



Put together a minimum of two dirt bikers, and the conversation inevitably turns to a comparison of the virtues and vices of various makes of motorcycles. Nowhere is this relative superiority more fiercely contested than with the competitive, flat out, highly specialized class of machines used for motocross competition.

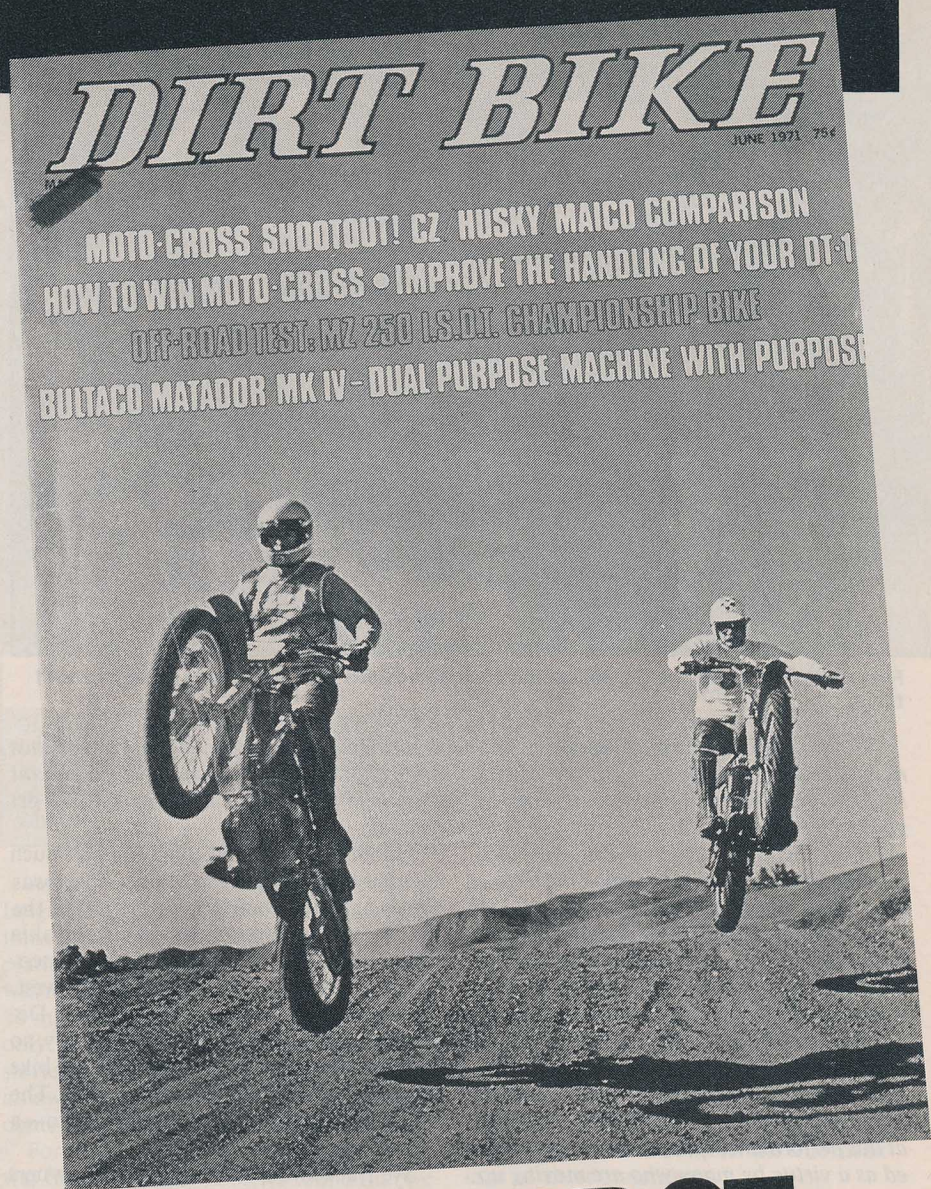
That's how it all began. Those were the first words of the first comparison in the first issue of *Dirt Bike* magazine. Twenty years ago this month, the motorcycle world was first treated to a different brand of motorcycle journalism. It was the first time the no-holds-barred, tell-it-like-it-is approach had been seen in our sport. Before that, motorcycle magazines were generalized street/dirt publications. *Dirt Bike* was the first acknowledgement that dirt riders and street riders might not be interested in the same things any more. After that first June '71 issue of *DB*, the motorcycle press would never again be the same. Even the general interest magazines would change, eventually retreating to cover nothing but pavement.

To celebrate the anniversary, we've reassembled the objects of that first test.

The big three, acknowledged tacitly by nearly everyone, are Husqvarna, CZ, and Maico. These also happen to be the top three international contenders that can actually be purchased by a rider. Suzuki may have won the manufacturer's championship and BSA the Trans-AMA, but have you seen one of their 250 motocross machines for sale at your local dealer? No way. You're not likely to consider a Suzuki 250 for your competition bike unless your last name is Robert, Geboers, Peterson, etc. Not for a while, anyway. So it remains that a Husky, CZ or Maico is the bike to beat (along with the Spanish 250 machines to be covered in the next issue of *DIRT BIKE*) at your local motocross track or rough scrambles event. What makes these machines winners? Why choose one over the other? Which one is the right mount for the novice rider or the expert?

DIRT BIKE acquired the current model of each of these 250-class machines and after weeks of riding, dyno-ing, timing and measuring, managed to put together the info to answer those questions. The source of this data was a head-to-head confrontation of all three: on the track, from the specs and in the shop. Welcome to the Husky-CZ-Maico shoot-out. The choice of weapons is yours.

