

BICYCLE MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

# **DIRT BIKE**

34355 JANUARY 1975

**360 YZ  
MONOCROSS**



**125  
TYRAN  
MX**

**175  
PUCH  
ISDT**

**250  
BAJA  
EL SINORE**

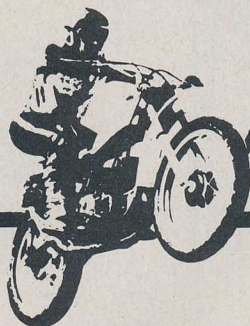
**ISDT: SIX DAYS  
OF ALMOST  
SEEING GIOVANNI  
BATTISTA MONTINI**

**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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DIRT BIKE (Jan. 1975) is published monthly by Hi-Torque Publications, Inc., with editorial offices at 16200 Ventura Blvd., Encino, California 91436. Subscriptions \$7.50 per year, foreign \$2.00 additional for postage except Canada. Copyright © 1975 by Hi-Torque Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted in whole or in part without the express permission of the publisher. Manuscripts, photographs and illustrations should be accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope. The publisher does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material. DIRT BIKE, P.O. Box 317, Encino, California 91316.

# PUCH 175 I.S.D.T.

by the Staff of DIRT BIKE

Everything's there . . . except for an engine

"Hey! Did you hear about Hermie?"

"No, what?"

"He got some good news and he got some bad news."

"What's the good news?"

"He was offered a sponsored ride for all the I.S.D.T. Two Day Qualifiers this year."

"What's the bad news?"

"It's on a 175 Puch."

"Whatta you mean? I heard that Puch is a fine old Austrian bike builder with a pretty good rep for handles."

"Oh, they handle just fine, but the engine. . ."

"So what's wrong with the engine?"

"It's the same one they use in the 175 motocrosser."

"Well, then. Ought to be good and powerful."

"Uh, well, it isn't really, and it's got a rather peculiar powerband for enduro riding. Nothing at the bottom, hardly anything in the middle, everything at the top."

"Pipey, huh?"

"No, just peaky. But you have to screw it on and hold it there."

"Bummer, huh?"

"Well. . . it'll get you there, but I wouldn't get off my Ossa for one."

The Puch has a pretty good reputation. That's why we couldn't figure out why it didn't seem so suitable for typical enduro or Two Day Qualifier terrain. Well, the bike is fine, but the engine isn't.

Sit back, pull out a copy of the 1975 DIRT BIKE Calendar, and while you busy yourself looking for the abundant errors (Ash Wednesday on a Thursday?) think about your favorite trail riding spot. You know, the one where you and Mary Lou first discovered truth, beauty and the real meaning of internal combustion, and try to

comprehend taking something like a 125 Elsie along those tight little switch-backs. No low end on the Elsie, right? Really not altogether the most ideal way to spend the best part of a day, huh? Well, the 175 Puch has about the same low end as the Elsie. Zilch.

Yeah, but there's good mid-range. Uh, no. There isn't. All the power is toward the top.

So what do you have? A bike that's supposed to take you anywhere all day long. Guess it will, but that power range. . . Seems like a serious tactical blunder to us.

The peculiarity of the power had us contemplating that perhaps our test unit had not been set up too marvelously. Since the head Puch guys were over in Italy for the Six Days, we were unable to check back with them for a fortnight or so. Instead, we asked an I.S.D.T. veteran who had ridden a 175 about the bike. He's one of those types who can ride anything straight up a mineshaft while simultaneously resetting his trip meter, winding the route sheet up a notch and chanting his favorite mantra to the rhythm of Shuffle Beatin' Boogie.

"Say, just wondering about this Puch we have. Doesn't seem to have anything on the bottom."

"That's right," grinned the I.S.D.T. veteran.

"And can't really say there's much in the middle, either."

"That's right," grinned the I.S.D.T. veteran.

During a desert outing one of the riders along with us (with Two Day Qualifier credentials) graciously declined to climb aboard. Said just by listening he could tell he didn't want to play shift, shift, shift till Daddy takes the T-Bird away. He definitely preferred to just mosey along on his own enduro mount, winding

out to 2500 or maybe three grand and climbing buildings in a single bound while going chugadda kachugedda in third or fourth or fifth. Didn't really matter much.

Perhaps our friend on the large tractor also peaked while we were taking the pictures. Seems that Zeal had a lot of trouble keeping it on the power for the sliding activities. Enduro riders do a lot of sliding, don't they? It was a problem mainly because there wasn't any power there. Stall. Start. Lug. Stall. Start. Load. Brnnngggg. Stall. Crash.

Zeal also had a great time picking his way through the rocks, just like the enduro riders really do, having to wing along at about 16 grand in first gear to keep things spinning.

