

THE 1300
IN COLOR!

MOTORCYCLIST



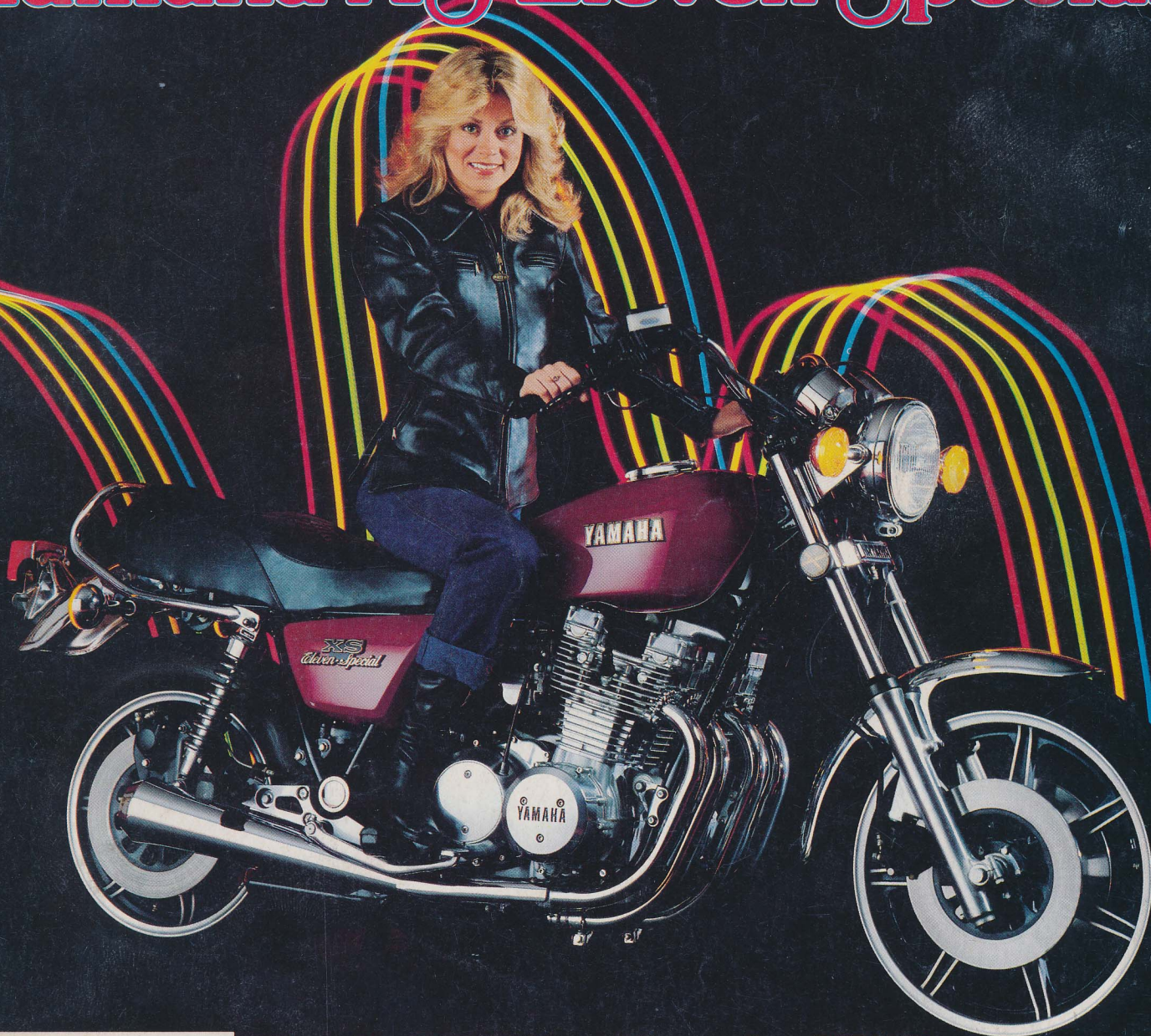
Riding Kawasaki's Monster Six

FEBRUARY 1979

Motorcyclist

\$1.25
In Canada
\$1.50

Yamaha XS Eleven Special



Honda XR185 vs. Yamaha IT175

Battery HowTo • Maico 400 Enduro

son: Detachable Saddlebags

KOLNCA4R0063098 MAY80
SID LONCWEILL



COVER

Yamaha's top 1979 machine features the XS Eleven motor, the styling of the Specials and other goodies as well, including model Dawn Clark. The background pyrotechnics were conceived by photographer Mike Levasheff and executed by Art Director Jervis Hill. The test begins on page 20 with another full-color photo of Dawn. Our special 8-page color coverage of Kawasaki's new 1300cc Six starts on page 48.