As you can probably imagine, it was harder to find three 1971-model dirt bikes in 1991 than it was in 1971, but we managed. The Maico was the easiest find. It was lurking in the garage of *Dirt Bike* test rider Pete Murray. Murray is the fastest man in vintage racing. The routine goes like this: every few months Pete hoses off the Maico,



THE FIRST SHOOTOUT

After 20 years, we finally pick the winner

By the *DIRT BIKE* staff

looks to see if there's gas in the tank, wins a vintage race, gets protested, proves there's nothing illegal about his bike, puts it in a dark corner and forgets about it until next time. Pete goes so fast on the old 250 that no one believes it could possibly be legal—they think that it's a cleverly disguised YZ250 or something.

It was a different world in 1971. *DIRT BIKE* magazine's first issue was an acknowledgment that off-road riding had reached maturity in America.

The truth is that it's not particularly fast or dazzling, but it does have some endearing qualities. This is what they had to say about it in 1971 . . .

FIRST SHOOTOUT



First shootout: When the CZ, Maico and Husqvarna 250s first met, it was a clash of 1971 titans.

The 250 Maico is a visual machine. The most striking performance feature of the Maico is the ability of almost any rider to go very fast on it his first time aboard. The machine instills confidence and, due to a number of characteristics, forced the beginning rider to ride like an expert.

Not us. With the exception of Pete, we rode like first-time moto-turkeys. Riding '71 Maicos is a completely different sport than riding modern bikes. We realized it could take hours before we were great.

The 250 Maico is smooth and predictable, even in the rough. The steering is slow compared to the other two shoot-out bikes, but at this performance level, that will be counted as a virtue by many who are moving up to an all-out competition machine for the first time. The Maico is not as exciting as the other two machines at first ride, but this is largely due to the smooth, predictable handling and power combination.

The Maico has no front brake to speak of; the front hub is almost an ornament. It was easily the worst of the test bikes and five or six pounds could be saved by eliminating it since it is nearly useless functionally.

This is the beginning of the DB tell-it-like-it-is tradition. Pete's front brake wasn't quite as bad as the description here. Why? "Rust. That's the secret," he says. Interesting. Right now we're conducting an experiment with modern disc brakes sitting in the rain. We'll tell you how it works out.

Frankly, it did not pull as strongly as expected. The power was adequate, but most of the riders had anticipated a hotter machine. Apparently the 250 Maico wins are not accomplished on sheer power.

Some diplomacy here. *Dirt Bike* editors hadn't yet worked their way up to future editorial statements, such as placing slow motorcycles in pigpens and running the photo. Still, we agree totally that the Maico is a handler. Pete's bike was a blast to ride.

Summing up, the Maico is not a fierce

screamer but strong in handling and has smooth, controllable power. It's a mount that will make the beginning competitor get better.

Finding a CZ in good condition was much tougher than finding the Maico. There was some confusion about the model year of the CZ in the comparison. In Czechoslovakia back then, they didn't pay as much attention to calendars as they did here in the west. They didn't notice that 1970 ended in December and that 1971 began in January, so they just kept right on making the same bike until sometime in the summer of 1971. The CZ tested was the earlier one of the two—a '70/'71 model.

We tracked one through several owners and found it in Jim Lewis' garage. One problem immediately was clear: Jim's bike was original. Not restored, mind you. Original. The bike still had the Barum tires that came on it new, virtually unused. It still had the little rubber doo-hickies on the kickstarter and the shift lever. It even had the original front fender, one of which will get about \$300 at a swap meet. If the bike were a restored model, that wouldn't scare us nearly as bad. We could always fix anything we broke, but once a completely original bike is repainted or has anything replaced, it's no longer original. "Just take it, have a good time," Jim said. That scared us even more. We took it. We reported Jim to the Common Sense Police as soon as we had the bike in our possession.

The CZ is the only totally new design motocross engine of the three test bikes. Both the Maico and the Husqvarna engines are derived from 175cc road machines. The CZ had the lightest clutch action of the shoot-out bikes, with good release: this from a clutch that it was seldom necessary to use. It was possible to slam indiscriminately either up or down the gears without touching the clutch. This included shifting into low at the start. This latter will be appreciat-

ed for the quick motocross start. All motocross bike clutches and gearboxes should be this good.

The brakes, taking front and rear together, were the best of the three shoot-out bikes. The front brake was particularly impressive, and both could be used severely without any tendency to fade during a moto.

The front forks are excellent. Springing and dampening seem just right, even though the forks travel a good distance before reaching full compression in competitive use. The rear shocks are just OK. They are not quite right and a change of springs is in order for most riders. The front forks leaked oil very freely with the stock seals, and most serious riders replace the Czech items with Honda or Ceriani seals. The overall suspension feels light, almost delicate. The steering is very precise as a result.

