

HUSKY CR125GP

A New Frame and Top End Keep the 125 In the Running.



We've been getting letters from readers wanting to know what is going on with the new Husky 125. While everyone is getting ready for the 1976 machines, Husky is one of the last to introduce this year's model.

Part of the reason for the delay is the fact that Husky wanted to develop a machine that would be very competitive in the 125 class. Lately their small-bore machine was slipping, or rather, it was staying at the same stage of development while the other guys were getting better. So it was back to the old drawing board. When we were at the new model showing from Husky, we noticed the absence of the 125 machine sitting amidst the 175, 250 and 360 motocrossers. "We're not going to release the bike until it's as fast or faster than the competition," was Husky's reply to our questions.

So the 125 was redesigned, and in keeping with Husky's tradition of quality work, they didn't just change the paint stripe on the gas tank and paint the fenders a different color.

To start with, one of the major changes is the engine. Like last year, it's



A new top end and pipe debuted this year. The kickstarter will pop out sometimes, but a rubber band fastener cures the problem.

still a six speed, so you have a variety of cogs to scoot you around the course. The centercases are now aluminum and the outer cases made from magnesium. Maybe it's a little heavier than their totally mag engines, but it keeps the cost down (always a European problem) and doesn't force you to take out a second mortgage on your kids if you manage to lunch a motor.

The main change is in top end design. The entire cylinder, head, and intake system has been recast. There is a new reed valve system. It's larger, allows more fuel to flow through, and burns the mixture a little cleaner. The design follows along the lines of the bigger motocross machines. Porting has been changed in order to give the machine a better powerband and quicker throttle response.

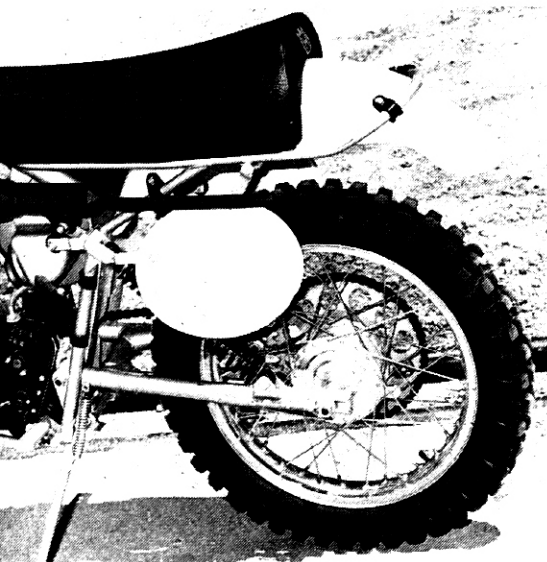
A few previous owners of 125 Huskys were complaining about rod problems. Some bikes were coughing up rods like it was the thing to do. There is a new beefier, stronger rod down there to keep things together. The lower end bearing is also stronger, wider, and ready to take more punishment before it rebels.

With the new porting comes a new piston. The radial head is also a nice idea, and gave the folks at Husky a good excuse to bring out the totally new casting for both the cylinder and head. For you garage tuners, the timing is 1.4mm below top dead center. Playing with the timing might reward you with a little better performance without breaking out the porting tools.

To match the powerband, Husky has designed a new pipe for the CR 125 GP. It is still in the same location as before but the dimensions have changed. Over at the factory in Sweden they experimented with a whole garageful of pipes, finding which ones worked and which ones didn't. Their final version works.



New dampeners and an excellent front brake adorn the forward section of the GP 125. The spokes should be checked often.



The GP frame comes with gas Grlings. Serious racers are putting on the 250 rear wheel. The back brake is usable, but slightly under par with the rest of the machine.

The juice is still supplied with a motoplat system. Husky has used this method for years. Last year's 125 came with a motoplat, one of the trick items that you didn't have to go out and buy after purchasing the machine. Now the motoplat has been slightly improved. The stock CR 125 GP ignition has lead wires for setting up a lighting system. There is a lighting coil built into the ignition so that setting up your bike for cross-country night travel is as simple as splicing two wires together.