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Motorcyclist

Magazine

PUBLISHED MONTHLY • NUMBER 980

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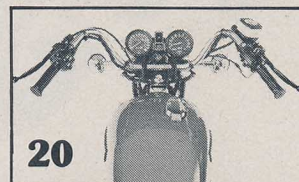
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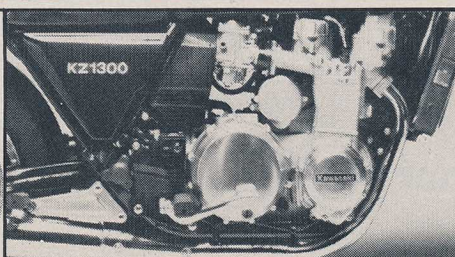
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Maico 400 Magnum E

AN ENDURO BIKE FOR SPEED-HUNGRY EXPERTS



**DIRT
TEST**

Gaining the total acceptance of the American consumer has eluded the Maico marque since their first sporadic appearances way back in 1964. For in spite of consistently offering purely performance-oriented machinery capable of outclassing even the most sophisticated Japanese counterparts, Maicos have been plagued with a history of being somewhat temperamental and mechanically fragile; the familiar nickname "Maico Breako" still haunts the German brand despite its continued evolution. But Maico has weathered the storm by drawing in an elite group of worshipers who are willing to accept the high prices, the unpredictable reliability and the constant need for babying in return for undeniable performance and prestige.

Last year, with the introduction of the technically superior Magnum Series Maicos, this little company has apparently emerged from its black cloud and busted headfirst into the motorcycling limelight with highly competitive race-ready bikes that can now seemingly "take a good lickin' and keep on tickin'." The latest big-bore MXers are currently the favorite choice of weapons among creditable privateers on the National MX circuit.

Fortunately the enduro models, never termed as "jewels," because they were little more than conglomerations of outdated excess parts, have been swept up in this whirlpool of technology and this latest 400 E (E for enduro) is happily enjoying the same rebirth as the motocrossers. This is understandable since the 400 E is basically a sneering, growling Magnum MXer cleverly disguised in timid enduro clothing. With that legendary Maico steering still intact, an enormous 11 inches of ground clear-

ance (gained mostly by eliminating last year's skidplate and moving the centerstand rearward) and an acceptable 36-inch seat height, the Magnum E seems to fulfill the basic requirements of an enduro machine. But it also offers outright motocross handling and stability through its 10 inches of suspension travel at both ends, which is what enduro fanatics and cross-country racers are craving more than anything.

Like last year's WR models, the 400 E is brilliant looking in its virgin state. It still has the identical tip-to-stern fiery red color and Falk fenders and headlight/numberplate combination—but those are the only holdovers. Maico has marked this as "the latest" by replacing their long-time trademark—the coffin tank—with a larger, smooth-flowing 3-gallon aluminum unit and even topped it off with a nicely vented cap that doesn't slobber fuel. The motocrosser's larger FIM regulation numberplates adorn both sides and Maico has highlighted the E series with sparkling gold-anodized Akront rims.

