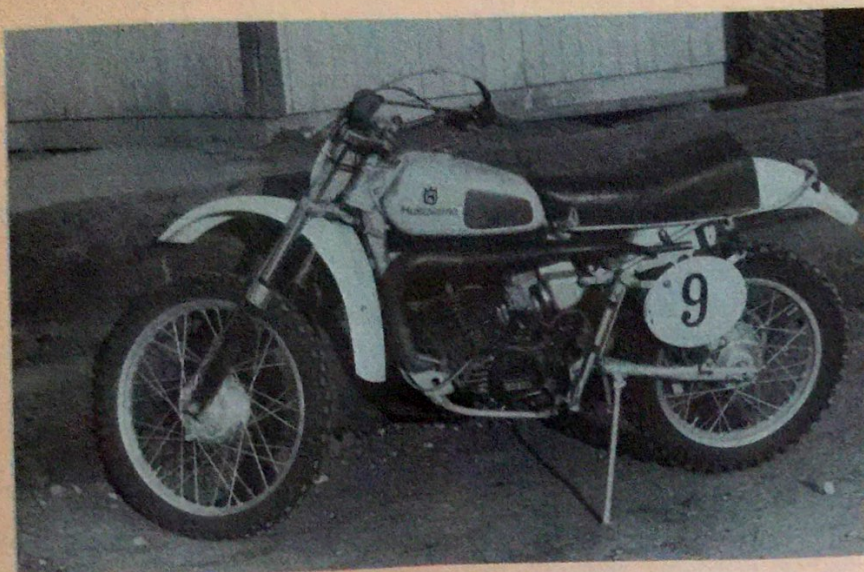


race test



You get what you pay for!

**HUSQVARNA CR125**



Look close. It's almost all new.



Nils-Arne Nilsson's bike that he campaigned in the 125 Nationals. Not much different except the forks.

Husky really did their homework. Using last year's model as a foundation, they mechanically swept through the bike to produce the new '77 CR125, the first European 125 capable of competing with the small Japanese bikes in a long time.

The Swedish wrenches attacked the problem much the same way you would. They sat down one night with a bottomless mug of beer and took a long, hard, honest look at their previous creation. It was close, but no cigar. They knew what really cooked on the track. The '76 Husky was basically right, they didn't need that much modification to make them work. Nothing that couldn't be incor-

porated into the next year's model. Definitely, a faster engine was needed. Go first-class on the suspension too. Pull in the front end, a trick they had learned on the GP circuit. Things started to shape up.

When Husqvarna proudly announced that they were going to make about 1000 bikes this year, more than twice as many as last year, a lot of the knowledgeable Husky freaks shook their heads. "This'll be the year," they said. Indeed it is. The '77 CR may look a lot like its predecessor, but it is almost a completely new motorcycle. Maybe some of the parts are the same, but all the changes correspond directly to the way the

bike reacts with your body in trying trying to go around a motocross track at speed. In short, the modifications made to the Husqvarna have resulted in a surprisingly excellent race bike.

Husky has put it all together. The bike complements itself and works as a single unit. Its pieces harmonize. The engine runs hand in hand with the suspension. Best of all, the entire bike works with the rider in very special ways, pleasing ways. It lets him go fast.

### A TRICK OF THE WRENCH

By placing themselves in the rider's position, the Husky mechanics noticed one important fact about the old bike . . . they were getting blown off down the straights. A faster motor was an obvious necessity. So they dug in. The ports got ground and a new piston was popped in. They slapped the radial head back on and went in search of more power. A new pipe was fabricated, incorporating two silencers. The pipe is mellow, it tucks in well and never burned us once. Mounted sano, too.

The new 32mm Bing has both a tickler and a choke. They work miracles together in the early morn. A couple of kicks standing next to the bike, while the reed valves "gobble" on each kick, will get the little Husky popping.

Air filter servicing is a breeze. Four screws and it's off. Inside, a Twin-Air filter takes care of the chores. The air box itself isn't sealed extremely well, although it's a great improvement. A fair amount of dust and crud seemed to sneak in during every race or test riding session. New concepts in little rubber flaps protect the air box from most aquatic attacks, but don't stand a chance against the wild fury of the 35-cent car wash.

