



**HUSKY 250 WR ENDURO**

# PROSPECTING FOR GOLD

Rocks, shocks and earned respect

By the Editors of Dirt Bike



In this day of long travel bikes, it's refreshing to see that someone realizes not everyone is six-foot-plus tall. Long and painstaking research has shown us that the average dirt biker is right around five-eight, maybe five-nine and weighs in a bit over two hundred pounds. Oh sure, there may be a few deformos who vary from the norm, but we can let them fend for themselves, eh?

Thus, it was with a great deal of pleasure that we slung a leg (with a 29-inch inseam) over the new 250 Husky WR. And, lo and behold, with cheeks in contact with the saddle, both feet could be placed flat on the ground. With this kind of low profile one expects limited travel.

Not so.

The 1980 Husky has 9.5 inches, front and rear. That's more than

enough for the rigors of enduro work, especially in Eastern or Midwest enduros, where the going is often slower and tougher than in the wide open Western runs.

That's when one of our testers said, "Yeah, it's probably a great woods bike, but you'd get beaten to death in a desert enduro."

Valid point. So, we entered the Husky in the Prospector's Gold Rush

Enduro. Traditionally, it's one of the toughest of the year and usually runs over a wide variety of terrain. And you can always count on one or more heart-stopping downhills.

The crack DB enduro team loaded bikes and bodies into the Dirt Diggers' Great White Bus (Rolling Ghetto Mark II) and headed north to the rocky desert near Red Mountain. The Diggers' bus is worth a story all by itself, but space and embarrassment prevent the telling of that particular saga here and now.

Anyway, despite the best efforts of Gary Woodling, the bus creaked to a halt in the pits the night before the enduro and the DB enduro team proceeded to get twisted out of their alleged minds on various noxious liquids. Campfires burned well into the night. Good cheer, laughter and the spirit of brotherhood permeated the clear desert air. Also, someone threw up on Clipper's KTM. Probably a Prospector.

