

HUSQVARNA 250WR

An Engine With A Broad Powerband,
And Suspension With A Narrow
Performance Range, Make For An
Incomplete But Promising Racer.

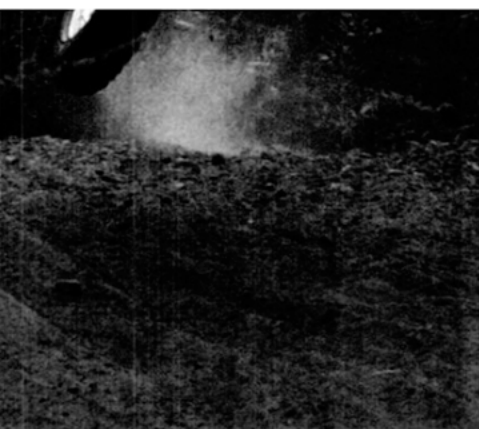


■ HUSQVARNA HAS ALWAYS had a very good reputation. The name has been synonymous with power, handling and reliability. There are still many old red-tankers running around the desert and woods areas in this country, plugging along contentedly. For quite some time, model changes amounted to a few minor, almost insignificant modifications. But recently, in order to keep up with the demands being made by consumers' almighty dollars, Husky, along with just about everyone else, has gotten involved in massive leaps in product development and marketing. It is possible to buy this year what the factory racers rode last year. Sometimes such radically innovative strides will find a manufacturer leaving behind some of the painstaking Old World craftsmanship upon which his marque based a solid reputation. Fortunately, this has not been the case with Husqvarna.

We found the 250WR, Husky's latest offering, to possess all of the excellent features and traits of the CR series after which it is modeled. Chrome-moly frame, magnesium engine cases, reed-valve induction, high-speed stability and excellent braking number among its attributes. We also encountered a few items we didn't like this time around, simply because the WR demands to be ridden over different types of terrain than do the CR motocrossers.

When we first received our machine, jetting was far too rich. Since the bike was new, and since it wasn't fouling spark plugs even though it was rich (a testament to the firing power of the conventional Femsa ignition), we decided to leave it alone. Then we went so far as to enter it in an enduro in a very >