A Motoplat CDI ignition provides the juice.

The little Hoosk has even got magnesium cases now, like its bigger brothers. They must've tinkered around in the six-speed gearbox too, because this year's models shift much smoother. The ratios are spaced just right. With the engine turning out more horsepower on top while retaining its strong pull in the lower range, the Husqvarna engineers set to work

*Continued*

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# husqvarna race test

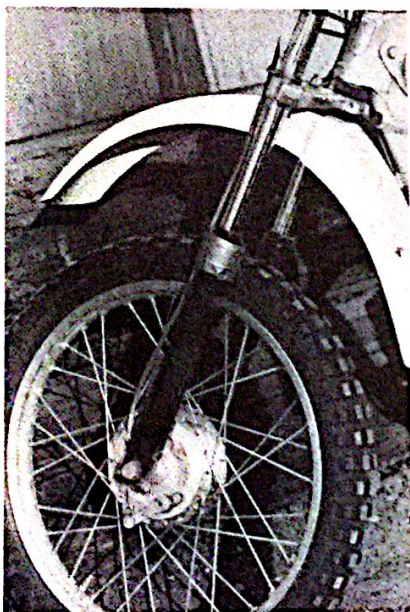
on getting the suspension sorted out.

As the first representative of a new breed of Husky, the 125 features the pulled-in front end. By decreasing the fork angle, the Husky turns sharper and quicker. This modification probably has more to do with the fine, new handling characteristics of the '77 CR than the long travel suspension. In fact, if there was one compliment that all the test riders had, it was how neat the new Husky turns. The thing steers bitchen.

Although Husky was experimenting with offset axle forks on their factory 125s this season, they chose Betors for the production bikes.



Finally Husqvarna has got some new pegs. They're spring loaded and grip OK. Anything's better than what they used to have.

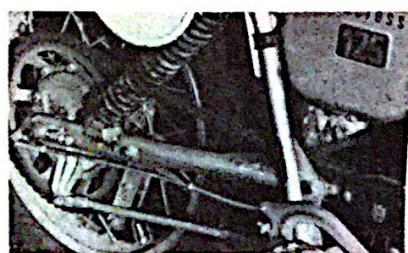


Up front, Betors with eight inches of travel, a well-shaped, unbreakable fender, a larger hub that improves the braking, ridgeless Akront rims, and Trelleborg rubber. The front brake cable needs to be routed correctly and, oh yeah, watch the spokes.

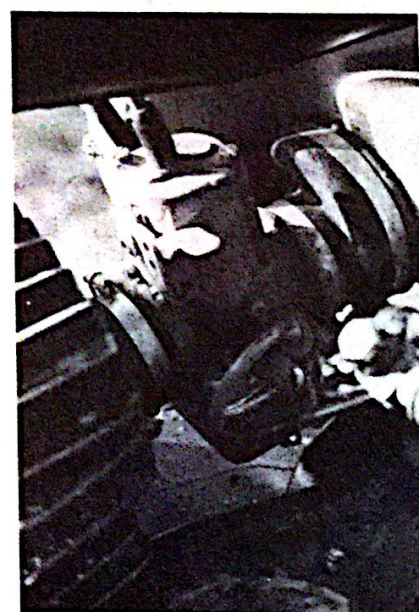
They offer eight inches of travel and give a very plush ride, producing a sensation of rolling over the bumps, instead of hitting them. The forks can be moved up and down in the triple clamps to alter the steering.

The rear of the bike has to be one of the nicest setups available on a production machine. Gas Girlings are laid down in the now-traditional Husky style. The internals get some attention - a miniature ring on the shock piston keeps the tolerances close. The shocks never seemed to fade. The swingarm now swings on needle bearing bushings, and it is mounted directly to the rear of the engine cases.

