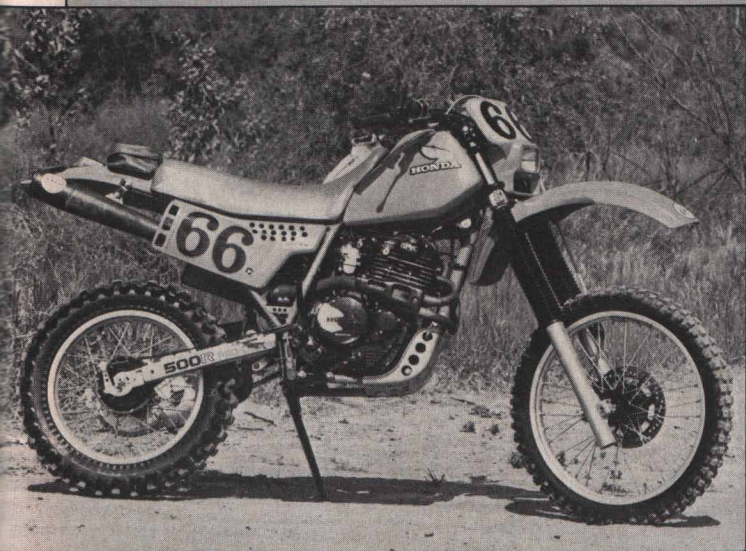


**THE LOW-BUCKS APPROACH TO
BUILDING A WINNING
FOUR-STROKE**

TESTING THE IMS XR500 HONDA

The "not-so-special" Viewfinders
GP special

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE



Chuck Miller rolls the throttle on and smoothly lifts the front end of the IMS special. In spite of retaining the weight of the stock XR500, the C.H. Wheat wonderbike feels much more balanced and is far easier to ride aggressively.

A deceptively simple package, the IMS XR500 Honda is nonetheless strong enough to win a GP against local Expert riders.

In Saturday's Open event at the Viewfinders Grand Prix, Bruce Ogilvie ran away with the win on what appeared to be an almost stock Honda XR500 four-stroke. We got a chance to ride that bike and found out just how much—or how little!—was done to the machine to turn it into a winner.

The man behind the winning XR is C.H. Wheat, president of International Motorsports and an ex-National flattracker. He's also one of the savviest four-stroke tuners around.

C.H.'s goal was to make a bike that would be competitive without spending a fortune and without any special frame, fork or shock replacement. Just massage on the basic product.

THE IMPORTANT PARTS

The 1984 XR500 was actually built for Jim Pfluger in Hawaii, but it was felt that a race test was in order. The engine was fresh and just barely broken in before the work was started.

The stock piston was used but had to be milled to accept a special high-lift cam made by IMS. It has a short duration and increases power all over the range rather than

turning the bike into an overrevving hand grenade.

Special bronze valve guides are used (for wear), and IMS valve springs replace stockers. The head must be milled to accept the valve springs.

The stock carb(s) are used but rejetted as needed. IMS supplies the jets with the package. The headpipe remains stock, but the tail section is an IMS muffled reverse megaphone. A K&N filter rides in the heavily drilled airbox.

CHASSIS SHAPING

The stock shock was completely reworked, and the oil was changed. The stock body and spring are used, but the compression damping is dramatically increased and the rebound reduced. The cost for this is \$125.

Up front the damper rods are opened up to reduce the low-speed compression damping, while the high-speed damping remains stock. Stock springs are used with no air. Maxima ten-weight oil is run at the six-inch level. Cost for shaping the rods is \$29.95.

Gearing for GP work is 14 up front and 46 in the rear. A 3.25 x 21 Metzeler is up front; the stock rear tire works okay.

RIDING IT

Amazing is an apt word for how well this bike works. It starts easily, idles comfortably, yet pulls strong and hard from everywhere. The suspension is supple and on the soft side, but the bike tracks straight and true and does not tire the rider over long periods of time. You couldn't ask for a more mellow and easy-to-ride rocketmobile for a long GP or cross-country race.

Remember, this is not a massively reworked special, but a properly tuned bike that is flexible and easy to ride. And best of all, it's competitive and fun to race. Just ask Bruce Ogilvie. □

WHERE TO GET IT AND WHAT IT COSTS

Mill piston	\$19.95
IMS cam	\$118.00 + excl.
Valve springs	\$69.95
Valve guides	\$35.95
Mill head	\$69.95
Package price for all engine parts and machining	\$299.95
Pipe, tail section	\$69.95
K&N air filter	\$21.95

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