

# Husqvarna 360CR

An Expert Motorcycle That Even the Junior Can Ride



Just about everybody in the motorcycle business makes a full-blown, super-horsepower open-class bike. There are a lot of people out in riderland who are primarily interested in finding out how much hair they've got and allow handling, suspension and braking power to take a back seat. If it goes really fast, it's a winner. A lot of guys buy an open-sized motorcycle just for the sheer terror of acceleration.

The new Husqvarna 360 CR is one of those bikes that will give you all the ac-

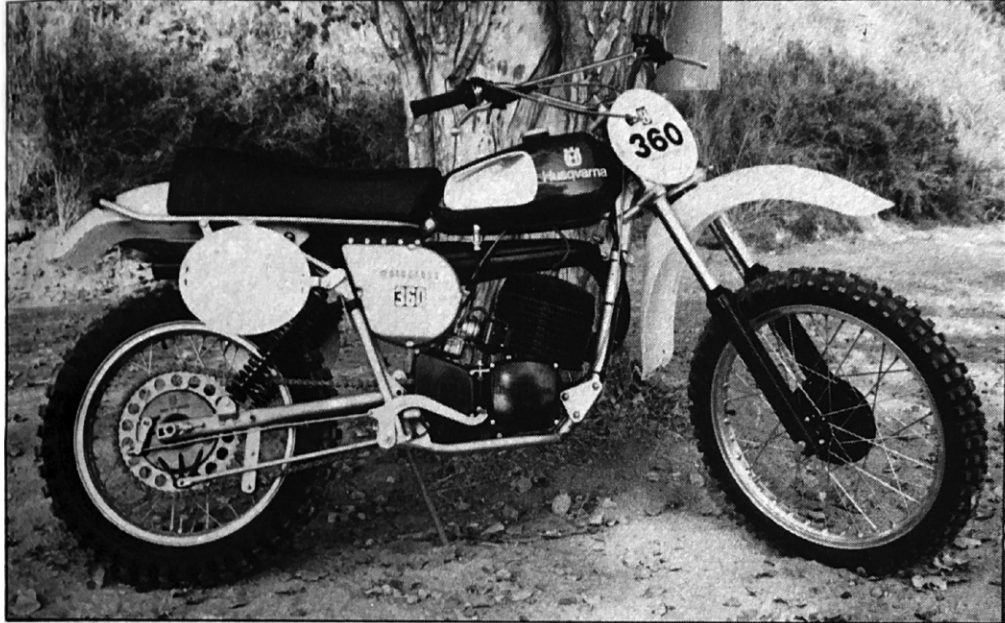
celerating on a track.

The 1976 360 CR has a new gas tank color. You can see it from *hundreds* of feet away. It's a mixture between pink, purple, red and a few other flavors, resulting in one of the strangest shades of whatever-it-is that we've ever seen. The gas tank is small, looking as though it belongs on a Speedway bike instead of a motocrosser, and it measured out at only about 10 inches wide. It holds just a hair over two gallons of your favorite brew and will get the thirsty engine through a

45-minute moto with enough fuel left over to carry you to the victory stand.

While just sitting on the bike, you'll also realize that the controls, seat and pegs appear to be in the right place for all sizes of riders. For those from as small as five feet five inches up to six-footers, the bar/seat/peg relationship is an almost custom fit. Everything is just the right height, length, depth and width. One small thing we changed was the position of the bars, moving them back a few degrees. We found that with the bars back, you have less tendency to keep your weight off the front end, a big mistake when it comes to the 360's abundant Swedish ponies.

We're not going to pat ourselves on the back for this brilliant discovery. We were just thumbing through some old issues of various publications the other day and noticed that Dick Burselson and



**The new Husky 360 CR is simple, light and very effective on a motocross course.**

celeration that you could possibly want. It's one of the fastest, lightest (212 lbs.), best-handling machines around today, and quite easily can give you a thrill from turning the gas to the stops repeatedly. If you're a Point A to Point B racer, you're going to have some very sore neck and back muscles from the 360 CR.

