

FASTA PASTA

Deep-dish delight

By the editorres de la DIRTE BIKE

Cagiva is working hard at becoming a prominent name in the off-road world. This isn't an easy area to break into, let alone stay in the competitive mainstream. Life evolves quickly; technology is at a constant high. Our first thoughts with the Cagiva WMX125 water-pumper were positive; the bike looks stylish. The Italians know how to dress up a scooter, and the bright-red 125 gets an "A" rating here.

A compact, tidy liquid-cooled engine rests in an advanced chassis with a break-away rear tail section. An Ohlins rear damper is mated to a beefy aluminum swingarm. Sharp red plastic, tucked-in radiators and a gray seat detail the package. Yes, Cagiva has done its homework here.

SADDLE UP

Once you throw a leg over the Cagiva, it's apparent that the bike is definitely European. It feels like a shrunk-down Maico. Bars, pegs and saddle all have that Euro touch. The Big Four 125s are lower and just different. If you're a Honda or an RM rider, plan on some adjustment time.

After a few laps, another aspect of the bike stands tall: It's a handler! No twitchy, strange manners on this baby. More like stable, confidence-inspiring, and it likes to turn. Stay on the gas and the behavior further improves. We couldn't really find a fault in this department; it was all smiles.

With the suspension, things flattened out a little. The forks, 40mm Marzocchi units, are too soft, needing an oil-level adjustment, or heavier springs, or both.

We went with ten-weight oil, six inches from the top of the tubes. This helped. The action is decent, but not great. Give it an average rating. Because the air valves are located directly under the handlebars, bleeding them is a pain. Like most forks, they do pump up.

The Ohlins-based single-shock rear end needs some work. It's stiff to the point of being harsh. A change in the compression damping is needed. Even with heavyweight riders aboard, the motion of the rear end rates rough. Tougher, demanding tracks pound the rider into Play-doh. Still, the Ohlins shock can be dialed in by a savvy shock man with little trouble.

POWERIN' ON

Our bike started super easy and was jetted spot-on. Power builds fairly strong after a meek low-end delivery. Like most 125s, it makes all the usable juice from the upper



Acceleration is middle-of-the-road. You'll be mid-pack through the first turn in a field of competitive 125s.

mid-range into the top revs. This isn't bad, as the bike likes to be revved to the melt-down point, and your fastest laps come when it's ridden this way. We'd say the smoke factor rates with the top Big Four scooters. Into the first turn the Cagiva will hold its own at mid-pack or better.

One of the reasons the engine shines is the shifting ease. It's smooth and can be slipped through the gears just right for a 125 and no power-robbing gaps in the six speeder. We do have a complaint about the distance from the countershaft sprocket to the swingarm pivot point. It's too far. Late '70s

bikes placed them closer. Some work is needed here.

Another stick in the side is that the bike burbles on major impacts. Yes, the jetting was on; it just gurgled on sharp taxing loads. This usually means that a screen is needed around the main jet to keep the fuel from frothing.

BITS AND PIECES

The seat is too soft and sacked completely in just a couple of rides.

We ran the bike through some serious water, trying to drown it out. No way. It's a fish from the word go. While we were swim-

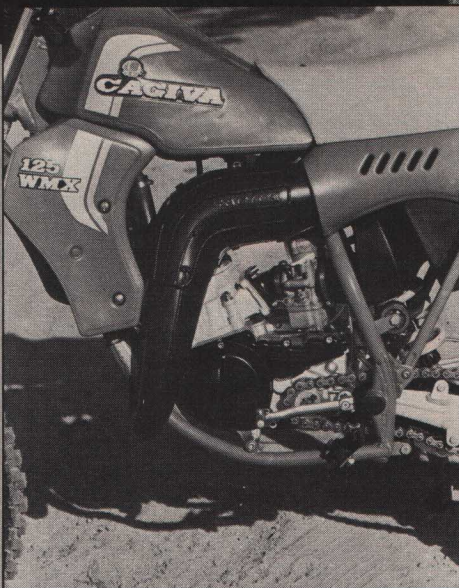
ming, the brakes took a hike. They aren't waterproof at all.

While the rear brake pedal looks like a fine design, it bottoms on an oddly shaped kickstarter. Once it does this, you lose the rear brakes.

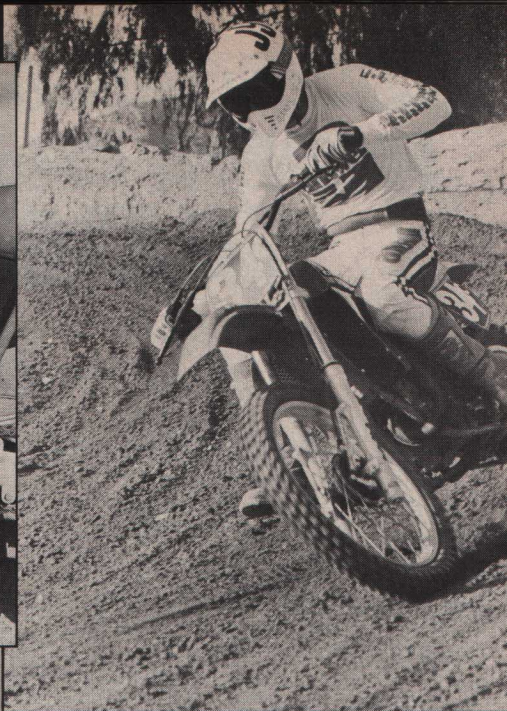
Everyone loved the bars, levers, grips and the action of the clutch and throttle. Nice work here. Akront rims are laced with giant-sized spokes. We never had a problem while testing, but we hear that breakage has been surfacing. Keep an eye on them.

WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS

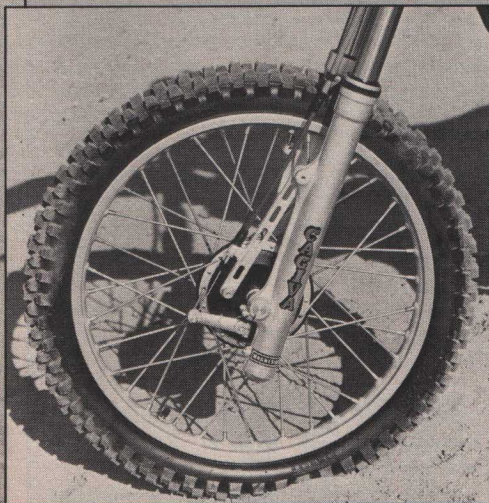
Cagiva has started off on the right foot with a detailed package, heads-up styling and a competitive motor. Some suspension work is in order, as are a few other odds and ends, but basically everything is there. Considering that they're just babes in the motocross world, we expect big things in the future. □



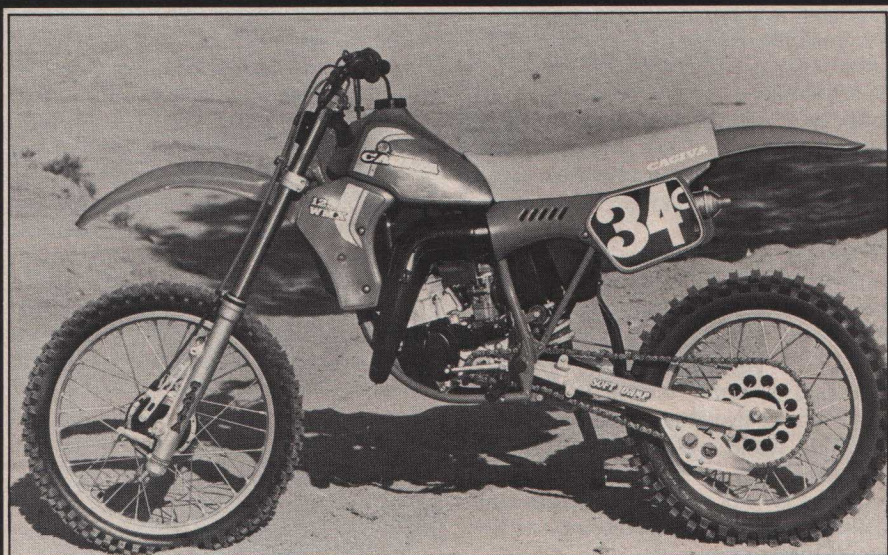
Although the shifting is smooth as pancake batter, the countershaft sprocket is placed too far from the swingarm pivot point. The rear frame section unbolts and there's a nifty heat shield on the belly of the pipe.



Under power, the Cagiva carves a fine line through the corners. It's stable and likes to be ridden fast.



The 40mm Zokes are too soft, demanding an oil level increase or a change in springs. Considering that the front brake is only a single-leading shoe, it works pretty well. Pirelli meats are great for sand, grim for hard-pack.



A floating rear brake is average and goes away quickly at any hint of moisture. The aluminum swingarm looks stout, but we've heard rumors of breakage problems. Ours never gave us any grief.

CAGIVA WMX125

Engine type	2-stroke, water-cooled
Bore and stroke	56.0mm x 50.6mm
Displacement	124.63cc
Carburetion	Dell'orto 36SS
Factory jetting:	
Main jet	180
Needle jet	268CF
Jet needle	U7
Pilot jet	60
Slide number	30
Fuel tank capacity	8.2 L
Lubrication	Pre-mix at 32:1
Gearbox ratios:	
1	2.273:1
2	1.786:1
3	1.466:1
4	1.250:1
5	1.105:1
6	1.000:1
Gearing, front/rear	13/49
Ignition	CDI
Recommended spark plug	Champion N82G
Silencer/spark plug	Yes/no
Wheelbase	1470mm
Ground clearance	375mm
Seat height	990mm
Trail	122mm

Wet weight, no fuel	212 lbs.
Tire, size and type:	
Front	3.00 x 21 Pirelli
Rear	4.25 x 18 Pirelli

Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	40mm Marzocchi, 300mm
Rear	Ohlins based, single shock, 325mm
Intended use	Motocross
Country of origin	Italy
Retail price, approx.	\$1960

Distributor/Manufacturer:
Cagiva N. America
469 N. Oak St.
Inglewood, CA 90302

Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use in mind:	
Handling	Very good
Front suspension	Fair
Rear suspension	Fair
Power	Good
Cost	Fair
Attention to detail	Average
Effectiveness, stone stock	Good

This rating system is included to aid in comparison of bikes in the same displacement and intended-use categories. Comparing the ratings of two dissimilar machines is a meaningless exercise in futility.