

DUAL PURPOSE DUEL: DT250 vs. TS250

# DIRT BIKE

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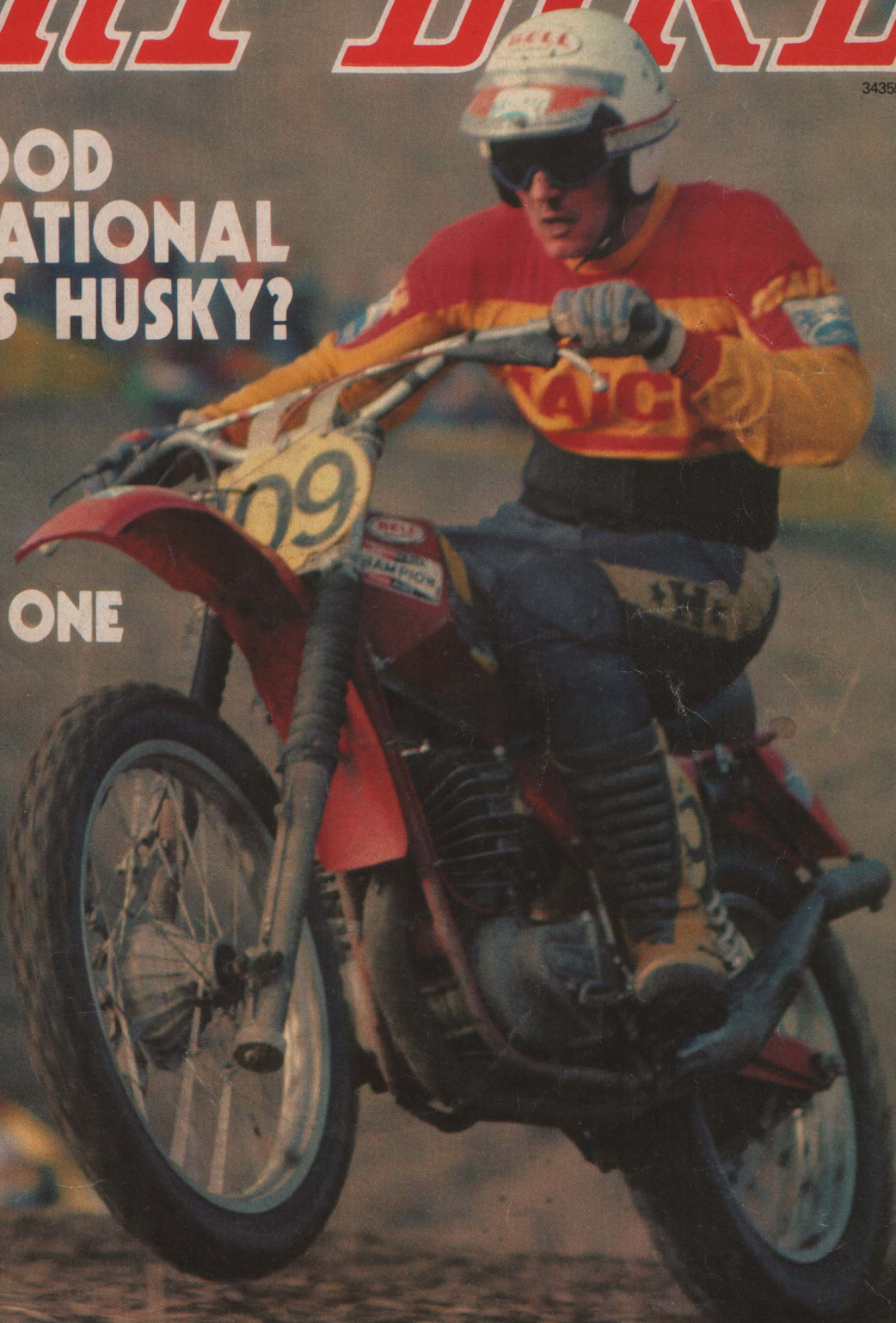
APRIL 1977