Unlike the Yamaha and Kawasaki open class monsters, the Husky (along with the Suzuki RM 370) has a few added attractions, like handling, suspension, brakes, security, and more. Brute horsepower and breathtaking acceleration aren't the only important values of an open class bike.

When you first sit on the Husky, it gives you the impression of speed, true, but that speed is intertwined with sophistication. It's very slim, and from a saddle point of view, the engine doesn't exist. You can't see any protruding components down between your legs, simply because there aren't any.

When the bike was designed, Husky was striving for a slim, efficient-looking motorcycle that just happens to be able to combine function and form. You can't enter it in a custom motorcycle show, but it sure looks pretty out on the race track. One of our test riders likened it to a thoroughbred race horse. Sleek, but



**The factory in Sweden has always stressed the fact that a slim bike is easier to move around on a track. Husky has about the narrowest machines available today.**



**New steering head bearings live in there, and are designed to last a lot longer than previous units.**

Malcolm Smith like to run their bars low. Burselson seems to have his almost sitting on the gas tank. Check it out yourself.

Before we go into riding impressions, let's get the new parts and innovations out of the way. Our staffers, along with every other motorcycle magazine's, have bitched, moaned and screamed about the kickstarter. Husky changed it, and although it's far from being "just right," it's a lot better than last year's idea. They altered the angle degree in the lever arm so now you're not kicking the starter right into the right footpeg all the time. We took a survey and found that you no longer lessen the life expectancy of the peg, start lever, rider's leg and boots with each kick. Even when it kicks back, you don't end up walking funny for a few weeks.

Another usual beef is the fork seals. At a recent Husky technical meeting, one of

the engineers from Sweden said, "We're very aware that you magazine people are not happy with the fork seals in the previous models. You said that they leak a lot. We heard you, and did a lot of work on that problem. We think that you'll find, on the 1976 Husqvarna models, that they leak a lot less." So far our test bike hasn't oozed a drop of fluid from the forks. Possibly the addition of another inch of travel up front spurred the factory into improving the seals at the same time. As a last resort, there's still the favorite old standby—Honda seals.

Steering head bearings were also a sore spot with Husky owners. When the bike is new you can usually expect a few hours of hard riding before the bearings flatten out, seize, disintegrate and wreak havoc with your steering head. Now they're bigger, in a better cage, and last a long time. We had to tighten down the head once during testing, but never had to reach up on the garage shelf where we keep a box of spare bearings for our Husky test bikes.

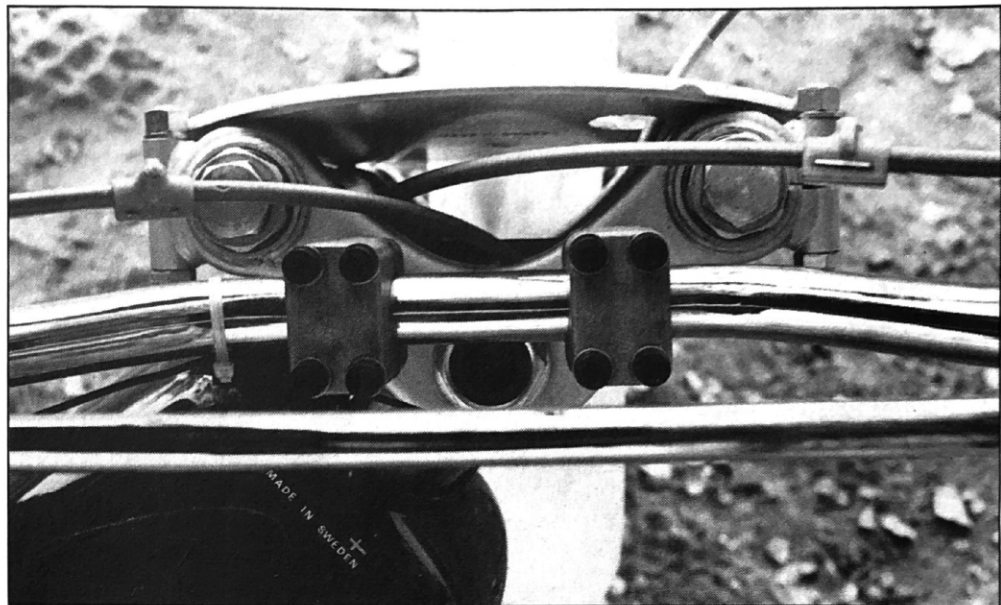
Other favorable goodies include a new lower end bearing, new exhaust system, wider fenders, more beefing in the reed inlet housing, chrome-plated steel piston ring, and self-cleaning footpegs (which didn't come on our bike, but should on yours).