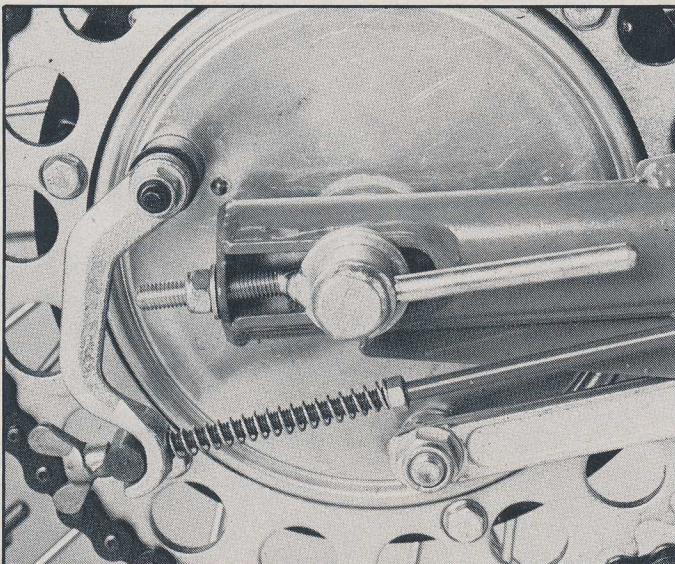
Underneath that case-hardened appearance is a new feather-weight chrome-moly frame that's identical (even in steering geometry) to the motocrosser's except for the additional loop supporting the rear fender. The new frame positions the engine an inch lower in the cradle (improving the center of gravity) and closer to the swingarm pivot, further reducing excess chain slack. Most importantly though, the swingarm pivot now doubles as the rear engine mount, helping to relieve frame stress and the fatiguing vibration which has always accompanied Maico's brawny powerplant. Barely a tingle works its way up through the rubber-mounted handlebars now—the

best of any Maico yet.

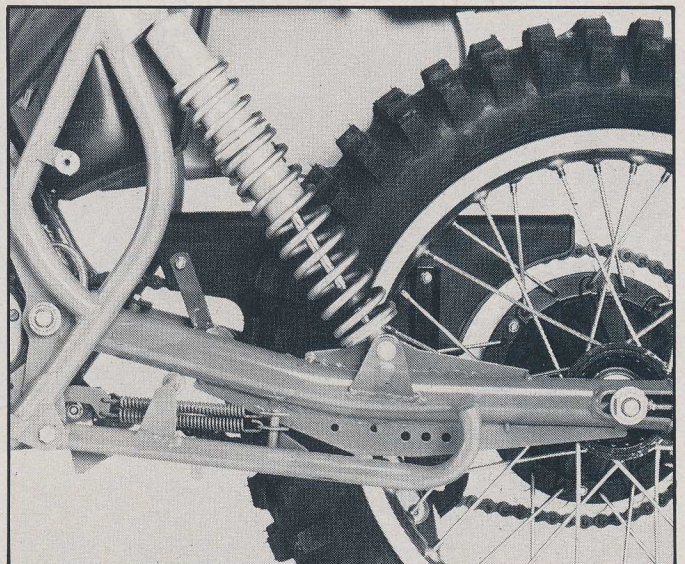
But it's the totally redesigned 386cc piston port Magnum engine that's turning eyes, dropping jaws and opening wallets. By moving the shifting mechanism to the bottom of the cases and employing an idler shaft behind the two gear shafts, Maico engineers have repositioned the countershaft sprocket rearward to within 65mm of the swingarm pivot, thereby eliminating excessive chain slack and its inherent problems. A simple chain guide replaces last year's tensioner. The new design has resulted in a set of centercases that are noticeably lower, slightly longer and considerably narrower, not to mention that the entire engine is 6 pounds lighter.

To complement the new gearbox, Maico also revamped the remainder of the powerplant—the result of a year's worth of testing on the GP circuit. All the engine bearings are now held by retaining plates; there's a new lightweight crankshaft; a special alloy piston churns inside a new barrel featuring '79 porting (each of the transfer ports have been vertically eyebrowed for an extra boost), and the cylinder head has changed in internal dome design, having one centrally located spark plug. Outwardly, the bottom of the barrel features one less cooling fin (which allows easier access to the retaining nuts), the right side fins are shaved down to give Maico's new upswept pipe sufficient clearance and lightweight plastic covers protect the countershaft sprocket and the CDI's internals.

Compared to last year's WR, jumping on the Magnum is like sinking into a beanbag chair: instant comfort and total maneuverability. New Magura dog-leg levers are easily pawed. The tank sits lower to facilitate fore



Rear backing plate is waffer-thin aluminum—super light but also quite fragile. Non-floating brake is strong but does chatter slightly over stutter bumps.



