

# DIRT RIDER

MARCH 1976

PDC \$1.25



**SPECIAL  
SIX DAYS  
ISSUE**  
**Malcolm Smith  
on Safari**



**HOTCHA**  
—Another verge  
of control color  
**MOTOCROSS  
POSTER  
INSIDE**

**Bike of  
the year?  
Yamaha  
TT 500**

**Three  
Trans-AMAs  
wired on  
the circuit**

**First test  
250 OSSA  
GP Phantom**

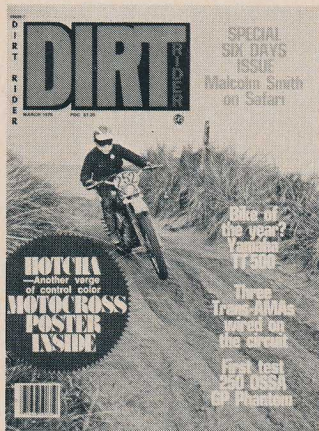




# DIRT RIDER

VOL. 4, NO. 3

MARCH, 1976



COVER: Malcolm Smith at the Isle of Mann ISDT. Bill Sacco photo.

ED SCHNEPF/Publisher  
RICK SIEMAN/Editorial Director  
DAVE SCHOONMAKER/Word Director  
BRUCE WOODS/Phrase Director  
ROLAND GUEVARA/Art Director  
DAVID SWIFT/Tennessee  
RUSS DARNELL/Sports Desk  
CARL CRANKE/Horticulture  
BRIAN FABRE/Magical Machinations  
GARY HYMES/City Desk

JOHN ERNSDORF/Executive Art Director  
RICH GEHRUNG/Graphics Director  
BOB RATNER/Production Director  
JIM BUCHANAN/Circulation Services  
DAN WHEDON/Promotion Director  
SVEN CARLSON/Circulation Director  
CAROL VAN ORSDOL/Business Manager  
JANET GRAHAM/Consumer Relations

LEE SALBERG/  
Eastern Advertising Director  
333 N. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
(312) 263-4569

ALAN KUDA/  
Western Advertising Director  
7950 Deering Avenue  
Canoga Park, California 91304  
(213) 887-0550

CHRIS HAMM/Advertising Coordinator

## Tests

- 31 **OSSA 250 GP PHANTOM**  
*The whole shot.*
- 45 **XL 125 HONDA**  
*Is it better than you are?*
- 52 **YAMAHA TT 500**  
*Surprise!*

## Events

- 17 **THE ROOF OF AFRICA RALLY**  
*Move over Tarzan . . .*
- 25 **THE INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS TRIAL**
- 58 **THREE TRANS-AMAs**  
*Howdy Smith? Marty Doody?*
- 64 **RATTLESNAKE ENDURO**  
*Seizin's Greetings.*

## People

- 66 **TL 125 NON SET-UP**

## Technicalities

- 21 **HONDA CROSSBREED**  
*What's a nice little trials bike like you doing in an enduro like this?*
- 50 **CARVING A CZ**  
*A cut above the usual . . .*

## Departments

- 4 **EDITORIAL**  
*Read it.*
- 6 **MAIL**  
*Thank ya kindly.*
- 8 **MOTO XR**  
*In a rut?*
- 10 **SWIFT**  
*Notes from the hinterland.*
- 12 **FABRE**  
*YZ 360 Enduro? Speedometer?*
- 14 **DIRT RIDER RECOMMENDS**  
*Things to work with.*
- 16 **DIRT READER**  
*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.*
- 35 **MOTOCROSS POSTER**  
*Blow up!*
- 71 **TOOLS AND CHATTEL**  
*An unavailable Sherpa.*
- 74 **MOTOGRAPH**  
*Shucks, we weren't doin' nothin'.*

DIRT RIDER is published monthly by Challenge Publications, Inc., 7950 Deering Avenue, Canoga Park, California 91304. Copyright ©1976 by Challenge Publications, Inc. All rights reserved on entire contents; nothing may be reprinted, in whole or in part, without written permission of the publisher. Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. All photos, artwork, and manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed return envelope. Single copies \$1.25. Subscriptions \$15.00 for 12 issues (one year). Second class postage paid at Canoga Park, California and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.



# Honda Halfbreed Test

If a TL 250 had carnal knowledge of a 350 XL...