Getting back to riding the motorcycle, we had a slight problem with the engine at first. It wouldn't run half as well as your average in-need-of-a-bore-job 250. Bottom end, midrange, and top rpm were all terrible. The bike loaded, never cleaned out, and generally made everyone miserable.

Fortunately we had freelance contributor Jim Gianatsis with us, who just happened to have a 360 from last year, "oohing" and "aahing" over the new bike. After he watched us rack our brains rejetting, playing with the slide needle, needle jet, pilot jet and plugs, Jim calmly walked over, returned the bike to stock jetting, turned the idle up higher, and the bike ran perfectly. If your 360 runs sick, try turning up the idle before anything else. Sounds stupid but it worked. Rumors of Jim's ability to walk on water are unfounded, so we suspect that simply turning up the idle was the cure. Husky owners are very secretive about tuning tips.

With the machine running cleanly, we no longer had any excuses for slow (or even normally fast) lap times. The 360 CR is the type of motorcycle that just never seems happy unless it's going so fast it's usually above the rider's ability. The bike likes to take command of a situation, giving you the "Don't worry—I can handle it" type of message while you just sit in the saddle and cruise.

For instance, cornering is very secure. You've got your choice of two fun ways to turn the Husky. Take the extreme



An example of thoroughness can be seen in the handlebar clamps. Eight Allen head screws on two separate brackets keep the bars secure.

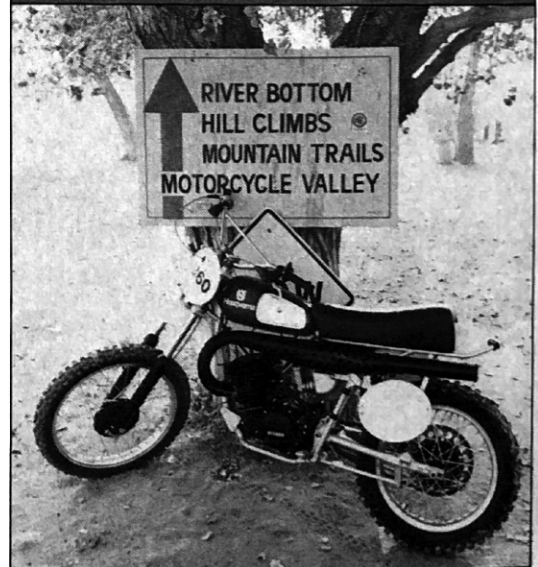
Acceleration is crisp and strong. Here one of our test riders was caught with his guard down while the bike got good traction and started to wheelie at 50-plus mph.



outside, throw it down till the bars hit the dirt, dial it in on, wheelie out, and the Husky is pleased as punch. If you go in, smack the berm hard, gas it, and wheelie out again, the bike still smiles going down the straightaway. Incidentally, the wheelie part isn't really optional. The 360 does them naturally, without rider assistance. It's a very tall machine, thus when you first ride, you feel as though it won't turn at all. We moved the forks up so they stuck out the top triple clamp about an inch and that helped the steering, but it wasn't until we threw caution to the wind, trusted the motorcycle and really started flicking it around that its true abilities came about. No one could out-corner the Husky, no matter how radical you got. Every time you tried to outsmart the bike by purposely going into a corner all wrong, the 360 seemed to sense what was going on and would bring you out in perfect form. It got a little boring at times, knowing that no matter how many mistakes you made, the Husky never fell down because it was the bike's fault.