Bowed swingarm keeps seat height low and gas Bilsteins offer motocross stability—a great combination. Be careful removing front wheel: the bike will fall off centerstand.

Maico 400 Magnum E

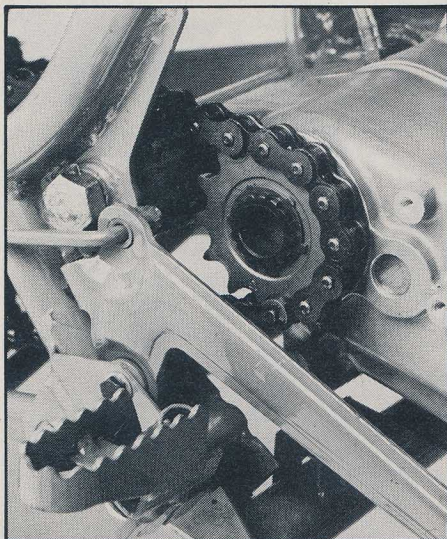
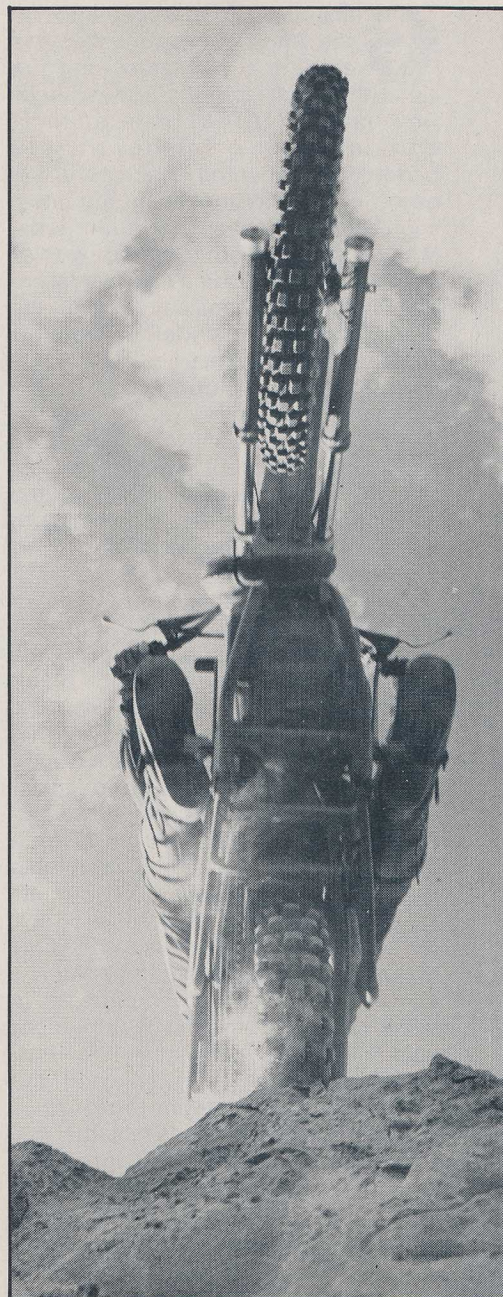
and aft movement. The pipe tucks in better and doesn't blister the jockey's leg, and new cleated footpegs (which are positioned higher and slightly rearward) provide better footing and more clearance around rocks. Top this off with a wet weight of 262 pounds (which undercuts last year's WR by nearly 10 pounds) and you've got one of the most agile Cadillacs in the enduro field.

Just as it can easily thread a tight line in close quarters through Maico's proven combination of precise steering and Metzeler tires, the Magnum E, with its motocross-bred suspension, can glide over threatening terrain at a torrid pace. Maico doesn't spare anything when it comes to handling; the 38mm leading axle forks are Maico's latest air/oil/spring motocross units featuring a new two-piece damper cone, a pair of straight-rate bottoming springs instead of the former rubber bumper system, bronze bushings between the stanchion and slider for smoother stroke and a new lower-leg design which now attaches the entire damper unit externally. Due to the added air pressure (14 psi per leg is stock) and new wiper cones that incorporate additional seals, the forks have a stiction problem in the first two inches of travel which makes the front end chatter over small stutter bumps, but as we compiled more miles it progressively disappeared allowing smooth, compliant fork action—downright plush.

