

SPECIAL

"RHINESTONE COWBOY" INTERVIEW!

POPULAR

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CYCLING IND

ARGUS

TESTS:

- **YAMAHA'S MID-SIZE YZ 100 ROCKET!**
- **THE ALL NEW HUSKY 250 OR!**

ANAHEIM STADIUM MX ACTION!

ELECTRON CARB:
The Best Available?



Husqvarna, as you're probably aware, wins a large share of off-road and desert races in this country. The Swedish brand is virtually the king of Baja racing, with such riders as Mitch Mayes, Larry Roeseler, Jack Johnson, Rolf Tibblin and J.N. Roberts helping establish and cement that reputation.

As a direct result of those (and others, of course) riders, Husqvarna has always sold a goodly portion of its total number of imports to desert/off-road racers. There are a lot of Huskys out in the boonies these days.

OR (rather than his familiar WR) in the ISDT in Czechoslovakia.

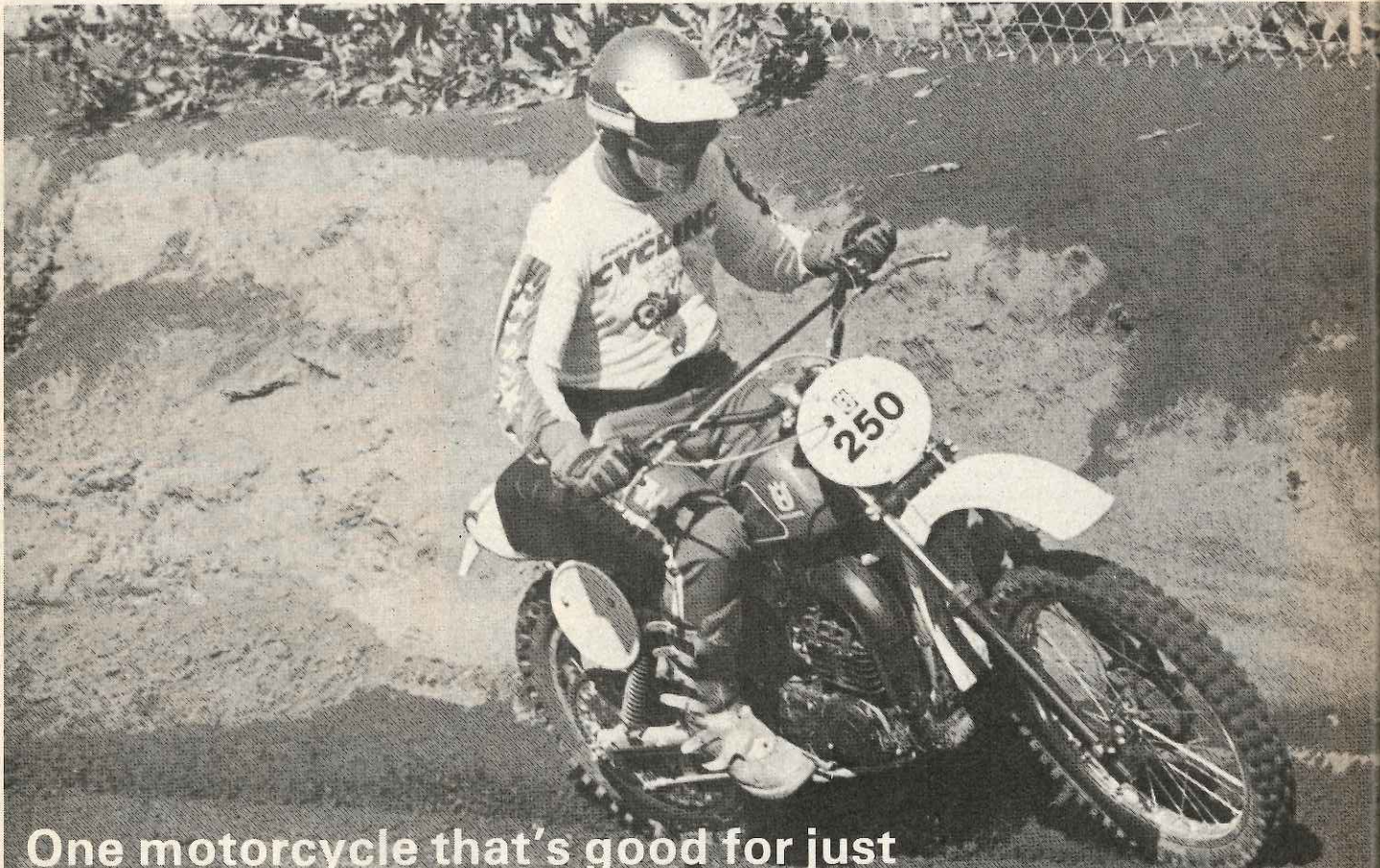
Husqvarna has long felt the need for a bike that could be ridden successfully in the desert. To fit that bill, they needed something about halfway between the CR model, which is the close ratio motocrosser, and the WR, wide ratio enduro machine. Since most of the desert riding in this country is in southern California, the bike also had to comply with California noise regulations so that the consumer could acquire the dreaded "Green Sticker."