Same thing goes for bumps and jumps. With the bars moved back it almost forced the rider to take the jumps low and fast, a proven method for circulating the track quickly. In the rough sections, the bike tracked straight, never wavering from its intended line. With the hard acceleration, the front wheel was usually just skipping along, barely transmitting any feelings to the rider.

After our first few hours of riding, we



The new upswept pipe features a built-in silencer that no longer blows out after a few hours. It's quieter this year too.

changed the suspension. We thought that the original stiffness would soon lessen, but as the first day wore on, so did our arms, legs and shoulders. The bike in stock trim was just too stiff for the average rider.

Our first alteration was to put S&W springs in the front forks and go down to a 15 wt. oil. A great improvement, for

the bike felt as though it came with 30 wt. from the factory. Now the forks were really getting their 7.5 inches of travel, being very plush, and still not leaking.

In the rear we took off the stock 125-lb. springs and exchanged them for the 110 units. Nice, measurably better, but it didn't seem as perfect as the front was. We then put on a set of Moto-X Fox Shox that were half an inch longer than the stock shocks, and had the split rate springs. Now the suspension was just right, with the front and rear working in unison.

For most people, the stock Husky shocks in the rear with the 110-lb. springs will be just fine. For those of you who can afford it, the Moto-X Fox units are even *better* than the stock gas Girlings. With the additional length, we

**Reinforcement in the reed block housing is new. You should tie-strap your coil wire away from the pipe before riding the bike.**

only other bike that comes close is the 450 Maico, and there aren't too many people (Adolf Weil included) who can handle that beast. The Husky comes on smooth and strong, with a powerband that is easy to work with, unlike the RM 370 which has a hint of explosive power. We never got into any real trouble with the abundance of ponies, although there were a few instances when traction was perfect that it stood straight up and rocketshipped its way down the track a little quicker than we were ready for.

The reed block system really seems to help out the bottom end power. While experimenting in the starting area, we found that you could easily start from a dead stop in third gear with a little clutch slipping. Once the engine was up over 2000 rpm, you could let go of the clutch, sit back, and watch as the Husky left the others behind.