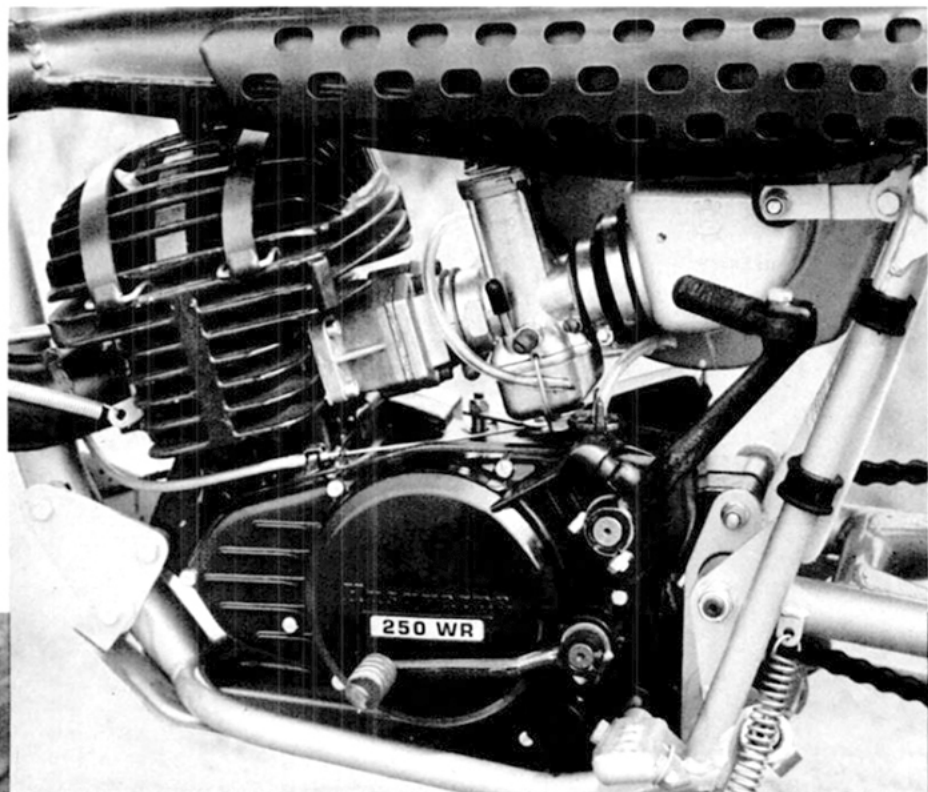
**Cycle
World
Enduro
Test**

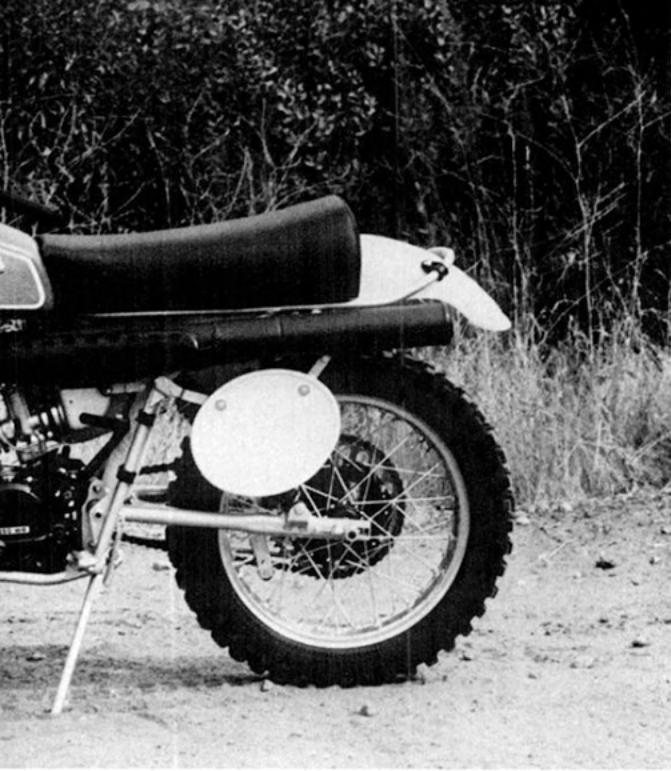


Photography: Fernando Belair, Paul Webb



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rocky portion of the Southern California desert.

To be frank, the engine was gutless. It carbureted well at low- and mid-rpm speeds, but there was nothing at the top end. The CR250 that shares the exact same motor parts with the WR has a tremendous kick in the upper rpm range. The WR had zero. Not even a little oomph. We hoped that after the engine broke in, rejetting would cure the problem, but we couldn't worry about that when there was an event to be ridden.

