



RACE TEST

□ Racing motorcycles are a long time in research and development. They move through a process that includes not only drafting tables, but deep, loamy berms. There are components to be pulled together, dies to be formed, and market analyses to be scripted. Testing can stretch what is already an interminable process out to a *terminal* process in a fast-paced world like American Motocross.

In the time it takes a designer to design, an engineer to calculate and a production line to produce, the product can be a year out of step with what the public wants. But, the drafting-table-to-berm genesis is a requirement in a world of product liability, international competition, currency fluctuation and consumer fickleness.

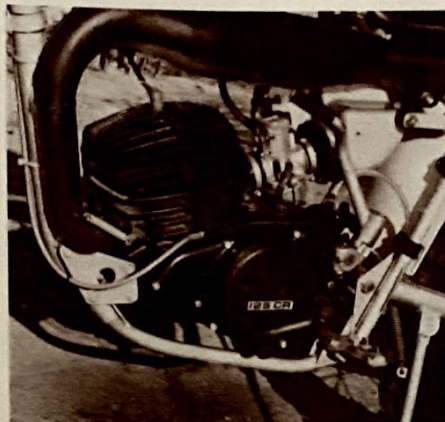
The Husqvarna 125 CR (CR stands for Close Ratio) breaks out of this time-proven formula. It cracks the mold because Husqvarna AB is a company that is so immersed in pride and quality that a good idea doesn't drift from department to department looking for an influential benefactor to carry it through. Husqvarna's racing department is within walking distance of the production line. There is little or no interdepartmental secrecy in the tight-knit Swedish factory. Many computer-run Japanese factories operate in such a well-oiled bureaucracy that one department could be working on the same thing as another department and neither would know. But when something is cooking in Husqvarna, Sweden, it is cooking throughout the whole plant.

The Husqvarna 125 CR is, in fact, hardly more than a Husky 250 with a pre-shrunk engine. Although they

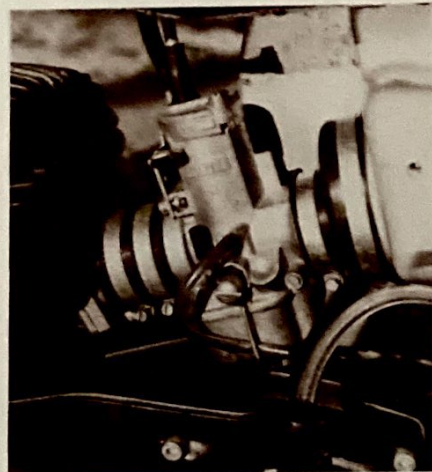
share many components, the 125 CR is a spare and lean racing machine. So lean that when you throw a leg over its tall seat you know that it is going to be a no-frills-ride.

The 125 CR engine is cradled in a heat-treated chrome moly frame.

Chrome moly is a term that is bantered around a lot in the industry, misused normally, but in Husky's case the Swedish steel is lightweight and high-strength. The cases are pressure-fed die cast magnesium. The finish is superb. The crankcases aren't



With magnesium cases and the barest frame on the market, the Husky 125 is still a few pounds more than its competition, but it will last at least a year longer.



32mm Bing Vergasser appears on the 1978 Husky 125 only. The rest of the Huskys use Mikunis.



The handling is superb — a little soft for hard, fast riders, but geometry and design are top-flight.

HUSQVARNA 125CR

Long on legs, short on power

HUSQVARNA 125CR

the only components that get the high-priced magnesium spread. The outer cases and air filter housing are also made from the extremely light metal. Suffice it to say that magnesium costs considerably more than the industry-standardized aluminum.

Tucked into the lightest cases in production goes a six-speed close-ratio gearbox. All the casting on the powerplant is the work of guild craftsmen. The cylinder is a heavy-looking, but structurally sound, design that sweeps into a radially finned head. The compression has been upped this year to a corrected 13.5:1. The piston is forged with a single chrome-plated ring.

