



A lot has happened since we first slung a leg over Donny Schmit's preproduction CCM C25 in the September '95 issue. Schmit took the British machine to a convincing Sound of Thunder championship, and the four-stroke series gained National status for '96. During the winter and spring, Clews Competition Motorcycles relocated the factory to meet the demands of the new U.S. and world markets, and several changes were made to the C25 line before final production. Despite delays inherent in the move and production run, CCM reaped the benefits of its racing success in the form of orders from around the world.

Then tragedy struck, as Schmit succumbed to a rare form of leukemia. CCM America was thrown into a tailspin, having lost the series champion and a partner in the company. CCM America's Mike Griggs scrambled to find a suitable hotshoe to fill the void. CCM decided to field a large team of Billy Liles, Gordon Ward and Terry Fowler to campaign the '96 Sound of Thunder series. CCM America regrouped and has brought 50 '96 C25s in-country, and another 150 are destined for our shores before the '97 production run starts. CCM has already decided to use the new 50mm Marzocchi fork on the '97s and is finalizing other changes, but we are getting ahead of ourselves.

MEET THE PRODUCTION C25 605

CCM stands for Clews Competition Motorcycles, and C25 celebrates the 25th anniversary of the tiny British factory. Alan

CCM C25 605

*England's answer
to the Husaberg*

By the long-duration staff of DIRT BIKE

Clews started the marque in '71, wrapping his lightweight frames around BSA drivetrains. Austin Clews, Alan's son, continues the tradition, but today's CCMs use proven Rotax powerplants. CCM makes its own frames, swingarms, subframes, exhausts and side panels in the tiny Bolton (England) factory. Austria supplies the engines, Holland produces the WP shocks, Spain provides the Morad wheels and Brembo brakes, and Italy makes the Marzocchi 45mm forks and Acerbis plastic. The linkageless, lay-down shock design and unique oil system (the frame is the oil

"tank") help keep the 605's weight to 259 pounds. Oil runs from the steering head through the left cradle to the swingarm pivot. A small filter rides between the frame and engine, and the frame holds two quarts of oil. The pre-pro 605 we rode had incredible suspension, excellent handling and a good motor, so we were jazzed to try the production model.

When Griggs rolled our race machine out of the CCM box van, we were struck by the changes that had been made to the C25. The subframe, airbox, seat, number plates and fenders had been changed to replicate '96 YZs, giving the bike an even lighter look. Gas capacity had increased to 2.3 gallons, yet the bike remained the slimmest thumper on the track, despite having the widest motor. The C25 also got Pirelli MT18 knobbies, wider footpegs, an oval silencer and a more potent cam. We were stoked to try the CCM at the White Bros. Four-Stroke Championships (round three of the SoT series).

FEEL THE THUNDER

Where Liles' factory bike sported a 12:1 piston and was a bear to start, our production 605 lit up easily and consistently. Nothing suffered from the pre-pro bike to production (hey, it looked enough like a YZ125 to make us nervous). In fact, the suspension seemed even better than Schmit's bike. The Marzocchi fork and laydown WP shock worked well together, provided compliance over chop and resisted our attempts to bottom them. We experienced some rear-wheel chatter

1996 CCM C25

Engine type	.....Air-cooled, 4-valve, SOHC 4-stroke
Displacement	.....598cc
Bore and stroke	.....97.0mm x 81.0mm
Carburetion	.....39mm VHSB Dell'Orto
Fuel tank capacity	.....2.3 gal.
Gearing	.....15/48
Lighting coil	.....Yes
Spark arrester	.....Yes
EPA-legal	.....Not yet
Running weight w/no fuel	.....258 lb.
Wheelbase	.....60.0". (1524mm)
Rake/trail	.....28°/NA
Ground clearance	.....13.7" (349mm)
Seat height	.....36.5" (927mm)
Tire size and type:	
Front	.....90/90-21 Pirelli MT18
Rear	.....120/100-18 Pirelli MT18

Suspension:

Front	.....Marzocchi 45mm cartridge fork, adj. comp., 11.8" (300mm) travel
Rear	.....WP BA aluminum piggyback shock, adj. comp./reb./prel., 13.4" (340mm) travel