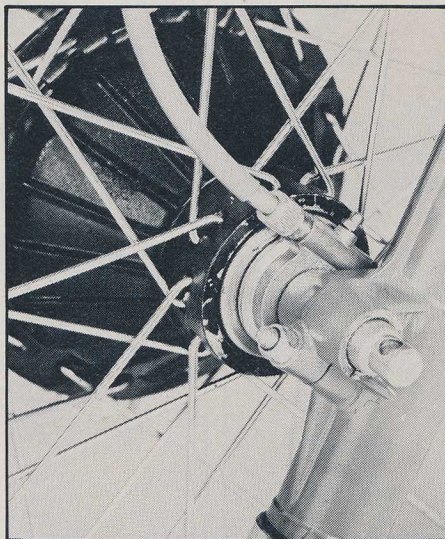
The rear sports another piece of

motocross trickery: a hefty new chrome-moly swingarm which pivots in sealed needle bearings and is bowed in the middle to accommodate longer shocks without increasing seat height. However, unlike the motocrossers which utilize remote-reservoir Corte Cosso gassers, Maico has opted to shave costs by fitting the E-model with gas Bilsteins. Although they are susceptible to heating up and fading under abnormally severe riding, they should satisfy 99 percent of the riders with a beautifully plush and controlled ride 99 percent of the time. In fact, the only place we could really fault the Maico's steering or handling was in sandwashes. It still shakes from side to side down the straights and digs like a plowhorse in the corners. Sitting on the taillight helps relieve the wiggles, and lots of throttle will keep its nose above sand while turning.

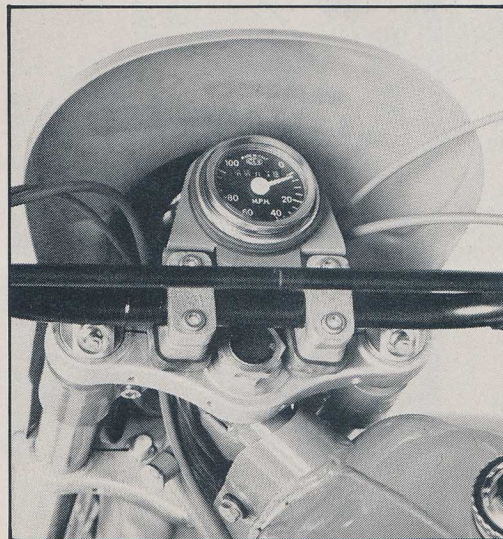
The 30-horsepower E doesn't have the lightning-quick acceleration of the 34-horsepower motocrosser: higher overall gearing, wide-ratio gearbox, and spark arrester have drained most of the E's eye-popping performance. But, fortunately—for the sake of enduro work—it's not as hyper either. By using a Bosch external-rotor CDI, which gives more flywheel inertia than the motocrosser's Motoplat internal-rotor CDI, they've really softened and broadened the power delivery, and given the E more low-end grunt for poking along. Like previous Maicos, there's lots of brute torque on hand for negotiating tricky uphill sections, and the power comes on so smoothly even a beginner shouldn't be intimidated. Overall, the engine is far less temperamental. It never failed to start within a few kicks, and the motocrosser's 36mm Bing carb supplied even, consistent throttle response.



The countershaft sprocket now lies close to the swingarm pivot, eliminating 12 chain links and lots of slack.

