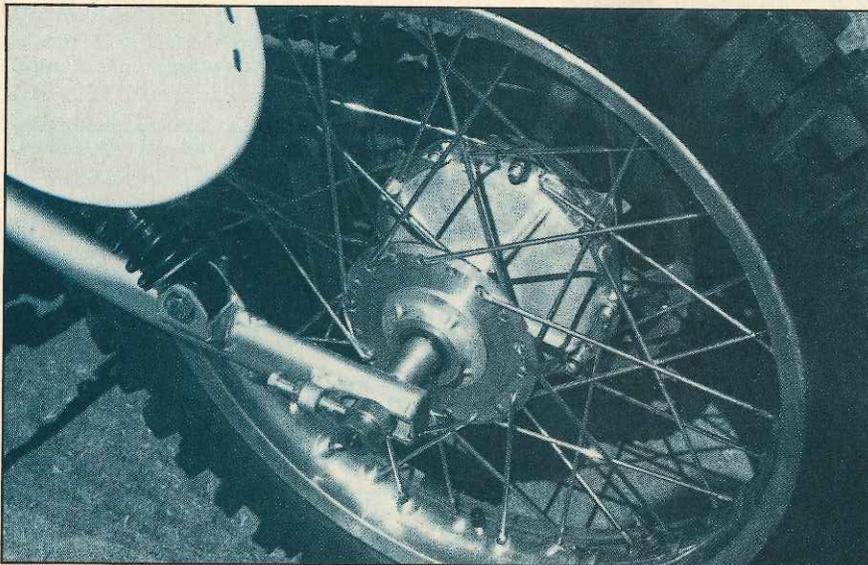




A new exhaust pipe complete with a silencer came out on the new machine. It's a lot quieter and aids the engine in delivering good mid-range and top end power.



Inverted gas Girling shocks are found in the rear end. The wheel no longer eats up the plastic piece, and the stock tires are worth sticking with.



A new rear hub design came out with this year's machine. It's a mix between a conical and a conventional design that securely bolts to the sprocket. The spokes are very heavy-duty and the rims are the best the Akront company offers.

HUSKY CR 125

Suggested Retail Price: N.A.

ENGINE

Engine type	2-stroke reed valve
Bore and stroke, mm	55 x 52
Displacement, cc	124
Horsepower/rpm (claimed)	n.a.
Torque/rpm (claimed)	n.a.
Compression ratio	13.2:1
Air filtration	Twin Air
Carburetion	32mm Bing
Lubrication	in fuel
Ignition	motoplat

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission	6-speed
Clutch type	wet, multi-disc
Primary drive	chain
Final drive ratio	n.a.

CHASSIS

Chassis type	single downtube
Overall length, in.	83.5
Seat height, in.	31.5
Peg height, in.	12.5
Ground clearance, in.	10.6
Wheelbase, in.	55
Weight as tested, lbs.	194
FR/RR wt. bias, lbs.	n.a.
Tires, front	3.00 x 21
rear	4.00 x 18

Max. Pts.	NUMERICAL EVALUATION	
10	Power	10
10	Powerband	10
10	Acceleration	9
10	Transmission	
	(5) Ratios	5
	(5) Operation	5
10	Suspension	
	(5) Front	5
	(5) Rear	5
10	Brakes	
	(5) Front	5
	(5) Rear	4
10	General Handling	9
30	Miscellaneous	
	(5) Starting	5
	(5) Rider comfort	4
	(5) Quality of craftsmanship	5
	(5) Tires	4
	(5) Noise level	4
100 pts.	Overall Rating	94 pts.