The company has manufactured the

ago with the entire Husqvarna desert racing crew, including team chief Dean Goldsmith and riders Larry Roeseler, Jack Johnson, Scott Harden and Brent Wallingsford, and put together a concept for the bike they wanted. Out of that meeting came the basic idea for the OR model, and the features it carries.

Getting right down to specifics, we'll tell you that in essence, the OR is a middle-ground motorcycle. It combines the ideal features of both the CR and the WR models. One of the main areas of compromise is in the gearbox, as the first three gears are low ones from the wide

Action photos by John Bethea



One motorcycle that's good for just about everything.

By Tom Beesley

HUSQVARNA 250 OR

Further, as a result of those sales figures, Husqvarna decided to build a model geared even more specifically to the off-road rider/racer. The bike, designated from the beginning as OR (for Off-Road, what else?), was originally intended primarily for desert-type riding. It's turned out, though, that the model is one of the most versatile in Husqvarna's whole lineup, and it's finding a great deal of use not only among desert racers, but eastern enduro riders as well. For instance, Dick Burleson elected to use an

WR model in the past, and it was aimed primarily at the enduro market. They found, however, that the model wasn't really up to the job in the desert. Riders were buying CR models which didn't comply with the noise regs, and which weren't ideally suited to desert terrain riding. So rather than sell motorcycles which people were illegally using in the desert, Husqvarna decided to come up with a bike specifically designed for that segment of the market.

Husky engineers sat down a over a year

ratio WR system. The top three are from the high-speed CR. What you end up with is a very high speed racer with enough low-end power to plonk around the rocks like you were on a trials bike.

The bike comes fitted with Curnutt shock absorbers, which are currently the best and most reliable available for desert racing. The 16-inch units are identical to those that Goldsmith puts on the team desert/Baja machines. Travel is 9¾ inches on the rear.

The front forks are Husky's own

design, and they've always been pretty good in the desert. Now, there are no complaints at all. Travel up there is 9½ inches.

