

Husky 360 WR

An All-Round Motorcycle That Excels at Everything

How would you like a secure, good-handling, well suspended, 220-lb. rocketship to blast around on in the desert, in enduros, or for just plain trail riding at a fast clip? Husky has one in the guise of a 360 WR. Basically the same motorcycle as the motocross machine, the WR is a tad faster, a bit softer and a lot more fun to ride.

The WR (which stands for wide ratio) is designed with the desert or enduro rider in mind, by virtue of its far spaced six-speed gearbox. The gears are matched nicely enough to the good powerband that you can use first for the tighter enduro courses, and sixth is still available to attain high speed runs for making up time, or for hand speed record attempts across the desert.

As with the CR model, there are quite a few changes in the 1976 model that will



please the prospective Husky buyer. First on the list of goodies is a new kickstarter that works. This one is usable, doesn't break your ankle off in the event of kickback and won't shear off the footpeg.

New fork seals are also included with the bike. They still leak a little bit, but they don't pour oil out the forks as they did in the past. If you want to get really trick, you can put air caps on the top of the fork tubes, and put in about six pounds of air in each leg. That's just about enough to make a better seal between the fork leg and the seal surface.

Another problem that Husky owners had was the steering head bearings. It seems that the little devils liked to self-destruct, leaving you with a handful of metal shavings and a badly behaving motorcycle. The bearings are bigger, in a better cage, and are less susceptible to breakage. It seemed that although the CR and WR shared common bearings up front, the WR model, due to its heavier and longer punishment in enduro and desert runs, was eating up more bearings than its motocrossing brother. Now that problem is solved.

You'll also find wider, longer fenders, a better reed inlet housing, a new lower end bearing that should last forever, chrome-plated steel piston rings and a new exhaust system that features double walled construction (just like Ford's doors).

The WR features a larger gas tank for those longer runs. Husky knew that the bigger tank was necessary—the bike is extremely thirsty. If you happen upon a section that is longer than 65 to 70 miles between gas stops, you'd better check out an accessory tank that holds a little more fuel than the stock unit, or else you might find yourself pushing your way to the pits, not a plus in your favor if you're trying to get up towards the top of the results sheet.

A heavier non-conical hub adorns the WR, and there is an optional speedometer and lighting kit available from your Husky dealer. They use the VDO speedometer, extremely precise in its operation, and leave a small space between the right fork leg and the brake hub so that you can slip the little adapter in without any modifications.

Nice fat enduro/desert-type tires outfit the stock WR, eliminating the need to run out and buy a set that really works. You'll also find that the suspension is a little bit softer than its motocross twin, mainly because the engineers felt that a little plushness is welcome on rides lasting longer than 40 minutes at a time.

Down in the underneath section, you'll find a skid plate, a nice little extra that your favorite Husky dealer throws in at no extra charge. The plate protects the belly of the engine, something you really don't want to see with a pizza-size hole in it. The side cases of the powerplant



The 360 WR can be used in a variety of competitive events, and still have an edge over the other brands.



It's a good flyer, being light, powerful and very secure when it touches back down on the ground.

aren't protected by the skid plate, but if you go back a few issues and check out Malcolm Smith's bike, you can see how that can be easily remedied.

