

# HUSQVARNA 250 XC

Unlike the manufacturers that develop "one-size-fits-all" bikes, Husqvarna builds specialized off-road racers. If you prefer desert races and fast Hare Scrambles, try out a Husky 250 XC—it's tailored exactly to your needs.



PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID HANSEN

● MOST PEOPLE WOULD AGREE THAT IT'S hard to argue with success. And if you buy that, then questioning the effectiveness of Husqvarna's off-road motorcycles is nearly unthinkable. For years the Swedish company's off-road racing efforts have virtually embodied the word "success," and Husqvarna continues to be a dominant force in desert racing and enduro competition, despite increased pressure from other manufacturers. While Team Husqvarna is composed of some of the best off-road talent in the world, these riders compete on machines that are amazingly close to showroom-stock; in more than a few instances Husqvarna riders have literally taken

bikes out of the crate, fine-tuned them according to personal preferences, and gone on to win hotly contested events. With Husqvarna, what they race is what you get.

The 250 XC is Husqvarna's "Western bike," designed for desert races but equally suitable for Midwestern and Eastern Hare Scrambles and wide-open enduro events. Formerly known as the OR, the XC is closely related to the track-bred CR motocrossers; both models share identical frame geometry, swing arms and suspension components. The XC's steering geometry—30 degrees rake and 5.98 inches of trail—combines with a long 59.3-inch wheelbase to make

the Husky a stable and predictable high-speed handler. The 250 XC is no less than amazing when hustling through long, sandy washes and over whoop-filled terrain; the bike tracks straight ahead and never side-hops or shakes its head even if you chop the throttle. At racing speeds the XC inspires confidence and rarely demands acrobatics from the rider.

This remarkable stability exacts a price in low-speed agility; in slow, tight turns the XC tends to push the front end. Sliding forward on the gas tank to weight the front wheel helps the 250's tracking ability to some extent, but in close quarters the XC cannot be called nimble. In all fairness, the XC was not designed for the



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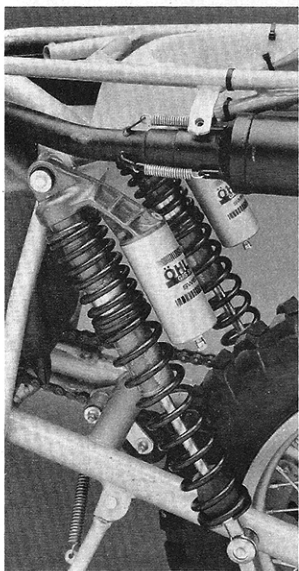
tight and narrow; Husqvarna offers the 250 WR for riders who compete in the tight stuff on a regular basis, and that bike is also superb in its element.

Like the motocrosser, the XC offers 11.8 inches of fork travel and 12.2 inches of rear-wheel travel. The suspension components have damping and spring rates that match those on the MX bike, and the quality of travel is good at both ends. The two-shock rear end uses Ohlins piggyback reservoir dampers that we found impossible to fade, even over long stretches of whoops. The shocks are adjustable and rebuildable, and this twin-damper setup gives away little, if anything, to the latest single-shock rear suspension systems.

The fork features 40mm tubes, and it works well with no air and the stock 450cc of 15-weight oil. The fork springs are a trifle stiff for our lighter (140-pound) test riders, but our larger testers have no complaints. Despite new fork seals and a new polish job on the fork tubes for 1982, our XC fork still weeped oil. The leak was less serious than the loose fork seals of the 430 CR we tested in March 1982, but it's inexcusable that the Swedish engineers still haven't figured out how to keep all the damping fluid inside the fork. As a sign of good faith, the factory is offering a warranty fix to owners with severe fork seal problems. The fix involves the installation of an oversized seal that should stay put in the fork stanchions.

Another familiar Husky shortcoming is the functioning of the brakes; although the brake shoe material is new and supposedly improved, one good dunking through a deep water crossing fades the brakes badly, and they never come back 100 percent. The shoes soon become glazed enough to require a light going-over with sandpaper to restore stopping power. But even at their best, the brakes are inferior to the binders on any of the latest Japanese enduro bikes. The front brake is mediocre; the rear unit is a little better because it's a bit more fade resistant and easy to modulate near the lockup point. The front brake lever, a newly bobbed two-finger item, is trendy but not entirely functional—with the Husqvarna brake you need all the leverage you can get. The brakes are a handicap; better waterproofing and a drastic improvement in brake-lining material are in order.