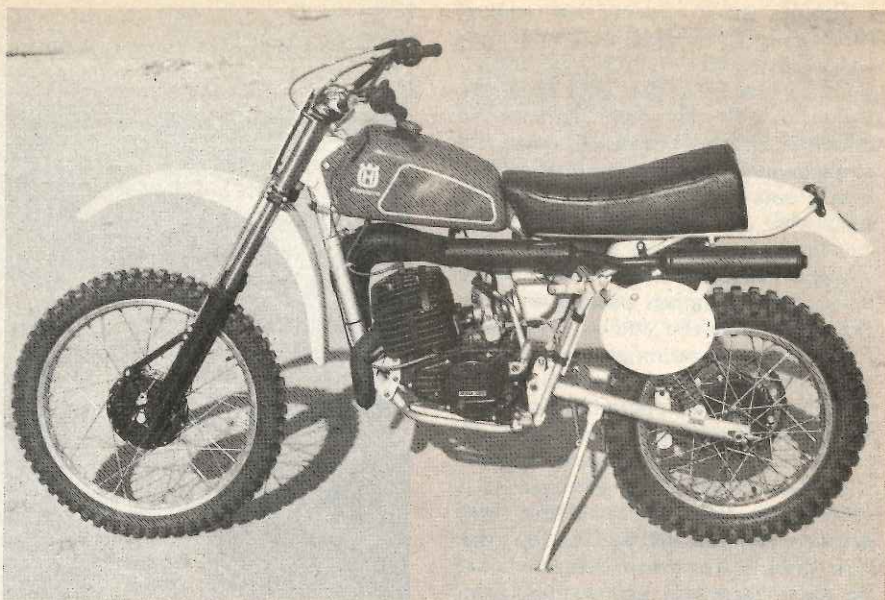
With that, Husky has pretty much got the suspension package they wanted.

The frame is basically the CR motocross type, but Husky had feedback that the steering-head angle was too steep to go fast with safety and comfort in the desert. So they changed the angle about a degree, making it 31.5 degrees now.

The frame has also had a rock guard added underneath to protect the bottom of the engine from nasties.



Gas tank size is three gallons, which is more than adequate. Baja racers will want to go with bigger tanks, since they're going much greater distances between stops. Most of us will be content with the three-gallon job. Gear spacing keeps the engine from being overly thirsty, so you'll get a lot of miles in on that tank full. Husky did experiment with a four-gallon tank, but that size made the bike too hard to maneuver. The three-gallon tank is adequate for the vast majority of riders.



Left side of OR shows newly designed kickstart lever, a welcome change. Pipe lacks heat shield but the only person we heard complain was riding in blue jeans—didn't ever bother us while wearing leathers (even nylon "leathers"). Seat is well shaped and fairly comfortable.



A photo of what makes the OR an all-new motorcycle. New engine cylinder, gearbox that brings lowest gears from the wide-ratio enduro machine, top three from close-ratio motocrosser. Double-wall exhaust pipe is super-quiet. Gas tank holds three gallons, plenty for anything except Baja.

Husky's prime concern was making the bike quiet enough to comply with California's Green Sticker noise regulations. To reach that goal, they machined the gears with very close tolerances to minimize gearbox rattle. They're still straight-cut gears, which are noisier than helical cuts, but the factory elected to stick with the more efficient straight-cut gears.

The exhaust pipe is a neat double-wall design with fiberglass packing between the walls. On the end is a Skyway silencer/spark arrestor, also required for much of California's forest riding. The end result of the engine/pipe effort toward quietness is a very pleasant 86 dB (A). Why can't all race bikes be so quiet?

As we mentioned, the gear spacing is ideal for desert riding. The first three gears are from the WR and the top three from the CR. The result is exactly what the team riders said they wanted. Even Malcolm Smith said that the bike was just about perfect for every kind of riding.

Malcolm even said that he thought the motocross riders should be riding OR models, since the lower gears made the bike so "mellow" coming out of corners, yet the top end was still there from the higher CR gearing.

You have enough low gearing to get you out of rocks, off the side of a hill, out of deep sand, or whatever, without slipping the clutch. And you've still got gearing to go plenty fast.

In fact, although we really appreciated the Curnutts, the powerful engine, the quietness and the usual Husqvarna quality, we liked those gear ratios best. That's what really endeared the motorcycle to us.



One of the things that makes us confident in Husqvarna motorcycles is this decal which comes attached to the rear fender of every bike. Fenders, by the way, are tough polypropylen; almost as good as Preston's.

Back to basics... The swingarm is brand new. It's a big 40mm diameter item that is much stronger than the old one, yet weighs the same. The Curnutts mount about five inches in front of the axle and are laid at a fairly steep angle to the top of the frame.