Breathing is accomplished through the magnesium air box. The plastic cover hides a foam waffle air filter and the air inlet is protected by an overlapping arrangement of rubber flaps. Next year's works bikes are actually testing the more conventional integral air box, which will probably hit the line in '79. A 32mm Bing is attached by rubber hoses to a reed-valved cylinder. All the big Huskys in 1978 will come with Mikuni carbs because of irregularities in quality control at the German Vergasser factory. Expect the '79 Husky one-two-five to be Mikuni-pumped also.

Spark comes from a Motoplat CDI, which for some reason is equipped with a lighting coil. We don't like dual-purpose cycles, because we only use our bikes for one thing. Motocross! Some of the disadvantages that the Husqvarna 125 CR does have are related to the choice of CDI ignition systems. The basic problem is that the Motoplat CDI on the littlest Husky has a heavy, by 125 racing standards, flywheel.

KEEPING YOU IN SUSPENSE

As much as the little engine floats in the bottom of the frame, the frame itself floats on the suspension. The front forks are Husqvarna forks. Last year's Husky 125 came with in-line axle Betor forks, and although they worked well, they were not cosmetically in tune with the marketplace (read in leading axle). So, the factory just took the good-working leading axle forks off of the big bikes and bolted them on the 125.

Front wheel travel is 242mm, or 9½

inches, without the use of air. Our experience with Husky front forks is that hard riders will find the forks too soft after the fork springs begin to sag. The addition of air caps and between four and eight pounds of air will fill the bill.

The rear suspension is handled by a spindly little swingarm. Yet, it is constructed of heat-treated chrome moly and rides on needle bearings. The swingarm is attached to a set of dual-spring gas Girling shocks, made to Husqvarna specs, and the rear wheel travel is 254mm (10 inches). The Husky 125 is the hands-down winner of the 125 class suspension tape-off.

Tidbits on the bike include a full-floating rear brake, alloy gas tank, new conical front hub, strengthened conical rear hub, Magura power levers, double silencer up-pipe, bar-backs, Trelleborg tires, chain tensioner, silver-plated crankshaft bearing, reinforced spoke nipples and, lordy-be, a new, easy-to-use kickstarter.

FIGHTING THE YELLOW PLAGUE

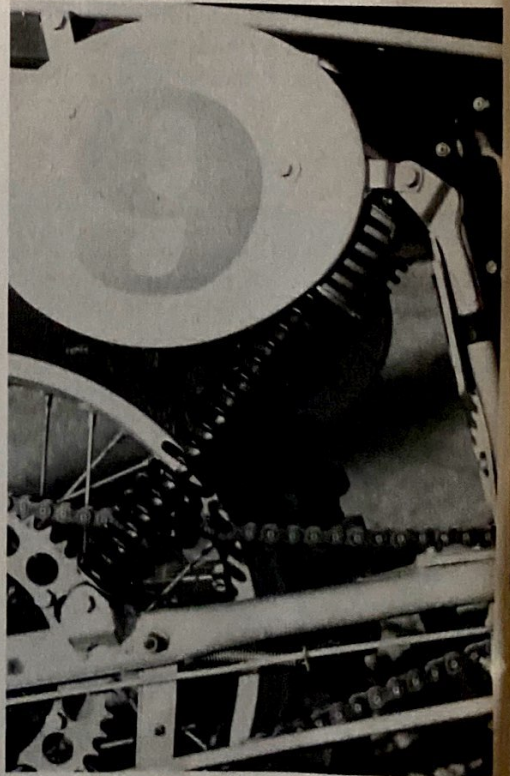
The Husqvarna 125 CR is not as fast as an RM125 or YZ125. Period. On the other hand, the RMYZ don't handle half as good as the little Husky. Period. The dilemma is obvious. Once we run out of cut-and-dried statements, some decision is going to have to be made about the 125 CR.

If your local circuit is like a flat track with hard-as-rock terrain and no bumps, then the Husky isn't for you. But if your track has a little traction, some gnarly whoops and a generous amount of corners, the Husqvarna can do a number on the yellow plague. The Husky doesn't rev like the Japanese bikes, which is not to say that you don't have to rev it, but rather that it signs off while the yellow bikes are still singing. Depending on the terrain, you can stay ahead of the RMYZ if you play a rapid rat-a-tat-tat on the cogs and never relax your wrist. In deep sand, mud or rough-and-tumble terra firma, the Husky is going to hook up sooner and keep moving longer. The reason that it will move in the muck, but die a slow death on the flat, is traced to the ignition.