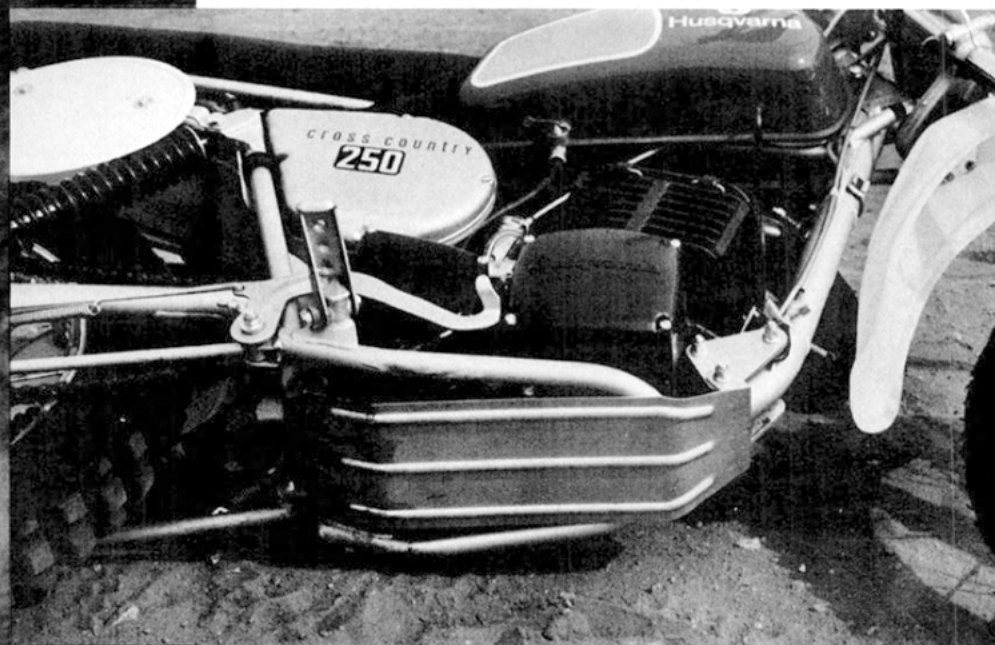
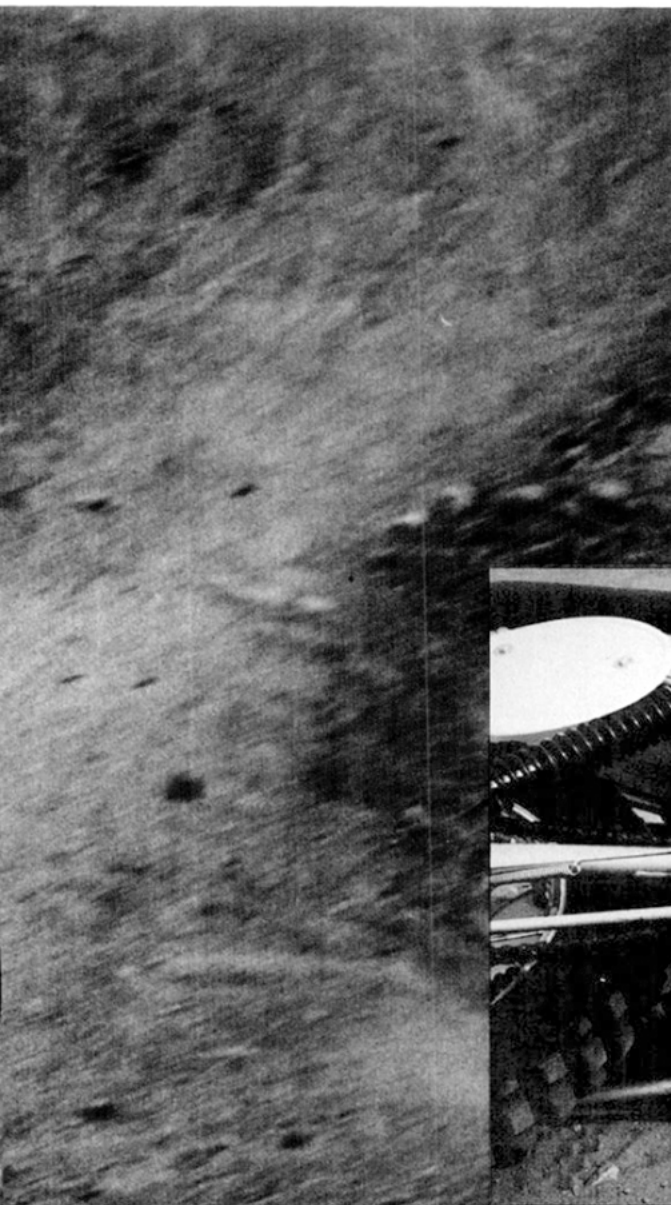
The first chance the Husky got to stretch its legs, it showed us the handling of which World Championship caliber machines are made. At speed the performance of neither chassis nor suspension units could be faulted. The gas/oil Gurlings eat up anything you throw under the rear wheel, while the forks absorb abuse without a whimper. Slim styling and an outstanding seating position make boogieing across the wide open spaces a sit-down affair. Everything falls into place as though it were custom designed for each and every rider.