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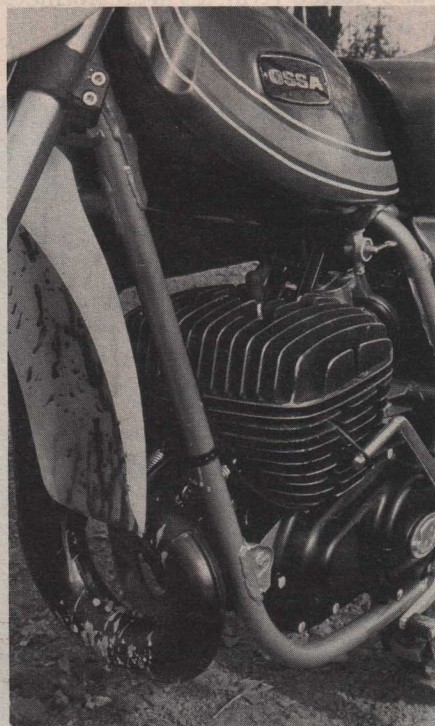
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THE PRIVATEER LIFE OF GAYLON MOSIER  
BLUE MEANIE: OSSA 250 PHANTHOM GPII



# OSSA 250 PHANTOM GP II

*Good moves and  
sleek lines, but  
about those legs...*

Upon its arrival in Ameriland in mid-1973 the Ossa Phantom 250 made big waves in the 250 motocross pool. Top production dyno pusher of the year and first sub-200-pound 250 were a couple of its calling cards. The Phantom as a year or two ahead of its time in '73 and, with minimal development effort, it maintained a high ranking position for those ensuing years.

Times change and the Phantom became the norm. By 1975, despite its power and light weight, the Phantom's legs began to look a might spindly. Wheels that traveled eight and more inches to accommodate terra infirma suddenly seemed more important than light weight or eye-bulging horsepower. Times changed and Ossa changed. First came the Phantom GP and now the more thoroughly worked over GPII. The GPII easily marks the most significant changes in the Ossa motocross line since the Phantom replaced the Stiletto.

#### IN COGNITO

Many of the Phantom's changes are hidden to the naked eye, despite the extensive cosmetic work-over. This year both transmission shafts ride on needle bearings and the shift mechanism has been altered to provide a lighter detent pressure. Five

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“  
**Fifteen minutes  
would work up  
a dandy set  
of blisters.**  
”

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well-spaced speeds are sufficient for motocross, which is the only locus the Phantom should ever become familiar with.

Porting is altered to provide a few more top end horsies without doing damage to the Phantom's extensive and usable mid-range. An up-pipe winds through the frame and exits behind the right number plate. Though the high pipe avoids the rider and ground quite conveniently, people who are currently riding Phantoms hint that there may be more power to be found in the GPI downpipe. One tremendous advantage of the new high pipe is that it finally incorporates an at least moderately effective integral silencer.

Everything aspirates through an example of the Spanish license Bing which is becoming so common on many Spanish machines. 38mm seem to provide adequate breathing room and the choke lever provides appropriate enough enrichening to allow immediate starting always.

Air filter access is under the seat and two 6mm bolts let you see it. The filter attaches by a rod and nut which pass through the body. Though detritus can fall into the carburetor neck when servicing the filter, the one-piece construction of the box provides excellent water sealing. The Phantom will and did run in water up to seat height.

Both left and right side cases have been altered on the GPII. The previously somewhat bulky Phantom clutch case has been replaced by a sleek, form-fitting item. This case allows the rider's left foot to tuck in tighter on the motor, a boon but for the fact that the kickstarter shaft is now an obnoxious protruder. It tends to

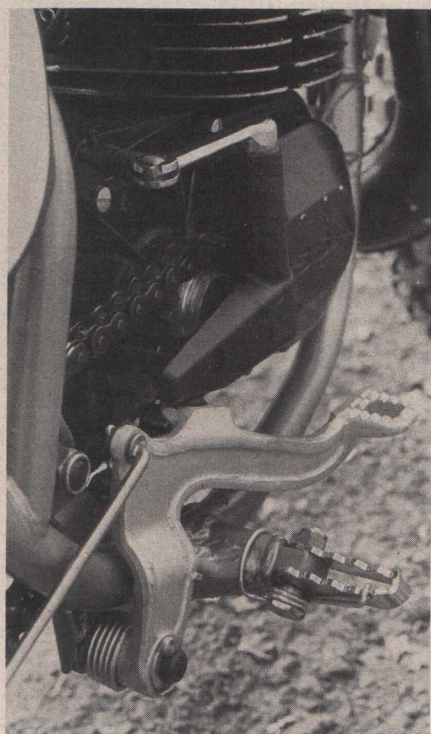
hang up the ankle of the rider's boot, prohibiting full travel on the shifter. Any problems we had with the shifting of the bike are completely attributable to this problem — one that can be remedied by the individual owner. The ignition cover on the right side is also narrower and provides abbreviated countershaft cover. The cover keeps the rider's foot out of the chain, but leaves the chain completely accessible.