The Motoplat CDI has the flywheel effect necessary to keep the engine churning when necessary, but at the same time knocks off the quick



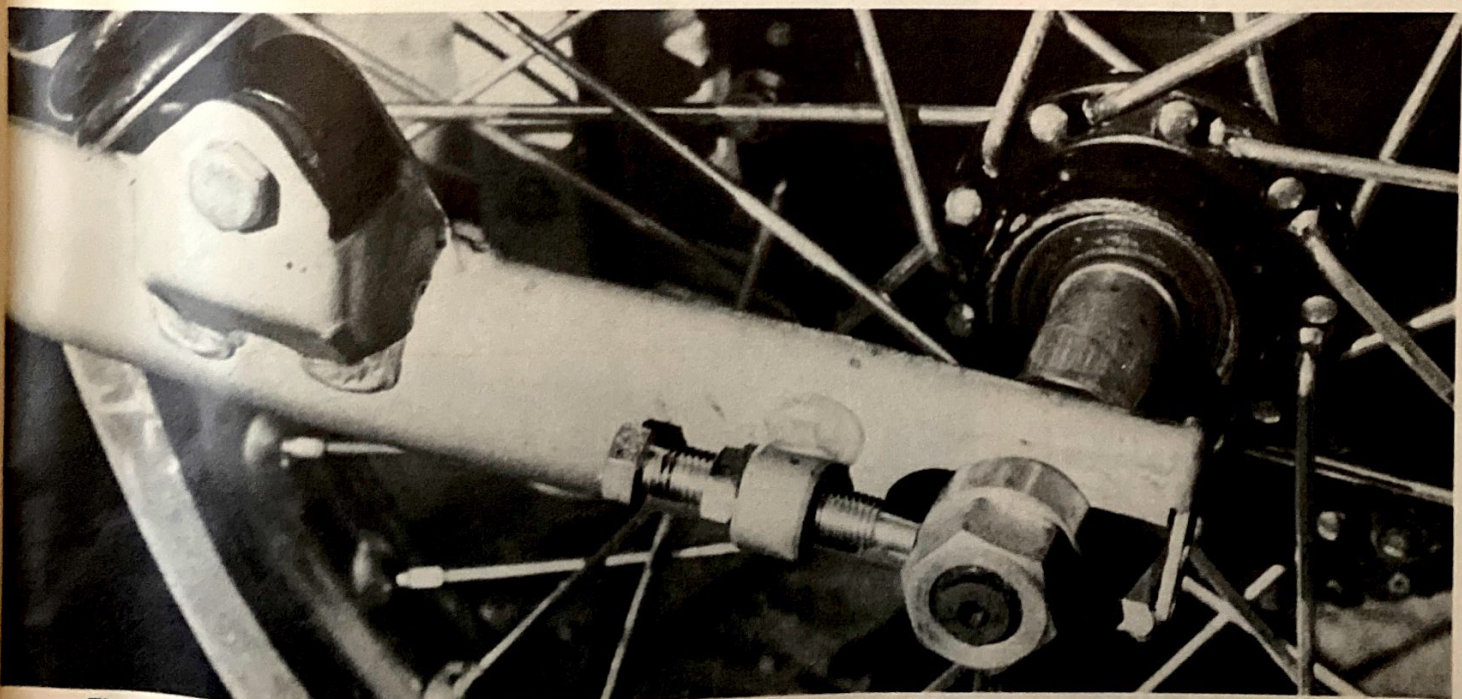
The kickstarter return spring snapped on the first day. It was the only failure during the test.



The rear shocks are dual-spring gas Girlings. They fade sooner than reservoir shocks. The number plate hangs like an albatross on the rear of the bike.



Radical Ron wobbles the front end while driving full-on across the face of this berm.



The chain adjusters are simple and direct. The tires are Trolleborgs and they are good on soft tracks.

HUSQVARNA 125CR

brapp-brapp revving that can be used so effectively on hard tracks.