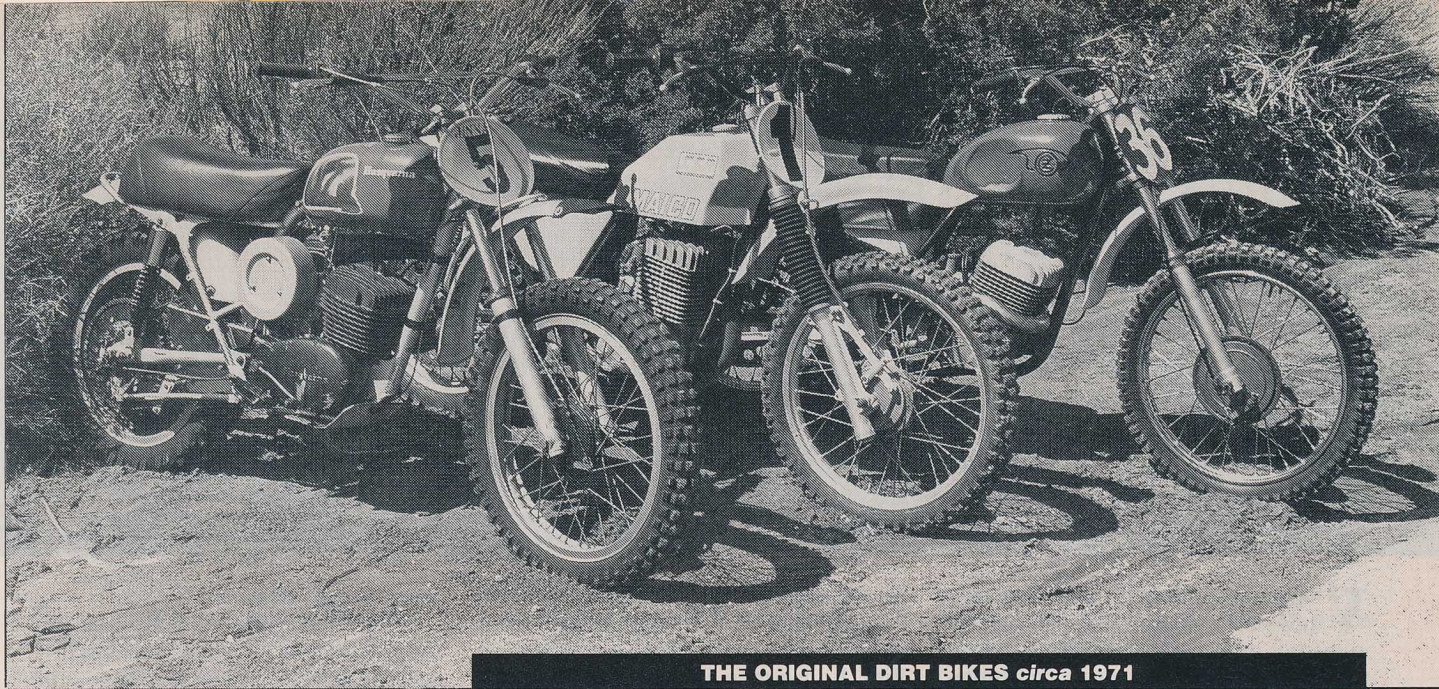
True, true, all true. Except, maybe, the part about how good the front brake was. It worked better than the other two, okay, but the reason it didn't fade is because it couldn't generate enough friction to heat up. On the other hand, the fork travel was pretty good—all three inches of it. In fact, if you asked Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, etc., to build suspension this good using only this much travel, they probably couldn't do it. So there.

The low-end torque was poor compared to the other two test bikes, but the CZ came on strong, possibly the strongest, from mid-range through to top-end. If the rider is skillful enough to keep the machine up on the pipe, the power is awesome and can be used efficiently. Our test bike proved fairly easy to keep within the power band and was devastatingly quick when wicked on for short bursts between corners. Enough to produce white knuckles if you aren't ready for it or haven't adapted to the potential of the machine.

The tendency of the rear end to hop on deep whoop-de-dooos was initially unsettling but no serious problems developed as long as the throttle was kept screwed on.

We have trouble understanding some of the descriptors used in this excerpt. We know, however, that the English language is a dynamic, living thing, always changing with the times. For example, the word "awesome" must have meant something entirely different in '71. Perhaps it was generally used to describe anything attaining forward motion. Another word that must have changed its meaning is "unsettling." This probably meant "generating untold amounts of fear."

Again, though, the *Dirt Bike* editors hit the nail right on the head (a 20-year old head, anyway). The CZ was pipey and the most powerful of the three. You must understand, though, that each of these bikes would struggle to outrun a modern 80cc motocrosser. We've come a long way in that respect.



We regathered the cream of the 1971 crop for another shootout. This time we pick a winner.

The CZ is a machine which can be ridden and ridden competitively by the novice competitor. It takes the skill and experience of the expert to get the full potential out of the bike, something that is true of most all-out motocross machines. The qualities that make it a World Champion in the hands of Robert or Friedrichs also allow the sportsman rider an extra margin for error and recovery during the fast pace of motocross competition.

We knew exactly where to look for the Husqvarna. Bruce Conrad of F&L Racing Fuel has over 50 of them. Why? He likes them. Makes sense to us.

In all of those bikes, though, he didn't have the exact right model for our needs. He had an Open bike that was the right year, and he had a 250 engine that was the right year, but he didn't have an assembled '71 250 Husky—at first. After a couple of hours of work, he did. That was fine with us. It was sort of how the Husqvarna factory worked back then, anyway.

The Husky had a powercurve that seemed more suited to enduro riding. The result was overpowering low and mid-range power. There is so much torque, it's hard to tell what gear you are in. The Husky topped out on speed and revs much sooner than the other machines and it seems that a tooth or two more on the countershaft sprocket would result in a better spread of power.