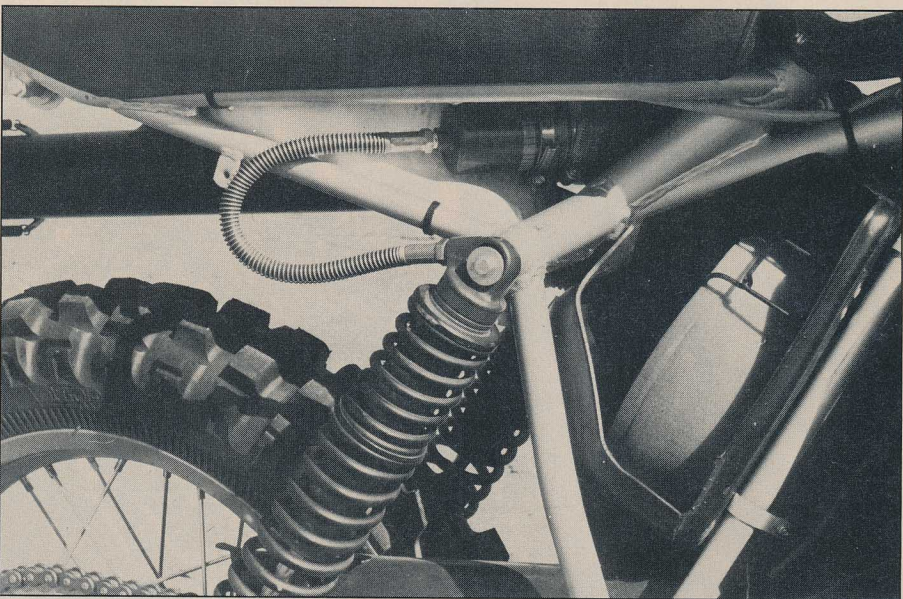
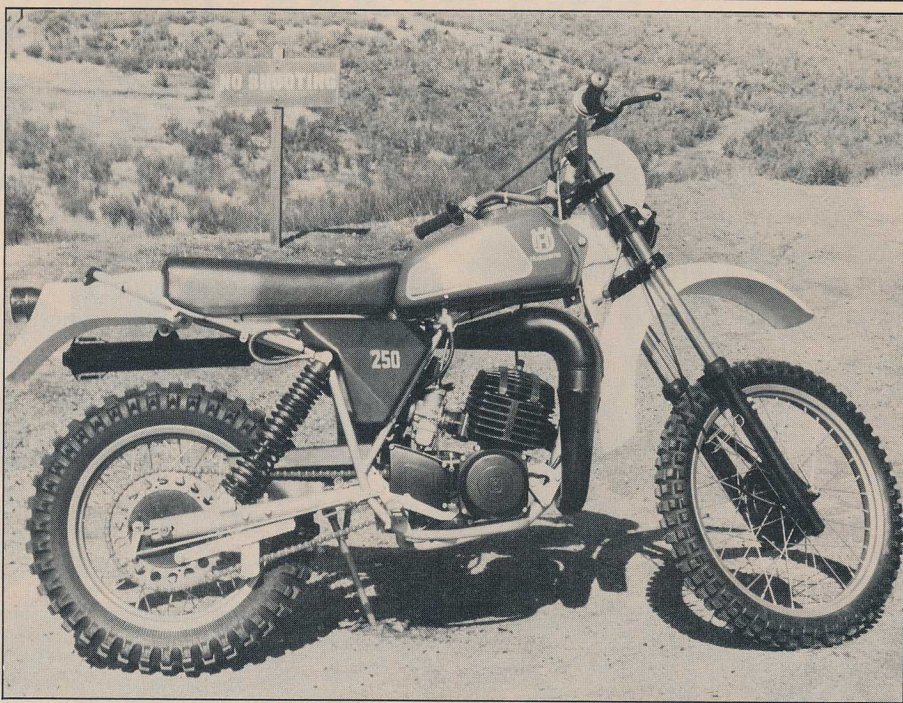
Early the next morning, we fired the bikes up and rode around a bit to check the jetting on the bikes. We leaned the needle out on the Husky one additional notch, and this made a big difference.

We had a chance to ride the Husky a few days earlier and found that the bike was jetted horribly fat. Lots of smoke billowed from the pipe and the performance was sluggish throughout the range. We checked the jetting and found that the carb came with a whooping 435 main jet and was also too rich on the mid-range. We exchanged the 435 for a 410 main and that helped a bunch. Some fine-tuning on the mid-range cleaned things up and the low end was taken care of by the pilot air screw. If you happen to get a 250 WR and are not happy with its performance, then by all means, take the time to dial the jetting in.

Once we had the Mikuni carb in the ballpark, the Husky showed its heritage. The engine pulled just right down low and had an incredibly strong mid-range, flattening out a bit early on top. For an enduro bike, it was near-perfect power.

One thing that was not perfect, however, was the suspension. The first time we rode the bike we were sorely disappointed with both the front and the rear suspension. Those forks felt harsh, but still bottomed... a strange set of circumstances. And the rear end sagged, but jolted the rider over sharp-edged bumps.

We shaped up the forks easily by draining the old oil out and replacing it with PJ-1 five-weight. The Husky manual calls for fork oil to be between 10- and 30-weight. We feel that's wrong. The stuff we drained out looked like about 20-weight. With the five-weight oil in, the forks felt great. We used 275ccs of oil and six pounds of air pressure in the forks. This gave us just



*Our stock shocks came with too much compression and rebound damping and overly soft springs. Reservoir is tucked under the saddle. Easily accessible air filter can be seen on the right.*

the right amount of "sag," yet bottoming was rare. All things considered, once our tuning was accomplished, we'd have to rate the action of the Husky forks as excellent. Because the travel was under 10 inches, the smallish 35mm fork tubes were up to the job.