Engine performance is more grunt than zap. Remember, we are talking about 125s, so if you hopped off of your 400 Maico you would think it was peaky. It isn't for a tiddler. It produces its serious horsepower at a lower rpm than its competition, so you come to a Mexican stand-off. You are buzzing the Husky engine to its max, and your competition is buzzing their RZYM's to their max. The difference is that they are more than one thousand r's above you.

We would have preferred a Mikuni to the Bing carburetor. Bings are finicky, and many times one Bing differs so radically from another that two identical bikes may be jetted totally differently. A Mikuni is a production-line marvel. Tuning parts, information and knowledge about Mikunis abound in America. Where the Bing falls flat is in its ability to carburete cleanly off the bottom. The Husky should be smokin' from the first rotation of the wrist, but for some reason it hesitates before pumpin' ponies. Attempts to re-jet for quarter-turn tuning resulted in modest improvements, but a Mikuni more than likely would have cleared up the lag.

The Husqvarna is an easy starter, thanks largely to the Gunnar Lindstrom-designed kickstarter. But the Husky does not have primary kick starting. The new kickstarter swings out and away from the peg. An inexperienced rider can actually start the Husky. This never would have happened in the old days. Engine noise is an unobjectionable bark as the sound curves upward to a dual silencer system. The bike shifts with ease, but it is necessary to back off the throttle a tad to catch each gear. Full-power, clutchless shifts were not 100-percent guaranteed, but the gearbox is positive once you develop the knack.

PLUSES AND MINUSES

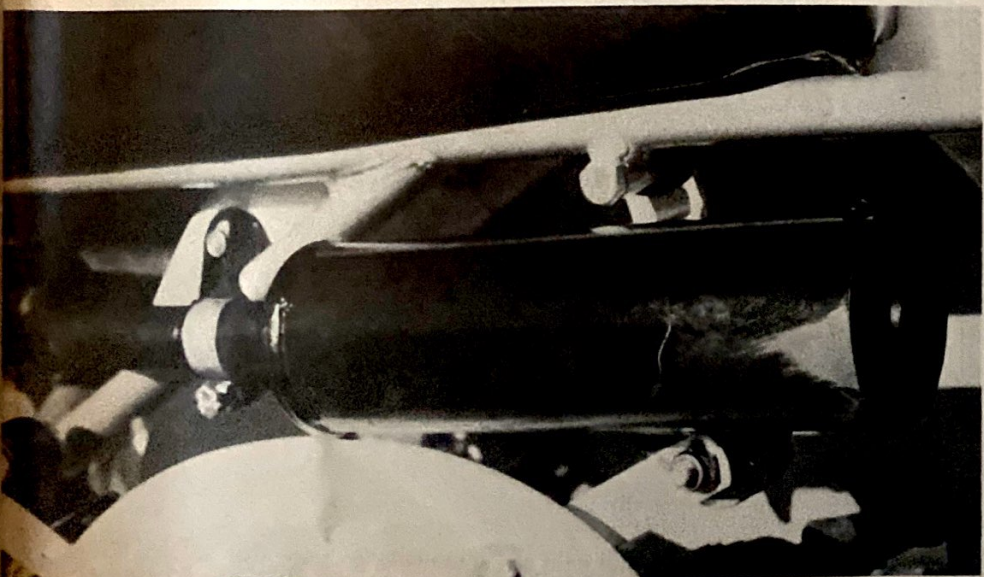
The biggest plus for the Husky 125 CR is that it is a finely built motorcycle. It should last the owner about three times as long as a Japanese model. The Swedes take pride in their product, and hardly anything is cheap or shabby. But then, the price is a high \$1495. Yet even at \$1495 the firm is probably losing money, but they are doing so in order to offer their dealers a complete line of 125, 250 and Open



Jody seeks the hot line in hectic pursuit at Saddleback.



Cornering the little Husky is best achieved by nailing the berm wide open and a gear up.



The pipe comes with dual silencers. The bike ran better, dare we say it, without the rear silencer.

machines. With a short production run on the engines and utilization of the more expensive and robust 250 components, the price is not too high. Except in comparison to its competition.

