

**Tibblin Tells: HOW TO CRASH GRACEFULLY!**

**POPULAR**

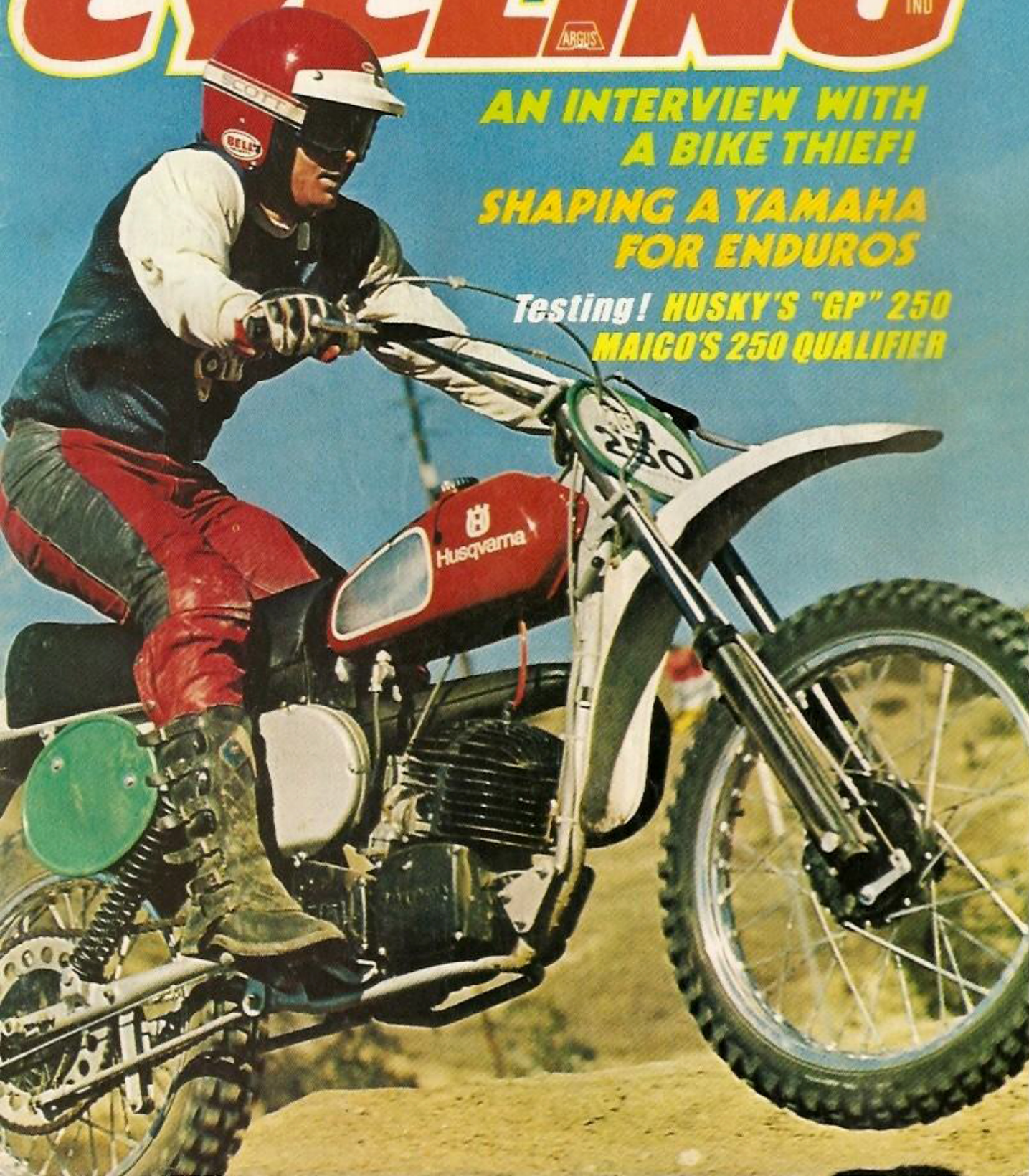
34120 APRIL 1975 \$1.00

# **CYCLING** IND

**AN INTERVIEW WITH  
A BIKE THIEF!**

**SHAPING A YAMAHA  
FOR ENDUROS**

**Testing! HUSKY'S "GP" 250  
MAICO'S 250 QUALIFIER**



# HUSQVARNA 250 GP

A HANDFUL OF CHANGES FOR '75.  
THE BEST PART IS THAT THEY ALL WORK.

