

DB RIDES A TRIALS EVENT!

# TRIAL DE ESPAÑA XII

By Tom Webb



The 1981 trials champ, Curt Comer, drops his bike and cliff during the exhibition.

Since Super Hunky's reincarnation at *Dirt Bike*, there have been no Trials coverage or tests. His feeling alienated the magazine from the Trials folks, and every time we would talk to or hear from someone in that field, they would leave quickly. It might have been his statement about Trials being as much fun to watch as paint drying... we don't know.

But, feelings can change, so for the first time since '79, we were doing something Trials-oriented. This didn't

come easily; it took much prodding and coercion from the top-level management. As it turns out, the Hunk volunteered... not himself... but a lower part of the staff to carry out the assignment.

With the help of Bay Area Bultaco, two Trials bikes were lined up. Next, we would actually compete in an event, the Trial de Espana.

#### WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The Trial de Espana is the final event of the year in Southern Cali-

This event had 12 sections: two loops in all, making it 24 traps for the rider to compete in. Since we were first-timers, there was a lot to learn. By watching other riders, we saw that walking the sections was critical. Mentally preparing for each obstacle readied you before actually riding the trap. For those unfamiliar with the sport, you lose points by touching the ground (or dabbing), so speed isn't a factor; style and concentration are.

By the end of the day, we had actually acquired a so-so style. Turning by weighting the outside peg, bowing your legs, choosing the correct gear for a section, blanking your mind of all else but the upcoming obstacle, had us cleaning many of the Beginner sections of the Trial.



Bay Area Bultaco rider Andre Plouffe rides over a few tiny stones on his way to the big rocks.



Just your average run-of-the-mill obstacle here.



Bernie, caught here in mid-flight, is actually jumping his SWM nearly 20 feet in the air.

ifornia. It's held at Saddleback Park and the purposes are many, including to try to raise funds and send SoCal's best riders to Europe for World competition. Also, it's a promotional device for Trials. With this event, they try to recruit new riders and pump them on the sport.

Sections are laid out in a fashion so that all get a taste of the action. For beginners, the traps are relatively easy, yet they still challenge the rider, without being dangerous. Without scaring the newcomers, it allows them to break into the sport slowly.

All the sections are marked with ribbon. With each section, there are three or four different areas, depending on your skill level (Beg., Nov., Am., or Ex.). For the unadvanced, the course is short, yet it still requires concentration and finesse to get through without dabbing, or losing points.

All in all, it was a fun day. But the real action was yet to come. An exhibition section had been laid out for some of the top experts in the country and the world. It consisted of both stadium-type and natural obstacles. On close inspection of the man-made sections, our first thoughts were that these guys had a large void in their brains. Driving over cars, water-truck bodies, giant upright tractor tires, telephone poles jammed in the ground at 30-degree angles, were just a few of the obstacles.

The stuff we rode was child's play in comparison to the exhibition loop. On first sight, it appeared unmakeable, and virtually suicidal if it was even attempted. Ever try riding down a telephone pole, then having to jump a giant mudhole, flying nearly 20 feet in the air on a Trails bike? We're talking nuts!

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Quickly, our doubts about the sections and the riders were put to rest. These guys conquered them, and most of them quite easily (see photos). With this, another fact became apparent. Although the top riders in the country were assembled, there was only one real hero: Bernie Schreiber. He had the crowd on their feet and clapping

during the entire exhibition loop. He's like Bob Hannah is for motocrossers—your basic hero, idol, and all-around good guy.

With a giant smile and skill that is unmatched in this country, the SWM rider would attack the sections that other riders would flail through. He's an absolute master and had us nearly

### RIDING THE BULTACO SHERPA & THE ITALJET 350S

By Tom Webb and Dennis West

Riding a Trials event is pretty tough without a bike that is made for tight, slow situations. Basically you need a serious trials machine. With the help of Bay Area Bultaco, we got the use of a Bultaco 350 Sherpa and an Italjet 350. Both are top trials mounts and work perfectly for their intended use.

On close inspection, both appear rather old and archaic-looking. Skinny forks, very small swingarms, huge engines, bogus brakes and crudely-welded frames all make them appear grim. But don't be fooled. These bikes are made for only one thing...Trials. Both of the bikes have enough grunt to pull you up a building—without a hesitation. They are also equipped with some of the finest tires for Trials use; Pirelli's. The tires are expensive and don't last long.



The Sherpa is a five-speeder, very stable and has nearly perfectly tuned suspension, stock. Although it's hard to shift and hard to start, it's not hard to ride. For first-timers, the bike was a joy. In talking with seasoned riders, they say the Bultaco will do anything that the rider's skill level will allow.

A newcomer is the Italjet. It, too, is a 350, but has a six-speed trans. Of the two bikes, the Italjet had the most motor. At higher speeds, the Italjet wasn't as stable as the Bul, though it never hampered us during the event.

Thanks to Bay Area for the bikes—both worked flawlessly throughout the event. □



The exhibition loop started off with the easy stuff—a ride up a telephone pole with an immediate dropoff—left-hand turn, then it got harder.



Michael Lauxen, ATA rated #5, pops off the water truck body, down to a tight left hander.

bowing to him in respect. But, here's the nice part. Bernie is just like one of the guys. Not some self-righteous Mr. Big. He talked with all the friends that he grew up and raced with, gives pointers and doesn't hesitate to autograph most anything.

After watching Bernie and the Nation's top pros, we here at *Dirt Bike* have a new-found respect for Trials and a new hero to look up to. □

Photos by Tom Webb and Dennis West