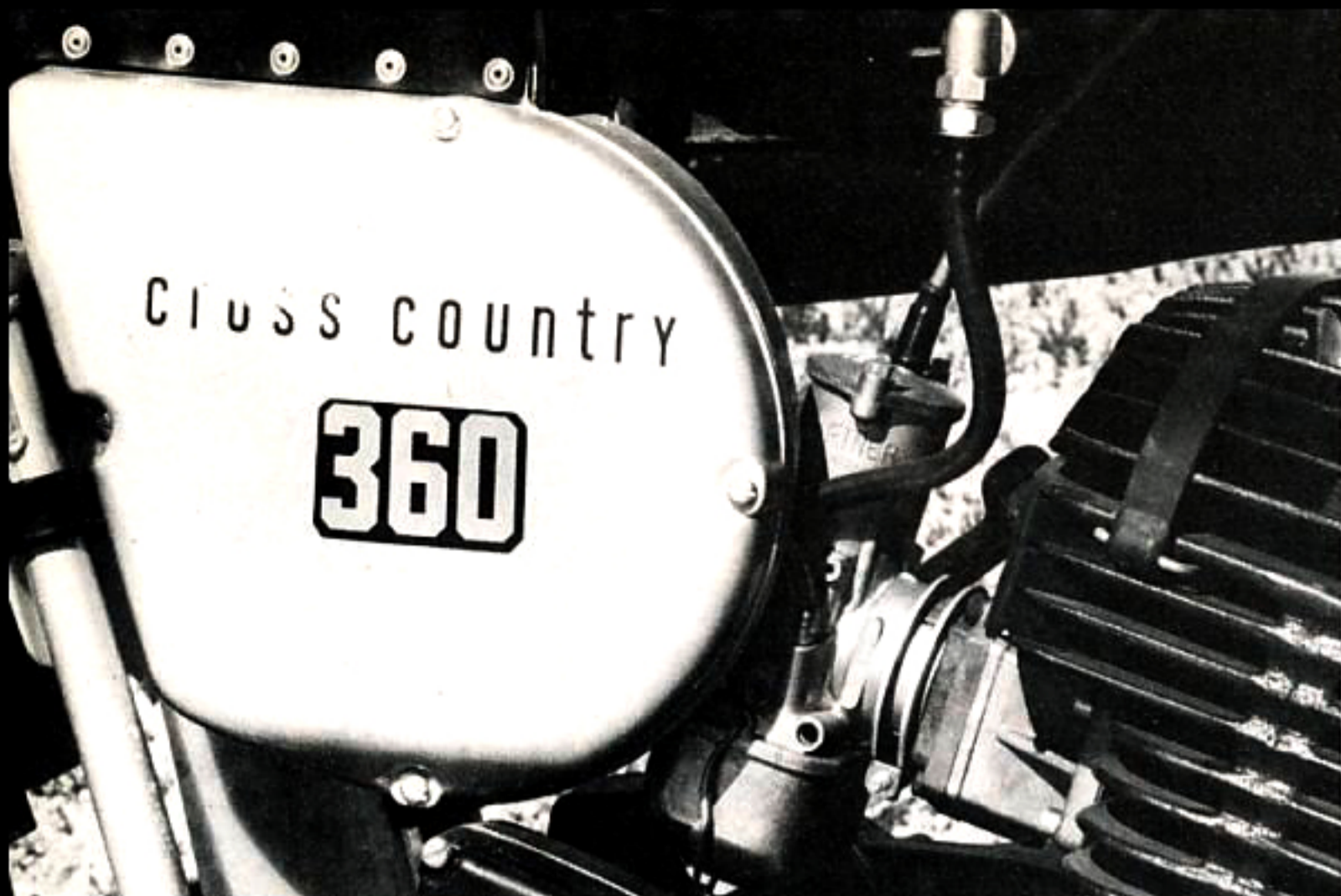
Riding the WR was a blast. It's a very lightweight motorcycle, which enables you to throw it around quite freely while going at an incredible clip. We did, however, have a few problems with the machine during our initial test that you also might come across.

The first problem was keeping the engine running cleanly. You're going to go bananas trying to jet the bike properly, and you'll find that it never will clean itself out and run consistently. The culprit is a little water splash guard found at the top of the airbox. It looks