One result of the brutal low-end torque was the suddenness of wheel spin when cornering. The Husky just did not like cornering as well as either the CZ or Maico. The best way to go through a corner, determined after many efforts by the test team, is to go in deep, square off sharply, pick a line and carefully wind on throttle to get out of the turn. Too eager a right hand would cause the rear wheel to break loose and put the bike and rider in very undesirable configurations.

THE ORIGINAL DIRT BIKES circa 1971

	Maico 250 K5 Motocross	CZ 250 Motocross	Husqvarna 250 Cross
Original price	\$1100	\$1135	\$1175
Displacement	248cc	246cc	245cc
Actual horsepower	26.7	28.0	26.2
Wheelbase	55.0 in.	54.3 in.	54.0 in.
Weight	231 lb.	242 lb.	234 lb.

Again, we see the changes in the English language. An "undesirable configuration" must have meant the same thing as a "face-plant" in modern semantics. The Husky was really hard to ride. It was then; it is now. To make matters worse, the Husky was the only one of the three to have a right-side shifter. "No big deal," we thought, "we've all owned right-side-shift bikes before; it'll come back to us just like riding a bicycle."

For future reference: No, it won't. That was then and this is now. We found that we couldn't just gently press on the rear brake. We had to jab at it. Our downshift impulses took over the control centers in our brains and there was no override control. In the ongoing war between habit and intellect, habit won.

The Husky proved very responsive at low speeds, due in part to the power band. Steering was neutral, permitting a rider to corner with power on or off. Handling is very quick. This, combined with the massive low-end torque, meant that the bike required constant attention as it wanted to go growling and breaking away if the steering-throttle combination was not correct for the course situation.

The bike tended to be more "bouncy" than the others, but the Girlings on the rear were the best shocks on any test bike. The impact after a bad jump was very soft and the bike always stayed under control.

It was very stable in the whoop-de-dooos, but paradoxically, the whole machine moved around a lot in the sand. It would cover the same ground over a much wider track than either the CZ or the Maico.

There are some lines that we love in this segment. "The Husky proved very responsive at low speeds, due in part to the power

band." We just wonder what *other* parts it's due to.

Other great moments in motojournalism: This is the only recorded reference where a Husky's handling is called "quick." This is the only recorded reference to the "steering-throttle combination" and a bike being at once "bouncy" and having the best rear suspension.

We currently have cryptologists working around the clock to decipher the true meanings of these statements.

As far as the parts that we can understand, though, *Dirt Bike* issue #1 again told the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The Husky still is what the Husky was back then.

The Husky can be summed up as a heavy-duty package of screaming raw torque. Despite the apparent flexibility this allows your riding style, a lot of the bike would be wasted on the novice rider.

At the end of the test, no winner was chosen. That hasn't happened in a *Dirt Bike* test since then. How could such a careless omission have been made? We asked that very question of Super Hunky, the only current staff member who was living back then. He says he doesn't remember. That's how he answers a lot of questions these days (it's okay, he's old).

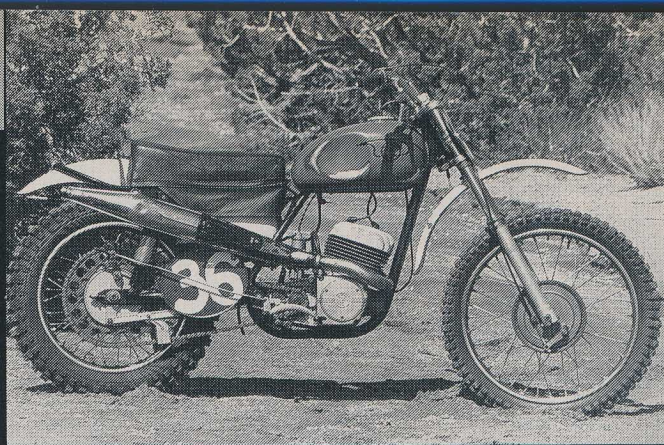
In order to rectify this situation, therefore, we now humbly offer the long overdue conclusion to *Dirt Bike* comparison #1, issue #1, volume #1: Of the three bikes involved, the Maico is the best motocrosser. No question about it. If you've been delaying that purchase decision for the last 20 years, now you can buy with confidence.

Afterwards, please tell us where you found your new bike. We all want one of each. □

SUPER HUNKY'S VINTAGE BIKE HOT SETUP TIPS!

*Maybe I was slow, but
my bikes ran great!*

By Rick Sieman



If you want to keep your CZ original, then you're stuck with Barum tires, Jikov carbs and shocks that wouldn't work on a screen door. Most vintage racing rules allow you to replace these items on a humanitarian basis.

Vintage bike restoration and racing is hot stuff right now. In fact, there are numerous organizations around the country that concentrate on vintage competition, and it seems that an overwhelming majority of tracks are having a Vintage class.

Why not? Vintage racing is affordable, fun and brings back some good memories for the old coots, while letting younger riders enjoy a piece of history.

If you're simply going to restore a bike and make it some sort of showpiece to put on display, then this article is not for you. However, if you are going to ride or race your "new" vintage bike, then this article is *must reading*, unless you have been around about 200 years or so, like I have.

HOW GOOD WERE THE OLD BIKES?

You want the truth? Not very good, all things considered. We're talking about the bikes from the late '60s up to (and including) 1974, the bikes before long travel stepped in.

The European bikes of that era came with great frames, engines with brilliant powerbands, good forks, stunning looks, afterthought shocks and an almost arrogant lack of attention to detail. You were expected to have your act together and "complete" the bike if you were elite enough to become one of the inner circle of proud owners.