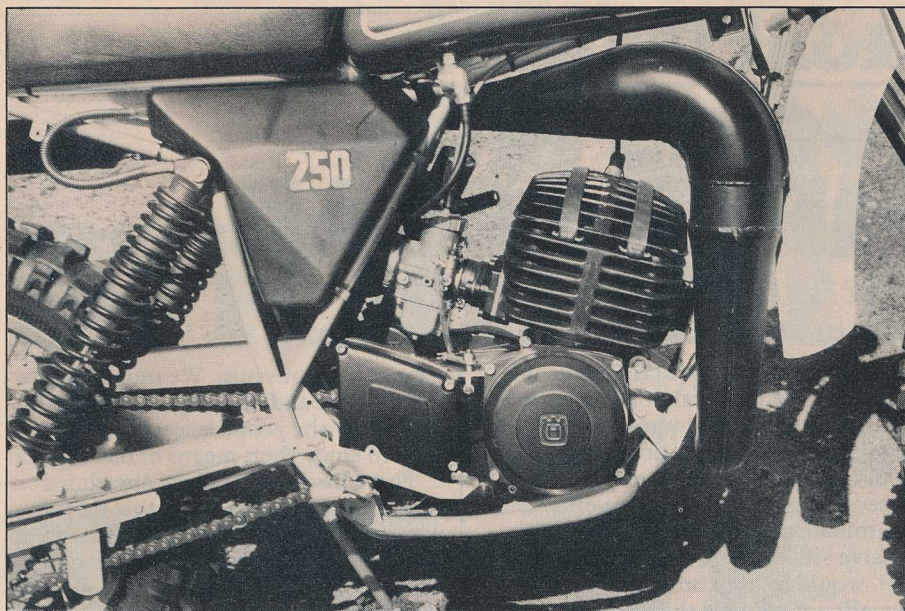
The rear end caused us considerably more grief, and that was a surprise. We've come to expect Ohlins shocks to perform in a state-of-the-art manner. Yet, our shocks sagged even when bumped to maximum preload. Too, when any square bumps were hit, the Ohlins would get rigid and transmit a great deal of shock to the rider.

Wrong-o. Big W.

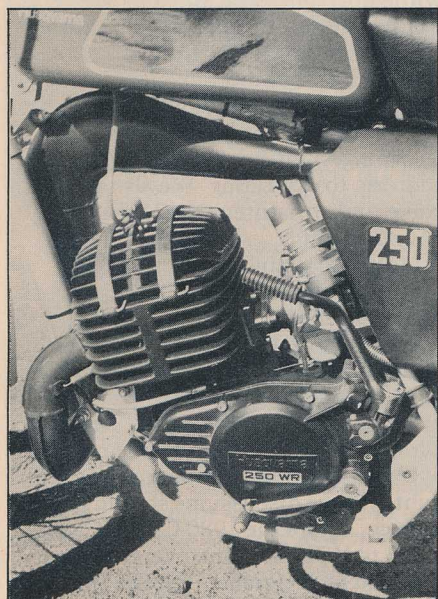
Without dwelling on this too much longer, here's what we feel is the prob-

lem. The Ohlins on the WR Husky have too much compression damping and too much rebound damping. This means that they not only get rigid when hitting a sharp bump, but they also pack down when hitting a series of small bumps. Husky tried to work around this by putting a soft spring on the bike, but this only works moderately well when the going is slow and the rear wheel has time to react.

