



# SWEDE

## REVENGE

### Husky's Last Hurrah?

This may come as quite a shock, but the 1987 Husky 250 Motocrosser flat hauls timber. In fact, it's the fastest quarter-liter machine to come out of Sweden in years, finally catapulting the white warrior into a competitive ranking with the rest of the 250cc class.

This is shocking only in that the machine arrived in dealer showrooms well past the competition and it may just be the last Husky motocrosser—ever. The word is that in '88 Cagiva will build the MXers and Husky will handle the enduro lineup.

Husky's delinquent 250 comes equipped with the much ballyhooed White Power upside-down fork, an Ohlins single-shock rear end with all new linkage and a motor that finally barks (rather than moans). But the engine is the big news, with its electronically activated power valve and computerized digital ignition. And while the powerplant looks relatively unchanged, the solenoid-triggered exhaust valve gives the Husky something it's never had before—a midrange wallop that'll carry the nose of the machine sky high with a harmless dose of throttle.

#### PLUG IT IN FOR POWER

If low-end, knob-ripping torque is your bag, keep looking. The Husky makes a whole lot of noise at the lower revs but very little usable power. Just past the initial twist of throttle, though, the powerband sparks to attention and comes alive. You can definitely feel the meaty mid-hit as the power valve slaps open like a light switch and lets the

water-cooled cylinder blow out a gut-full of digested fuel.

The trick to riding the Husky fast is to bypass the bottom-end black hole and work the mid-muscle blast. This isn't that tough and requires only a healthy twist of throttle and a well-groomed clutch hand. You must manhandle the motor and force it into the workable range of power. If you try to lug it, or short shift, it falls flat on its face.

We leaned out the main jet by two positions and the needle by one slot. This immediately tightened up the powerband and somewhat smoothed out the abrupt midrange hit. Plan on dropping the countershaft down to a 12 or adding two teeth to the rear sprocket. There's a gap between second and third gear that plagues the pilot with a dreaded bog. If you fall out of the workable meat of the powerband and let the Husky lug as you're shifting, you'll feel like you just ran into a pool of wet cement. Fanning the clutch and wide-open speed shifts are the hot ticket. It shifts more smoothly under full throttle than it does when you carefully snick it from gear to gear.

#### SUSPENSION GREMLINS

It's fairly obvious that the Husky comes equipped with some of the best suspension components you can buy on this planet. Oddly enough, it performs as though the factory forgot to test what they decided to sell. Both ends are extremely plush, but soft to the point of ludicrousness. Up front, we replaced the weak springs with a pair of 21-lb./in. ATK units. This helped considerably.

Out back, the Ohlins is undersprung and overdamped. Most of the hot riders shelved the 5.1 kg/mm spring in favor of a 5.5, 5.6 or 5.7. Fortunately, we had the folks from Z Racing with us during

the test and they revalved the Ohlins to their specs. Basically, Z Racing removes some of the slow speed rebound damping and adds a stop in the valving stack so the machine will react more like a Japanese shock rather than providing the standard mushman feel. We definitely recommend their shock mod. (You can contact Z Racing at Dept. DR, 330 E. Orangethorpe Ave, Unit K&L, Placentia, CA 92670; 714/524-5441.)

Once both suspension ends were stiffened up, the bike took on a whole new feel. It's far and away the best cornering Husky we've tested, and we can attribute its steering prowess directly to the White Power fork. The fork is extremely rigid and keeps the front end from hunting around like the flimsy 40mm telescopics.

Set the sag with the rider aboard at four inches and bleed the fork tubes after every ride (they pump up quickly; you'll need an eight-millimeter wrench to crack the bleed valve). The fork internals are hard-coated so the oil doesn't get contaminated as in normal cartridge forks. Changing the oil in the White Powers isn't easy; we hope they'll work on fitting the units with some exterior damping adjusters. In this day of adjustable suspension components, you need to be a nuclear physicist to adjust the internal valving stack on the WPs.

#### EUROPEAN ERGOS

Most of our testers were comfortable on the Husky. The only complaints that surfaced concerned the width of the seat/tank junction and a girthy feel through the midsection of the machine. Several riders sniveled about catching the top of their boot on the bottom of the left side panel. We finally shortened the side panel spacer by 10mm and cured that annoyance.

Most testers said the Renthal han-

*Idaho's favorite son, Rich Taylor, went completely berserk aboard the new and extremely fast Husky 250 motocrosser. Photo by Tom Webb.*



Our resident loon, Rich Taylor, hooks it through a high-speed corner. In such situations, the Husky shines.