All of us that rode it liked it a lot. None of us wanted to change anything, except maybe the kickstarter; we didn't like the way it was positioned. But all of the controls, including the handlebars, fit all of our staffers, no matter how tall or how short they were. Everybody liked the new bike. What bike was it? The new Husqvarna 250 GP Motocrosser.

Husky has really come up with a winner in this machine. It might not have the all-out maximum horsepower of a Montesa VR or the 250 Bultaco Pursang, but it has more than enough horsepower to be super-competitive; and it has a torque band that starts just above idle and goes all the way up. There are some open class bikes that would like to have this 250's torque band. And it's got light weight, good brakes and outstanding handling. When you get right down to it, it has just about everything including the aforementioned kickstarter that's unbelievably impossible to use if your foot is any bigger than a size eight.

When you first climb on the GP you notice little things like the Magura Power Levers and quick throttle. You notice the really slick cable covers Husky uses this year. They're designed in such a way that it's almost impossible for mud to collect

around the end and in the cracks of the levers. You really notice that for the first time you don't hit your leg on the exhaust pipe or the air cleaner box (will wonders never cease?). And you also notice the seat, narrow and long, and uncomfortable because it's so hard. However, once you start riding, the stiffness in the seat doesn't seem to bother you, and because it's narrow it's easy to move around and locate your body weight just where you want it.

Other things you might have noticed



before climbing on the bike include the radial-finned head, which factory tests have shown that the new design allows the engine to run approximately 70 degrees cooler than last year's. Then you might have looked at the shocks, tilted forward at the top to where they are almost 45 degrees to the ground or swinging arm. And then you notice the shocks are Girlings—mounted upside down yet. Boo! Then you find out that they're gas-filled Girlings made to Husqvarna's specifications rather than an adaptation of existing components. Because there was a little problem with springs and rates, Husky make their own 126-lb. units in Sweden. Yeah!

Motorcycle freaks, these shocks work, and keep on working. We rode the bike hard, both on a motocross course and in the desert, and the shocks never went away. The faster you went the better they worked. The rear end of the bike always stayed in a straight line as long as the power was kept on. With the gas off, the rear did tend to hop around a bit over stutter bumps leading into a corner, but not so bad as to give you that

All of the handlebar controls are Magura. Neat covers protect the ends of the cables.



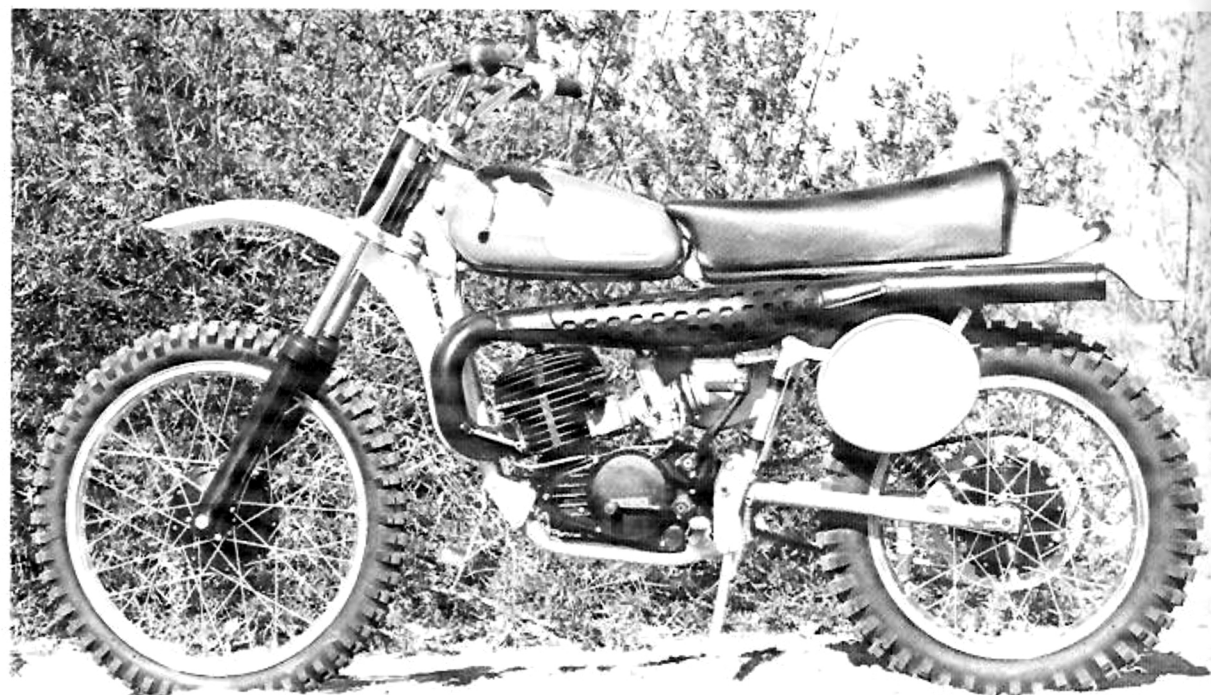
With the new lay-down shocks, the '75 Husky takes on an all-new appearance.