All the Husqvarna 250s (the XC, the WR enduro bike and the CR motocrosser) have new engines this year, and they are finally equipped with primary kickstarting; long-suffering Husky patrons need no longer fish around for neutral after stalling. The three 250s share new, beefed-up crankcases, and the swing-arm pivot bolt now passes through the reinforced rear portion of the cases.

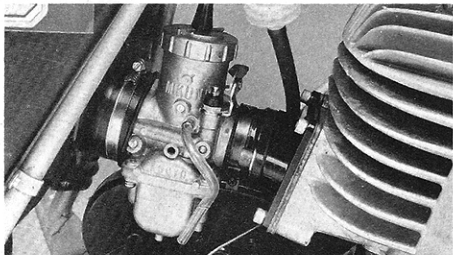


The XC employs a twin-shock rear suspension system that features excellent Ohlins piggyback dampers.

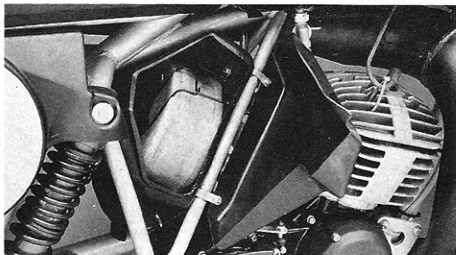
The XC has an unusual blend of features, sharing a wide-ratio six-speed transmission with the woods-going WR and using the top end from the CR.

The XC's first, second and third gears are lower than the first three cogs in the 250 motocrosser, and sixth is taller than the CR's top gear. These alterations increase the off-road machine's flexibility with little penalty. The XC successfully bridges the widened gaps between the

lower three gears in most situations; however, you must spin the engine up tight to keep the engine on the pipe in the upper gears. You can keep the engine within the top-weighted power curve during wide-open riding by slapping the clutch lever once or twice when needed. However, the motocross-style power delivery and the wide spread between gears do become a liability in tight riding conditions. Although a good rider can



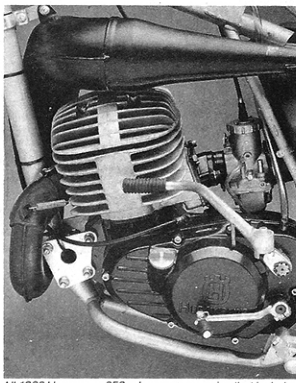
Plenty of access room around the carburetor makes it easy to rejet the 250.



Air filter access is terrific; you need no tools to service the foam element.



The off-road XC shares identical frame geometry, swing arms and suspension components with the CR 250 MXer.

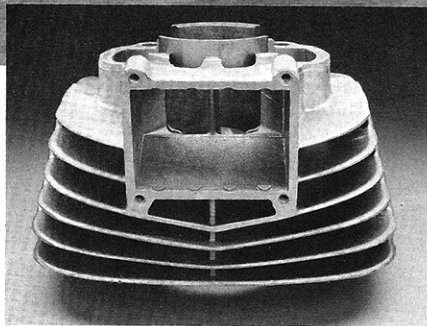


All 1982 Husqvarna 250s share a new engine that includes a redesigned top end and primary kickstarting.

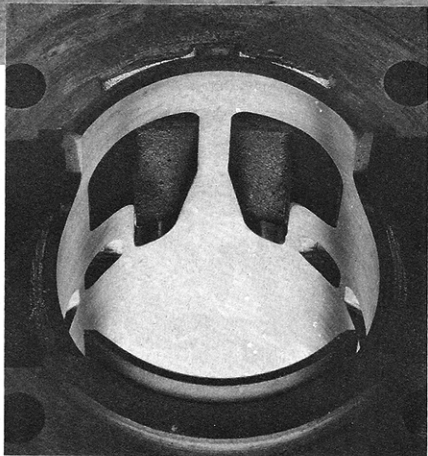




*Get this specialized Husky on goat trails or in ten acres of trees standing in a five-acre forest and you'll be hating life. Try some nice open desert terrain and you'll just love the results.*



*The new XC top end has a cast-in reed cage for the eight-petal reed.*



*Twin finger-type boost ports lead up from the top of the intake port, and two case-filling ports lead directly from the intake tract to the crankcase.*



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compensate with a lot of clutch work, it's hard on both the bike and the rider. Once again, remember that the XC was not designed for a steady diet of goat trails and tree dodging.