Ignition is a reliable and strong Motoplat CDI. There is a lighting coil already installed in case the OR owner wants to install lighting. Since Dick Burleson says that the OR is ideal for

Two Day Reliability Trials, we suspect that there will be a majority of ORs with lights installed, not to mention those that find their way to Baja with all sorts of high-powered lights affixed.

We already told you that the exhaust pipe is quiet, but it's so un-noisy that just about all you notice in riding the bike is engine and chain noise. You really think that the chain is jangling a lot, since on most bikes you can't hear it that well over the exhaust system.

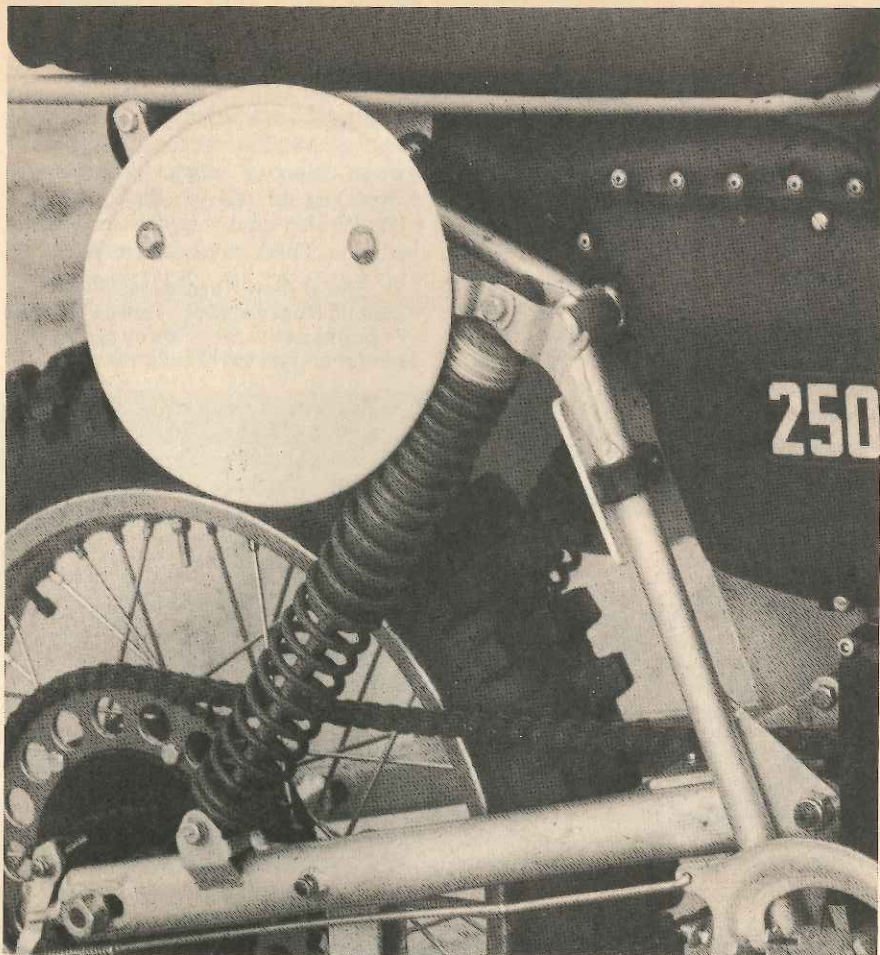
The steering head utilizes new Timken roller bearings. These bearings are the very best that money can buy or produce, and they're adequately sealed in the head so as to be almost completely trouble-free. Don't every worry about those bearings unless something is radically wrong with your motorcycle.

Usual quality Husky components include high-pressure die-cast magnesium crankcase, side covers, reed-valve housing and front and rear brake backing plates. The piston is forged, with a single chrome ring.

The big end bearing is silver-plated, which is unique. There is a tremendous amount of load on the rod bearing, and silver is the best material to stand up to the abuse. Silver is a very expensive material, so you know that Husky wants to eliminate their old problem of burning out rods. Silver is the best material available to transfer heat yet endure the load imposed.

