

Suspension is still the key, confidence comes next.

OSSA PHANTOM REVISITED

by Russ Darnell

Few motorcycles can be considered "out of the crate" racers. You almost always need to make changes to a machine to make it competitive. Still, the European manufacturers have, for a long time now, been building bikes that are the nearest to being race-ready. In 1969, Husqvarna built their first 400s, and Bengt Aberg took the 500cc World Championship in 1969 and 1970 riding virtual production machines. Since then, the Japanese have entered the motocross market, and the entire industry has gradually moved toward building efficient production racers.

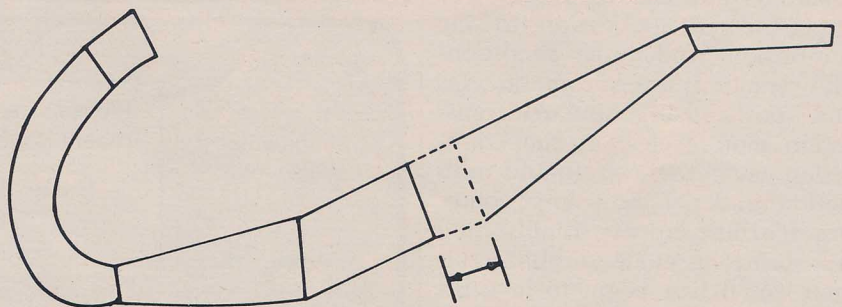
In the highly competitive 250cc class there are about four or five really good production bikes. The RM250 Suzuki is probably the best effort from Japan, while the new Ossa Phantom GP is one of the best from Europe. The Ossa, like several other 1976 models, is capable of winning right out of the box. But who leaves any machine stock? I've made many small changes on my Phantoms to personalize them.

After breaking the bike in for about a tankful of mix, I did several things immediately. First I threw away the trash stock muffler. It's heavy, ugly and totally offensive to the ears. I replaced it with a Casler weld-on type from Malcolm Smith. A Skyway or other weld-on item will work just as well. The stock foam over paper air filter was replaced by a J&T Racing Stage Two double foam job.

After those two changes were made, the detail work began. The stock fenders are beautiful, but junk. If you don't fall they'll be OK, but if you're like the rest of us humans, install Pettys after the first tumble (or before). The factory says that all future Phantoms will be equipped with plastic, instead of fiberglass, after June. The inside of the air box should be taped where it joins the rear fender. This will make the GP a virtual submarine, and keep dust out on dry days. Leave the top of the box open. If you tape too much of the upper part of the box, you will

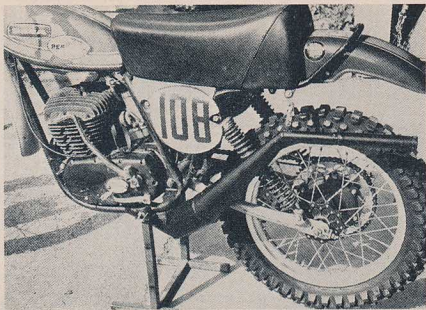


OSSA PHANTOM GP PIPE MODIFICATION



Add 50mm to cone #2. Same diameter.

***Note — The stock GP pipe or the modified GP pipe will increase power on the 1974 and 1975 Phantoms also.**



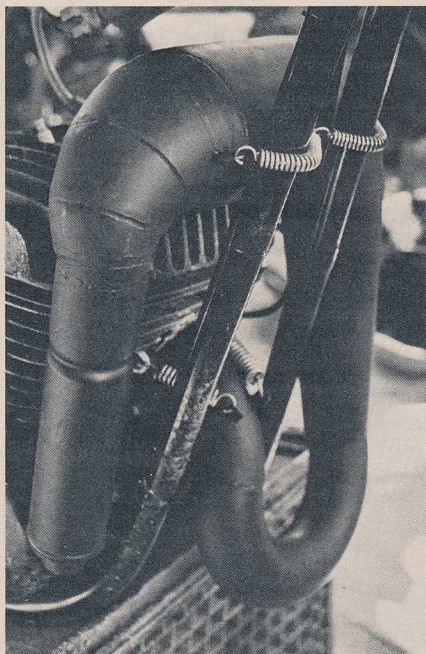
Darnell's bike, with modified pipe, suspension, etc. It goes.

restrict the airflow.