One additional problem is that the sagging rear end makes the bike steer in a fuzzy fashion. With the stock Ohlins on the bike, we found ourselves running into the base of immovable trees and careening into the sides of hills. After going wide on a fireroad and sailing off into the clear blue sky, we gave up on the Ohlins and retired to the



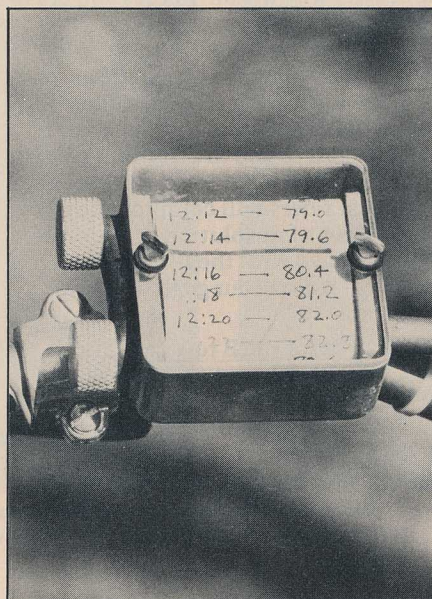
Truly impressive motor. The 250 WR puts out exactly the right kind of power for serious enduro riding.



Engine rails run wide and offer some protection for the cases, but we slipped on a Petty skid plate for an enduro. Kickstarter is high and awkward to use.

well-lit, fur-lined DB garage. Most of the trick shocks that we had around would not do the job on the Husky. You see, the 250 WR has a very mild suspension lever ratio of about 1.9. This means that for every inch of shock travel, the rear axle travels 1.9 inches. The shocks we had were all set for bikes with about a 2.2 suspension lever ratio. This meant way too much rebound damping and ultra-heavy springing.

We finally settled on a pair of Works Performance shocks for a 1977 Suzuki RM370. This bike had just about the same travel and suspension lever ratio as the WR Husky. Getting the right bushings in the shocks for the Husky was a pain, as the top shock mount is a huge pin, held in place with a wimpy



The old standby, a Webco route chart holder was used on our bike for the Prospectors Gold Rush Enduro. It's still one of the best buys an enduro rider can make.

ten millimeter bolt. Once we got the old Works shocks on, the Husky was taken for a brief test spin and everything was all smiles.

It worked... and how!

The Husky now went where it was pointed, and directional changes required no more than weighting the outside peg and blasting on the throttle. The wiggling and waving rear end sensation with the stock shocks also went away. What we had left was a bike that tracked straight and true and appeared to do the job well on the bumps.

However, that was the impression of a bit of trail riding. How it worked under fire was why we found ourselves warming bikes up at 7:30 in the morning, with a 100-mile enduro ahead.

The DB enduro team consisted of

Gary Woodling (pronounced Woo-dling), Paul Clipper, Nate Sciacqua (pronounced Smith) and Rick Sieman. We had a 55 A through D. Clipper and Woodling were equipped with enough trick time-keeping aids to start a small computer company on the side, while Nate and Sieman relied on the old tried-and-true Webco route chart holders.

At 8:55 (8:00 key time), the intrepid four took off on the first loop of the Gold Rush enduro. Boy-o-boy-o-boy, we thought. We are hot stuff! Hell's fire, we zeroed everything in sight. As a matter of fact, though, the first loop was easy enough to zero in a 1965 Ford pick-up truck. We scoffed. Actually, the Prospectors have this new idea to draw in beginning enduro riders. The first loop is easy to ride, with a few tricky checks thrown in to trap the unwary. This way, a father can ride with his son, or a guy can take his girl along and not worry about death and destruction. Then, the beginners can retire after the first loop and the heavy-duty stuff starts.

On that first loop, we learned a few things about the Husky. The smooth spread of good torque made the bike easy to ride and we could short-shift without the engine falling on its face. Because we had a relatively smooth course, we gassed it hard when we could and then slowed down and rested to keep from burning a check. At high speeds, the Husky ignored the bumps and went about its business in a straightforward fashion. In fact, the faster the better. Those crusty old Works shocks did the job just fine and light five-weight oil allowed the forks to respond at just the right race.