The kickstarter is redesigned to make it virtually impossible to get your foot tangled between it and the footpeg. It folds in nicely out of the way, but folds out to enable you to miss the peg by a good distance. All we can say about the new design is... at last!





Beefier new swingarm hangs beneath 16-inch-long Curnutt shocks, the best in the business for off-road/desert riding. Air filter is still easily accessible oiled-foam unit.

The cylinder is new, with a pressed-in liner. So if you wear the thing out, you can bore it out to a third oversize (three re-bores) and then start all over again with a new cylinder liner.

Carburetion is via 38mm Mikuni, which is another feature we applaud. Compared to other carbs, including the Bing that Husky's always used, the Mikuni is simple and trouble-free. The carb feeds through reed valves to fairly mild cylinder porting, which greatly aids the wide powerband.

Through that powerband, Husky has come up with a great motorcycle. It's fast and powerful, yet all the horsepower is not of the peak variety. It's spread nicely through the whole powerband, so the bike doesn't stand on end as soon as you wick on the throttle. The factory has left all the extreme horsepower on the CR motocrosser. The OR, we repeat, was designed to be a bike that anybody can ride, for a whole day if he wants, without his arms dropping off just from holding on. The whole motorcycle was designed with that goal in mind.

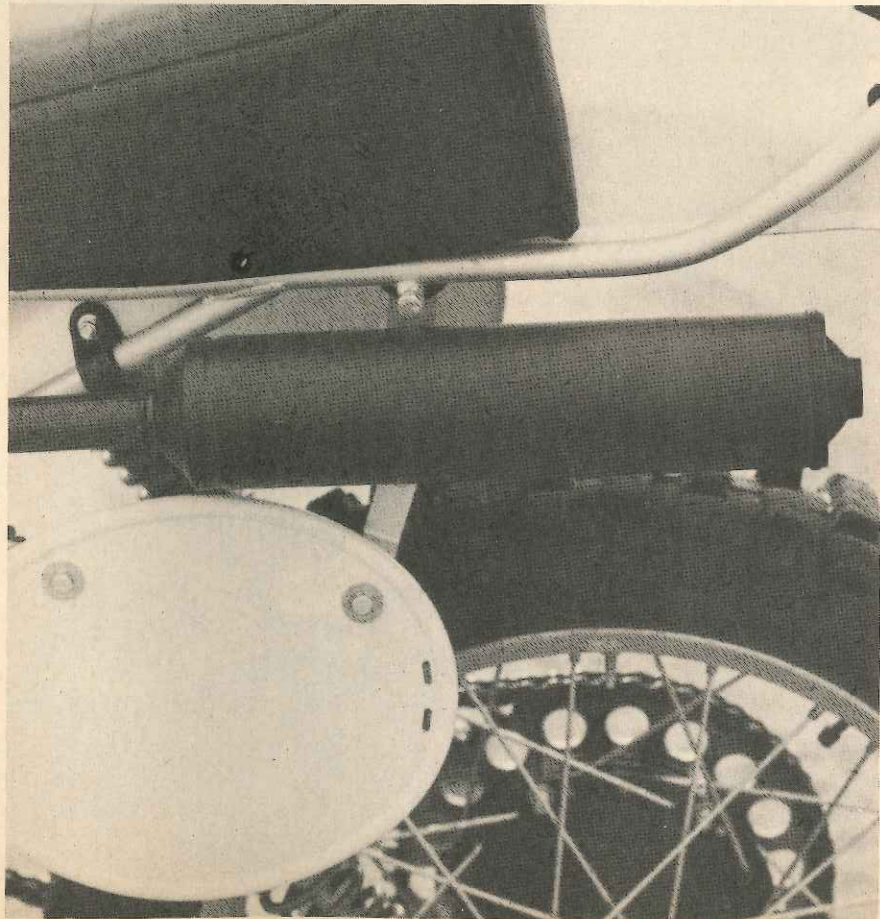
Make no mistake, though, this is a fast and powerful motorcycle. There is more horsepower than on last year's CR.