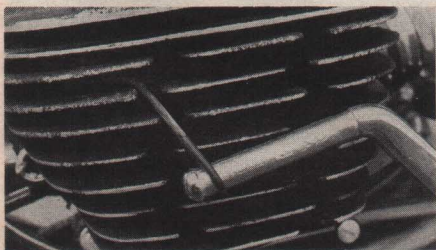
Five motor mounts provide integrity between motor and chassis. Two 8mm bolts in front, two 10mm bolts in back, and double support from the tank/seat junction of the frame to the cylinder head cinch it together. Stays from the upper frame area to the motor have become quite common since the advent of LTR suspension, and it is quite critical that all mounts be kept tight. Loose motor mounts can actually result in handling irregularities, not to mention broken cases and so forth.

In part because of the chain-driven primary, and in part because power moves off the mainshaft of the transmission, the Phantom's countersprocket (note misnomer) is a country mile from the swingarm pivot. A solid six inches of distance virtually ensures that the chain will rub on the swingarm to some extent. The Phantom is provided with a tensioner and a rubbing plate on the top of the arm which keep the problem at bay. But, in order for Ossa to advance much further in rear suspension, something will have to be done to get the sprocket and pivot closer.

Rear wheel travel, controlled by Betor gas shocks, is eight inches, not as much as some but certainly adequate. The frame appears to be the same Phantom frame with the rear subframe altered to lean the shocks forward. Mechanical advantage is 2:1 putting significant stress on springs and dampers. Springs are straight-wound, which doesn't allow for changing leverage in the centilever system.

Front forks are also Betor and should travel just over eight inches. These forks are similar to previous Betors but are two inches longer and have a cast-in reinforcement front and rear. With





Prize doorkicker award goes to the kickstarter holder.

the stock 19-pound/19½-inch springs our Phantom's forks traveled 6½ inches and performed quite miserably. We have been working with alterations to gain the Betor ride we are accustomed to and so far have had only partial success. Al Baker provided us with a set of 20-pound/20-inch S&W springs, which coil-bind later in the travel and actually allow the forks 8¼-inches of movement. If there had been



The crux of the matter: Pirelli tire and Betor shock.

time, we would have used Montesa's specs to sort out these units, since Montesa's forks are modified Betors and work exceptionally well. We might add at this point that neither of Ossa's West Coast riders use the stock forks, preferring the more professionally accepted Marzocchis.

Both hubs are the same as previous Phantoms. Laced to green label Akronts, the wheel units were absolutely maintenance-free. No spoke tightening was required through many hours of riding. This is especially remarkable considering the poor performance of the forks throughout most of the test.

Improvements in the padding of the already supple seat make the Phantom one of the most comfortable motocrossers to perch upon. But for the kickstarter shaft, the riding position and control location are fine for the rider of average stature.