Because they use the big-bike parts to make the little bike, the reliability factor is extremely high, with a modest weight gain that is offset by the use of only the barest minimum of parts. In many ways, the 125 CR is over-engineered. Originally the compact little six-speed tranny was designed to see service on all the models. So, it was designed to handle a lot more power. The result is that the shift drum weighs several pounds more than necessary. Husky has experimented with machined and lightened shift drums and they have worked fine.

Overengineering and parts interchangeability have given the little Husky a strong frame, suspension and transmission, but not a strong powerplant.

Experience has shown us that the Husky needs more revs, cleaner carburetion and a healthy increase in usable horses. Experience has also shown that when you do this, things start to go wrong. Raise the compression, increase the r's and pump a couple more ponies and the rod will go out. Not the bearing or the silver cage, but the rod itself. Increase the r's significantly and the piston wear factor will have you changing pistons every other race. The heavy flywheel ignition will shear the flywheel keys off the shaft if you rev the bike too high. So, you are in an approach-avoidance situation. On one hand you need to clean up the bottom end bog and add a few more revs, but if you do it you risk a shortened mechanical life of the weak parts of the bike.

All the minus points of the bike fall in the engine. The primary gear is a taper fit on the shaft. It is not held in place by any splines or keys. Thus, if you suffer a seizure or breakdown the resulting jolt to the rear wheel can spin the primary gear on the shaft. If it marks the shaft, you could be in for trouble.

YUMPIN' YIMINY

It is too bad that Husky chose the wrong ignition. Motoplat CDIs with internal rotors are available. Mikuni

HUSQVARNA 125CR

carbs are available. It is too bad that the Husqvarna 125 CR is such a great machine scarred by a few flaws. If you built the ultimate motorcycle with great suspension, good hubs, chrome moly frame and the highest quality accessories, but it blew the clutch every time out, you'd never sell one. Husqvarna has built a great machine. It's worth every penny that they ask for it, but it will not run with the competition head-to-head, except under unusual circumstances. To find out how to get it to run with the RMYZ, check out the DG Performance Specialties Husky 125 in this issue.

The Husqvarna is a nice bike. Every bolt on the machine has a nylon locking nut attached to it. The bike has a dual silencer system. We hate to say this, but if you remove the rear silencer the bike will run better, and still be silenced, although not as well. The side number plates are hokey. We hate them. They are easy for scorekeepers



The Husqvarna 125 CR is a tiddler in a big-bike frame. Normal berserk 125 tactics require some stretching.

to read, but the assorted brackets, 8mm bolts and paraphernalia weigh much more than plastic side panels. The seat has an unreachable bolt holding it on way up underneath where a slip fit would work better. The cables and levers are top-flight. The gas tank is well-made and mounted. The pipe bracket on the front of the frame is much too complex for its purpose. The air cleaner is good, but we switched to

a JT Racing Phase 2 just to be sure. The bike is very tall, but comfortable. All in all, the Husky 125 Close Ratio is a straightforward, well-built machine. If you ride it hard you could win on it stock, but it would surprise a lot of people. With a few dollars more invested, the engine could be brought up to class standards. But then again, who wants to invest a few dollars more in a \$1495 one-two-five. III

SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE Husqvarna
 MODEL 125 CR
 COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE: Sweden
 RETAIL PRICE \$1495

ENGINE

Type Single-cylinder, two-stroke
 Bore & Stroke 55x52mm
 Displacement 124cc
 Compression Ratio 13.5:1
 Carburetion Bing 32mm
 Ignition Motoplat CDI/flywheel
 Lubrication Pre-mix
 Air Filter Foam/oiled

TRANSMISSION

Type Six-speed close ratio
 Ratios .32.8, 24.7, 19.6, 16.5, 14.0, 12.3
 Primary 18/70