But you can't go WFO forever. Sooner or later you have to slow down. That's when you discover the first setback. When it comes to picking your way through rocks, the Husky bounces around like an inebriated ping-pong ball. The suspension just refuses to work at anything below 10 mph. It jars you nearly senseless. The forks are much worse than the shocks. They make steering the machine nearly impossible because the front wheel rarely makes contact with the ground for more than a split second. We hoped newness of the machine could be blamed, but to date things haven't loosened up.

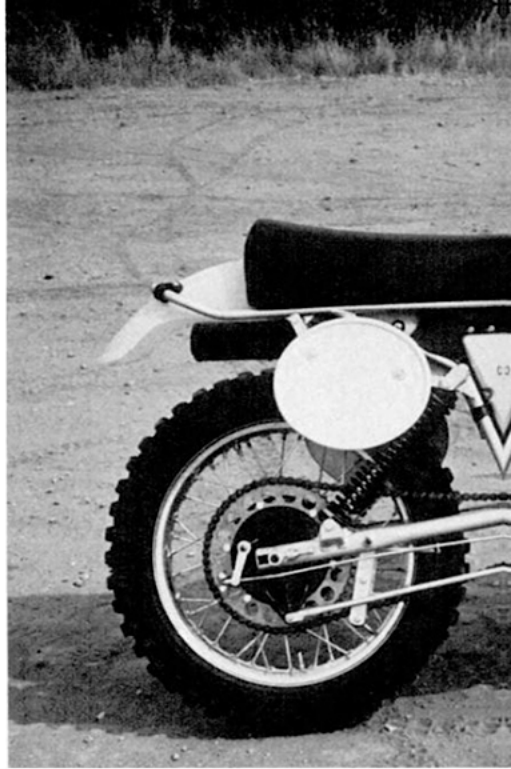
Even when there were no rocks, low-speed steering was very sluggish. The WR felt as though the steering head bearing tightened up as the bars were turned. Inspection showed this not to be the case. Rather, the Husky's geometry is designed more for high-speed stability than for tight maneuvers.

The remedy for the steering problem is one that riders will have to work on until the characteristics suit their particular riding styles, but we do recommend a set of progressive shock springs. These should alleviate the suspension's poor low-speed manners, yet preserve fine high-speed performance.

Speaking of high-speed, the Husky is one of the fastest, best-handling downhillers we've encountered in quite a while. There are several contributing factors, number one being the above-mentioned geometric stability. Second is a fine set of brakes. If you know that the binders will stop you in case you get in over your head, you are more confident and able to >



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hang it out farther. Finally, there is a relatively low seating position (considering that the WR possesses more than seven inches of rear axle travel). When descending, you can place your weight lower and farther back than on most machines. Control is more easily retained.

The VDO speedometer, which is an option on the WR, was very accurate. VDOs always are. Since the WR is a cross-country machine suitable for enduros, rather than the other way around, Husqvarna has seen fit not to include lights as part of the retail package. But Preston Petty items fit on just as simply and cleanly as if they were production items. Even the wiring for the lights fits PP specs.

For enduro use, riders will find the Husky pleasingly quiet. There are noise-reducing panels in the intake box, as well as a double-walled, very effective exhaust pipe. A spark arrestor comes standard. It is this more restrictive exhaust that flattens out the radical CR-type power curve to a more usable level. Still, once we got the jetting right, there was a substantial snap when the engine came on the pipe, particularly in the lower three gears.