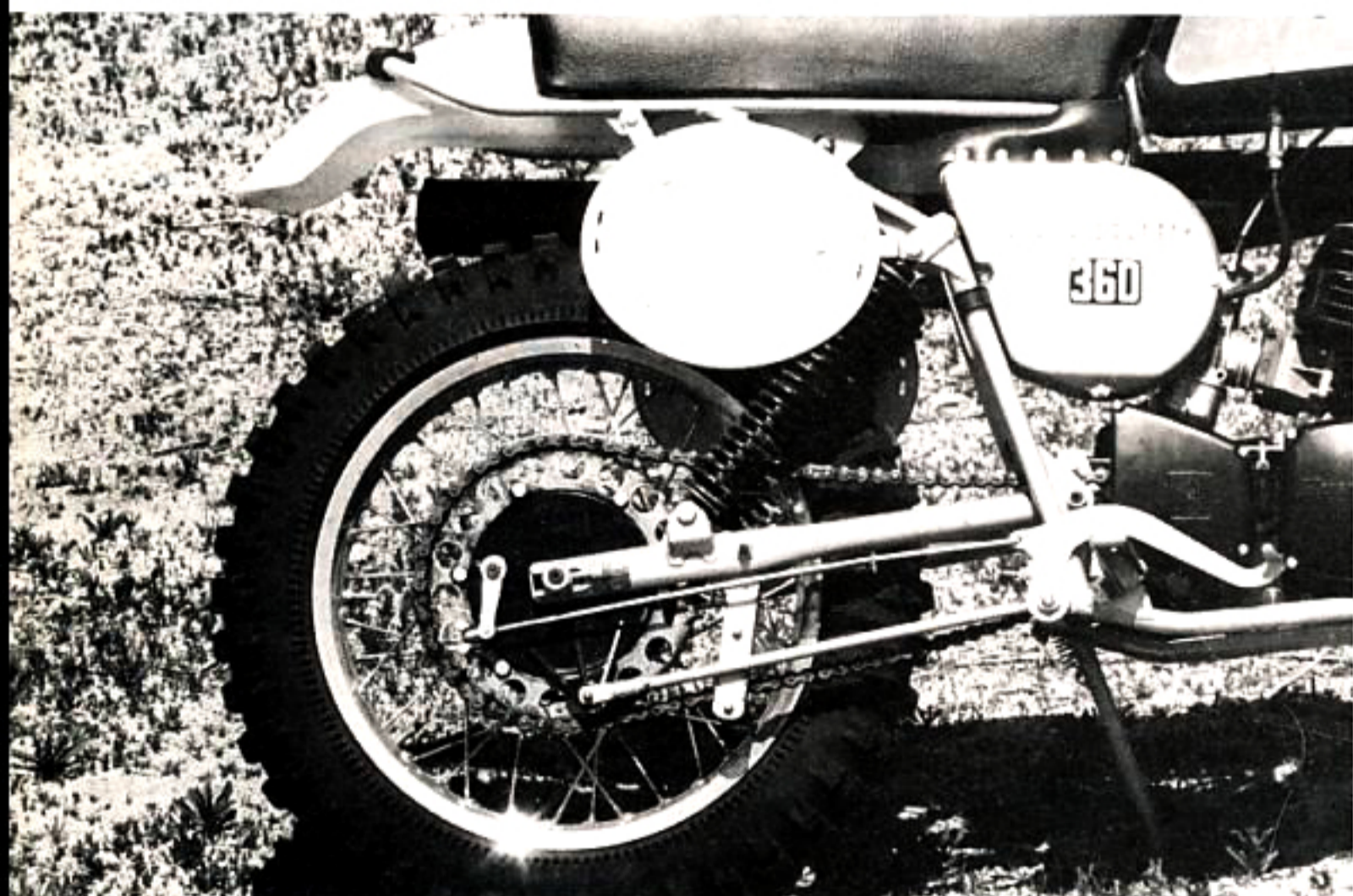
just like a little shelf, and forces the air to go up and around the guard before it can get to the filter.

Originally, this was probably designed to eliminate water penetration into the engine, and to cut down on the intake howl. All it really does is make the bike run terrible. Grab a chisel and a hammer, and break off the pop rivets that hold the guard on. Now go back out and try to jet your bike again. You'll find that it's a lot more consistent, it runs at least 50 percent better, and you get the real potential that the engine offers by turning that right wrist.

If you're worried about the water penetration, you can go to the K&N air filter system that Malcolm Smith uses.



Inside the ample airbox is the culprit to horsepower loss—a small water splash guard that heavily restricts airflow.



Gas Girlings support the rear end, a good desert tire gets the traction, and sturdy rims keep everything round.

The K&N filter is a little smaller than stock, and allows water to roll around its sides instead of sitting up against the filter element. The stock Twin-Air unit is a bit large, and doesn't allow the water to escape.

Another problem was the small piece of independent fender that's found between the airbox and swingarm. It's just a rectangular little piece of plastic that is designed to keep the mud and dirt from splashing up on the centercases.

When the chain is new, the axle is shoved up toward the front of the swingarm, which in turn moves the wheel forward. When the suspension is bottomed out, the wheel occasionally grabs into the plastic piece, bends it, rips it and eventually breaks it off. You can't miss it when you're riding. The

32/POPULAR CYCLING

suspension gets towards the bottoming-out point, and you'll hear a high-pitched squeal, followed by a sudden deceleration of the bike. That's the plastic piece. Plan to buy a new one after you've broken in the chain and stretched it a little bit.