There is a Twin-Air filter housed in the magnesium airbox. A word of caution to Husky owners and others who have Twin-Air units: don't wash that filter in gasoline. The gas will eventually eat away the glue that holds the filter together, allowing the dirt and dust to bore your cylinder, free of charge. When it gets dirty, take it out and hand-wash it with regular soap and water. Let it dry and then apply some oil. It will last longer that way and you don't have to worry about a bad seal from carb to cylinder.

Husky has decided to use the same frame as found on the other machines for

the 125 GP. It's the new laid-down shock frame that Brad Lackey and Heikki Mikkola use. The 125 engine is just slipped in, giving you a big-bike performance unit for the little class rider. Gas Grlings have proven to be about the best units for suspending the Husky. Our test bike came with 126-lb. springs. 100 and 130-lb. units are also available so you can do a little tuning on the rear end.



Some of the previous 125 machines were crushing steering head bearings. Husqvarna has now put in larger, stronger bearings so that you should be able to ride a lifetime without having to worry about flat bearings ruining your day.

The front forks are the same as found on the bigger machines. Dampening has been changed a little, but basically you've got the same things as the guys racing in the big-bore classes. For mathematical freaks, the travel works out to around 190mm (7½ inches). The forks hold 220cc of oil in each leg. With the newly designed dampeners you could probably experiment with different grades of fork oil (10 wt., 20 wt., etc.) and adjust the amount of available travel on the machine.

Lele makes the wheels for Husky. Both front and rear brake hubs are different from the 250 and 360 machines. In the rear wheel there are now two bearings on the drive side. Husky found out through testing that there was a possibility of losing a bearing if there was just one taking the punishment. They slipped in two so no one has to worry about burning or crushing a wheel bearing.

Fenders have quickly become the high point of motorcycles. Every year each manufacturer tries to outdo the other guy by coming out with the neatest, most functional fenders on their new models. Husky has jumped into the race with the debut of their new mud stoppers on the 125 GP. They look at first to be the nylon type; you get a little closer and they appear to be almost transparent. Husky has stuck with the plastic (nylon would bring the price up too high) but they have come up with a compound that is light, almost clear and like the others, will bend in

grotesque contortions without breaking.

Husky finally spring-loaded their footpegs. It's been a long time coming and we were never able to figure out why they didn't do it sooner. They also designed a new chain guide so the chain stays where it belongs and the guide doesn't have to be rewelded after each afternoon ride.

Magura levers, strips and throttle still adorn the Husky. They've added a new touch this year. The adjusters are new, making them easier to use. They also stay adjusted with finger-tight pressure, so you can throw away those pliers and channel locks.

Before we rode the new Husky we dropped it on the scales. It looked light, and we wanted to see just how close it was to the rest of the field. With a full tank of gas (no one rides a motorcycle "dry") it came in at 194 lbs. That's in the ballpark when you consider that Japanese machines all hit at around 190 to 205 with a full fuel load.

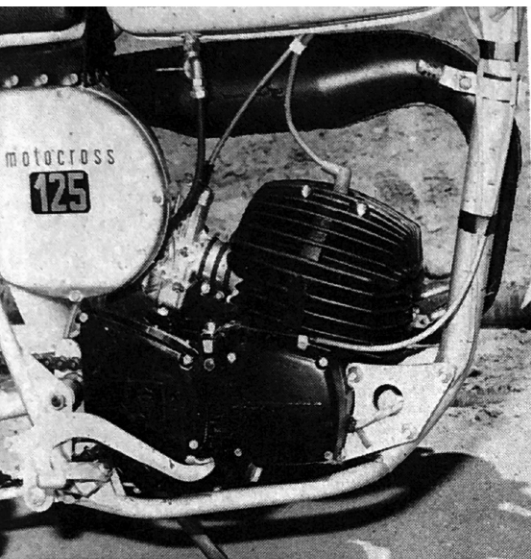
With all these neat improvements, redesigns and new concepts, we were wondering how the overall performance of the bike would be. After a few laps around the MX track, we found out quickly that it's not like last year's machine. The CR 125 compared to the CR 125 GP is a turkey.

As far as power goes, you can feel, hear and visibly see the improvement. The top end, combined with the pipe, has brought the 125 up from an also-ran to the front of the pack. It's fast, and in a drag race it will almost run with the Japanese machines. Notice we said almost. The 125 GP is a tad slower than its competition in a flat-out top speed race. But there's a catch. It might be a little slower, but it's a quicker machine.