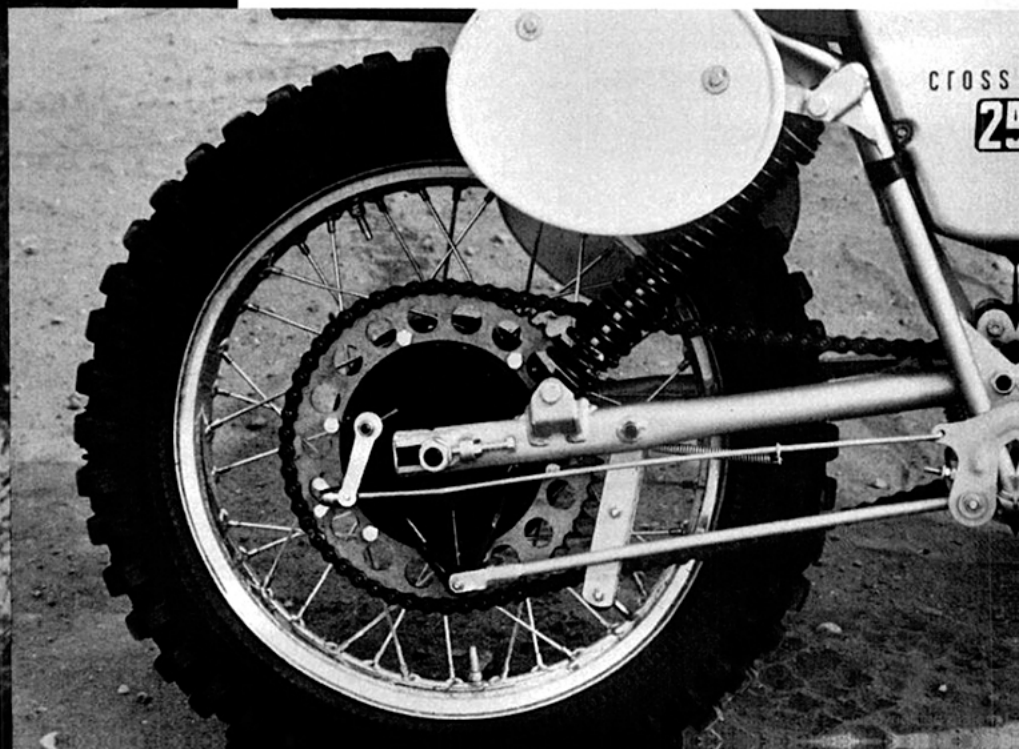
Both performance of, and ratio selection in, the WR's six-speed transmission are excellent. Shift lever throw is longer than we might have liked, but no shifts were missed. There's a gear for every need, from trials-style plonking to Rolf Tibblin-type WFOing.

Everyone who has ever ridden one knows that a Husky has the most awkward kickstarter in captivity. It is short and placed high up on the engine. Its effective arc is about half of a normal kick-through because the left footpeg gets in the way. The only saving factor is that the motor starts if given even half a chance. We ran our test bike on Bel-Ray MC-1 oil at 50:1 and had no problems.

For long-distance riding, a 3.0-gal. tank is supplied standard. Surprisingly, the tank neither looks nor feels bulbous. Many times such a large tank detracts from the appearance of a machine, but not so on the Husky.

Pre-mix passes through a 36mm Bing carburetor, past the twin-pyramid reed-valves and into the engine. Ignition is taken care of by that aforementioned faultless Femsa system. Power delivery is via straight-cut primary gears.

Traditionally, Husqvarna motorcycles come fitted with Trelleborg tires. While Trelleborgs are excellent, we were glad to see Husky use Barum ISDT tires on the WR. The Barums are more suited to enduro and cross-country riding than most >





