

BICYCLE MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

# **DIRT BIKE**

34355 JANUARY 1975

**360 YZ  
MONOCROSS**



**125  
TYRAN  
MX**

**175  
PUCH  
ISDT**

**250  
BAJA  
EL SINORE**

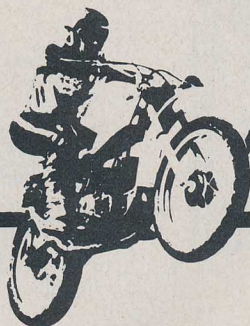
**ISDT: SIX DAYS  
OF ALMOST  
SEEING GIOVANNI  
BATTISTA MONTINI**

**NATIONAL MOTOCROSS FINALS \* QUEBEC'S  
MAPLE LEAF ENDURO \* EVEL'S SNAKE  
RIVER SENDUP \* BENGT'S SWEDISH SWEEP**

Retailers: See Page 93 for Special  
Display Allowance Plan.



# DIRT BIKE



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ON THE COVER: Aerobic advocate  
of lighter than air travel shown aboard  
Yamaha's flying machine.

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MORE "WHAT IT'S LIKE"



# THE BAKER ELSINORE

Riding the Baja 250 class winner

## by the Staff of DIRT BIKE

They start from a platform, up where the crowd can see them all. They go off two at a time. Bikes always go first; makes the traffic easier to handle.

When they get the signal, they leave that little grandstand with all the officials and all the good-looking women and roll down into the arroyo. It's a wash that runs right through the middle of town. Spectators, both American and Mexican, line the sides and the town police hold off any cross traffic.

The bikes are in the top gear by the first cross street.

From then on, it's flat-out until the end of the race. They only shut down for the pits and the driver change. They only slow down for the rock gardens and the few tight corners. All the rest of

the time it's WFO.

Most don't make it. They eat it somewhere. Or the bike comes apart under them.

One that did was this Elsinore. Al Baker and Steve Holladay brought it back into Ensenada in eight hours and 32.87 minutes, averaging 44 mph over the Baja desert, and taking first 250 and sixth overall.

A lot of hours went into this machine. It shows, just looking at it. It also shows when you ride it.

It's tall, and feels taller yet because of the enormous saddle. It also feels soft. It's designed to soak up the worst bumps Baja offers. The Elsinore works. Have a lapse of concentration and hit a road crossing? Matters not. The long forks start squishing oil first, then the forward-mounted shocks hit. It does kick up the rear, but not like the front-wheel wheelies a trailbike will perform. Besides, you land on those plush forks

again, and there's even a little bit of emergency travel built into the front end: a pair of Malcolm Smith J bars. They're solid aluminum and flex an extra inch during the hard landings. They also flex a little as you're riding, giving your arms a break from the buzzing of the engine and the constant working of the front wheel and forks.

This Honda goes straight. Relax on those sections and let it pick up speed. No problem. Tracks like an old desert Bultaco. But it'll turn, too. Good combination, arrived at with a lot of work. George Etheridge, of American Honda, modified the frame; he took an inch out of the downtube and three-quarters out of the top frame member. Then Al Baker put on modified Betor triple clamps to bring the fork angle back in a little. The result was 33 degrees of rake, and a bike that turns, as well as going desert-straight.

More time went into the CR's engine than anywhere else. The result is a long powerband that starts somewhere near the middle and winds all the way out past all reason. It's strong, but you can't paddle around on it; it'll start going chug, chug, chug until you clean it out again.

The components that went into that motor included: the standard head and an AC S42XL plug, the optional Honda cylinder (cleaned up, naturally), and the new-style Honda piston. The standard 34mm carb was used in the Baja, but Baker said that there was a flat spot on top when he used the stock downpipe; a 36mm carb would have been the answer. A Honda MT ignition was installed because Baker wanted lights for

the race. To keep expenses down, and to keep the stock CR shifter and sidecase (making the engine slimmer than the MT), the aluminum stands holding the coils were ground down and then 60 thousandths was taken off the backing plate. After that, the CR sidecase fit right on. Timing was 2.5mm BTDC.

An MT gearbox was installed, since the close-ratio CR box was a little tight for Baja. It was a simple swap, except for third gear. People have been blowing it, so Baker turned that gear down a millimeter, letting the dogs engage deeper; then a one-millimeter washer was used on the other side of the gear to take up the slack.

A lot of work, but the payoff was first 250 at the SCORE 500 and that translates into dollars.

**WANNA BUILD ONE?**

*It's possible to almost duplicate the Baker Honda. Almost. If you want to try, we'll give you some hints and addresses, but there's a lot of work involved that you'll have to do yourself.*

**FORKS:** stock Honda units with Tim Witham fork kits for 7-7/8ths inches of travel; available from Al Baker Racing & Development (15180-R Raymer Street, Van Nuys, California 91405).

**FENDERS:** Preston Petty units, available almost everywhere.

**TIRES:** Bridgestone 3.00x21 six-ply on the front; check your dealer for these; and a Goodyear Eagle DS 4.00x18 on the rear; those are available from Webco (Box 429, Venice, California 90291).