The top end features a new cylinder with a cast-in reed cage that takes an eight-petal reed. All three Husky 250s share the basic cylinder port layout, which incorporates finger-type boost ports that lead upward from the top of the intake port. These ports direct the incoming fuel/air mixture toward the top of the cylinder; the transfer ports direct their flow in a more circular, swirling motion.

The XC/CR cylinder differs from that of the woods-going WR. Husqvarna lowered the exhaust port one millimeter and added two case-filling ports that lead directly from the intake tract to the crankcase. These case ports, downstream of the reedblock and in the floor of the intake tract outside of the steel liner, operate independently of the piston-skirt-controlled intake system. This hybrid case-induction/piston-port-induction system resembles Suzuki's Full-Reed intake system in that it provides longer-duration case filling than a conventional piston-port intake design allows.

As the philosophy and design of these pieces suggest, the XC engine produces motocrosser-like power on the dyno. The Husky pumps out an average amount of low-end for a 250, and it shows a healthy power surge in the mid-range and top end. And even though the XC is down relative to the class-leading Yamaha IT250J by as much as six horsepower in an rpm-for-rpm dyno chart comparison, the difference is not necessarily as great as the bare numbers indicate.

Our XC showed signs of transmission distress while we were running it on the dyno; this prevented thorough testing, and in all probability also stunted the Husqvarna's top-end power output. Make no mistake—your XC won't out-horsepower a Yamaha IT250J, but that doesn't mean the IT will run away and hide once you're out of the dyno room and on the trails.

The XC starts easily; at worst, our 250 was a three-kick bike. The primary kick-starting is a useful addition, and most riders should be able to start the bike when it's in gear and warm, even while astride the bike and kicking left-footed. The Husky has a long shift throw; we occasionally missed the second-to-third exchange when shifting without the clutch; shifting was decidedly smoother with it.

The 38mm Mikuni carburetor is commendably accessible; there's plenty of room to work on the carb, which makes it easy to rejet as riding conditions demand. As a word of caution, rejet by reading the spark plug and check the spark arrester before assuming that the XC needs leaner jetting. Husqvarna



## RIDING THE KING'S MACHINE

We recently had a chance to ride one of Dick Burleson's factory Husqvarna mounts, and we were immensely impressed—impressed because the 250 WR was, for all intents and purposes, a box-stock 1982 bike.

We rode the same 250 WR Burleson did in the last round of the 1981 National Enduro Championship series, held in Tulsa, Oklahoma. How important was the Tulsa meet? Consider these facts. First, going into Tulsa, Burleson and his two teammates, Terry Cunningham and Mike Melton, each had a shot at the 1981 title. Tulsa wasn't a throwaway. Second, winning the 1981 Championship would give Burleson an unprecedented total of eight enduro crowns—eight consecutive National titles. Last, 1981 would be the final year Dick Burleson would compete full-time. Tulsa was a do-or-die effort for the veteran rider, and he needed nothing less than the best equipment Husqvarna had to offer. What did he pick? A stock Dick Burleson Replica out of the pile of crates that was the first shipment of 1982 production machinery.

Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the 1981 Enduro Championship are now history, and the records show that Burleson battled his way to a second-place finish behind Cunningham, earning the title by just two points. When we got the chance to run our fingers over and swing a leg astride King Richard's bike, the bike that made enduro history, we gave it a thorough examination and wringing-out, and compiled a detailed list of Burleson's top-secret tricks—tricks that transformed a stock 250 WR into a championship-caliber enduro weapon. We didn't care if Husqvarna objected; we were printing all of Burleson's secrets.