In our test of the motocross machine, we complained that the bike was a little bit too stiff. The suspension on the WR is just about right for desert and enduro riding. It soaks up the little bumps enough so that you don't notice they're even there. When something really taxing comes along, there's still ample suspension travel to soak up most of the jolt.

If you're planning to do some wide-open throttle settings out in the desert (something that the Husky enjoys



An extra inch of travel can be found in the front forks this year, along with better steering head bearings and wider, longer fenders.

immensely), you should probably go to the motocross type of suspension setup. It's a bit stiffer, and in the long run, you'll feel better after a day's worth of attacking puckerbushes.

For enduro riding, you might want to leave it right where it is, or maybe even stiffen it up slightly. For back East, riding it should be about right. For the West Coast types of enduro, the stock suspension is a tad on the soft side, and needs to be beefed up slightly. You guys in the middle—you're going to have to figure it out yourself.

Powerwise, the 360 has got more horses than we've got hair. The motorcycle is fast—very fast, yet it still allows you to feel confident while riding. It doesn't do anything nasty or surprising to you while cooking across the desert areas. It's just "there," doing what it's designed to do, and not making the rider work any harder than usual.

The Husky likes to go in a straight line, go fast and ignore a lot of the bumps. The bike seems to regard small braking bumps or road crossing ruts as being too small to bother with. It enjoys the big gnarly type of bumps, where your buddies are worried about going over the bars and you're just cooking right along without a worry.

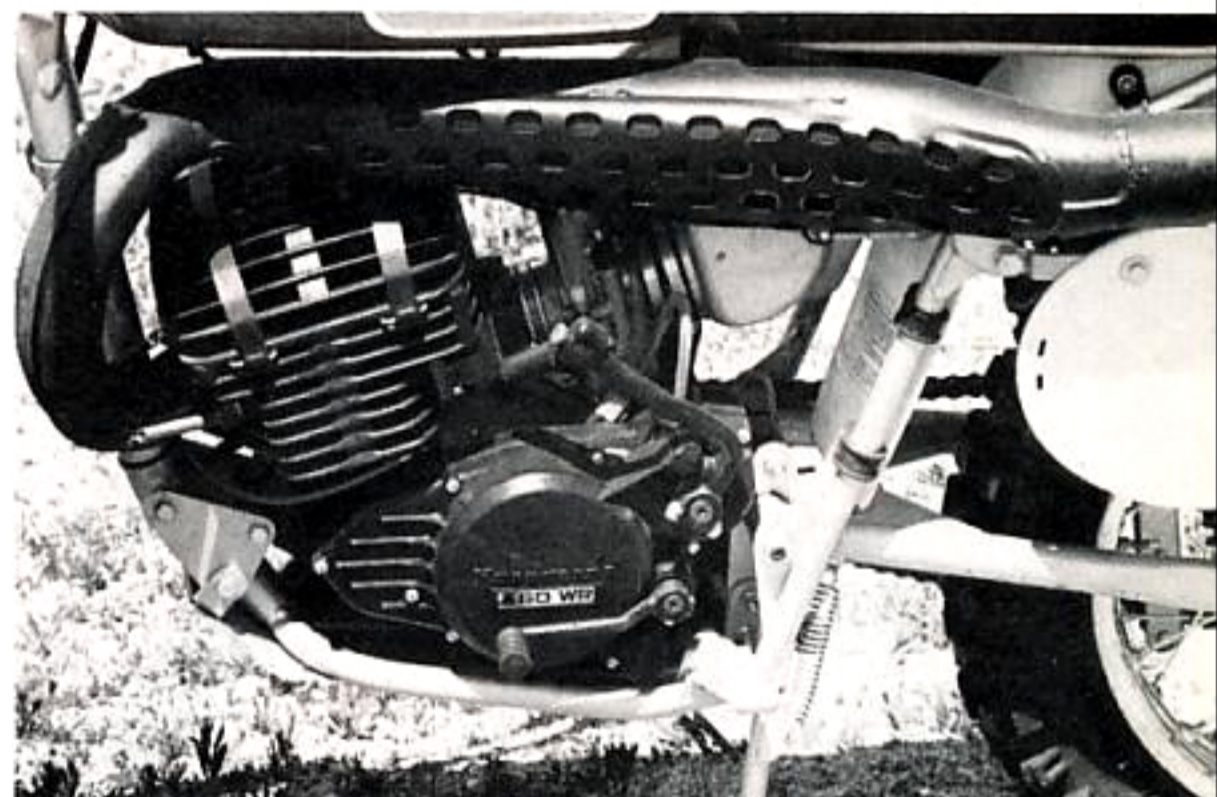
It doesn't really like to corner sharply, even if you use the throw-it-down-and-



