

**HOLD
ON!
HERE
COMES
THE
SWEDISH
EXPRESS**

*The last of the
holdouts*

By the Staff of Dirt Bike

Husqvarna is the last of the European manufacturers to introduce a truly monstrous big-bore. Its 430 is a nice bike with nice manners, but gets smoked to the first turn by everybody. Enter the 500CR. It seems Husky was tired of making excuses for the 430, so here we have a brand-new mid-year bike, and a 500, to boot.

There's no mistaking the 500 for any other bike in the Husky lineup. The cylinder is a massive unit, tall in its structure compared to most open bikes. It's fed by a King Kong 44mm Mikuni carb, through an all-new eight-pedal reed. Two of the cogs have been eliminated in the trans, making the CR the only four-speed European mount. It's pure motocross in design. The gearbox naturally eliminates any trail-oriented sports, where a low gear is a must for survival.

In addition to the new engine, there are a host of small improvements on the Husky. Cosmetically, the tank is the most appealing color to come out of Swedeland. A brilliant silver enhances the bike's looks, letting the CR stand out in a crowd. New damper rods reside in the 40mm forks. Most of the handlebar gear has been changed, as has the muffler. Small stuff, but it adds up.

DANCIN' DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

Although called a 500, the CR is a 488. Its sole purpose in life is motocross. For riders who want more versatility, Husky offers its XC lineup. Maybe next year there will be a six-speed version of the 500. Who knows?





HUSQVARNA 500CR

For those of you who want numbers, the engine has the same bore, but with a ten-millimeter increase in the stroke. The compression is 9.5:1, lower than the 430's 11.1:1. To keep down vibration, the same crank is used, but is cut and shaved to compensate for the added weight it has to propel.

So much for numbers, how does it work? Starting the CR is a simple task. Usually it requires only one or two boots to gain fire. We're not talking a limp-legged swat; more of a serious punch is needed. The first thing that's noticeable is the very tall first gear. In fact, we stalled the bike in the first efforts to get under way. A quick run down the road showed the jetting off—way too rich. We replaced the stock 2.0 slide with a 3.0, changed the needle jet from a BB5 to a BB0 and the pilot jet from a 35 to a 30. The main jet, a 400, was left stock.

With these mods, the nature of the beast changed quite a bit. Very little vibration transmitted up to the rider's hands. In fact, we'd venture to say that there was less than on the 430. Acceleration is tractorlike; the CR is a torquer. The bike pulls from point zero lower and stronger than even a Maico. Its surge is intense and continues well into the powerband. While it doesn't rev out like the KTM or a Maico, its thrust is ferocious in the mid-range, making it torquey with plenty of flywheel effect.

We couldn't find fault with the four-speed trans; it's suited perfectly for motocross. Although first seems high, once some time is spent on the bike it becomes natural. The spread on the other gears suits the new motor. With its enormous boost, the CR pulls the tall gearing, allowing the rider to concentrate on riding, not shifting. Very little shifting is needed, and second and third handle all but the longest courses. Fourth gear revs out at about 70 mph, enough for any 'crosser.

All of the gears are beefed up to handle the extra load put out by the engine increase. While the clutch is unchanged, we couldn't find fault in its action. The pull on the lever is almost nonexistent, feeling much like a 125 rather than an open bike.

HOT RODS MAKE FOR SMOOTHER ACTION

We haven't complained about Husky fork action for the last couple years. It's been good. Excess stiction, leaky seals and harsh bottoming when the oil level wasn't spot-on, were our only complaints. For the '82 bikes more taper was added to the damper rods, resulting in a better ride and improved bottoming. The 500CR has gone one step further and the action is even more deluxe.

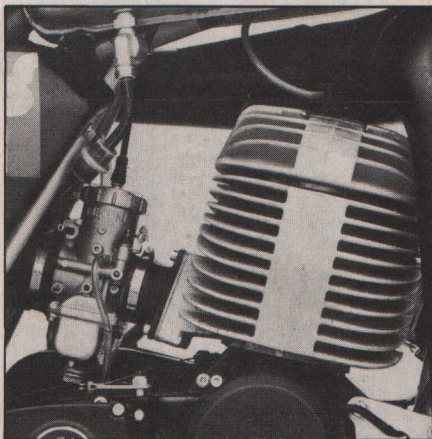
In the past we suggested 12-weight oil (mix ten- and 15-weight); the new forks



Torque is the name of the game with the CR. The power to the ground out put on the Husky is awesome; the sucker hooks up.