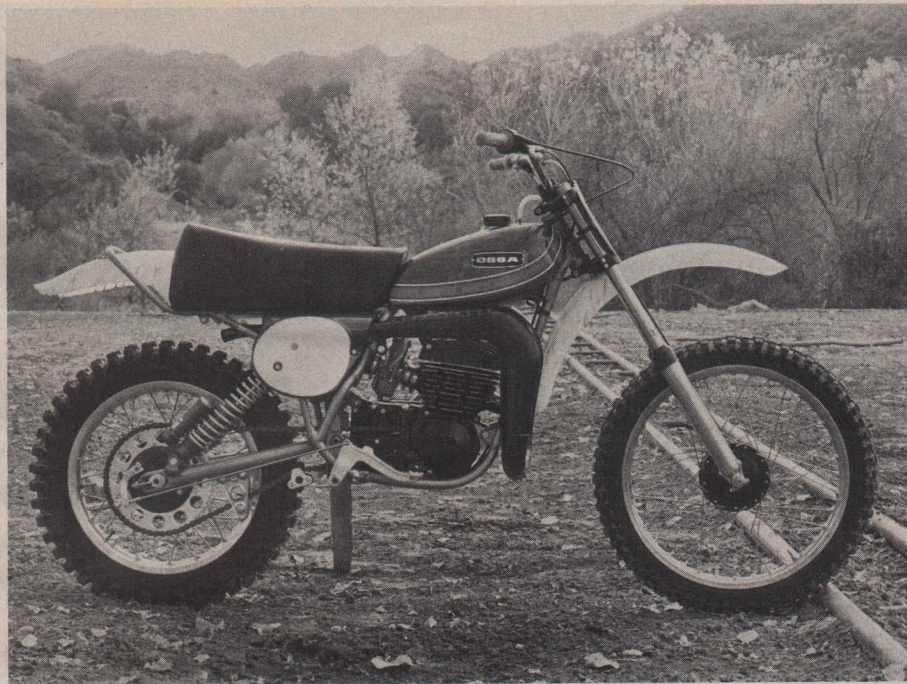
#### BLUE ON BLUE

In the wake of the winter monsoons the Ossa's first outing was mired in the Dunes morass. The stock Pirellis were quite pleased by this unforeseen pleasure and rider and machine happily glorped about roosting those with less mud-worthy machinery.

As the day wore on and the sun shone downward, our more customary California adobe began to return. On harder ground at higher speeds everything was not so swell. First the forks began to pound ruthlessly landing from jumps and braking into corners. Fifteen minutes would work up a dandy set of blisters. And the Pirellis began to work like Pirellis. They squirmed and skated and generally signaled their displeasure.

Still, your lone tester of the day, unaccustomed and unskilled at motocross as he is, felt pleased with the Phantoms. Handling was quick, allowing for squared corners and inside lines — in California apparently the hallmarks of a chicken motocrosser. Nonetheless, taking the easy way, with strict avoidance of full-throttle slides and bravado cross-ups, the Phantom proved to be relaxingly





manageable. Smooth mid-range and lots of it drove the Ossa from any corner with determination. More often than not the front wheel would tend to loft despite the skatey surface and flaccid Pirelli.

With two tanks of gas through the engine for break-in and a set of blisters to attest to the front fork's ill manners, the Ossa was declared ready for the onslaught.

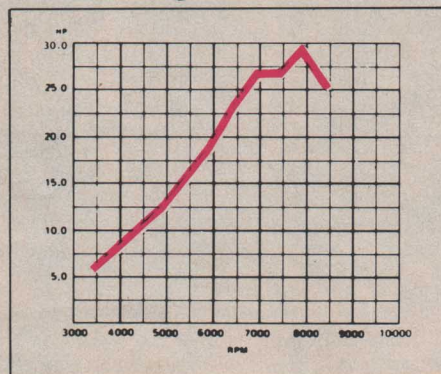
The next morning the DIRT BIKE staff returned in unaccustomed force, lacking only our moto-Swede who was off vacationing in, you guessed it, Sweden. For the following five or six hours the Phantom ran pretty much constantly. Blimpton sneered, showing his ever-pleasant and forthright bias. Weed thumped his "trialiley" bike over rocks and ignored. Woods snored, having just returned from the Yamaha show in Vegas. Bill and Tom paced back and forth in their leathers, right hands twitching spastically. Schoonmaker mumbled, "Uh, remember it's got Pirellis on it."

And so they went forth and it was ridden. And ridden some more. Everyone agreed, "No, the forks don't work." Everyone agreed, "No, the Pirellis don't work." Beyond that agreement fell to the wind. "It's fast." "It's squirrely." "It turns great." "It's too quick." "Huh?" "I'm too sleepy." "I only liked the Penton."

“  
**Can a bike really  
 be good  
 and bad at once?**  
 ”

It was a day of confusion for those who write tests and attempt to convince you of our consensus of opinion. By that evening some were as willing as ever to bad-mouth the Phantom and others more willing than ever to praise it. What could be at work here? What can it all mean? Can a bike really be good and bad at once? And so on the eve of Gunnar's return we wait. Wondering. Who is right? Who is wrong? Does it matter?

The ever-rational and observant Gunnar brought us down to earth.



**OSSA PHANTOM GP11**

Price (approx. retail, West Coast) ..... \$1648

Enging ..... Two-stroke, piston-port

Displacement ..... 244cc

Bore x stroke ..... 72mm x 60mm

Compression Ratio ..... 15.6:1 (uncorrected)

Standard Jetting:

180 main, 2.80 needle jet, 35 pilot

Horsepower ..... n/a

Clutch ..... We, multi-plate

Primary Drive:

Double-row primary chain, 2.26:1

Transmission Ratios:

1) 2.12:1

2) 1.74:1

3) 1.43:1

4) 1.17:1

5) 1.00:1

Final Drive:

12-tooth countershaft

53-tooth rear sprocket

Air Filtration ..... Paper and foam

Electrics ..... Motoplat CDI

Lubrication: Pre-mix, 32:1

Recommended Fuel ..... Premium

Recommended Oil: ..... Full Bore

Fuel Tank Capacity ..... 2.4 gallons

Frame:

Double cradle, chrome moly

Suspension:

Front - Betor telescopic,

8.1-inch travel

Rear - Betor gas shock,

8.0-inch travel

Starting ..... Not primary kick

Wheels & Spokes:

Akront green label, 4mm spokes

Tires:

3.00 x 21 and 4.50 x 18 Pirelli

Dimensions:

Wheelbase:

56.0 inches (142.2cm)

Swingarm length:

17.8 inches (45.0 cm)

Ground clearance:

11.5 inches (290mm)

Bars, height . 43.3 inches (110 cm)

width ..... 35.7 inches (85.5cm)

Pegs, height 13.4 inches (34.0 cm)

width ..... 17.9 inches (45.2cm)

Seat height .. 35.7 inches (900mm)

Fork angle ..... 30.00 degrees

Weight ..... 213 pounds

distribution 42.7% front

57.3% rear

Brakes:

front ..... cable-operated

rear ..... rod-operated

Instruments ..... Hope

Lights ..... Hope

Silencer ..... So to speak

Spark Arrestor ..... Hope

Sound Level:

dbA (CHP): 96 left, 101 right

Warranty ..... Ignition: one year

Parts Prices:

Piston: \$40.50

Rings: \$10.60

Clutch cable: \$3.20

Brake pedal: \$16.80

Shift lever: \$5.45

Back out to the Dunes the Phantom once again went through its paces. Back into the pits, Gunnar was ready to fiddle. Oil change in the forks – two or three attempts and 220cc of five-weight was settled upon. Not good, how do you adjust for a cold day? Fork action? Mediocre. Gunnar wants to know what's in a Montesa fork. They bind, too, on stutter-bumps and jump landings.

Ah, and the rear end. For an Expert the shocks are not well suited. Springs are too soft and damping a little on the heavy side. For Amateurs they still prove to be acceptable.


Gunnar likes the shifting and the power. Finds it easy to shift with the power on and loves the smooth and potent mid-range. "It wheelies easily from corners, but not uncontrollably. You can just hold it there." Not so fond of the new 90-degree throttle, though. Maybe something between the old trigger and 90 degrees would be better.

Details: The tank rubs lightly on the pipe. The front brake cable guide is not sufficient – the cable tends to hang up and bend. The tail piece of the pipe is attached with a hose clamp: Mickey Mouse. Controls tend to be mushy. The front brake has so much return spring that it's hard to feel. Powerful enough, though. The rear is a bit mushy, too, and the pedal runs into the frame rail after an inch of movement. Clutch works fine except that after 30 seconds at the starting gate it begins to drag and finally will not remain unengaged. Comes back quickly, though.

On the much-touted handling controversy: The steering is quick and the bike, overall, is very maneuverable. The Ossa is the lightest 250 we have tested and benefits in turning and mid-air manners. It will tend to push the front wheel a little on flat, skittery corners, but is light enough to be held in place by the rider. With some Full-Bore tires to replace the Pirellis the feelings of squirrelliness are at bay. With non-wiggling tires the Ossa feels sufficiently, though certainly not excessively, stable.

More details: Very comfortable seating and control position. Good

*Continued on page 80*



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**PHANTOM**

*Continued from page 61*

bars and levers. Nice grips. Strange bolt sizes about: 23mm axle, 7mm sprocket bolts, one-inch fork caps. Front number plate is not firmly enough mounted; it twists. Right plate cracked around pipe. Without vent caps on the forks they no longer pee oil on your knee. Motor mounts and steering head must be watched for tightness.

**CONTUSIVE CONCLUSIONS**

Ossa's GPII Phantom is an attractive motor and chassis package with suspension that needs some work. The forks should be capable of adequate performance for the Amateur with some attention to spring and damping. For the Expert replacement may be necessary. The shocks, too, are acceptable for Amateur-level riders but will not do the job for the Pro. The frame will be excellent suited to riders who prefer quick handling and to racetracks that are more difficult and natural than the SoCal norm. Controls, seat, pegs are all top-notch.

Throughout our test the Phantom was remarkably reliable, requiring only periodic tightening of motor mounts and steering head. And other than some strange bolt sizes, maintenance is straightforward and simple.

But the Phantom's biggest asset is its superb power. Power that gets you out of corners quicker because you can use it. Power that will get you down a start straight next to any other production bike. For the rider who is willing to put some effort and money into the suspension components, the Phantom's advantages may well be worth working for.

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