We're probably going to make some owners of Japanese machinery unhappy, but the Husky 125 GP has the potential to easily beat them. It handles better than any other 125 we've tested, the Honda included. It also has superior suspension.

At first the Husky seemed just like any other 125 machine. It's light, very responsive, and goes fast. On a track you are probably going to have to take a back seat to the hopped-up Elsinores and YZs when it comes to long uphill winds where overall power is all that counts. If it's a smooth course the Japanese machine will pull you. If it's slightly rough you're going to make them look sick.

The suspension is superior to any monoshock, laid-down whatever offered in the 125 class today. There was one section on a test course we visited that had a large pothole in the middle of a downhill. On a regular 125 the rear wheel would be pitched over about six inches upon impact. With the Husky it hit the hole, you felt a slight knock through the handlebars, and the bike continued on its way, straight and unbothered. A couple of our test riders



The strongest, coldest-running engine is found on the 125.

swore that they didn't hit the hole, while in fact, one of us would be standing next to the course and watch the rear wheel drop in, the suspension react, and the bike continue down the hill.

The 125 GP really shines in the corners. We rode around for almost two hours before we discovered the other world that the Husky likes to ride in. We were bopping around, hitting the usual berms and sliding through the usual corners. Then we handed the bike over to a friend who is a 250 Husky rider in the expert class. He went out and totally destroyed our lap records. Once back in the pits, we pinned him up against the van and asked his secret.

"It's easy," he said, "just smack the berms and don't let off the throttle. This 125 turns 100 percent better than my 250 GP. You've just got to have the hair to try it once. Then you're hooked forever."

Being somewhat embarrassed, we took the bike back and proceeded to try just that. When a berm loomed into view, the machine was just downshifted once, the throttle was re-applied and the bike was laid over. It makes contact with the berm, and before you realize it, it's back out on the course without so much as a whimper.

The total trick to the machine is to hit a berm only once really hard, really fast, and you'll discover that the bike is secure and confident. After your first fast, hard berm, you'll be going crazy, smacking all of the others at least five miles an hour faster than you used to.

Using this method there isn't another 125 in stock trim that can keep up with the Husky on a real motocross course. On something that is closer to TT than MX, you're going to lose. But Husky has promised to release the porting dimensions to us in the near future so we can tell you how to hop the little 125 up. We've already ridden one machine that got a pass of the magic porting wand. The other guys are in trouble.

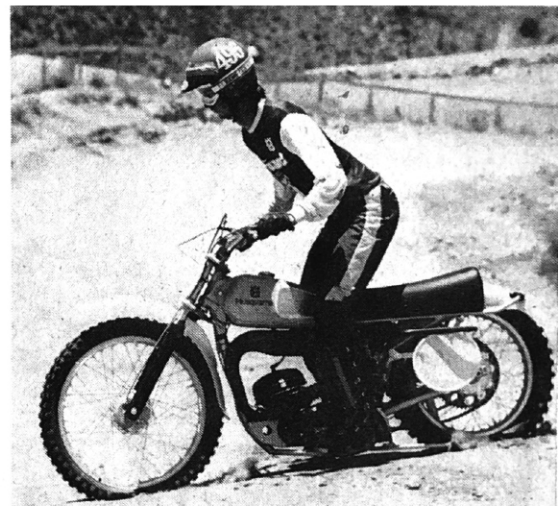


In the air you can make all the corrections you want. Cross-ups were easy and fun.

Seven and a half inches on both ends add up to a lot of suspension before you find the bottom point.

Now for the solemnizing part. The retail price of the CR 125 GP is \$1395. That's expensive, but the machine doesn't cut corners. Also, Husky did a lot of development on the machine and said, "This is the best motor that we offer. It runs the coldest and longest. We've tortured it on the dyno and it refused to give up." For Husky to admit that their 125 is more bulletproof than the 250 or 360 is something to think about. \$1395 is expensive, but on the other hand, considering what you're getting, it can be a steal.

Max. Pts.	NUMERICAL EVALUATION	
10	Power	8
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	5
	(5) Rider comfort	4
	(5) Quality of craftsmanship	5
	(5) Riding maneuverability	5
	(5) Tires	4
	(5) Noise level	3
100 pts.	Overall Rating	90 pts.



HUSKY CR 125 GP

Suggested Retail Price: \$1395

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