Japanese bikes bristled with niceties and well-thought-out details but, in general, exhibited frightening handling characteristics and had numerous weak areas, often in spots the average owner never thought to check out.

Spanish bikes were fast, beautiful, fragile, made from inferior materials in certain areas, and put together almost by accident. How many people bought Bultacos, Montesas and Ossas just because of their "looks" on the showroom floor?

So if you plan to ride/race your vintage bike, and were not around (or paying attention) when they were new, this handy guide will give you a fighting chance at keeping it alive and running as well as it can . . . and probably better than it did when new.

WHICH BIKES WILL WE COVER HERE?

Most of the popular ones. We will avoid weird off-brands, obscure Italian bikes, early

four-strokes and bikes with short model runs. In other words, if you want to see hot setups on a Rokon, Ducati, Gilera, Benneli, Bird, Bridgestone, Panther, Yankee, Sears, Aermacchi (H-D), American Eagle, Steen, Carabela, Puch, trials bikes, mini-bikes and other miscellany, you will have to look elsewhere.

We will cover the following: Husky, CZ and Maico in Part One, Yamaha, Suzuki,

most vintage bikes:

- Get rid of old-style filters and find a modern foam or K&N filter that will fit. It's not that hard, if you hunt around a bit.

- Terrycables are far superior to any of the stock control cables of the past, and the Hesperia, California, company has an amazing assortment that goes way back. Put your stock vintage cable in a plastic bag and store it.



Back in the days when men were men and motorcycles were European, only weekend riders kept their bikes in stock form.

Honda and Kawasaki in Part Two, and in Part Three we might take a look at some of the less popular bikes, like Sachs/DKW/Penton, Hodaka and as many of the major Spanish bikes as space allows. British bike fans will have to wait for their own special article, as there's enough information on the Triumphs, BSAs and the other four-strokes to fill a book. Woefully, we will ignore the English two-strokes, again because of space limitations.

Tips will concentrate on strengthening weak areas, improving performance and handling, and increasing reliability. We will stay away from the area of modifications, hop-ups and such, in order to keep in the true spirit of vintage racing.

GOOD GENERAL ADVICE

Instead of repeating these things for each bike, consider this advice that will apply to

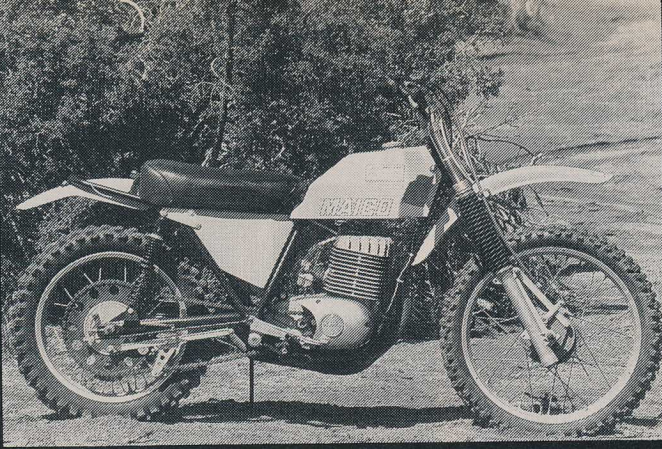
- Forget running stock shocks. Even the best of them cannot compare to the cheapest Works Performance shock offered. Some good news: Gil, at Works, regularly builds shocks for virtually any vintage bike.

- Modern tires are available and far superior in every respect to the knobblies of 20 years ago. If you can find an old Barum or something like that, then spray it with Armor All and store it.

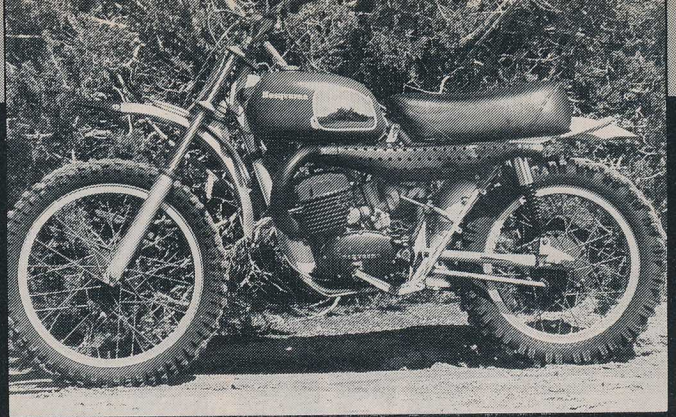
- Use new-generation chain whenever possible.

- Always use at least Grade 8 bolts in all critical areas; even better, consider using some of the new super bolts, like the Foremost F-911 fasteners, which are equivalent to Grade 11.

- Do not re-use old bolts unless you must. Twenty-year-old nuts and bolts do lose strength.



People used to say "Maico-Breako." Actually, Maicos were no less reliable than anything else of the period—but they had to be set up properly.



The hardest part about racing an old Husky is learning how to stop without brakes. If you look closely at pictures of Rolf Tibblin, you'll see that the soles of his boots were almost always worn out.

CZ—THE CZECH BULLETPROOF BIKE

• On all models, the air filter hold-down nut must be safety-wired or held in place with a rubber band. If you don't do this, the nut will work loose and get ingested by the engine. Bad news; even back then, cases were \$400+.

• Put a rubber band or a return spring on the rear brake arm to assist the brake pedal to return quickly and without sticking.