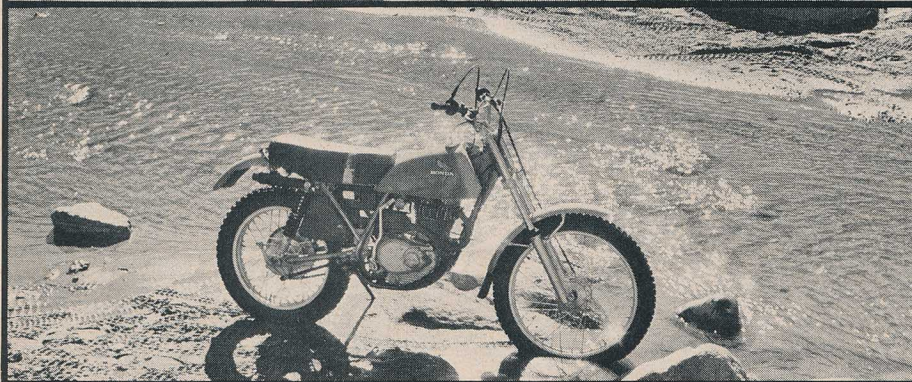
Cross breeds have become extremely popular of late, perhaps due to the new sexual permissiveness. More and more people are trying to improve their bikes by mating them with appropriate pieces from other machines. The Bultaco Frontera is probably the most famous of these crossbreeds as, with the help of the factory, it was able to eventually reproduce its own kind. Private individuals, caught up in a mad-scientist's glee of experimentation, continue to extend the boundaries of weirdness. We recently received a letter from someone who had adapted an Astro pipe and porting to his Alpina. We answered his letter. We can only hope the warning reaches him in time.

*Dirt Rider* recently had the opportunity to spend a day riding a rather special crossbreed. We had heard rumors about the machine, seen it referred to in the results column of an enduro

or two, and even talked with a guy who had ridden it in the enduros. He sounded like a kid on Christmas morning when he talked about the bike. Woods bubbled over with gullible enthusiasm. Skoon voiced cautious interest. A 350 Honda Enduro bike? A four stroker? Made from a TL 250? Caution did, indeed, seem the order of the day. It would be necessary to actually ride the thing before any guess about its capabilities would have value. Rekindled greed dripping like cocoa scum from the corners of his mouth, the Phrase Director conned his way into a ride.

On first glance the bike seems a shoe-in in any contest that rewards cobbiness, thanks primarily to the hacked apart and welded up XL 350 tank and the elegantly duct-taped seat. Closer examination reveals other little changes that are clearly more significant.





The shocks are CR 125 items, which bolt right on with a swap of bushings from the TL shocks. The handlebars are CR 250. A compression release sitting on the bars hints of invisible inner differences. We asked.

The engine is a 350, based on the TL 250 engine but incorporating XL 350 parts. An XL crank, piston, and cylinder (from the '75 model) have been added to the TL. Two XL 350 and the two longer TL 250 studs hold it all together, after being shimmed with washers to fit. Twenty-thousands of an inch has been milled off the top of the XL piston to bring the compression ratio down to a hopefully long lived

10:1. The cylinder was put on top of the head, scribed, and then machined to fit. The cam chain is replaced by the XL chain which must be shortened and then fitted with a CB 450 master-link. As assembled the motor should have all the reliability of a stock engine, since it has been assembled from stock parts, and could, of course, still be bored and stroked should some fool feel the need for more power.