Rims are shoulderless Akront. Forks have 8.6 inches of travel with 10-weight oil. This year the brake cable pulls straight up the fork-leg.





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**Gas tank holds two gallons when topped. Don't fall on it, it's aluminum. Pipe is tucked well out of the way.**

"Ohmygod" feeling. A quick blast on the throttle straightened the bike right out and you could continue on your way.

Good rear suspension doesn't mean much if there isn't equally good forks up front. No problem with the Husky. Although cosmetic changes are few, several technical differences are apparent with the front end. New for '75 is a magnesium backing plate for the brake assembly. This, together with closer tolerances of the brake locating pins, increase the effectiveness of the binders. The fork legs have been slimmed down and reinforced, and the internals have been completely redesigned to allow 8.6 inches of travel using 10 wt. oil.

Competitive weight is another thing a 250 must have, or maybe we should say not have, if it's going to be in the hunt. We placed our test bike on the incredibly accurate *Popular Cycling* scales and were collectively amazed when they topped out at 220 lbs. When riding the bike it felt lighter than that. After spending a few minutes telling each other about how heavy bikes can feel light if they're properly balanced, one of the smarter editors unscrewed the gas cap and found that someone—no one would own up to it—had refilled the tank after we'd ridden the bike. Since the tank holds two gallons, and it was filled all the way to the top, you can figure the bike weighs

207 lbs. dry, light enough for anybody. An all-out race weight of 220 lbs. isn't all that shabby either. An interesting side note on the weight. This year the Husky tank has a seam right down the middle of it. We thought it was kinda cheap until we found out that the tank is aluminum. Nuff said.

Helping to keep the weight down is the extensive use of magnesium. Like last year the engine cases are made from the light stuff, and this year the air box is magnesium also. The breather is all-cast magnesium and weighs 2.1 lbs., complete with a Twin Air filter, oil and rubber mountings.

In the engine department you'll find a thing of beauty. The cylinder is set lower in the cases which changes the port timing and lowers the center of gravity. With the use of so much magnesium in the engine, sleeves for the bearings have to be cast in at the factory. This allows the engine weight to be reduced drastically, and hopefully should provide a long life for the internals.

The all-magnesium clutch uses needle bearings rather than bushings for longer operation, and the clutch adjustment has been made simpler by incorporating spacers into the springs so that all you have to do is tighten the assembly all the way down and you're ready to go. Shock to the clutch assembly has been minimized by using rubber grommets.

For '75 Husky has added another gear to the tranny for a grand total of six. The



**A super-narrow profile is highlighted by an uncomfortable cover seat. Neither the air cleaner cover or the pipe gets in the rider's way.**