The standard Betor gas shocks work surprisingly well, and should be adequate for junior riders, and some advanced riders as well. Shocks are really a personal matter. I prefer Curnutts myself, and the newest models from Curnutt work extremely well on the Ossa. You gain another inch of travel also, for a total of nearly nine inches of axle movement.

The stock eight-inch travel Betor forks need some tuning for the individual rider. A five-weight oil is a good place to start. If you weigh 175 pounds or more, add a half inch to one inch of spacer to the top of the fork spring to increase preload. If you have to add more than three inches of preload, go to a heavier spring rate, and try to get a spring with a progressive wind.

The Betors will also work well as a gas fork. Make sure you install fork



As an alternative, Roger Sanderson of The Pipeworks makes this up and over short pipe. Address is 2204 Gladwick St., Dominguez Hills, California 90220. You're welcome.

protectors before you race, because the Betor sliders are very thin-walled, and a rock ding can cause them to bind.

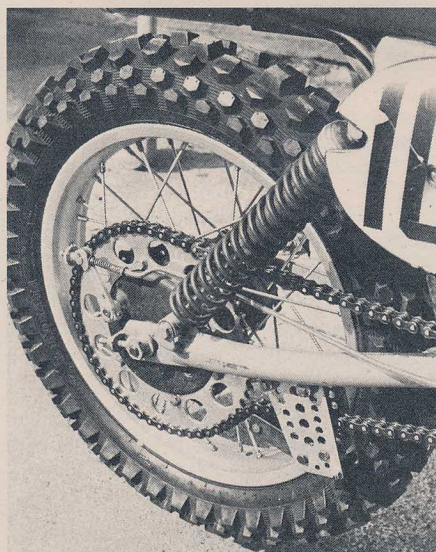
Because of the long travel, a chain tensioner is almost mandatory. Use your favorite chain after the stock Joresa stretches too far. Take a look at the new Denselube SuperChain by Jacwal Corp. It works really well for me, and you never have to lube



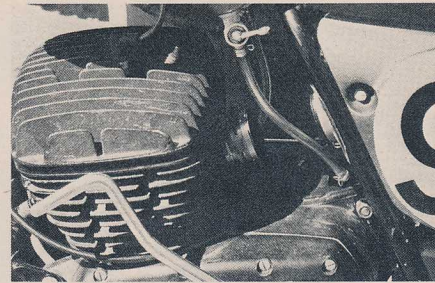
New plastic fenders due soon from Ossa bend easily. . .



. . . but they've got a long memory. George ponders the new shape of things to come.



Curnutt shocks and a special chain tensioner were two critical mods on Darnell's bike.



Gunnar tried this special carb mod on our bike. Response was amazingly steady and predictable, but power was down somewhat.

it, which makes it especially good under wet conditions.

The engine is very fast in standard form, but will benefit from a polishing and matching job on the ports. Don't do anything radical — just clean up the sharp edges and make sure the base gasket matches the crankcase. To gain an appreciable increase in power without making the bike pipey, you can add 50mm to the next-to-last section of the GP pipe (see diagram). If you perform this mod, make sure you rereck the plug reading for a possible jet change.

Speaking of jets, here is the jetting I use now: standard slide, standard needle all the way down. Needle jet #180-183. Main jet 165-175. Pilot jet #35. Floats parallel with bottom edge of carb body. The Amal twist grip can be tiresome to the wrist. To make the slide action softer, cut three-quarters to one inch out of the carb spring length, then stretch the spring out to its original length.

After three rides make sure you pull the clutch cover off to adjust the clutch plates. Tighten all spring adjusters one full turn, then adjust the outer plate so it's running true. Change the clutch oil at the same time.

I've switched from the stock Akronts to Sun rims with eight-gauge spokes. The stock tires (Pirelli) are fine on soft, high-traction surfaces, but very poor on hard tracks. I use Yokohama 900s or Fullbores on the front, and either a Yokohama 903 (hard track), or Yokohama 901 (soft track) on the rear.

As I said before, the Phantom is one of that select group of out-of-the-box racers, but, like all the others, you have to make certain adjustments and modifications to personalize it for your own needs and the demands of intense competition.

Do it!