• Naturally, the stock Trial shocks must be replaced. Years ago, everybody ran 12.9-inch Konis, but today a call to Works Performance will yield a good set of shocks that work better than any old Koni. Works recommends 13.75-inch to 14.25-inch-long shocks with a full four inches of travel, improved steering and better ground clearance to keep the pipe from getting crushed. You might have to put a small dent on the inside part of the pipe to let the lowered swingarm clear the pipe.

• An airbox from a '72 (or newer) CZ will replace the old fiberglass airbox that disintegrated easily.

• Drill out the float inlet in the Jikov carb to prevent fuel starvation should you choose to run some Grands Prix, where the engine will be revving a lot.

• You'll probably be happier with a one-tooth-smaller countershaft, as the CZs all have a very tall low gear and a close-ratio gear box.

• The stock clutch springs cannot take heat and should be replaced with anything modern you can find that will fit. Look around—yes, you can grind down the ends a bit to get the correct length.

• Replace the smallest 2.75 front tire with a proper 3.00x21 item and the bike will work better in soft stuff and sand.

• Most certainly replace the paper filter with a modern breather.

• Fork seals can be replaced with Honda seals from that era. Seal size is 35mm x 47mm, 7mm thick. Speed & Sport ([213] 490-0012) carries replacement seals and other goodies. They take two seals per leg. You can also use a Kawasaki c/shaft seal that works great: It's from a 125 Kawasaki single from the early '70s. That should be enough of a lead to find the part. Please don't ask

me for the part number, as I have forgotten it, but if you cannot chase it down, you deserve to have fork oil slobber all over you as you ride.

• Put stronger seven- or eight-gauge spokes in the rear wheel if you plan to ride the bike hard. The stockers will break easily. Use a cross-four pattern for maximum strength.

• Replace the spark plug cap with something new that will resist water.

• Check the points often, as the phenolic block wears rapidly. You might hunt around for Motoplat electronic ignitions that fit.

• Every nut and bolt on the CZ should be Loctited or safety-wired. Spend extra time on the rear sprocket bolts and motor mounts.

• A folding shift lever is a must; if you have an old rigid footpeg model, get some folding pegs on the bike before you ride it an inch. This is important, as those things are real ankle-breakers, and also hang up horribly in deep ruts, which you'll find out if you share the track with modern bikes.

• Weld a small strip of angle iron on the bottom of the low pipe (earlier CZs had high pipes, except the rare twin-pipers) to keep it from getting crushed.

• You absolutely must keep the swingarm pivot properly oiled and lubricated. If you let it get dry, a "step" will wear in the pivot bolt, making swing removal nearly impossible. In fact, when buying a vintage CZ, this is the first area you should check!

• Do not run the oil/gas ratio too lean or the timing side main bearing will get loose on the crankshaft, and then die. Run 20:1, just like in the old days.

• Use basic 50-wt. mineral oil (Castrol, Honda Oil, etc.) with at least 92-octane gas. If you're going to run it real hard, add some race gas.

• The top fork nuts must be kept tight or the forks will flex. Do not use Loctite here.

• A Bing carb works better than the stock carb. The 36mm Bing seems to do the job. If you can find one from a '76 Maico AW, it's already jetted in the ballpark.

MAICO—THE HANDLERS!

• "Maico-breako" became a taunting phrase of the '70s, but it was unearned. When properly set up they were extremely

reliable, but the weak point was the chain primary drive (known as the left side), which caused most of the grief.

• The small clutch (harder pull) was superior in every way to the big clutch (easy pull) and should be used for racing.

• The Belleville washer clutch stack pieces should be checked regularly for wear. When there's a large shiny area on the contact area, it's time to replace 'em.

• Use two single chains instead of the triplex chain for increased reliability in the left-side drive when using a three-row sprocket setup.

• Change the gearbox oil after every race and make sure you use a magnetic drain plug, which came with most models. If you can't find one, many older Porsche engines used the same plug.

• Do not use the aluminum clutch plates; stick with the heavier steel items.

• Check the primary drive sprocket for alignment against the driven clutch sprocket. When it's nice and straight, you can expect a year of racing every weekend out of the left side. If it's off, well . . . that's how the phrase "Maico-breako" came about.

• Rear sprocket bolts are undersized and should be replaced with bigger items. Also, Loctite 'em.

• Flip the rear brake arm down (under the swingarm) for a straighter brake rod pull. The bent rod that goes around the shock gives a mushy feel.

• Clean the brake shoes and backing plate (front and rear) after every race. This is a must.

• Put a cotter pin on the air filter hold-down rod/nut.

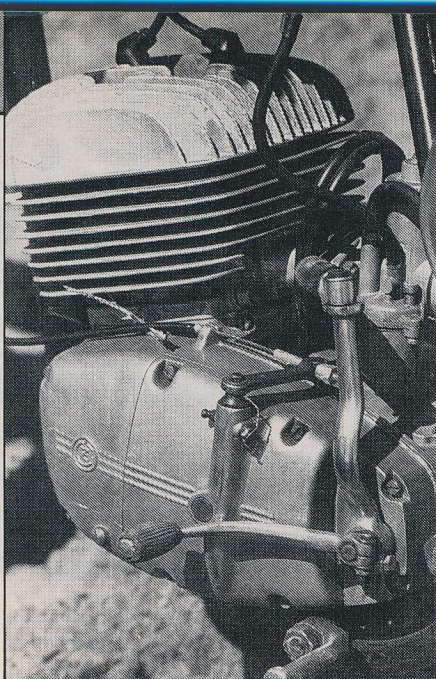
• Pay particular attention to the air boot where it goes into the airbox. It can get loose and suck crud into the engine.