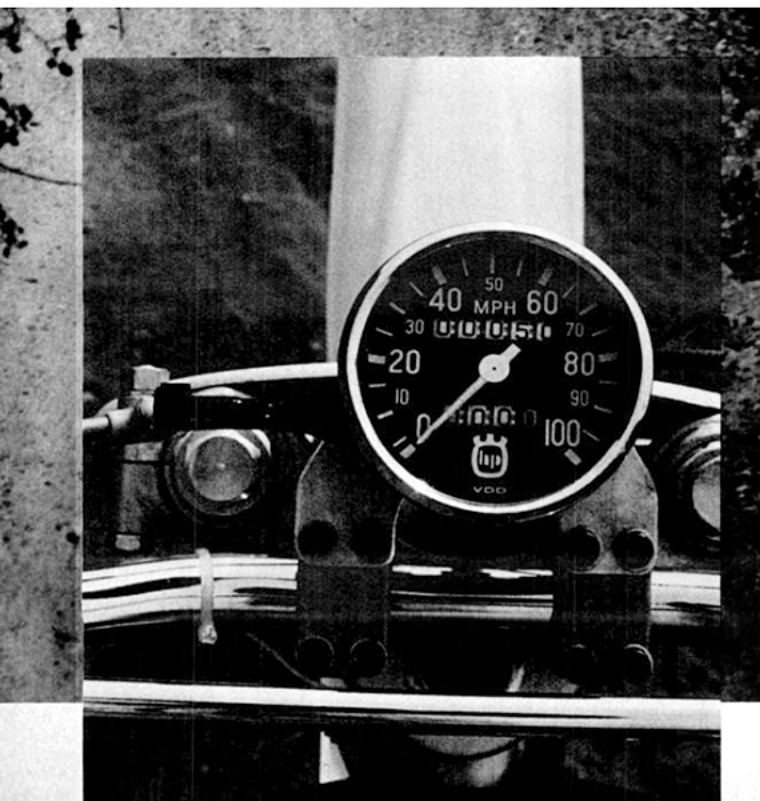
other tires. The rear sports a 4.75-18 skin with a rim-saving ridge that makes it possible for the machine to be ridden even with a flat tire. Up front, the 3.00-21 Barum has a very wide profile, which helps keep the front end from knifing into soft dirt or sand.

Husky's double-walled exhaust pipe does an admirable job of keeping noise down, but is poorly routed. We're not just talking about the fabled "Husky bulge" either. *That* we've learned to live with. But when you have to paddle along to help the machine through a particularly difficult section, your leg makes contact with the pipe constantly. If you have to paddle much, you'll have a nasty looking burn on the inside of your thigh. And, until you get the suspension sorted out, you'll *have to* sit down and paddle through the slow, rough stuff.

The closer you look, the better you see that the WR is not just a motocrosser with a speedo. To keep mechanical engine noise from resonating out through the cylinder fins, rubber blocks have been placed between the fins. In addition, rubber straps cover the leading and trailing edges of the radially finned head. Footpegs are spring-loaded, which we applaud. A quick-change Magura throttle is used. The Magura levers have grit covers that are a nice touch, but a pain to snap together after adjusting one of the cables. The standard grips are too hard.

Completing the package are a minimum-protection skid plate and small toolkit with a plug wrench, flywheel puller, two spare countershaft sprockets, and one of the most complete owners manuals ever. It even has suggested exercise programs for getting your body into shape for racing.

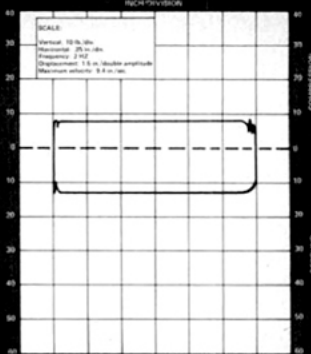
The Husky WR250 stacks up like this: With some work, the front suspension can be ironed out for tackling rocks at low speeds. The rear end doesn't need as much work, but could use a little. At speed, both sets of suspensions are flawless. Neutral is hard to find when the engine is hot. The clutch takes quite a bit of abuse before it starts dragging. And the exhaust pipe burns your left leg every time you put your foot down. Apart from these complaints and a few nit-picking ones about the grips, et al., the machine is ready to do business. Get the jetting right and wick it on.



Warranty	None
Piston, w/rings	\$39.95
(1) Set Rings	N.A.
Rear Shocks (each)	29.17
Wheel Rims (bare each)	48.83
Drive Chain (standard)	29.17
Front Fender	11.95
Rear Fender	11.95
Clutch & Brake Levers (each)	5.95
Clutch Cable	4.80
Throttle Cable	4.38
Brake Cables	4.86
Ignition Parts	
Coil	14.00
Points	4.38
Magneto Assembly	79.00
Sealed Unit Type	N.A.
Air Filter Element	5.26
Rear Tire (standard)	45.37
Headlight Bulb or Sealed Beam	N.A.
Taillight Lens	N.A.
Battery	N.A.