Country of origin.....England

Suggested retail price.....\$7128

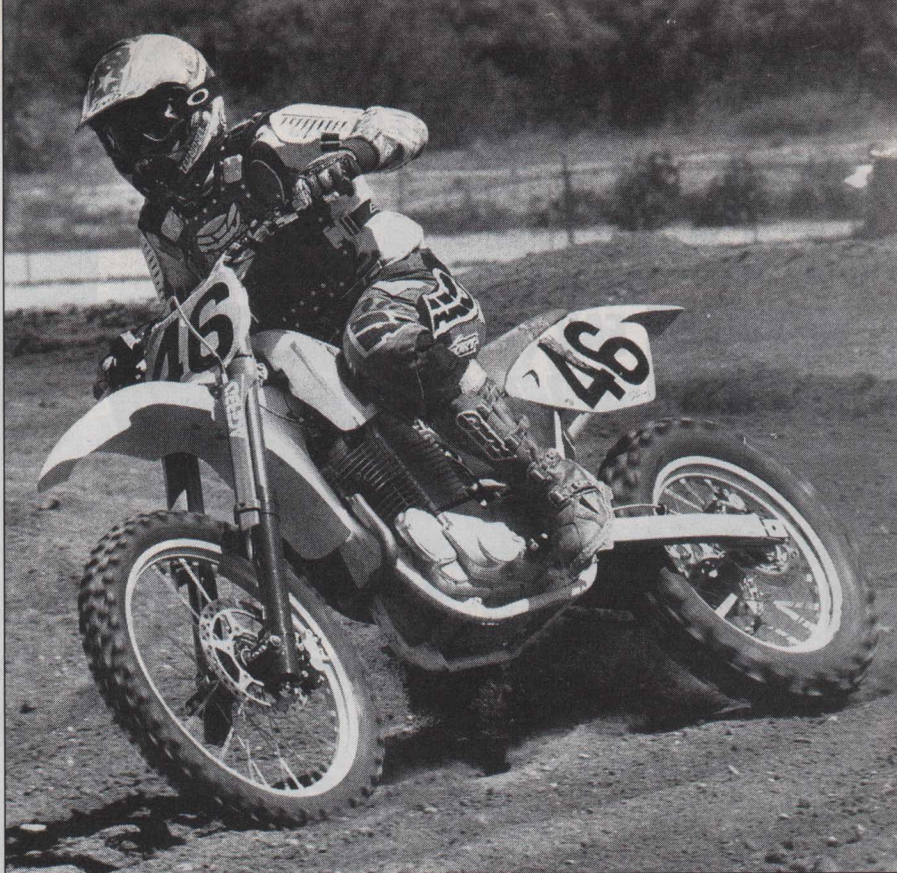
Distributor/manufacturer:

CCM America
310 S. 12th St.
Grand Junction, CO 81501
(800) 259-5037, (970) 241-5037

REPLACEMENT PARTS PRICES

Piston	.....\$412.56*
Rings	.....95.33
Air filter	.....37.36
Clutch plates (drive)	.....14.68 (8)
Clutch plates (driven)	.....7.88 (7)
Front sprocket	.....34.98
Rear sprocket	.....55.24
Front brake pads	.....32.08
Rear brake pads	.....48.34

* Includes rings and wrist pin



Now that we have spent more time on the CCM, we discovered how to make it turn—attack the corners harder, drift the rear end out, then get on the gas sooner. The C25 isn't RM-quick, but it isn't RM-twitchy, either.

◀ The production tank holds more gas than Schmidt's championship CCM, but it is just as narrow. The rear of the bike has slimmed down, thanks to a YZ-replica subframe, seat and plastic.

It may look like a YZ, but fear not, the production CCM C25 is as fast as the pre-production bike we tested in our September '95 issue—faster, even. Billy Liles demonstrates. ▶

Mass is well centralized, despite the ancient engine. Oil rides in the frame, the shock pivots below the carb, and even the brake pedal is moved closer to the engine. The CCM feels lighter than a Husky 610. ▼

under braking, but a click less rebound solved that problem. Overall, the suspension and handling were flawless; the bike never took any weird hops and stayed hooked in corners. It might have been our imagination, but it even seemed to turn better than the pre-pro model, yet retained the train-like stability.

A very linear power output made the 605 very easy to ride, and the light weight and good brakes made it easy to flick into corners. We could detect no glitches in the 39mm Dell'Orto carb's jetting, nor did it stumble over jumps—and it felt even lighter than we remembered. Overall, we would rate the CCM behind the Husaberg in power, weight and cornering but ahead of the Swedish banana in price, suspension

action, stability, attention to detail and ease of riding. Compared to the class-leading Husky 610, the CCM isn't as fast, but it's lighter, has stiffer suspension and handles better. The only thing we had to complain about with the CCM was that the new YZ-like front fender was so flimsy that it flopped around on the track, and that's a lot easier to fix than it is to make a Husaberg shift or stiffen the Husqvarna fork.

It's a pity that this bike didn't arrive in time for our 600cc thumper shootout, because it would have definitely been in contention for the win. CCMs are available in 350cc and 605cc displacements and can be ordered with electric starters for an extra grand. A kit is also in the works to convert C25s to dual-sport legality. □