SUSPENSION

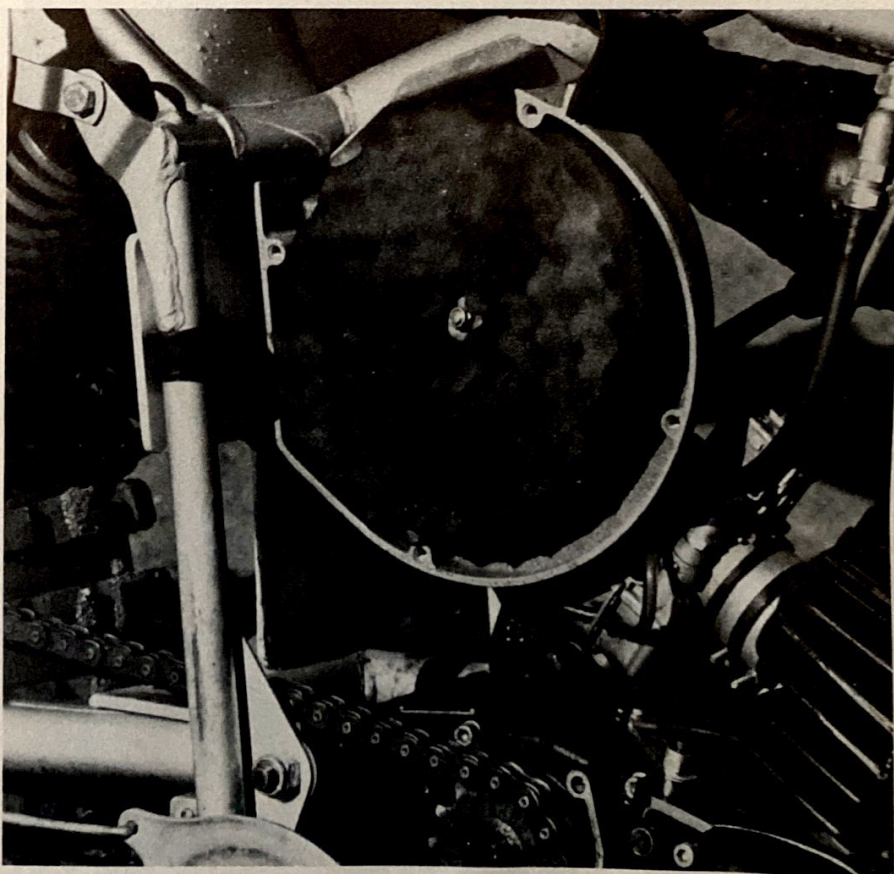
Front 9.5 inches (242mm) spring
 Rear .. 10 inches (254mm) Gas Girdlings

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase 56.7 inches
 Ground clearance 12.8 inches
 Seat height 37.0 inches
 Weight 207 pounds

CAPACITIES

Fuel 2.1 gallons



The air cleaner is a waffled foam unit that snuggles up against a zoot-capri magnesium housing. And we thought that plastic was trick.

DG PERFORMANCE SPECIALTIES HIGH-STEPPING HUSKY

In a cooperative effort between Husqvarna and DG, one specially prepared Husky 125 CR was sent out to do combat on the hectic SoCal motocross circuits. Husqvarna sent DG two stock 125 CRs and carte blanche to do with them what they wished. The results were startling to the jaded eyes of much of the Los Angeles racing community.

David Taylor and his 125 CR blazed a winning path through the weekly wars. The results of DG's labor is available in a special Husqvarna 125 CR kit that includes pipe, carb, machining, porting and matching.

If you have a stock CR, you are going to need to change the carburetor from the stock Bing to a 34mm Mikuni. It is a bolt-on operation. The DG Husky uses a 240 main jet. The carb will improve throttle response from way down low all the way to the top. To increase the point where the top stops, the DG pipe increases revs by almost 2000 rpm. The pipe and carb are almost required changes to get a clean-pulling, high-revving engine.

David Taylor's special DG Husky also has Stage 5 porting, which raises and reshapes the exhaust, lowers the intake, cleans, matches and balances the transfers. This is where the power really starts to come on. The head is then milled 15 thousandths to raise compression, and the skirt of the piston is trimmed a half-inch on the intake side.