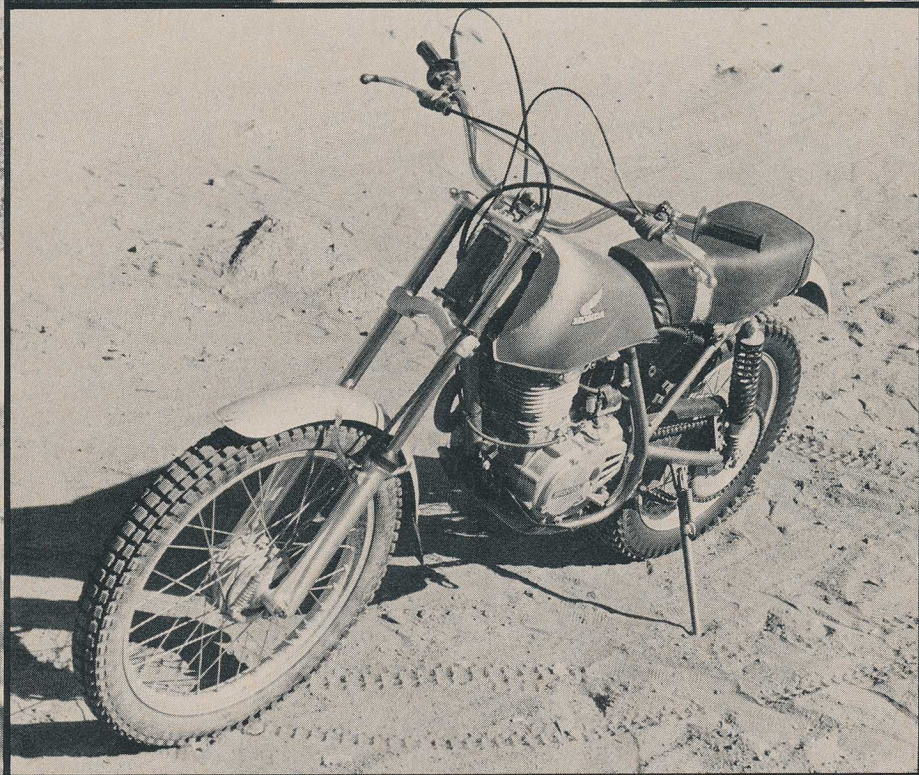
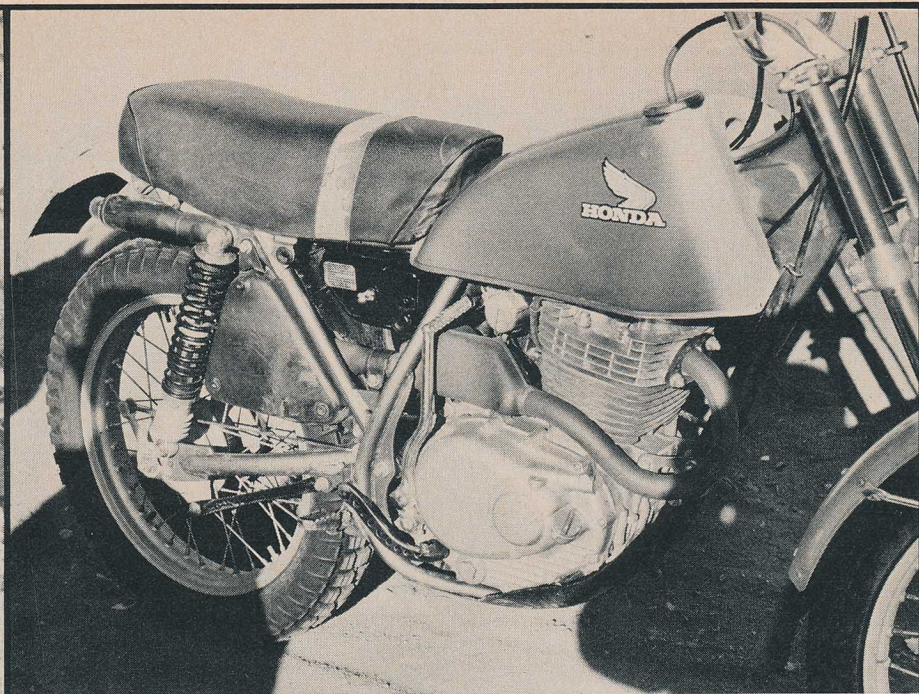
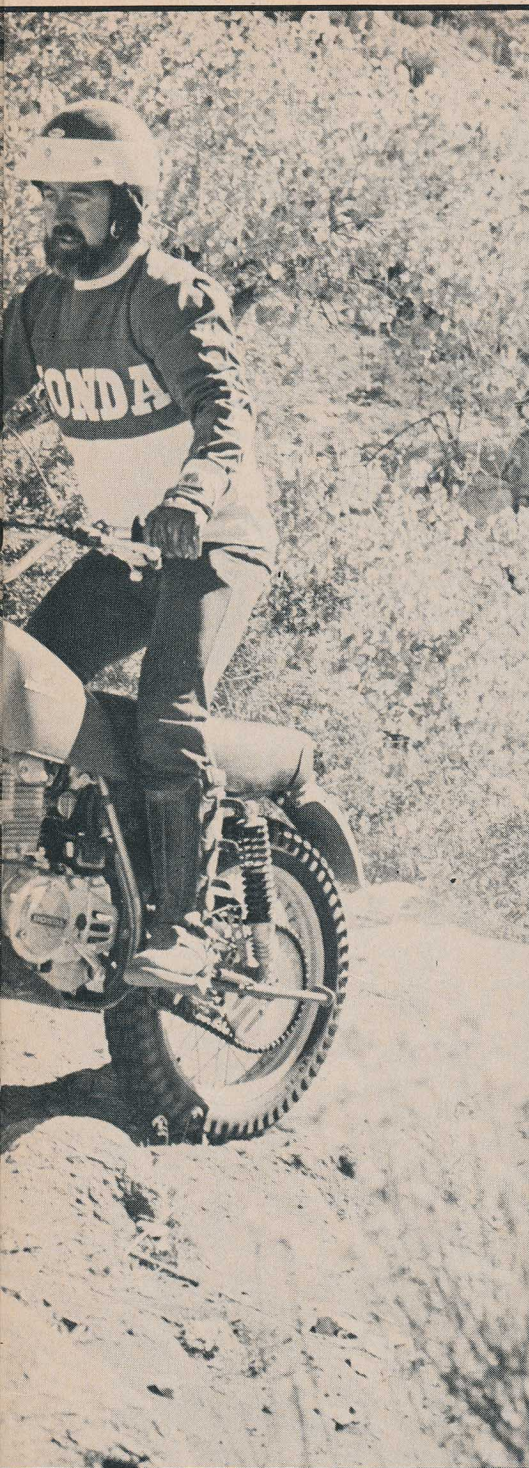
A bigger engine plus a trials bike do not an enduro bike make, however, more remained to be done.