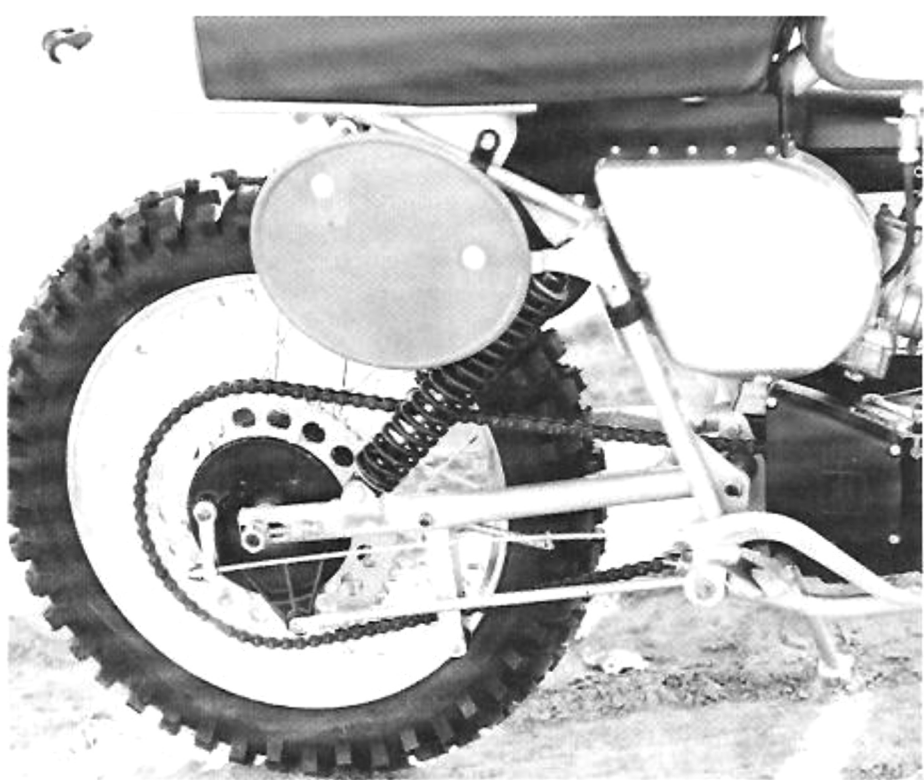
175, 250 and 360 engines share the same gearbox. This year the traditional pins have disappeared from the shifting mechanism and have been replaced with a cam assembly. The diameter of the shafts in the transmission have been enlarged to provide longer service. In the really outstanding owner's manual that comes, or at least is supposed to come with each bike, the Husky people suggest you don't use all six of the gears on any given course. They offer the suggestion that for the really short, tight, twisty courses you use first through fifth. And on the longer courses they recommend

Gas-filled Girlings handle the bumps in the rear. These Girlings work.

second through sixth. We'd have to agree with them. Second through sixth are fairly evenly spaced, and you end up with a very close ratio gearbox. On the other hand when you use low through fifth there is that fairly large space between first and second to give you the needed grunt out of an extremely tight corner.

Like last year, the engine is fed through a 36mm Bing center float carburetor leading into a reed valve arrangement. The reed valve, coupled to a well-jetted engine, is what allows the bike to rev from the bottom to the top without any flat spots along the way. The reed valve itself is the main reason for the engine's ability to drop off the pipe in a corner and still exit from it without loading up. It won't exit spewing dirt from the rear wheel, but at least it will get out fast enough that you shouldn't get run down from the rear.

The all-new Bing carb (model 111) has a new slide with a bigger cutaway and a larger needle jet. The instructions specify

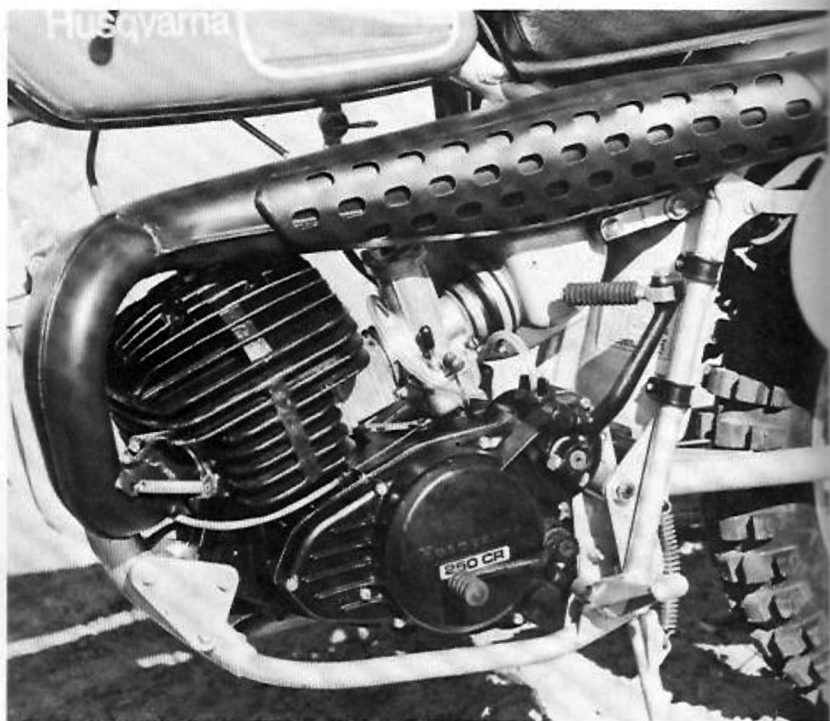


**The radial-headed magnesium-engined mill is fed via a 36mm Bing into a reed valve arrangement.**

not to move the needle from its preset middle adjustment. Lowering the needle would produce too radical of an adjustment to be safe. Also new is the Motoplat ignition found on this year's machine. Although there wasn't much trouble from last year's setup, the new one should be more reliable because it runs much cooler.