As a special racing project, additional modifications were made by DG to the Husky, which they don't suggest that the average racer invest in. A Honda CR125 ignition was hooked up to a Moto-Tek CDI. This resulted in much crisper ignition, faster revs and a broader powerband. It also resulted in considerably shorter engine life. "It

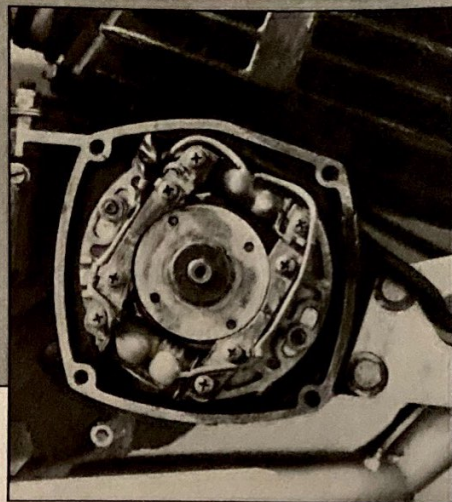
was quite a hassle" to mount and to keep up. Thus, the ignition is not offered as part of the kit.

The DG kit takes the stock Husqvarna 125 CR out to the logical and reliable limits. It provides the needed top end and improved throttle response without the negative side effects of increased maintenance schedules.

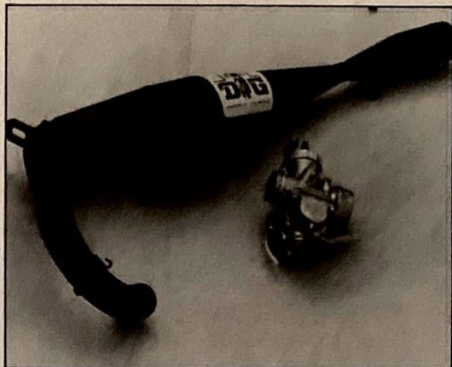
DG RACER — Husqvarna 125 CR

DG pipe	\$ 75
34mm Mikuni	\$ 48
Stage 5 porting	\$ 90
Head milling	\$ 20
Matched cases	\$100
JT Phase 2 air filter	\$ 13
Arnaco LTR shocks	\$134

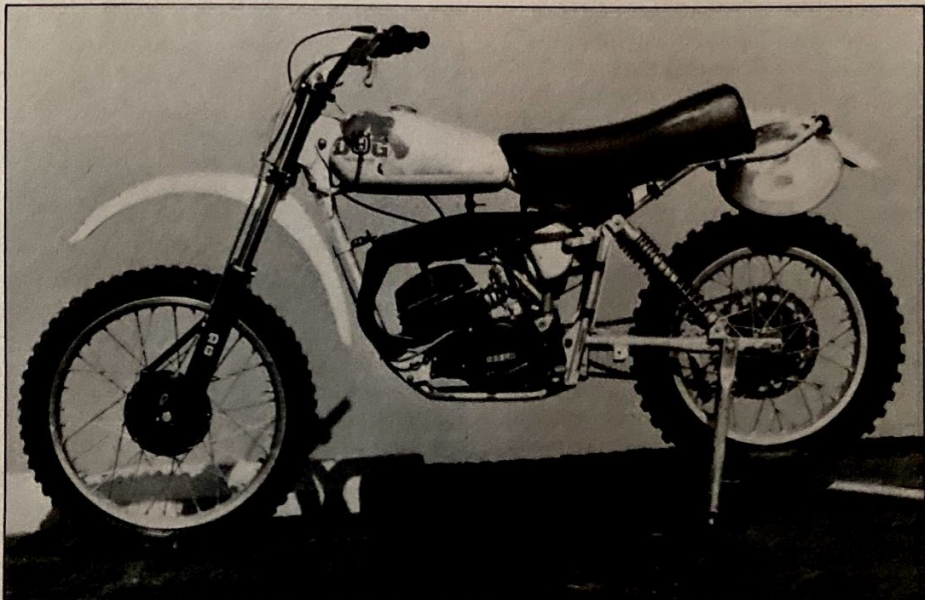
DG Performance Specialties
1170 Van Horne,
Anaheim, California 92806



Careful preparation and fine tuning aided DG in building a fast Husqvarna, but a Honda CR125 ignition and Moto-Tek black box iced the cake.



The addition of the pipe and the carb alone brings the Husky up to Japanese alphabet racer standards.



David Taylor rode this Husky 125 CR to a series of dominating wins in tough Southern California competition. It is a proven package.