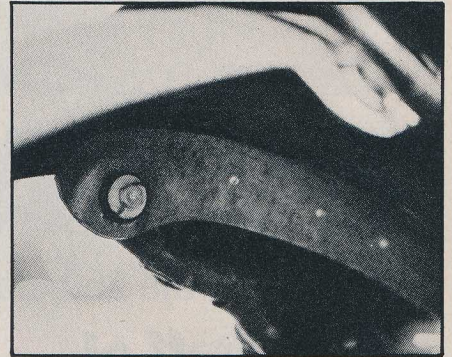
**CABLES:** all are Terry cables from Terry Industries (P.O. Box



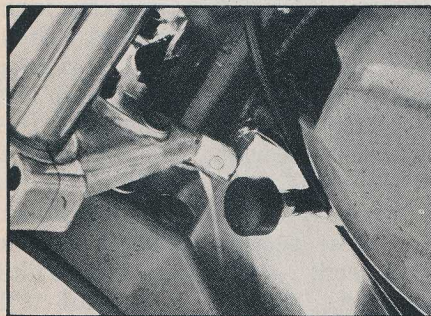
Check out that trick pipe; just the thing for rock runs.



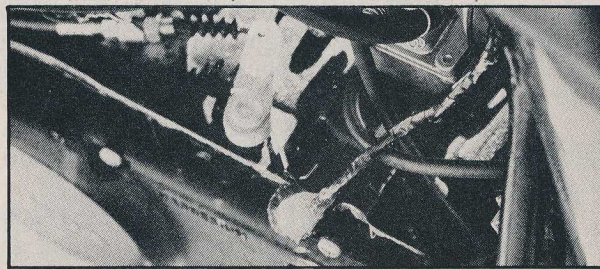
The front end is kicked out for desert stability.



Half the stock Elsinore fender was combined with the back half of a PP plastic job; Preston's are cheaper and he paid contingency money.



Baker had to make these fork stops to keep the front end off the gas tank.



Detailing was professional. Of course. You don't finish in the money any other way.



Not very pretty, but it finished, complete with official DB stickie.



1321, Hesperia, California 92345).

**LIGHTS:** a Cibie and a trick mounting bracket, both from Malcolm Smith Racing Products (P.O. Box 1086, Riverside, California 92502).

**BARS & GRIPS:** a Malcolm Smith J bar and Oury grips which you can get almost anywhere.

**TRIPLE CLAMPS:** those modified Betor clamps are available nowhere right now, but by the time you read this, Baker might have some; write him.

**TANK:** the Vesco skinny/fat tank is available from Don Vesco Products (7936-C Lester Ave., Lemon Grove, California 92045).

**FRAME MODS:** you're on your own here.

**ENGINE WORK:** same.

**SWINGARM MODS:** ditto.


**SEAT:** you'll have to go to your local upholstery shop; get them to put in the good, stiff foam, starting with two inches in the front and tapering back to one in the rear; it goes under the regular foam.

**GEARBOX:** at your dealer, or from Tom Sawyer Honda (26062 Bouquet Canyon Road, Saugus, California 91350); don't forget the Baker trick on third gear.

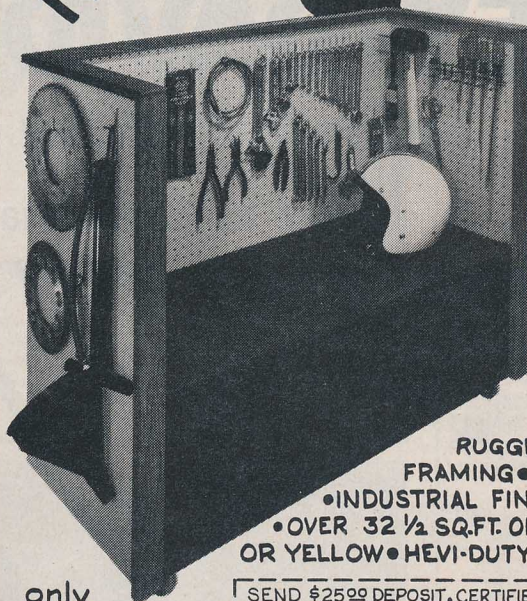
**PIPE:** although a stock downpipe was used during the Baja race, two bash plates and the pipe were wasted, so Al built his own pipe; that pipe, a side number plate, and all the appropriate hardware is available from Al Baker at the address above.

**AIR BOX:** the stock air box and a K&N filter were used; get your filter from K&N Engineering (P.O. Box 1329, Riverside, California 92502).

**SHOCKS:** the ones used during the race were 14-inch S&W units that had 4½ inches of travel; that, combined with moving the shocks up 4-7/8 inches, gave Al almost 7½ inches of travel at the rear axle; S&W shocks are available from Webco.

That's about it. Go do it. Enjoy. 

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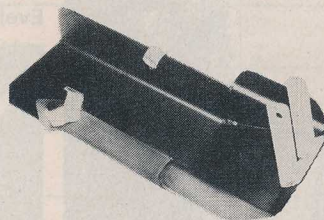
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