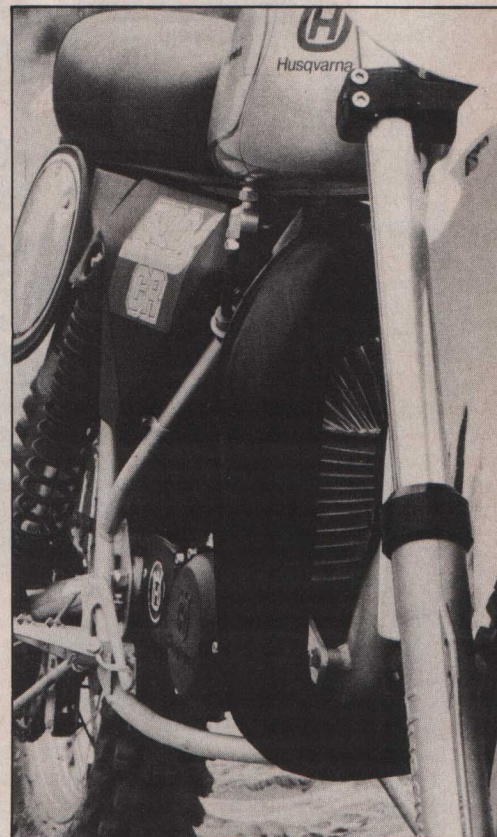
Spacing on the four-speed gearbox is spot-on. On a motocross track, shifting is kept to a minimum, letting the rider concentrate on going fast.



The engine is all new. A monstrous 44mm Mikuni feeds through a giant reed assembly. Notice how tall the cylinder is; there's barely enough room for the pipe to fit under the tank.

work best with ten-weight. Husky recommends 470cc's per leg. That works out to about six and a half inches from the top of the leg, if you're into measuring the level. There's no more stickiness in the first part of the travel. The stroke is smooth and soaks up even the smallest of ripples. Giant bongo jumps that zap all the travel on impact are tamed rather than struggled through. There is no more of the clashing that frays the rider needlessly on full compression. About the closest comparison we can make is to the YZ forks. They just plain work.

Complimenting the front is the last of the holdouts in the dual-shock design. Husky's setup is simple, strong and easy to work on. Ohlins handle the damping



Possibly the poorest brake pedal around, this unit flexes, bends and offers an all-around bad feel. The Trelleborg tires hook up well—a must for the 500. Big changes internally on the forks have them working deluxe. More taper on the rods allow the use of lighter oil, giving a better overall feel on the small as well as bigger stuff.



Although the CR500 isn't the lightest open bike, air flight is stable, and plush suspension soaks up the landing.

HUSQVARNA 500CR

task remarkably well. Outboard-mounted on a tubular swingarm, the action is progressive in feel: soft on the small bumps; firm enough to handle the big stuff as well. It's state of the art as far as dual-shock setups go.

While the rear might not work on a par with the Suzuki Floater, it does have benefits that the single-shockers do not have. For one, maintenance is nonexistent. Another benefit is in dialing in the front and rear ends to work together. On a single-shocker, this is critical. When one end is too stiff or soft, the bike either shakes its head or wallows in a foul way. On the Husky, simply adjust the preload to where it feels good, and ride.

COURSE WORK

Huskys have never been hop-on-and-ride-'em-fast bikes. They require the rider to be aggressive and attack the course. Part of the reason is the 30.5-degree rake—generous, to say the least. For some reason the 500 is worlds easier to ride; it doesn't push the rider as much and allows for altogether faster times around the course. There are several reasons for this: The forks action lets the front end settle sooner, making it stick better. Also, the handlebars are much lower than in years past. This forces the rider to stay forward, keeping his weight over the front of the bike. Add the fine manners of the engine, with its controlled acceleration, and the rider is allowed a margin of error. Anyway, it's easier to ride.

With some of the other four-speeders, stalling in the turns is a problem. Overly touchy brakes and a lack of flywheel are the causes. Our CR never caused this kind of grief. Its conduct was predictable, never alarming the rider with strangeness.

The 500 uses the same ignition as the 430, a smaller cut-down crank, and is in another league when it comes to usable grunt.

BITS AND PIECES

Considering the size of the engine, its pipe is rather small, smaller than the 430 unit. Long gone is the rubber-mounted silencer. The new item is a slip fit, with O-rings keeping the connection tight.

A Magura throttle replaces the normal Gunnar Gasser. The reason is that the monster Mikuni has such a huge spring in it that more leverage is needed from the throttle, thus the Magura. It's gear driven and works smoothly.

You might have some trouble finding jets for the carb. Don't worry, Husky has a complete stock of them already and they are available from the dealers.

Because the bike sucks more fuel, the gas tank is a 2.9-gallon item, the same one used on the XCs. The contour is slim, allowing an effortless transition to the front of the saddle while riding.

Trelleborg tires, front and rear, work well. We rode our bike on both hard/dry and loamy courses and could not find

fault with the rubber. A 17-inch rear wheel is still stock.