The radial-finned engine is a 62 by 56mm 169cc piston-port number with a 32mm Bing attached aft. The promo sheet claims 27 horses at 9000 rpm. Don't think so.

So let's stop prolonging about the power spread and talk about what is nice about the machine. One staff Easterner felt it looked trick. He really has a way with words. Charlie thought it was bitchen' cause it looked like a Penton. And because it's red.

The enduro competition-type touches are there. The rear taillight, an item whose lack of profuseness is matched only by its obscurity, is mounted on a hunk of rubber that folds over and serves as a plate holder. The VDO speedo is also rubber mounted. It resigned during the first outing when the drive cable unscrewed from the hub. The headlight and horn kept working, although you can't hear the horn even when it is working.

The Puch cables are a hot setup and should be plagiarized by everybody else in the immediate





future. Each cable has a small pop-open excuse-the-language nipple right up in plain sight to facilitate cable lubing or even make it easy. And the Magura throttle setup provides for easy outing of the cable for replacement chores. There's a rubber accordion doodad to keep dirt out and both hand levers have Magura dust covers.

Fenders are plastic, as is the gas tank, which curiously bears the inscription Motocross. Capacity is about 2.1 gallons, hardly the hot setup unless you're entered in the I.S.D.T. in Austria and there are gas cans hidden with great abundance by loyal homelander. Hercules told us that an optional three-gallon container is in the works, along with optional sprockets.

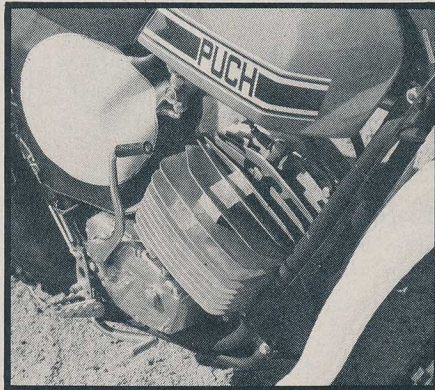
People may argue about the wheels. They're by Radaelli of Italy, they are shouldered for strength or mud retention or both, and they're steel. That makes them heavy. Some say it also makes them near indestructible and less likely to pinch a tube if you really ding into an anvil beside the trail.

Then there's — The Shroud — harbinger of obfuscated kill buttons and ticklers. The vinyl cover wraps around just about everything but the engine and the shocks to prevent foreign impedimenta (klass word for krud) from attacking the carburetor, air cleaner and the likes. Hidden behind that shroud is the tickler on the Bing for cold starts. So you either probe behind it or poke through it with a sandpaper-sensitized touch to prime for the fire-up. Starting was a one- or two-kick affair. Mostly one when the engine was warm.

And you know how everybody always complains about the kill switch being on the right side instead of the left side. Puch neatly sidestepped the entire controversy by placing the kill button on the right side, but not on the handlebars. Try the right side, behind the rider's leg and underneath the shroud. Twenty five practice swipes before breakfast and after dinner and you'll have the drill down pat. Simply remove your right hand from the hand grip and front brake lever of the jammed wide

open runaway machine, grab around behind your leg and deftly go push, push, push, whap, dam, tap and you've got the fire out while pulling in the clutch and steering with the left hand.

But the machine handles nice. Depending on whether you believe the promo sheet or the owner's manual the wheelbase is either 55.1 inches or 53.3 inches. We measured 53 inches. The machine likes to turn with a minimum of effort. If you're into chassis



geometry you'll notice that you can draw a straight line between the centers of the two axles that also passes right through the center of the countershaft sprocket and the swingarm pivot point. This is a characteristic prized in many circles.

Scoot along up on the pegs, zipping and darting in and out and up and down like an enduro rider should and you'll start digging the response and feel. You'll also notice that it's a right fine comfortable bike for standing up on the pegs. Why, one staffer even labeled it the most comfortable stand-up bike he's ever ridden.

Another staffer, initially disimpressed with the power, came sauntering into the office after a take-it-out-and-play-all-weekend session and offered that after he got used to it he was frolicking his fool head off.

The only time you think about vibration is when you sit down to a typewriter and try to remember: Was there any vibration? Can't seem to recall any.

The seat is kind of confusing. Sit down on it and it feels very hard. Like a slightly improved observed trials seat. You tend to say: Bleccccch. Who needs this? But then you go riding and you kind of forget about it. This seems like the perfect situation to use;

but once under way the feeling of slightness disappeared.

There's no pipe or air cleaner or kickstarter or anything else to get in the way of a comfortable ride. Yeah, the bike feels like it was designed by people who wanted to go riding 200 miles at a rip.