The rear end tracked straight and true, staying in contact with the ground when it should. The rear end coordinates with the front and



The chrome moly swingarm is mounted to the rear portion of the magnesium cases, saving some weight. Inside, Husky has added some new needle bearing swingarm bushings.



A larger 32mm Bing now feeds the cylinder through a reed valve setup. The carb worked fine and features both a tickler and a choke. Needless to say, the bike started easily in the cold morning.

the entire suspension package is superb — not a hint of swapping. You pay your dues with the soft ride though, as both front and rear ends will bottom out occasionally when you land off the big ones.

The handling is further enhanced by the Trelleborg tires. They're just like anything else on the hard SoCal cement tracks, but get them in the soft, tacky stuff during practice, or on a properly prepared track, and they'll really turn tricks. The improved steering, good suspension and the Trelleborg rubber team up to produce one of the best sticking bikes around.

The Swedish factory has added a lot of nice touches to the bike. Some were long overdue and others were just common sense corrections, but they're all the things that make owning the bike a little more pleasant. They finally scrapped their wimpy old-style pegs and put on a set of good ones. The fenders are new too; they're shaped well and, according to our unexpected testing procedures... unbreakable. Sturdier cables, the kind with provisions for oiling, were added to the excellent Magura controls. The bike also comes with the good type of Akront rims and a kill button. The cables, wires and hoses are thoughtfully routed. One exception is the front brake cable, nothing that a little duct tape couldn't fix.

The 125 Husqvarna also comes with new, larger-diameter hubs this year, resulting in better brakes and less breaks. Stopping is excellent, especially up front. They even made the rear air box splash-guard/fender longer so the tire won't screw it up.

They only missed a few points. The number plates are made out of hard, brittle plastic. They can crack around the mounting bolts before a good pile-up has a chance to munch them. The vents at the top of the Betor forks still spray a fine mist of oil. The gas cap gives a positive seal, though.

Husky must've just plain given up on the kickstarter. It's not primary kickstart. It's on the left side of the bike and has to be positioned for kicking unless you have an educated toe. Once you do get going again, your dislike of the kickstarter will increase because it is occasionally nudging the inside of your calf. Sometimes it flops out all the way. Rubber band time. Oh well, it's an

easy-starting bike.

Two of the most important things to have personalized on your bike are the handlebars and the grips. Individual preferences in the bend of the bars and shape and patterns of the grips greatly alter your feeling of control over the bike. The absence of chain indicators make adjustment a bit more difficult.

As a result of the new, pulled-in front end, the front fender rubs against the frame downtube. It doesn't hinder the steering at all, but it's kind of annoying. Watch the spokes. They loosen quickly without warning, causing possible breakage.

The seat could use a little more padding. It sits fairly low and some of the test riders felt it encouraged them to sit down too much. After a few days in the saddle, the foam gets really soft and loses a lot of its firmness.

That's about it. It might sound like we're nitpicking, but since Husky went to the trouble to correct the major problems, we wonder why they ignored some of these minor ones.

So, what do all these changes add up to? How does it go on the track?

Can it win? There's only one way to find out. You have to go for it.

## RACE DAY

Probably the biggest surprise about the new Husqvarna CR125 is how well it works as a single piece. The whole is better than the sum of its parts. This is where you gain the advantage.

The engine now is competitive. For a stocker, the Husky is a fast 125. It'll stay with all of them and blow off most of them. The problem is, how many stock 125s are out at the tracks these days? The Husky's main competitors aren't Suzuki, Honda and Yamaha, but FMF, DG and the "millions" of other speed shops that are turning out rocketship one-two-fives. For this reason, you probably won't be making too many swift swoops on the straights or getting the holeshot very often.