What Husqvarna has done is build a motorcycle that somebody besides Larry Roeseler or Chuck Sun can ride. You don't have to be an expert and used to gobs and gobs of horsepower to ride the machine. This is, we think an ideal motorcycle for the novice desert/off-road racer. He can buy it and ride it just as fast as good sense or bravery dictates. As the rider progresses in skill and eventually comes to the point where he's ready to compete head-to-head against Roeseler, Johnson, and the rest, he doesn't have to rush out and buy another motorcycle. As we told you, Dick Burleson used an OR in the ISDT, Goldsmith and company came up with the basic concept for the desert, so who are you and I to demand something else?

As you can imagine, Husqvarna doesn't exactly give the motorcycle away. There's a price tag of \$1840 attached to the 250 OR. But for that, we'll tell you point blank that you *DO* get a lot of motorcycle, and there's always the thought that this might be the last motorcycle you ever have to buy. You might not need or want anything more.

As far as availability, don't worry about it. The bike should be in your dealer's showroom by the time you read this, and Husky marketing man Bill Kniegge has assured us that there'll be sufficient quantities. Said Kniegge:

Skyway spark arrestor/silencer on end of pipe helps keep sound level to only 86 dB (A).



HUSKY 250 OR

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

Engine type	2-stroke single
Bore and stroke, mm	69.5 x 64.5
Displacement, cc	245
Horsepower/rpm (claimed)	n.a.
Torque/rpm (claimed)	n.a.
Compression ratio	13.8:1
Air filtration	Oiled foam
Carburetion	38mm Mikuni
Lubrication	Pre-mix
Ignition	Motoplat CDI

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission	6-speed, constant mesh
Clutch type	Wet, multi-plate
Primary drive	Gear
Final drive ratio	13/53

CHASSIS

Chassis type	Chrome-moly, single downtube
Overall length, in.	85
Seat height, in.	36.5
Ground clearance, in.	12
Wheelbase, in.	57.4
Weight as tested, lbs.	234
FR/RR wt. bias, lbs.	55/45
Tires, front	Trelleborg 3.00 x 21
rear	Trelleborg 4.50 x 18

SUSPENSION

Rear	16-inch Curnutt shocks
Travel	9.6 inches
Front	Husqvarna, leading axle
Travel	9.5 inches

NUMERICAL EVALUATION

Max.		Pts.
10	Starting	10
10	Power	10
10	Powerband	10
10	Transmission	
	(5) Ratios	5
	(5) Operation	5
10	Suspension	
	(5) Front	5
	(5) Rear	5
10	Brakes	
	(5) Effectiveness	4
	(5) Waterproofing	4
10	Handling	
	(5) Low-speed maneuverability	5
	(5) High-speed stability	5
10	Comfort	
	(5) Sitting	5
	(5) Standing	5
20	Miscellaneous	
	(5) Quality of craftsmanship	5
	(5) Instrumentation	5
	(5) Noise level	5

100 pts. Overall Rating 98 pts.

"Last year, we ran out of new machines in May. We don't plan to run out in 1978."

In summary, we say that unless all you do is enduros or motocross, you should give fair consideration to a Husky OR. If you are strictly into one of those two categories, you should opt for the CR motocrosser or wait a few months for the latest WR enduro machine (which will come with lights, but won't be sold in California since the lights are "only" enduro legal, not California legal).

As far as our test 250 OR, we'll tell you

that we've ridden it a lot, under a wide variety of conditions. It's a fun motorcycle to ride, and one that's pretty easy to go fast (or slow) on. It's very versatile (which is what we've been trying to tell you all this time) for just about any type of riding or racing.

And you do still get that European, "Old-World" quality craftsmanship and precision. That's worth a lot in itself.

The all-new Husqvarna 250 OR has classic Husky styling. Tank is familiar bright red. A lot of motorcycle here, even for suggested retail price of \$1840.