The pipe, a downer variety, exits on the right, wends its way underneath, then shoots up behind the right leg to a point near the top of the rear shock and then angles off to the rear. Attached to it (we just have to say it), is this *humungous* chromed silencing appendage. Said silencer is satisfactory. Eventually it fell off. There's also a second chromed appendage that can be bolted on to house the first chrome appendage to further absorb dbs. Rubber grommets are used to mount the pipe and a bash plate comes stock to protect the underside.

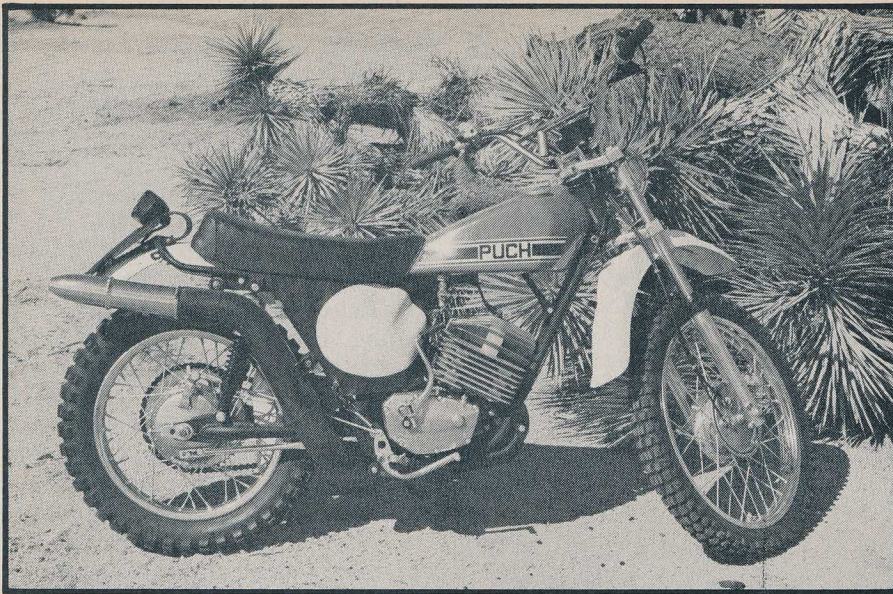
Back out in the field we were talking about handling, which leads up to suspension. The Puch has some. We liked the Betor front end better than the Girling rear end. The claimed 6.5 inches of fork travel is highly legitimate. It was easy to measure the full extent of travel by observing the trail of fork oil spewed along the length of the tubes after the fork seals let loose. The seals blew individually.

About the best that can be said for the Girlings claimed travel just under four inches, is that they lasted just about long enough to break in the swingarm bushings. That's ten hard miles. Then you replace them.

Calling down to the bullpen we came up with some (already well worn) Telesco relief. Thirteen point four-inch numbers. They raised the rear end of the bike just a tad. Springs were either 55- or 60-pounders. Chet forgets. The Telescos were reluctant to get sideways, even through continuous whoopdies. Finally, though, they did expire because of old age. Six months without a rebuild.

The bike's secondary shock absorbers, the rubber, worked super. Metzeler knobs, 3.00x21 and 3.50x18.

Which leads us quite naturally to a discussion of the braking facilities provided. The front had a



good feel, and acted friendly. The rod operated rear was a tad touchy, mostly noticed on downhill operations.

The chain adjusting bolts are quite long and Puch has thoughtfully drilled three different holes in the brake anchor rod to allow for maximum efficiency depending on the length of the adjusted chain. The torque stay arm has a big, beefy cotter pin and the mount for the rear brake arm pedal pivot is sealed and lubed, another one of those *let's keep it together for 1200 miles this week* touches.

A look at the transmission ratios suggests soundness, but... There's a 3.5 first gear which, coupled with overall gearing that tops out at about 55 to 60 mph, should let the bike climb walls. Only it doesn't, as we have already mentioned. Really puzzling. Low overall gearing, a low first gear ratio and you have to wing it and pop or ride the clutch to get rolling in first just like a 125 Elsie.

The clutch will heat up quickly and drag. Like pull in the clutch, come to a complete stop, release the brake, and you'll keep moving. All it took was one diddly little tight uphill switchback picking through rocks and we could count on heating up. Peering inside one finds a miniscule clutch reminiscent of the old Ace 90s. As far as the transmission is concerned, other than we sure had to use it a lot, we don't have anything to say other than it must be OK.

About the gearing. There's a

13-tooth counter and a 54 rear. The rear sprocket is very large. Also very heavy, 4.4 pounds. Enduro riders often prefer a rear sprocket as physically small as possible to avoid snagging small trees or portions of them, or chipping off teeth on rocks. You'd have to knock off several teeth out back to get the top end up to the 65 to 70 bracket. But that would just move the power range further up the mph scale. Curious and curiouser.