Serial number .....Engine: 21320339  
 Frame: 842251951HCP25161  
 Price .....\$3295  
 Number of dealers (U.S.) .....300+  
 Warranty .....30-day, limited  
 Customer service .....Cagiva  
 North America  
 700 W. 190th Street  
 Gardena, CA 90248  
 213/538-9337

**ENGINE**  
 Type .....Liquid-cooled,  
 two-stroke single with solenoid-  
 activated power valve  
 Displacement .....246cc  
 Bore x stroke .....66.5 x 70.8mm  
 Compression ratio .....14.7:1  
 (uncorrected)  
 Horsepower/rpm  
 (measured) .....35.5 @ 8000 rpm  
 Torque/rpm  
 (measured) .....25.1 @ 7000 rpm  
 Carburetion .....38mm Mikuni  
 Ignition .....SEM-MIC  
 Lubrication .....Premix  
 Air filtration .....Oiled polyurethane  
 foam element

**DRIVE TRAIN**  
 Transmission .....Five-speed  
 Primary drive .....2.63:1 (gear)  
 Final drive .....4.00:1 (13/52)  
 Gear ratios (internal) .....1st 2.041:1  
 2nd 1.638:1

**CHASSIS**

Frame .....Steel, single downtube  
 semi-double cradle  
 Rake/trail .....27.0°/4.7 in.  
 Front suspension .....Type—  
 White Power 4054  
 inverted air/spring fork  
 Travel—11.8 inches (claimed)  
 Compression and rebound  
 damping adjustments—Internal  
 Rear suspension .....Type—Husqvarna  
 single shock  
 Shock—Ohlins  
 Travel—13.4 inches (claimed)  
 Compression damping  
 adjustments—16  
 Rebound damping  
 adjustments—20  
 Preload adjustment—  
 Threaded  
 Reservoir—Piggyback  
 Brakes .....Front—Twin-piston  
 caliper disc  
 Rear—Single-leading shoe drum  
 Tires .....Front—3.00-21 Metzeler MXR  
 Rear—4.50-18 Metzeler MX

**MEASUREMENTS**

Weight (wet, no fuel) .....235.0 lb.  
 Weight (wet, tank full) .....251.0 lb.  
 Wheelbase .....59.5 in.  
 Fuel capacity .....2.6 gal.

Reserve .....None  
 Sound test .....103 dbA  
 Ground clearance .....15.2 in.  
 Seat height .....38.0 in.  
 Swingarm length .....22.5 in.  
 Swingarm pivot to  
 center of countershaft .....2.5 in.

**PARTS/COST**

Maintenance manual .....\$9.95  
 Carburetor jets .....Main jet—\$1.54  
 Pilot jet—\$1.95  
 Needle jet—\$11.00  
 Needle—\$3.60  
 Piston kit .....\$86.80  
 Rings .....\$18.00  
 Cylinder (with liner) .....\$253.76  
 Clutch plates, Friction (8)—\$7.79 ea.  
 Steel (7)—\$4.49 ea.  
 Air filter .....\$22.14  
 Brake shoes/pads .....Front—\$33.48  
 Rear—\$10.64  
 Chain .....\$68.67  
 Sprockets .....Front—\$14.56  
 Rear—\$47.78  
 Seat .....\$132.32  
 Fenders .....Front—\$20.13  
 Rear—\$36.80  
 Fuel tank .....\$154.36  
 Handlebar levers .....\$12.40 ea.  
 Shift lever .....\$38.50  
 Cables .....Throttle—\$12.95  
 Clutch—\$12.95  
 Front brake (hose)—\$74.65

dlebar was too flat and low. A Honda-type bend would better suit the Husky's layout. The distance from the pegs to the seat and handlebar is fairly normal, though the 38-inch seat height is a hindrance in corners.

Plan on replacing the standard grips before you unload the bike. They're so soft, the ribs come off after one ride, leaving you with rubber tubes.

Only one tester liked the Magura levers, but he has hands the size of garbage can lids. Most of the riders, especially those who normally ride Japa-

## TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

As we mentioned in the test, the big news concerning the Husky 250 is its all-new engine. For the first time in many moons, the Swede machine pumps out a good spread of power with a competitive midrange hit. Most of the credit goes to the new long-stroke, single-ringed, power-valved, micro-processor-ignition motor.

The long-stroke engine was designed to aid in the torque department, while the single-ring piston points toward less internal friction, equaling more rpm. The single ring setup is also said to be more reliable than double rings since it won't catch on the ports.

Husky's micro-processor ignition is nearly identical to the KTM system in that it lets the bike respond better to fuel delivery since the spark is timed to complement the demands of the motorcycle while it's running. The micro-processor ignition matches the exact rpm via a computer chip to a pre-programmed timing setting and fires the plug at the correct moment. This lets you jet the machine leaner and crisper plus allows for perfect spark timing throughout the powerband.