The gearbox is entirely XL 350, a bolt in operation. The owner suggests, for anyone trying to duplicate the bike,

the 1976 gearbox, as it has a redesigned shift fork that is superior to earlier models. The XL flywheel, heavier than the TL's, completes the changes made in the engine.

The forks are surprisingly close to stock. In the TL 250 forks are two sets of springs, one set short, the other the usual long springs. All of these have been removed, but *one* of the shorter springs has been cut in half and each half placed on the top of the CR 125 fork springs that replace the other TL units. 170ccs of 10 weight fork oil replaces the stock oil. The final front end change, more important than it may seem, is simply a 3.00 x 21 front tire.





The larger tire, coupled with the CR springs, give the Honda a bit more trail than stock for more high speed stability.

The stock TL exhaust system, one of the quietest around, is retained, as is the stock carb. The needle is raised a notch and a one-size-larger main jet is used to accommodate the engine changes.

The major problems encountered in building the bike, believe it or not, were in adapting a seat and tank to fit. As pictured the machine uses a CR 125 seat which was mounted using TL 250 front and rear brackets plus cannibalized skidplate mount brackets from

an MR 175. The tank, which had to be changed to clear the new taller engine, is a miracle of cutting and welding. Much hassle could be saved by using the Powerall 300cc stroker kit instead of the more complex engine mods, and then making the gearbox and other changes. This would allow retention of the stock tank and would only entail a small difference in power from the 350.

External gearing is largely a matter of personal preference and riding style. A good start would be a 14 to 57 countershaft to rear sprocket ratio for tight terrain and 15 to 57 for wide open spaces. The countershaft sprocket

should be shimmed out to the clip ring to retain correct chain alignment, and to prevent seal damage.

In a full day of riding the bike was put through the usual sadistic *Dirt Rider* paces. Starting with a ride down a section of our fabled trials-bike-eating streambed, where it performed pretty well, though was geared a bit high for feet up riding in the really tight sections, it was then taken on a forty mile trailride encompassing as wide a variety of terrain as possible. Through deep sand whoops, tight up and down hill switchbacks, fireroads, water, and rocks, the Honda carried our semi-competent Phrase Director. Woods was amazed



at the power, at the versatility of the frame and suspension, at the fact that the bike allowed him to go faster in some sections than he had on any other test bike.

Suffice to say it is a fine machine, an interesting and valid experiment. For those people who prefer four stroke power characteristics to those of two cycle engines, it may represent a new state of the art in enduro bikes. Sadly, even using the Powerall kit it is complicated and likely expensive conversion. As of yet it is questionable whether Honda will ever produce the TL in enduro trim. Hmmm, perhaps if we kidnapped Marty Smith until they did . . .