The list doesn't exactly fill a notebook; here's what you have to do to set up your bike like Burleson's. First, take a 1982 250 WR out of the box and assemble it. Next, install a pair of full-length Magura dogleg levers. Cut the ball-ends off the



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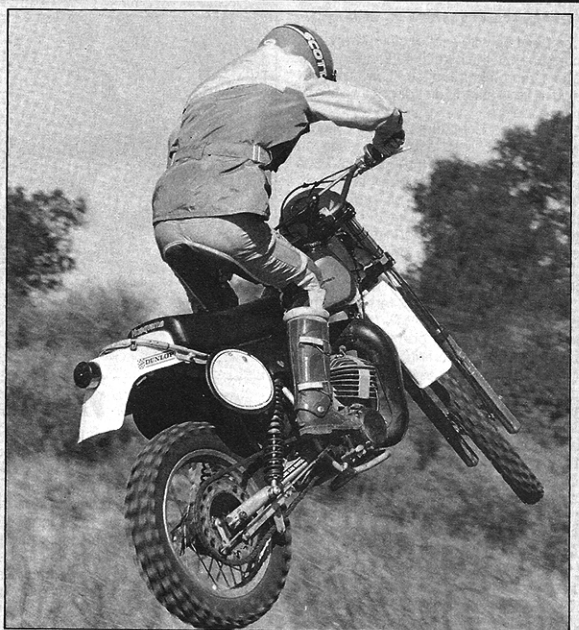
equips its off-road models with a screen-type spark arrestor; as carbon fouls the screen, the bike stutters as if running overly rich. We started out with Husqvarna's recommended 25:1 premix ratio, but experienced fouling of the spark arrestor. The bike ran fine after we gave the spark-trapping screen a thorough cleaning and switched to a lean 50:1 oil/gas mixture using Bel-Ray MC-1.

The 250 has a healthy appetite for fuel. With the 250's smallish 2.9-gallon capacity, XC owners will have a range of no more than 55 miles. Also, the fuel tank, a handsome aluminum unit, will accumulate dings and dents as you and your bike experience the joys of off-road



get-offs. A plastic tank would probably be more durable, and a larger capacity would definitely be well received. The Husky's gas cap seals tightly but can be hard to remove, especially with cold or wet hands.

Access to the air filter on the Husqvarna is exemplary; you can remove the air filter element with one hand. The airbox cover pivots out of the way for super-quick access to the filter; it fastens securely in place by a lip which tucks under the seat frame tube, and there's no bother with any nut-and-bolt fasteners. A simple but effective wire retainer holds the actual filter element in position. The airbox, though not absolutely waterproof, benefits from an effective drain system that keeps the box from filling



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levers and trim one inch off each side of the handlebar to give additional side clearance. Set up the suspension according to weight and ability. (For Tulsa, Dick used 430cc of 10-weight fork oil per leg and no air, and for his 150 pounds he set the shock spring preload so the rear end would rebound to a quarter inch less than its full rebound height when the unladen, standing bike was compressed and released.) Then jet the bike according to geographic and weather conditions. Finally, install Oury grips and a Dunlop K88 rear tire. The bike is complete.

With these high-tech modifications the WR works very well for tight woods riding. Although the Husqvarna WR has the same steering geometry as the XC and CR, a shorter swing arm reduces the wheelbase by 0.8 inch and makes the WR handle noticeably quicker. The bike almost pivots on the front wheel; it has better steering response and turning manners than almost any other enduro bike we've ridden.

The woods bike gives up about one inch of fork travel and an inch and a half of rear wheel travel compared to the other two Husky 250s, and that difference lowers the seat height and the center of gravity. However, the bike also surrenders an inch and a half of ground clearance, so you have to watch carefully to keep your toes from banging trailside obstacles. Although the WR gives up a small measure of stability through whoops and over extremely rough ground, this is evident only when riding the bike back-to-back with the XC; the WR is quick and agile, not squirrely.

The cylinder porting differences in the WR alter the power characteristics noticeably; although the flywheel weight is the same as the XC's, the woods bike feels torquier and slower-revving. This is not to say the WR is slow; it pulls just about as well as the XC in a drag race. However, the WR's powerband is easier to work with on really tight trails.

With or without the D.B. detailing, the WR is an excellent woods mount and is probably a better playbike than the XC for the average trail rider. It doesn't feel as high-strung as the XC, and its grumpy engine and responsive steering make it more forgiving. If you think that makes the 1982 250 WR Dick Burleson Replica less competitive than the XC, talk to the man Husqvarna named the bike after.

—Ken Lee

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with water and drowning the engine. After a number of creek crossings—leaving the foam filter damp—the engine never so much as stuttered.