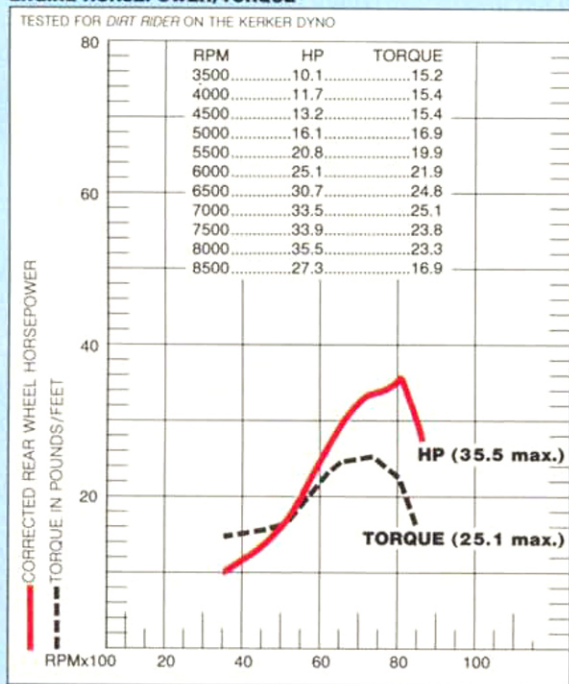
The one area where the Husky micro-processor differs from the KTM's is in the solenoid-activated power valve. Basically, the ignition has four parts: the lower CDI unit, the black box (or computer), the high-tension coil and the solenoid for the power valve. It counts the revs and at approximately 6000 rpm, it activates the solenoid which opens the six-millimeter-high power-valve gate. We thought it a bit odd that the bike had an external rotor (flywheel), then we learned that the bigger unit was needed so the ignition could make wattage to power

## REDLINE REPORT

Peaking out at just under 36 ponies, the Hooska's main deficiency comes in the lower horsepower range. From 3000 to 6000 rpm—when the solenoid kicks in the power valve—it has substantially less horsepower and torque than the '87 Honda CR250.

Still, this 250's mid-hit is improved by nearly five ponies over past Husky efforts. It runs nearly equal to a Suzuki RM250, though it feels slower right off the bottom.

**ENGINE HORSEPOWER/TORQUE**



nese scoots, said the levers were too far from your hands. Clutch action is decent, but it lacks the initial positive feel of, let's say, a Honda. Basically, you've got to pull the lever in too far before it releases. Still, the clutch never slipped.

Up front, the disc brake does a good job of stopping the white machine. The rear drum unit is a full-floater that's glitch-free, though we'd still like to see a disc. The Regina chain stretched quite a bit, and we broke a chain adjuster when the wheel was all the way

back in the swingarm.

Vibration is a problem that seemed to stem from the pipe. High-temp silicone glued into the exhaust manifold seemed to help.

#### HIP HIP HURRAH

If winning motocross races is your bag, you can do better than the Husky 250. While it barks out a competitive hit, the lack of any real low end combined with a chunky feel keep it from being a supercross winner.

On the other hand, this is without a

doubt the finest cornering Husky we've ridden in years. It features straight-line stability that borders on magic; the suspension can be dialed to perform flawlessly with the help of a savvy tuner; and the hardware on the machine is first rate.

If you like to motocross, play in the desert, romp in the hills and race the occasional hare scrambles, the Husky 250 MX might be the ideal machine for you. It might be Husky's last hurrah in the motocross world, so catch it while you can. **DR**

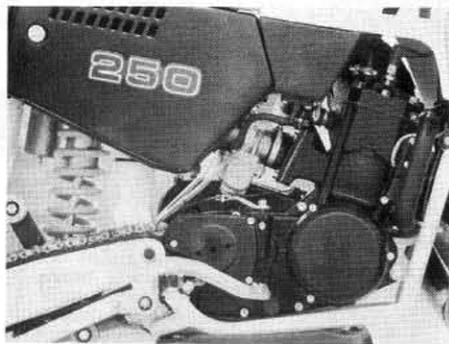
PHOTOS: MARK KARIYA



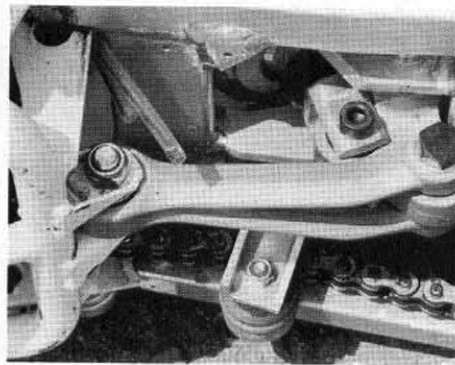
While the Husky 250 Motocross looks unchanged (except for the addition of the White Power fork), this couldn't be farther from the truth.