A shorty front brake lever is stock. The action is all right. It slows you down, but isn't in the same lineup as a Honda or a Yamaha. Hopefully this will be the last year we see that grim rear brake pedal. This item twists easily, while offering a worse feel than the more sensible XC/WR rear brake setup.

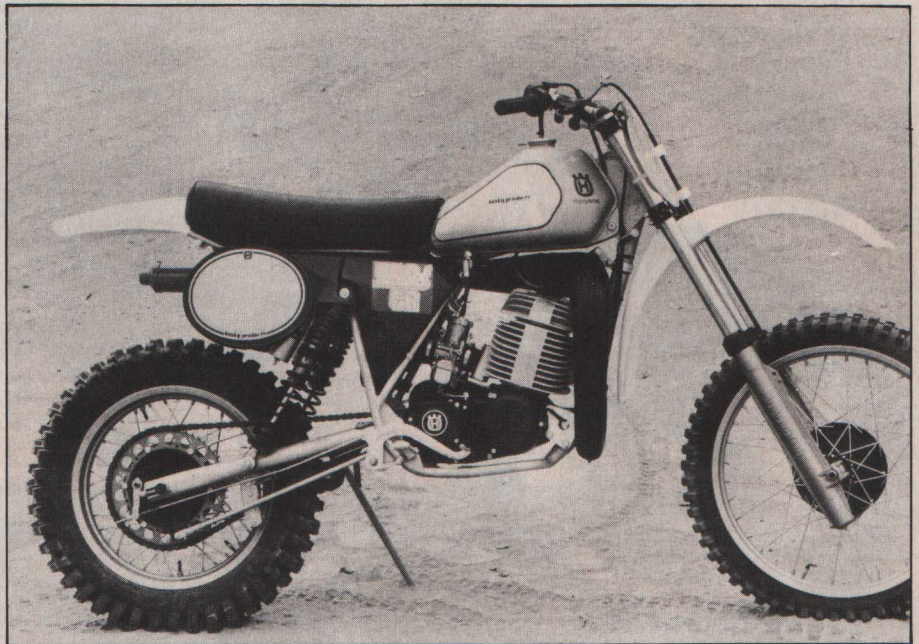
HEAVY METAL

We're thankful the Husky holdout is over. The drought for power is a thing of the past. Now we're greeted with another gronk, a big-time express model that has sensible power.

It's a tough job trying to compare the way the CR's motor works as opposed to

others. All of the Big Three have far less flywheel, and are revvers. The Maico is similar, but pulls a little longer than the Husky. In turn, the Husky will grunt far lower than the Maico because of its reed valve. A KTM has more everywhere than all the bikes, but it too seems to suffer from too little flywheel, and for many it is hard to ride.

The Husky package is a complete one. Noting has to be fiddled with on the suspension, the tires or the motor. In fact, the engine should satisfy everyone from the novice to the expert. It pulls, grunts and whips the rider around the course in an accurate, precise manner. For just under three thousand bucks, would you expect any less? □



HUSQVARNA 500CR

ENGINE TYPE	Single cylinder, 2-stroke, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE	86mm x 84mm
DISPLACEMENT	488cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED)	N/A
CARBURETION	Mikuni 44mm
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTINGS:	
MAIN JET	400
NEEDLE JET	BB5
JET NEEDLE	7DH3
PILOT JET	35
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium, 94+ octane
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	2.9 gal.
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Aluminum
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
RECOMMENDED OIL	Bel-Ray MC-1 Plus
OIL CAPACITY	1400cc
AIR FILTRATION	Foam type
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	4-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	13.53:1
2	10.29:1
3	8.23:1
4	6.96:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/53
IGNITION	CDI, motoplat
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	Bosch W4-C
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER/QUALITY	Yes/no/good
EXHAUST SYSTEM:	Up-pipe, through the frame
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube, chromoly
WHEELBASE	1505mm (59.2 in.)

GROUND CLEARANCE	345mm (13.6 in.)
SEAT HEIGHT	970mm (38.1 in.)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	30.5°
TRAIL	152mm (6.0 in.)
WEIGHT, DRY	107kg (235.9 lbs.)
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	3.20-21 Trelleborg
REAR	5.00-17 Trelleborg
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	Husqvarna, leading axle: 300mm (11.8 in.)
REAR	Dual-shock, Ohlins: 310mm (12.2 in.)
INTENDED USE	Motocross
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Sweden
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$2950
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Husqvarna Motor Company, Inc. 4925 Mercury Street San Diego, California 92111	
PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$94.87
RINGS ONLY	14.74
CYLINDER	369.62
SHIFT LEVER	24.50
BRAKE PEDAL	14.92
FRONT SPROCKET	11.11
OVERALL RATING, 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:	
HANDLING	98
SUSPENSION	98 front/96 rear
POWER	99
COST	84
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	96
EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK	98