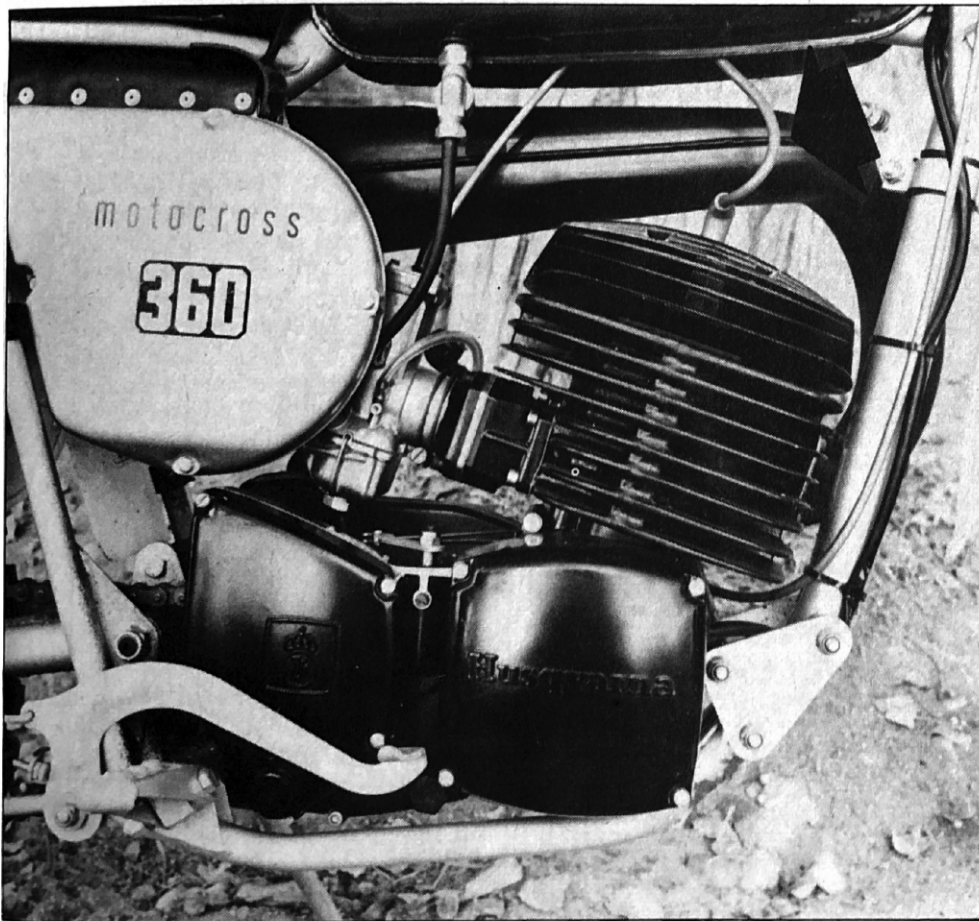
Even in a race between the 360 CR and the RM 370 (which comes on faster and revs quicker), the Husky got the nod

every time going into the first corner. It could be started in third, you didn't have to shift more than once, the power came on sooner, and the bike was easier to work with.

As far as handling goes, there are no complaints from us. It is able to take care of everything, except for trials and road racing. Whatever you've read about good handling is probably true about the Husky. If you've ever seen a road test on a Husky where they said it didn't handle, you can figure that they were too afraid to let the bike have some rein and really throw it around. The Husky works great in the handling department, and once you start to trust the bike more than your instincts tell you to, you'll find yourself closer to the front of the pack than you imagined.

So the bike sounds great, and we sound like a Husky commercial. But wait, we haven't gotten to the bad points yet.

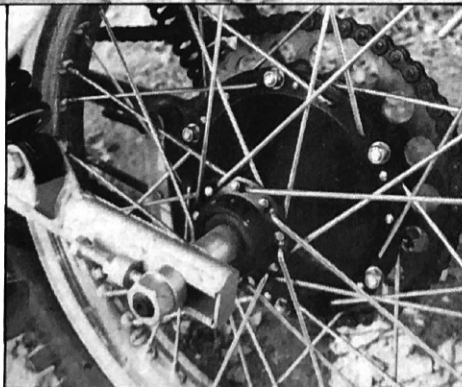
First on the list is the air filter. Take it



were able to slightly alter our steering angles, and the bike turned better.

With the suspension working better, we picked up more speed and shaved even more time off of our laps. The six-speed gearbox on the 360 seems to be just right, offering you a cog for every occasion. We never had any problem missing gears, although finding neutral when the bike was running proved to be almost impossible.

Power-wise, the Husky appears to be about the fastest thing available. The



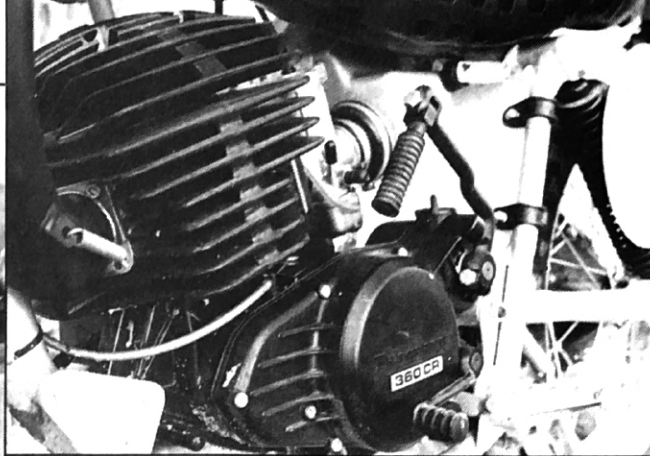
**Before we moved the bars down, our test riders had problems keeping the front end down when accelerating hard.**