Husqvarna equips the XC with an external-rotor Motoplant capacitor-discharge ignition system. We found the ignition system to be sufficiently waterproof, and we suffered no ignition-related problems with the bike. The XC comes set up with a 35-watt lighting coil but no headlight. You can purchase a light from Husky Products for \$53; the hookup procedure is uncomplicated.

The 250 XC is unusually well detailed. For instance, most of the bolts and nuts on the XC have 10mm heads; standardized hardware means fewer tools and hassles on the trail. A strengthened rear hub and good, substantial spokes prevent wheel problems. Husqvarna uses an additional frame tube in place of a skid plate to protect the engine cases; it's just as effective and won't collect mud. The sidestand tucks under the left side of the swing arm; it's tough to deploy with your foot, but you needn't worry about the stand or accompanying hardware gouging a divot in your ankle.

At \$2545, the 250 XC is undeniably ex-

ensive, but Husqvarna is a specialty manufacturer; it builds bikes for serious competitors who know exactly what they want and have specific needs. No other manufacturer tailor-fits its off-road motorcycles to a distinct riding application. The 250 XC delivers motocrosser-like power and suspension travel in an off-road package aimed at riders who compete in high-speed events like desert races, Hare Scrambles, wide-open enduros, and even an occasional motocross race. If you're experienced and skilled enough to know that the 250 XC's abilities will fill your needs, then you'll be delighted with Husqvarna's middleweight XC.

# Cycle TEST SPECIFICATIONS

Make and model ..... Husqvarna 250 XC  
Price, suggested retail (as of 2/23/82) ..... \$2545

### ENGINE

Type ..... Two-stroke, reed-valve-inducted single-cylinder; air-cooled  
Bore and stroke ..... 69.5 x 64.5mm (2.74 x 2.54 in.)  
Piston displacement ..... 245cc (15.0 cu. in.)  
Compression ratio ..... 12.3:1  
Carburetion ..... (1) Mikuni round-slide  
Exhaust system ..... Upswept expansion chamber with silencer and USFS-approved spark arrester  
Ignition ..... External-rotor magneto, CDI  
Air filtration ..... Oiled foam  
Oil capacity ..... 1.5 qts. (1.4 l)  
Bhp @ rpm ..... 27.64 @ 8000  
Torque @ rpm ..... 19.31 @ 7000

### TRANSMISSION

Type ..... Six-speed, constant-mesh, wet clutch  
Primary drive ..... Straight-cut gears; 2.41  
Final drive ..... # 520 chain; 12/53 sprockets; 4.42  
Gear ratios (transmission) . (1) 14/33, 2.36 (2) 17/29, 1.71  
(3) 20/26, 1.30 (4) 23/24, 1.04  
(5) 25/22, 0.88 (6) 27/20, 0.74

### CHASSIS

Type ..... Single-downtube, full-cradle, chrome-moly frame; oval section, chrome-moly swing arm  
Suspension, front ..... Leading-axle, air-assisted fork with 40mm tubes and 11.8 in. (300mm) of travel  
rear .... (2) gas-charged, piggyback reservoir shock absorbers, adjustable for spring preload, producing 12.2 in. (310mm) of rear wheel travel  
Wheelbase ..... 59.3 in. (1505mm)  
Rake/trail ..... 30.0°/6.0 in. (152mm)  
Brake, front ..... Cable-actuated, single-leading-shoe drum  
rear ..... Rod-actuated, single-leading-shoe drum  
Wheel, front ..... 1.60 x 21 aluminum alloy rim  
rear ..... 2.50 x 17 aluminum alloy rim

Tire, front ..... 3.00/3.25-21 Pirelli Pentacross MT25E  
rear ..... 4.50-17 Pirelli Pentacross MT25  
Seat height ..... 38.1 in. (968mm)  
Ground clearance ..... 13.0 in. (330mm)  
Footpeg ground clearance ..... 12.8 in. (325mm)  
Fuel capacity ..... 2.9 gal. (11.0 l)  
Curb weight, with one gallon of gas ..... 236.0 lbs. (107.0 kg)  
Test weight ..... 396.0 lbs. (179.6 kg)

### CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACT

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San Diego, CA 92111  
(714) 565-1414