SUSPENSION DYNO TEST

FRONT FORKS

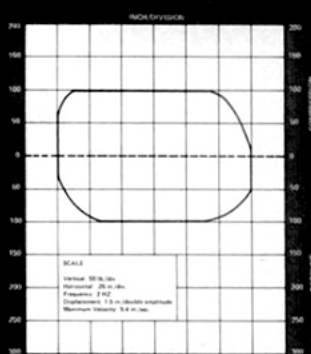


Description: Husqvarna fork with HD 315 oil
 Fork travel, in.: 7.5
 Engagement, in.: 4.0
 Spring rate, lb./in.: 15/22 progressive
 Compression damping force, lb.: 8
 Rebound damping force, lb.: 13
 Static seal friction, lb.: 6

REMARKS: Compression damping is fine. Rebound damping, however, is not sufficient for either motocross or woods riding, although it works fine in the desert as is. For either motocross or enduros, increasing rebound damping to 20 lb. is the answer. As is, the forks overreact (top) and make the Husky more difficult to steer in tight sections.

In order to increase the rebound damping, a more complex damper rod is required. Here's why. The Husky rod is a simple tapered unit made (on a profile lathe) out of a solid piece of aluminum. Holes in the bottom control compression damping. Because the system does not use a check valve, it is impossible to deviate too far from a 50-percent compression damping/50-percent rebound damping ratio. And, in this respect, the WR is already at the practical limit.

REAR SHOCKS



Description: Girling gas/oil shock
 Shock travel, in.: 4.0
 Wheel travel, in.: 7.0
 Spring rate, lb./in.: 125
 Compression damping force, lb.: 100
 Rebound damping force, lb.: 100

REMARKS: As indicated by its front fork and proven by its rear shock, Husky believes in a 50/50 compression/rebound damping ratio. This effectively prevents bottoming but, at enduro speed, causes an inordinately rough ride and resulting poor control. Reducing the compression damping by 50 percent to 50 lb. would bring it in line with current theory. Rebound is off an equal amount, but instead of having too much, there isn't enough. For enduros, or motocross for that matter, rebound damping should be bumped up to something in the neighborhood of 140 lb.

As delivered, the Husky rear works well at speed. In any other situation it is less than desirable. The modifications suggested above would add the versatility necessary for the top enduro mount Husky came so close to building.

Tests performed at Number One Products

HUSQVARNA 250WR

List price \$1795 (w/o speedo)
 Suspension, front telescopic fork
 Suspension, rear swinging arm
 Tire, front 3.00-21
 Tire, rear 4.75-18
 Engine, type two-stroke, reed-valve, Single
 Bore x stroke, in., mm . 2.74 x 2.54; 69.5 x 64.5
 Piston displacement, cu. in., cc 15.0; 245
 Compression ratio 12.3:1
 Claimed bhp @ rpm N.A.
 Claimed torque @ rpm lb.-ft. N.A.
 Piston speed @ rpm ft./min. 3386 @ 8000
 Carburetion 33 mm Bing
 Ignition Femsma magneto/coil
 Oil system in fuel
 Oil capacity, pt. 3.4
 Fuel capacity, U.S. gal. 3.0
 Recommended fuel premium
 Starting system kick, folding crank
 Air filtration oil-wetted foam

Clutch wet, multi-disc
 Primary drive straight-cut gears
 Final drive single-row chain
 Gear ratios, overall:1
 6th 7.81
 5th 9.77
 4th 12.14
 3rd 15.12
 2nd 19.84
 1st 27.41

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in. 55.9
 Seat height, in. 33.0
 Seat width, in. 8.5
 Handlebar width, in. 35.4
 Footpeg height, in. 11.0
 Ground clearance, in. 10.0
 Front fork rake angle, degrees 32
 Trail, in. N.A.
 Curb weight (w/half-tank fuel), lb. 226.0
 Weight bias, front/rear, percent 46.4/53.6