Besides, it's kinda fun working your way through the pack and passing everyone. What the Husky loses in sheer, raw speed, it more than makes up for with the *kind* of power it's putting out. The powerband is very broad for a fast

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# husqvarna race test

## SPECIFICATIONS

Make ..... Husqvarna  
 Model ..... CR125  
 Country of Manufacture .... Sweden  
 Retail Price ..... \$1395

## ENGINE

Type ..... Single-cylinder,  
 two-stroke, reed valve  
 Bore & Stroke ..... 55mmx52mm  
 Displacement ..... 124cc  
 Compression Ratio ..... 13.5:1  
 Carburetion ..... 32mm Bing  
 Ignition ..... Motoplat  
 Lubrication ..... Pre-mix, 32:1  
 Air Filter ..... Oiled foam Twin Air

## TRANSMISSION

Type ..... Six-speed, close ratio  
 Ratios ..... 32.80:1, 24.68:1, 19.65:1,  
 16.56:1, 13.96:1, 12.34:1  
 Primary ... Gear, six-disc alloy clutch  
 Ratio ..... 4.06 (53/13)

## SUSPENSION

Front .... Betor hydraulic dampeners  
 Rear ..... Gas Girlings, laydown  
 Travel: Front ..... 8 inches  
 Rear ..... 8 inches

## DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase ..... 56 inches  
 Ground Clearance ..... 10.5 inches  
 Track Weight ... 202 pounds with gas  
 Weight Bias ... 43% front, 57% rear

## CAPACITIES

Fuel ..... 7.8 liters  
 Transmission ..... 1.4 liters  
 Forks ..... 241cc

125 and delivers plenty of pulling power. It's not necessary to keep it right on the powerband, although you won't be going very fast if you don't. What's neat is, the strong little motor lets you reach that top end, while other riders are struggling to stay within theirs.

You'll be torquing out of the corner until it hooks up, while everyone else is working feverishly to keep their bikes in that narrow, precious powerband known as wide-open. The Husky's unique 125 engine will also allow you to ride differently. The power is always there, without hesitation. If you really lug it, one slip of the clutch is all that is needed. You won't be having to make unnecessary gear shifts just to keep the engine peaking.

But let's not get carried away. To win on a 125 you have to keep it WFO. The Husky hooks up with the best of them. Clutchless shifts are possible anytime, but it works better with it, naturally. The only shifting problem — some of the riders weren't used to the longer throw of the Husky lever, being more accustomed to the quick click of their own Japanese bike.

The new longer travel suspension feels good out on the track. Eight inches travel front and rear produce a very neutral, calm feeling. No erratic twitching, no sharp jolts, just a soft cushion that seems to absorb the irregularities of the track and transmit little of them to the rider. It takes a mean whoop to even scare you. The Husky isn't one of the lighter 125s, but the extra weight actually seems to add to the

bike's stability. In fact, it rides more like a small 250 than anything. The front end is relatively light, but didn't present any problems jumping or otherwise.

The most notable feature in the CR's handling is the tucked-in front end. The Husqvarna now turns sharply and precisely and can hold a line beyond compare. It goes where you point it, and obeys the most radical commands through the turns. Decide where you want to go in a corner when you get there. A quick pull and you'll be tracking on the inside. Let it drift into a slide and square it off. Even being horizontal in a berm is a natural feeling. Your lap times around the track will start getting lower. It turns so neat you can't wait to get off the straightaway and into the corner. The Husky will get you in and out very quickly. When you really start getting into it you'll find yourself riding on the farthest reaches of the track, discovering new lines you thought never existed. There isn't another 125 around that can be ridden the way the Husky can. That means you're not going to be taking the same lines as everyone else if you don't want to.

Owning the CR125 should be almost as much fun as riding it. Everything is simple, sturdy, functional, well-thought-out and designed to be worked on as well as work. Its engine isn't modified to the thin edge of self-destruction. The Husky is a joy to maintain, comes with a good owner's service manual, and should prove very reliable. Husqvarna already knows it built a solid, dependable bike, and they back it up with a 60-day unconditional warranty. That's a lot of races.

Although the vastly improved '77 CR125 costs the same as last year's model, it's still more expensive than most of the competition, but that Swedish quality has a way of sneaking up on you. Husqvarna has already incorporated a magnitude of trick parts into the production model for you, and what's more, they've done it in such a manner as to produce a bike that harmonizes within itself, a bike that was designed as a complete and thorough package, a bike that works. True works bikes don't come cheaply . . . you get what you pay for.