• Keep a fresh hose on the front of the carb, and use good, fresh, wide hose clamps or the heavy Bing carb can fall off when gas gets between the carb and the boot.

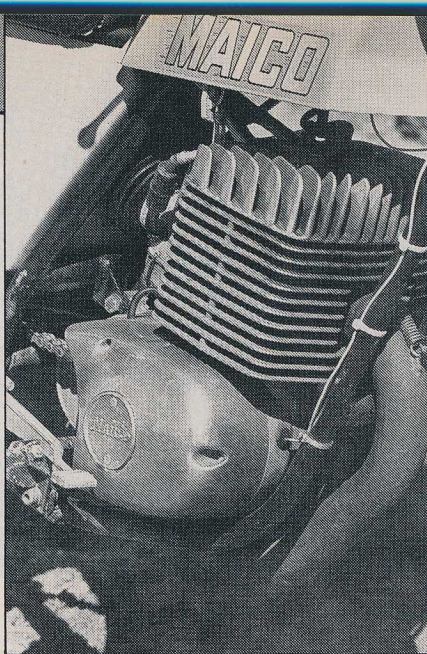
• Beef up the top motor mount plate (the one that hooks to the head bolts) or it will break.

• Keep a very close eye on motor mount bolts. Oversized bolts are a good idea for the bigger Maicos.

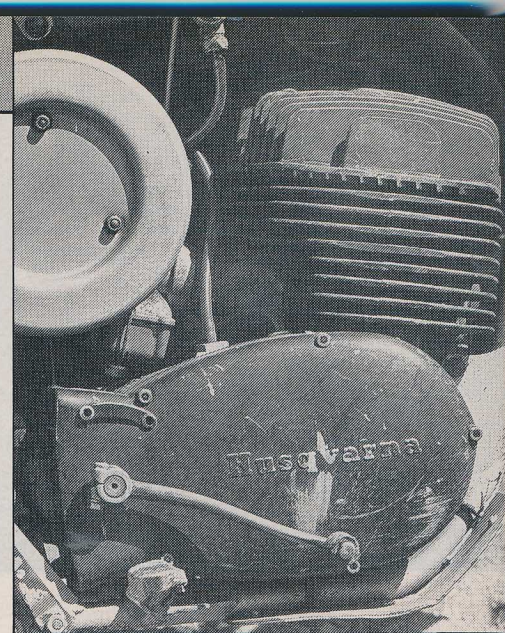
• Put a piece of rubber or plastic where



New powerplants should be this reliable. CZ engine and trannies just didn't stop.



The weakest point of the Maico engine was the primary chain. Not much could be done, aside from regular replacement.



Every recorded Husky seizure happened right in line with the cylinder studs. Cooling holes in the fins helped a little (very little).

the chain crosses the swingarm, and replace it as the chain saws through it, or watch the chain saw through the swingarm itself.

- Get rid of the Magura kill button; it will fail on you, sooner or later.
- Keep grease on the mag rotor; if it gets dry, the phenolic block will start scoring the high spots and the chrome will lift off, causing you much grief.
- You must drain the float bowl after each ride and blow out the pilot jet regularly.
- On the big Maicos, always use the compression release; make sure that the release cable doesn't come loose.
- Double up on pipe springs, and also beef up the pipe hanger. It's actually best to fabricate some of the rubber-bushed mount on the lower and upper hangers.
- Keep the rubber-mounted bar mounts tight and replace the rubber insets the minute they start to oval.
- The fiberglass seat bases tend to crack very easily, and if you want them to last, slap on a few more thin layers of 'glass. If not, the base will break.

• All Maicos with steel wheels bent easily, while the Akront ridged wheels were much stronger. Larger spokes will help, as will cross-four lacing patterns.

• Route the front brake cable cleanly or it can hang up on the top of the triple clamps and spit you off.

• Remove the steering head race roller-ball holder and put in extra balls to take up the slack. Use lots of moly-grease and the balls should last a long time. Otherwise, the stock roller/cage wears quickly.

• On older bikes the front brake is terrible! Many riders used to lacing up a Husky hub to get some stopping power.

• Do not sit on the bike with the side stand down; it'll bend easily.

• A leaking gas cap (chronic problem) can be fixed by cutting a gasket from an inner tube.

• Your low pipe will crack unless you gusset up some low spots and the area near the

swingarm pivot. If you let the pipe get loose, it'll crack in one ride.

• Check and clean the fuel petcocks. The smallest amount of debris will drastically slow down fuel flow.

• Timing is critical on the Maicos, and if timing is off, carburetion becomes a real problem that can't be solved no matter how many jets you swap.

• Some early Maicos came with Amal Concentric carbs. Bad news! Use the plain old Type 54 Bing instead. Oh, yes; there's a pressed-in plug on the Bing carb that guides the slide. Put a dab of epoxy on the outside body of the carb to keep it from coming loose and/or leaking.

• If you run low front tire pressure (under 10 psi), the Maico will start steering very heavy and sluggish. Twelve to 14 pounds seems to work best for most conditions.

• Get rid of the aluminum rim locks and install rubber ones from Japanese bikes. The aluminum ones can crack and fall apart and ruin a tire from a simple flat.

• Safety-wire the flap on the throttle housing down. It can come open and the cable will jump out. In fact, it's not a bad idea to safety-wire the throttle cable where it goes into the housing, and at the end where it slides into the carb cap.

• Put a decent chain roller on the swingarm; the stocker is wimpy.