A few irritating things cropped up. The gas cap wept like a runny-nosed kid, getting pre-mix all over the riders' leathers. When getting way back on the saddle, heat from the pipe would roast the left leg of the rider. This was especially noticeable when paddling up a snotty hill. Also, the lack of a primary kickstart was irritating. Whenever we rolled into a check, if you couldn't locate neutral it was necessary to shut the engine off, then fish for neutral before the engine could be started again. While this sounds like a small gripe, it cost about 30 seconds per check. When you're on a tight schedule, this adds up quicker than you might think.

We rolled into the finish of the first loop way early (allowable) and gassed up. A rag was wrapped around the gas cap of the Husky to stop (or control) the seeping. The needle was leaned once again. Spokes were good and tight and virtually no maintenance was required on the 250 WR. All the motor mounts were snug and the bike felt as sound as when new.

(Continued on page 62)

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(Continued from page 29)

We knew that the fun stuff was over and the remaining two loops would be no picnic at all. Anticipating some rocks, we had bolted a Petty plastic skid plate in place. Still, we feel that the Husky should come with a skid plate . . . the bike is not inexpensive.

Team DB rolled out on the second loop, full of dreams, hopes and visions of trophies. For exactly 14.4 miles, we were still confident and cocky. Then, it was Rock City. Lordy! Everywhere we looked, it was big rocks, with medium rocks in between them and small rocks taking up the slack space. Bouncing and clanking became the order of the day. You had to keep your speed up, or the bikes would careen off to the side. Too high a speed was dangerous, as the bikes would be on the verge of going out of control. Too slow and there was not enough stability to keep a good gyro effect going. What it meant was this: You worked your ass off to keep up a reasonable pace. Back off and it got brutal. Get reckless and it was asking for a crash.

The Husky did a good job under these conditions. It tracked well and ignored most of the rocks. Stuff that would have deflected an IT or sent a PE into a tank slapper was merely a sharp jolt to the Husky.

Again, we appreciated the excellent spread of power that allowed us to ride the Husky a gear higher and make the engine lug. Spinning the rear wheel in loose rocks is not the hot set-up.

A few miles later, we started climbing. This was a good chance for the WR to show its breeding. It took the climbs in strike, crawling down to amazingly low rpm for a 250. Most of the nasty hills could be attacked in second gear, with low gear being held in reserve for the truly nasty sections. When we did have to go to low to pick our way through the boulders, no clutch slipping was needed. The WR would get right down there and grunt like a tractor. We became more and more impressed with the flexibility of the powerband as the going got rougher.

Only one thing bothered us: Those uphill meant that a downhill was coming up soon. And when it did, four sets of eyeballs opened up right to the max!

Lord have mercy! It was at least a half-mile long and as close to vertical as a hill can get. We're sure that a fly would have needed hiking boots to get down that hill without crashing.

We left the Husky in second gear and worked both brakes like a bear and somehow made it to the bottom without crashing our collective brains out. Several pucker marks were visible in the team DB saddles at the end of the descent. The fantastic front brake on the WR was greatly appreciated on the

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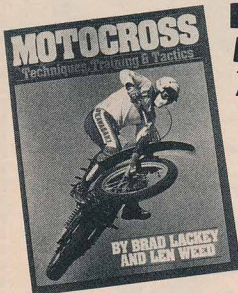
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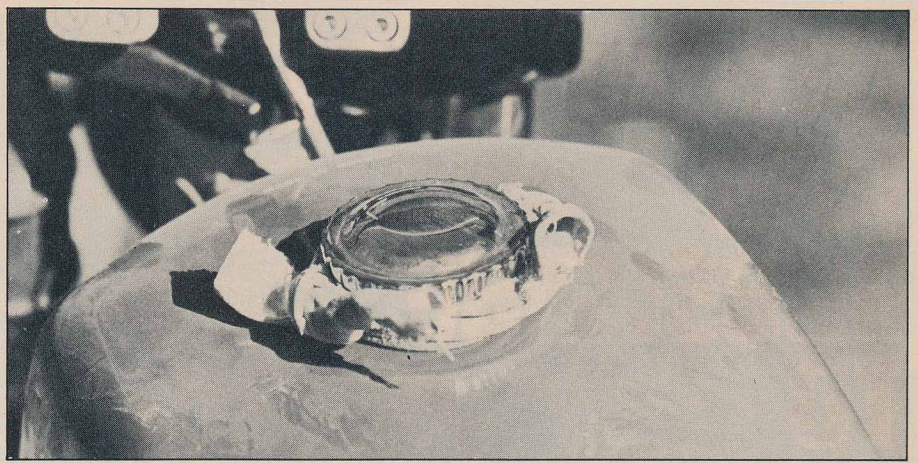
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The gas cap seeped enough to force us to wrap 'er in rags.