Accessibility. A key word for lovers of air cleaners. The Puch's paper filter is reached by removing two seat bolts, lifting off the seat and opening the shroud. No hassle getting to the plug.

The double loop frame is kind of unusual. It's bolted together, using two stout bolts up front and two reinforcing arms from the top tube down either downtube. The swingarm boldly declares that it is chrome moly. The frame is mild steel.

No need to worry about venting the magneto on the Puch. Two transparent cords burst forth, one running up the downtube and disappearing beneath the gas tank while the other winds around the underneath of the circular case and slides beneath — shall we say it all together: The Shroud.

Right here is a good place to put in the snore stuff. Like did you know that Puch makes more motorcycles than any other European manufacturer, provided you count mopeds as motorcycles? Also, Puch is pronounced Pook.

Puch claims a dry weight of 218 on their flyer and 214 in their owner's handbook. Our indubitably indisputable scale registered 258 pounds with its 2.1-gallon tank full of only one gallon of fire power. Seems like a slight discrepancy there. Did you know that a 175 MX Yamaha with

#### PUCH 175

PRICE: retail, approx. \$1198

ENGINE TYPE: two-stroke, piston-port, single

DISPLACEMENT: 169cc

BORE & STROKE: 62mm x 56mm

COMPRESSION RATIO: 11.5:1

CARBURETION: 32mm Bing Concentric HP @ RPM:

(claimed) 22 @ 9000 rpm

CLUTCH: Wet, multi-disc

PRIMARY DRIVE: Gear, 2.56:1

GEAR RATIOS: 1) 3.5:1

2) 2.21:1

3) 1.67:1

4) 1.28:1

5) 1.00:1

FINAL DRIVE:

13-tooth countershaft

54-tooth rear sprocket

AIR FILTRATION: Paper

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM: Bosch electronic

LUBRICATION: Pre-mix, 25:1

RECOMMENDED FUEL: Premium

RECOMMENDED OIL: Two-cycle

FUEL CAPACITY: 2.1 gallons

(3-gallon tank available)

FRAME: Rectangular backbone, steel

SUSPENSION:

(front) Betor, 6.5-inch travel

(rear) Girling, 3.9-inch travel

WHEELS: Shouldered (steel)

TIRES:

(front) 3.00x21 Metzeler knobby

(rear) 4.00x18 Metzeler knobby

DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase: 53.3 inches

Ground Clearance: 9.6 inches

Seat Height: 33.1 inches

Handlebar Width: 33.9 inches

Weight: (claimed) 214 pounds dry

(actual) 257.5 pounds

with one gallon of gas

(on front wheel) 43%

(on rear wheel) 57%

BRAKES: Drum

INSTRUMENTS: Tenths resettable speedometer (VDO)

LIGHTS: Yes

SILENCER: Yes

SPARK ARRESTOR: No

PRIMARY KICK: No

PARTS PRICES (frequently replaced items):

Piston assembly: \$29.10

(including rings)

Clutch cable: \$3.50

Cylinder: \$154.05

(including piston & rings)

Shift lever: \$7.60

Brake pedal: \$7.08

Clutch lever: \$6.25

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## FRAGMENTS AND PIECES

Gas cap was a real leaker. Crud accumulated all over the tank.

Folding pegs are serrated looped steel. They aren't spring loaded.

The plastic chain guard has to be broken or worn in. Until then it makes wretched, mournful sounds as it chafes itself into a comfortable state of being. And then it cracks.

You can get to the countershaft sprocket without having to pull a case.

The rubber mounted taillight can also be used to search for UFO's during midnight enduros. It angles upward at about a 45-degree angle.

If you want to buy a new cylinder you have to buy a new piston and rings with it. Total tab is \$154.05.

The chain didn't do any weird stretch numbers and functioned faithfully without adjustment for virtual eons.

Underneath the shroud there's a warranty sign that says nothing is warranted.

Grips are Maguras. They're good.

There are two petcocks, both of which say: Zu. This is Austrian for On...Off...Gas... a mysterious lost continent?

## SUMMATION

The Puch 175 I.S.D.T. would be a nice bike if it had an engine better suited to the majority of riders who might choose to climb aboard. Nobody seemed eager to get into all that revving and shifting on a trail ride. And yet once aboard, the handling, with the replacement shocks or the Girlings before they abandoned ship, made it an enjoyable machine. Keep it on the power and it did fine. Take on a district enduro or a Two Day Qualifier with the stock engine? Sure, it can be done, only we just remembered we're going to be busy that weekend.

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