• Keep the brake pedal pivot point clean, lubed and snugged just right or the brake pedal will hang up.

HUSKY—THE SWEDISH BEAUTY

• Fork seals are bad. Kawasaki fork seals (70-71) work well and, like the CZs, you use two per fork tube.

• Taper the bottom of the carb slide on the Bing carb to lean out the jetting. Most Huskys came jetted too fat in the midrange, but a needle jet change was not the answer.

• Brakes do not work when wet, so you have to file or hacksaw diagonal grooves in the brake shoes to force out the water. Even then, wet Husky brakes are hopeless. Some

riders keep a Yamaha front wheel/brake/hub assembly around just for racing in wet conditions.

• If you use the stock cables, you'll find small lube ports on them. Squirt a light oil in them all the time, or leave it dry. You can even wash those cables in water, then lube them again.

• Always carry extra plugs with you if you ride the desert, as they tend to load up when you crash (up until about the '72 models), and walking home is no fun.

• Kickstarters on the 360s and 400s bend easily. Keeping a fresh rubber (safety-wired) cover on the foot part helps a bit.

• The clutch will slip when it's used hard. The plates in the '72 and '73 were aluminum and a bit better. Use 80-90 gear oil for the clutch. If the clutch gets hot, the handle will come back to the bars but will cool down and recover eventually.

• Cold starting: petcock on, tickle button five times 'til gas squirts out of carb, petcock off, partial throttle and a fast kick. Three kicks cold is the norm. When hot, the drill is quarter throttle and just kick it. Two kicks is normal and one kick if you really need it for a dead-engine start.

• Use Champion N3G plugs; put in a new one every race.

• Filter: most of the riders swear by the K&N for the Husky.

• Forks works best with 10-wt. oil and you'll have to play with the quantity for your weight and riding style.

• Leaking gas caps were a real problem that no one managed to solve, not even Bruce Conrad, the patron saint of Husky. Just cut a foam donut to fit around the cap and squeeze it out after every ride.

• A large nut holds down the gas tank, but before '72 there was a gap between the seat and the tank. To keep your crotch comfortable, some sort of pad is a must. Malcolm Smith used to sell one.

• Drill holes between the barrel fins on the front of the barrel directly in line with

the through-studs. This is a chronic hot spot on the older Huskies, and every seizure mark ever known is in line with the studs. A cooling waft of air really reduces temperatures in this area.

- Footpegs are too smooth. Welding on small tips improves the grip.

- Waterproofing is horrible on all the old Huskys. The mag cover should be sealed with silicone seal; the ignition wires from the case must also be sealed. The airbox is virtually hopeless, and the only suggestion is to tuck in your leg close to the filter to keep the water from getting sucked into the filter. You can try to fabricate some kind of plastic or rubber shield. Good luck.

- No kill button comes with the Husky. An authentic old trick is to make a kill button out of a hacksaw blade, but a better approach would be to simply install a modern kill button.

- If you let one bolt get loose on the high pipe, the whole pipe will get loose quickly and cracks will start to appear. The first hint of a loose pipe is sudden heavy vibration.

- Make sure that the head assembly crown nut is Loctited in place.

- When you put the gas tank on any old Husky, make sure you wrap the top frame tube with foam. If any metal contacts the gas tank, it can rub a hole through that pretty tank in a hurry.

- These three things *must* be safety-wired: the exhaust flange on the cylinder, air cleaner mounts and the rear exhaust mount.

- Extend the crankcase breather tube to about twice its original length and route it away from the engine.

- Make sure that the air filter is sealed with grease or dirt will pass around the seat as the dumb filter mount shakes and rattles around.

- Engine tips: Pull the flywheel and check the sealing plate screws behind the flywheel for tightness; tighten the case screws behind the magneto. Replace the ignition seal with the rear wheel bearing seal from a Husky and make sure that the flywheel stays tightened to 64 foot-pounds of torque.

- Some of the older Huskys do not have springs on the footpegs. Maico springs can be made to work, but it certainly is a thing Husky freaks will not want to brag about.

WHAT HAVE WE FORGOTTEN?

Plenty, but most of the day-to-day prepping is covered in a manual . . . and there are manuals to be had. Clymer still has a bunch of them available for the older bikes. What we've tried to give you here are the little inside tips and tricks from two generations ago: thoughts and ideas from people who love the old bikes and the simpler days that went with them.

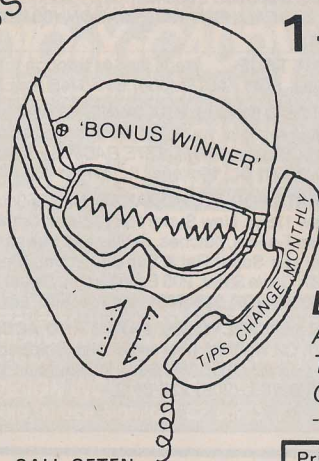
If we have forgotten some good ideas, or never even knew them in the first place, then by all means drop us a line and we'll try to share them as time goes on.

Thanks,
Rick Sieman ☐

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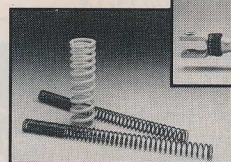
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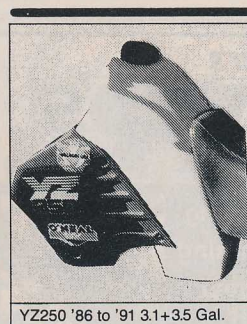


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