way down that particular hill.

Whoever laid out the course had a diabolical mind, as there was no rest for those who made it down in one piece. Immediately after the hill, the course turned into a rock farm! Wall to wall rocks. Big ones and little ones. Loose ones and rocks with roots in China. Square rocks and slippery round ones. Pointy ones and flat ones. You want rocks? This was the place. Stock up for Rock Day.

Here we learned to appreciate the low saddle on the WR. Some of the rocks were huge three- and four-footers and we had to ride over them and drop off nearly vertical. With a tall bike, this would have been grim for a normal-sized rider. On the WR, we just stuck both feet out like an outrigger and pushed, prodded and paddled our way through. Right then and there, we made the decision that whatever the Husky gave away on suspension travel was more than worth it in the rough stuff. The concept was correct.

At the end of the second loop, Team DB pulled into the pits, gassed up, lubed chains, sniveled and bitched, then headed out for the third and final loop.

If we thought the second loop was rough, the third loop made it look like a freeway. Not only were there rocks, but many sections on the miserable third loop were off-camber rock and sand trails. Slip and paddle. Paddle and stumble. And try to stay on time. Again, the low saddle height was a welcome thing.

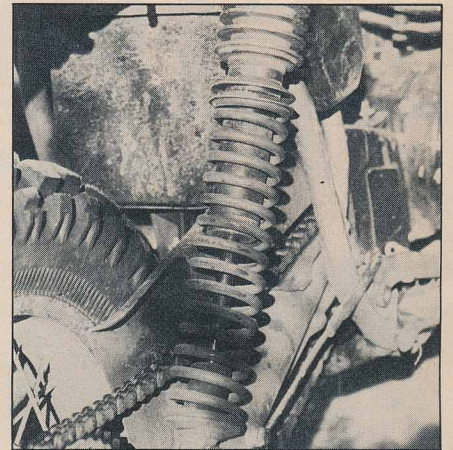
After almost 100 miles of torture, the enduro ended and a tired DB crew got back in the Great White Bus and proceeded to get loose, as they say.

### Thoughts on the Husky

Once we dialed it, the bike was delightful. We cannot think of a better, more sensible powerband for hard enduro riding.

That pipe is still a leg burner and should be changed at the factory.

Pegs, bars and seating position all feel right to most riders. Woods riders



We used an old set of Works Performance shocks on the Husky and they were superb.

will want to cut the bars down a bit for clearance.

Getting to the air cleaner is a snap. Just flip out the plastic side panel and the filter is waiting for service... in the garage or in the field. No tools needed.

The brakes appear to be the same as in past Husky machines. This means that if you get them wet, your brakes are gone. The factory should do something about this after all these years.

A straight-pull throttle is standard. Magura controls are on both ends of the bars. Good stuff.

Once neutral is found, the Husky can be started with the left foot while the rider is seated on the bike.

No tool bag comes with the Husky. We mounted a Can-Am bag over the rear fender loop and it fit nicely and stayed in place.

While riding the Husky, a droning sound emanates from the engine and inlet tract and adds to rider fatigue. The bike could be quieter.

Shifting was fairly positive and didn't require much thought, except for the first-to-second selection. Then, some deliberation was in order, or a missed shift was possible.