Husky's micro-processor ignition is similar to the KTM's except that it triggers the power valve, which kicks in at 6000 rpm.



You can barely make out the solenoid-activated power valve (right in front of the cylinder). The pipe hangs low; carburetion is via a 38 flat-slide Mikuni.



A new linkage ratio and clevis-mount Ohlin shock grace the 250's tail. The spring is too soft, and there's too much low-speed rebound damping.



Although the full-floating brake setup performs adequately, a rear disc would certainly reduce unsprung weight and aid wet-weather stopping.

the solenoid. The Husky micro-processor ignition has the capability to do other things as well, but they've left those things for future machines—like meter intake pressure and temperature, which is something the KTM unit cannot do.

#### ODDS AND ENDS

Husky has finally scrapped the magnesium side covers in favor of aluminum. This helps prevent the prema-

ture corrosion that plagued the older machines in the water pump area.

The new and stronger footpegs don't bend like past units, and the full-floating rear brake doesn't lock up the suspension like it does on the enduro Husky. There's a removable subframe, quick-and-easy airbox servicing and removal, plus a shock linkage with zerk fittings.

While Husky has gone overboard

(compared to past efforts) with engine gimmickry, they've failed to update their cylinder liner. Nearly every other manufacturer has gone to the Nikasil liners that save weight, offer outstanding heat dissipation and allow the cylinder to better conform to the shape of the piston. Hopefully, next year we'll see Husky implement a few more engine updates that will catapult it from the middle of the pack to front-runner.

## Husky 250 Motocross

# OPINIONS

After spending lots of time motocrossing an RM250, my first trip on the Husky felt like I was riding a file cabinet. It seemed too wide, too soft, and the bar was way too low. I was prepared to hate the bike. But oddly enough, the more I rode it, the better the bike responded and the more comfortable I felt.

There's no doubt in my mind that this is the fastest 250 Husky ever released. The only problem with the powerband is that it's a light switch once the power valve kicks in. It hits almost too violently to be a good trail bike, although desert riders won't bat an eye. I know several desert racers who've traded in their YZ250s for the Husky, and they're howling at the moon in glee. Personally, I think desert/off-road/hare scrambles is the bike's strong suit, while motocross is its weakness.

—Tom Webb

Age/Ht./Wt.: 33/6'2"/220 lb.  
Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:  
Honda CR500R, Husqvarna 510 Cross  
Country, KTM 350MXC, Suzuki RM250H  
Riding Ability: Vet expert motocrosser,  
"A" enduro rider

This is the best Husky I've ridden in years. For the first time, the engine has a competitive hit and the bike re-



PHOTO: TOM WEBB

**The 250 Motocross leaps better than past Huskys due to a better weight bias and suspension. Shave some weight, dial in the boingers and it will shine.**

sponds like a racer rather than an enduro cruiser. While the clutch doesn't slip, the lever is too far from your hand and it won't engage until it's pulled in to the halfway point. There's no comparison to a Japanese scooter here. Shifting is good, but the gap between second and third is irritating.

Whoever is handling the suspension

R&D should get their heads out of the snowbanks or start using riders who weigh more than a loaf of bread. It's hopelessly soft; it shouldn't come that way from the factory. However, in terms of handling, the Husky is stable but feels heavy, though it seems to corner without too much effort. Overall, I'd say it's got lots of potential and is fun to ride, but I wouldn't want to race it.

—Jon Miller

Age/Ht./Wt.: 35/5'9"/150 lb.  
Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:  
1987 Kawasaki KX250, '87 KX500  
Riding Ability: Vet expert motocrosser

This is the nicest Husqvarna motocrosser I've ever ridden. The engine finally has a good midrange burst; it can exit a turn just like a Japanese bike. It isn't the best engine or the best bike for motocross in the 250cc class, but it is competitive at many levels.

The ergonomics were perfect for a tall rider after the side-panel mount was shortened. The White Power fork supplies turning precision like no Husky has ever had.

I would race this bike in motocross and I would love it for hare scrambles or desert racing. It's a shame it may be the last Husky made for motocross.

—Karel Kramer

Age/Ht./Wt.: 32/6'1"/185 lb.  
Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:  
Suzuki RM250H, Yamaha YZ490T  
Riding Ability: Vet intermediate motocrosser