When the bike is exited from a corner in the right gear it rapidly gets down the straightaway. You have to shift a lot due to the six-speed, close-ratio gearbox, but then that's becoming more common with 250s. Both in weight and power characteristics they're becoming more like 125s every day. However, don't interpret this to mean that the 250 CR doesn't have torque, because it does—in spades. It's one of the easiest 250s to ride that we've tested in the past few months.

In the frame department things are new also. This year's frame is made of the best chrome moly available in Sweden. The new metal is one grade higher than any tubing used in the past. First the sub-frame is heat-treated, then welded



and then neutralized to prevent any embrittlement. This new process makes the swinging arm so strong that the need for reinforcing has all but disappeared. One warning though, any welding on the frame will damage the structural integrity of the metal. Examples: The rear number plates are rubber-mounted rather than being welded to the frame.

should go in one or two kicks. When the engine is warm one kick will suffice.

We also thought the rear brake was a little too sensitive. Actually, three of our testers thought it was, and two didn't. Maybe it takes some getting used to. However, the brake itself worked fine, it was just that it took such light pressure on the lever that it seemed a bit too easy

to lock up. The front brake, by the way, was super. All it took was two fingers to make it do exactly what you wanted. Really neat!

One thing that bothered us a bit was that the steering head bearings went away after just a few hours of riding. We were about to chalk this up to faulty installation when Husky told us that this isn't unheard of. They are aware of the problem and have already come up with a cure for it. It seems that they got a batch of improperly heat-treated bearings and they split right down the middle. They've got larger bearings to cure this, and happily this newer bearing can be used on any of the older bikes. Mark one up for Husky's R & D department.

Other than these few things, there wasn't much about the bike we could pick at. Husky did their homework and updated last year's bike with just the right things to keep it super-competitive. As a complete package we really liked this machine. Now, if there was only some way Husky could forget they ever gave it to us.



The chain guide is also rubber-mounted.

Now for a few things we didn't like. First and foremost came the seat—it's hard. Lord, it's hard. Riding a 45-minute moto on this pad will definitely redden up the ol' cheeks. In its defense it's narrow and long enough that you can easily position your weight wherever you think necessary.

We also didn't like the kickstarter. It's hard to reach because it's mounted so high on the side case, and if your feet are any larger than 'Twinkletoes' you'll have trouble getting a good swipe on the lever. It's all too easy to get your foot caught between it and the footpeg, and then you'll say things that would make your mother wash your mouth out with soap. Thankfully the starting drill is easy enough. When cold, you open the petcocks, tickle the carburetor until it overflows, open and shut the throttle a couple of times and kick it through. It

| Max. Pts. | NUMERICAL EVALUATION         |         |
|-----------|------------------------------|---------|
| 10        | Power                        | 9       |
| 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                     | 3       |
| 10        | General handling             | 9       |
| 30        | Miscellaneous                |         |
|           | (5) Starting                 | 4       |
|           | (5) Rider comfort            | 4       |
|           | (5) Quality of craftsmanship | 5       |
|           | (5) Riding maneuverability   | 5       |
|           | (5) Tires                    | 5       |
|           | (5) Noise level              | 4       |
| 100 pts.  | Overall rating               | 92 pts. |

## HUSKY 250 GP

Suggested Retail Price: \$1750.00

### ENGINE

|                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Engine type              | 2-S, sgl., rood valve induced |
| Bore and stroke, mm      | 69.5 x 64.5                   |
| Displacement, cc         | 245                           |
| Horsepower/rpm (claimed) | n.a.                          |
| Torque/rpm (claimed)     | n.a.                          |
| Compression ratio        | 12.3:1                        |
| Air filtration           | Twin Air                      |
| Carburetion              | 38mm Bing                     |
| Lubrication              | w/fuel                        |
| Ignition                 | Motopul                       |

### DRIVE TRAIN

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Transmission      | 6-speed         |
| Clutch type       | wet, multi-disc |
| Primary drive     | gear            |
| 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            |
| Weight, lbs. (as tested)    | 206             |
| FR/RR wt. bias, percentages | 45 x 55         |
| Tires, front                | 3.00 x 21       |
| rear                        | 4.00 x 18       |