First is low enough that you can pick your way through the rocks.



A big tank, Magura throttle, levers and grips, wide handlebars and a soft seat are all found on the WR.



Everyone is applauding the new kickstarter which, although it isn't perfect, is getting close to being cooperative.

trust-it method that we found so successful on the motocross model. Some of our test riders complained that the large gas tank was what was throwing them off, giving them the impression that the bike was heavy and cumbersome. It's not. We suspect that the tires aren't ideal for zig-zagging through a course, thus you've got to work a little harder to make those pinpoint turns.

This oddity showed up very well in an enduro, especially toward the end of the day when the rider got tired. In one

event, the third loop consisted of a lot of unnecessary backtracking, due to overshooting corners. You've got to work to get the WR turned sharply, and in an enduro, when your energy is all but sapped, there just isn't that initiative to throw the handlebars down into the ground and pivot around.

If you just let the bike turn itself, it isn't going to happen. The Husky prefers teamwork, and if you're not up to it, the bike will just go where it's pointed, instead of reacting quickly like some of the Japanese models.

For events like Saboba, Virginia City, Viewfinders and other Grands Prix, the 360 WR has got to be one of the most competitive mounts. It's got good motocross-type handling, the powerband and gearbox are well matched, and the bike will go a lot faster than you're ready for. That, plus the fact that it's very light and easy to maneuver, will give you an edge toward the end of the race. If you didn't have to work as hard in the beginning, you'll have that little bit more left at the end where it really counts.

Getting down to particulars, the



Wheelies are simple, just turn the throttle—slightly!



You can slip that speedo right in there and endure your brains out with the WR. It makes a good time-keeping mount.



handlebar, seat and footpeg positions are just where they should be. Of all our test riders who ranged from rather short to ridiculously tall, not one complained that he was uncomfortable when riding the bike.

Over half the riders said the handlebars were too wide, but once we cut about half an inch off each end and took the bike out again, they were complaining that now they were too short. Try to adapt with the bars in the stock position. It might seem awkward at first, but you get used to the additional leverage with time.

The problem of burning your leg on the exhaust pipe is eliminated, largely due to the additional width of the gas tank. The only way you could get singed would be if you had a really weird riding style.

The bike flies well, lands straight and seems to be holding up just fine. You shouldn't have to tighten spokes or motor mounts after the first two or three rides.

A few things that you should check are the swingarm nuts, the spark plug wire where it can be burned by the exhaust pipe, the sprocket bolts and the handlebar clamps. Other than that, we'd be very surprised if anything fell off or got loose.

Rubber straps cover the radial finned head to cut down on the noise.



The 360 Husky was designed to perform in a variety of competitive events. It's a very good desert mount, as evident from the many Baja, Mint Parker and other big desert victories the bikes have racked up.

In stock trim, the suspension was a bit too soft for our test rider, Mitch Mayes, who was trying to qualify for his pilot's license.



It's also an extremely good enduro mount. Just ask Dick Burleson, and the thousands of others who are riding the Swedish machinery in the big national enduros and Two-Day Qualifiers.

You can use the Husky for everyday cow trailing, but it's an expensive machine to consider buying for just that reason.

Overall, the 360 WR is a very stable, well-built motorcycle that does its job properly. There are no major problems with the machine, and very few minor ones, all of which we have listed here. If you're looking for a bike that you can ride in desert races, enduro runs, marathon events, Grands Prix and weekend pleasuring, the 360 WR Husky is about the top of the line. It's got to be one of the best machines available to the rider who wants to expand his trophy collection.

HUSKY 360 WR

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 motoplast

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 450 x 18

| 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. |