The stock grips were too large for all of our test riders and we replaced them with some slim Daystars.

At 233 pounds dry, the Husky is no

lightweight, but it's not out of line for a 250 enduro bike. With a full tank, the bike reaches 250-plus pounds on the DB scale.

**Should I buy one?**

Why not? Especially if you ride in the East or Midwest. If you ride Western enduros, then you are immediately faced with the necessity of spending additional dollars for shocks. If you're willing to make that added investment in the suspension department, then the Husky 250 WR is almost impossible to resist. □

**HUSQVARNA 250 WR Specifications**

NAME AND MODEL	Husqvarna 250 WR
ENGINE TYPE	Air-cooled, two-stroke, reed valve, single cylinder
BORE AND STROKE	69.50mm x 64.50mm
DISPLACEMENT	244cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY)	N/A
CARBURETION	Mikuni 38mm
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	430
NEEDLE JET	R2
JET NEEDLE	6DH3
PILOT JET	45
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	N/A
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	3.0 gallons (11.5 liters)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Steel
GAS/OIL RATIO	25:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Foam element
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed
GEAR BOX RATIOS:	
1	23.2
2	16.8
3	12.8
4	10.3
5	8.6
6	7.3
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	13-53
IGNITION	Motoplant pointless
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	No
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	Champion N3
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	Yes/yes/slightly loud
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Up-pipe
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube, chrome moly
WHEELBASE	1440mm (56.7 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	265mm (10.4 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	900mm (35.4 inches)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	29.5 degrees
TRAIL	152mm (6 inches)
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	106kg (240 pounds)
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	3.00x21 knobby
REAR	5.50x17 knobby
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Leading axle, oil/spring fork, 240mm (9.5 inches)
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Ohlins gas/oil shock, 240mm (9.5 inches)
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Enduro competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Sweden
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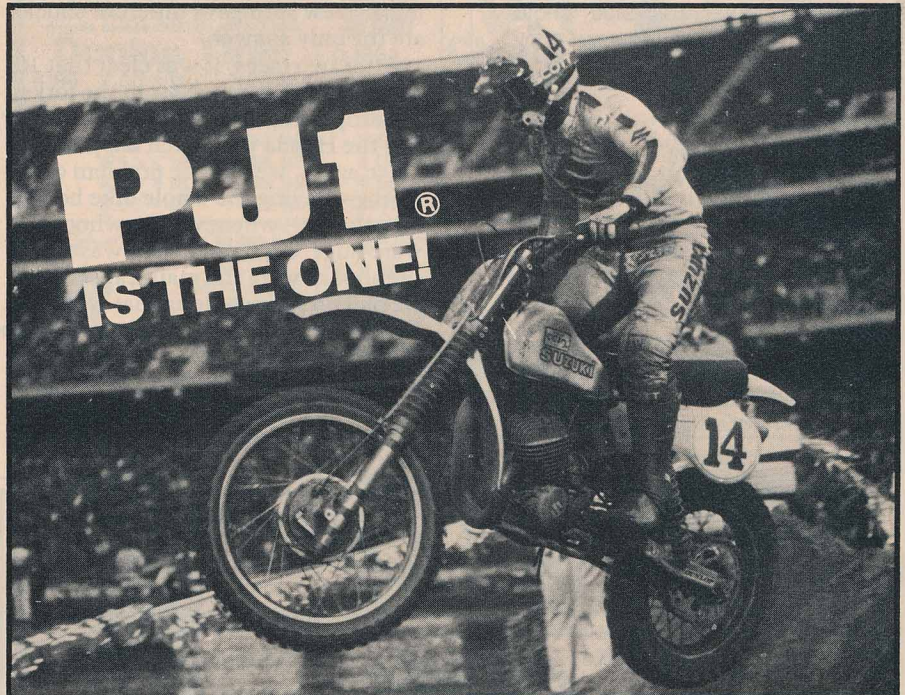
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