out and throw it away. It's a Twin-Air unit, reported to be one of the best available. But it's gotten too thin lately and allows a lot of dirt into the engine. Get a thicker Twin-Air (there are still some around) or go deluxe and install a Phase 2 unit. Install a fuel filter too. You don't want to fix the air filter only to let dirt in via the float bowl.

The pipe still got in our way once in a while, although every year it's getting tucked farther and farther into the motorcycle. The heat shield is a nice idea, but it is about 50 degrees too hot. You can still get toasted thighs if you like to hug your bike while riding.

The vibration of the 360 is a little more than we would like. Our last 360 test

**The axle setup is simple, works well and is adjustable from both ends. Heavier gauge spokes would be a good idea for serious racers on rough courses.**



The new kickstarter design eliminates a lot of the hassles over starting the bike. Duct tape on the springs will reduce the strange noises you hear when you let off the gas.

The Husky is a willing slider. With a little modification it could be a serious threat to the TT and Short Track world.

With the bars relocated, the rider had more control over the motorcycle, and was able to do Brad Lackey impressions.

machine was worse than this one, so possibly Husky is doing something about it. We talked to Kent Howerton and he said his stock 360 didn't vibrate at all. Maybe ours is a freak or maybe Kent got an exceptionally smooth one.

Most of the vibration is through the ends of the bars, and although it's not enough to numb you, it still is annoying at times. Most of it can be found transmitting when the bike is up by the top of the powerband, just a little before you shift to the next gear. Mounting the bars differently, or checking bolts (a must on

Continued on page 99



## HUSKY 360 CR

Suggested Retail Price: n.a.

### ENGINE

Engine type . . . . . 2-stroke, reed valve  
Bore and stroke, mm . . . . . 82 x 67  
Displacement, cc . . . . . 354  
Horsepower/rpm (claimed) . . . . . n.a.  
Torque/rpm (claimed) . . . . . n.a.  
Compression ratio . . . . . 11.5:1  
Air filtration . . . . . Twin-air  
Carburetion . . . . . 38mm Bing  
Lubrication . . . . . in fuel  
Ignition . . . . . motoplant

### DRIVE TRAIN

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

### CHASSIS

Chassis type . . . . . single downtube  
Overall length, in. . . . . 83  
Seat height, in. . . . . 31  
Peg height, in. . . . . 11  
Ground clearance, in. . . . . 10  
Wheelbase, in. . . . . 56  
Weight as tested, lbs. . . . . 216  
FR/RR wt. bias, lbs. . . . . n.a.  
Tires, front . . . . . 3.00 x 21  
rear . . . . . 4.75 x 18



Destroying berms is simple with the 360 CR. Just smack the dirt and apply a liberal amount of throttle.

Max. Pts. NUMERICAL EVALUATION	
10	Power . . . . . 10
10	Powerband . . . . . 10
10	Acceleration . . . . . 10
10	Transmission
	(5) Ratios . . . . . 5
	(5) Operation . . . . . 5
10	Suspension
	(5) Front . . . . . 4
	(5) Rear . . . . . 4
10	Brakes
	(5) Front . . . . . 4
	(5) Rear . . . . . 4
10	General Handling . . . . . 10
30	Miscellanea
	(5) Starting . . . . . 5
	(5) Rider comfort . . . . . 5
	(5) Quality of craftsmanship . . . . . 5
	(5) Riding maneuverability . . . . . 5
	(5) Tires . . . . . 5
	(5) Noise level . . . . . 5
100 pts.	Overall Rating 96 pts.