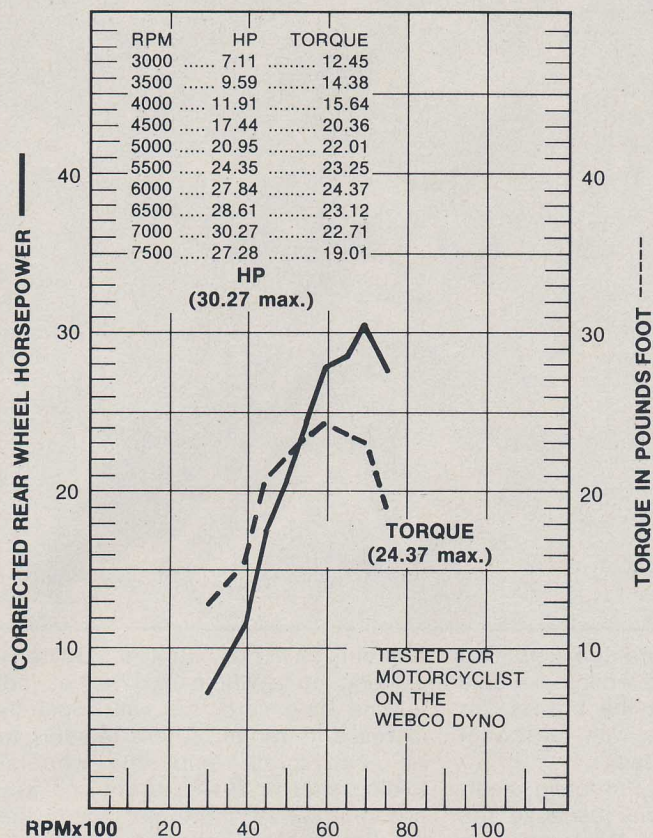
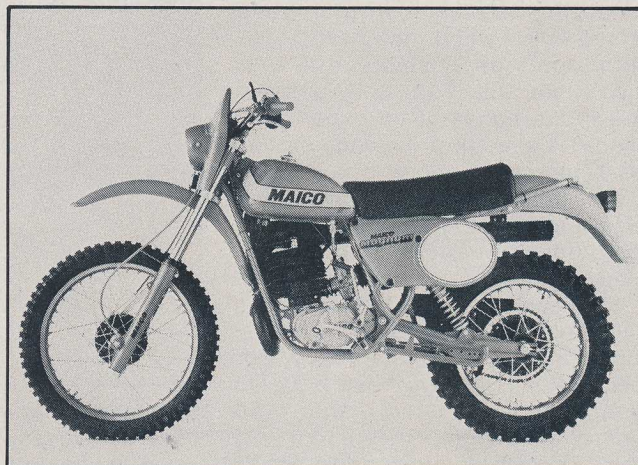


A spacer behind the speedo-drive dictates three-handed wheel changes. Front backing plate is mag.



CEV speedo is prototype—later bikes will likely have VDOs with resettable trips. Note the additional fork lock.

MAICO 400 MAGNUM E



PRICE

1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM E	\$2278
1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM	\$2111
1978 390 HUSKY OR	\$2025

WEIGHT

1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM E	262 lbs.
1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM	243 lbs.
1978 390 HUSKY OR	257 lbs.

HORSEPOWER

1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM E	30.27
1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM	34.77
1978 390 HUSKY OR	32.76

SUSPENSION TRAVEL

1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM	FRONT 10 in.
	REAR 10 in.
1979 400 MAICO MAGNUM E	FRONT 10 in.
	REAR 10 in.
1978 390 HUSKY OR	FRONT 9.5 in.
	REAR 10 in.

Suggested retail price.....	\$2278
Warranty.....	None
Number of U.S. dealers.....	300
Cost of shop manual.....	None available

ENGINE

Type.....	Two-stroke piston-port single
Displacement.....	386cc
Bore x stroke.....	77 x 83mm
Compression.....	12:1
Carburetion.....	1, 36mm Bing V54 slide-needle
Ignition.....	Bosch CDI, magneto
Lubrication.....	Premix
Air filter.....	Oiled foam
Battery.....	None

DRIVETRAIN

Primary transmission.....	Triplex chain, 1.86:1
Clutch.....	12 plates, wet
Final drive.....	5/8 x 1/4 (520) JWIS chain 13/52

CHASSIS

Fork.....	Maico, 38mm dia., 10-in. wheel travel
Shocks.....	Gas Bilsteins, 10-in. wheel travel
Front tire.....	3.00-21 Metzeler
Rear tire.....	4.50-18 Metzeler
Rake/trail.....	28°/4.84 in. (123mm)
Wheelbase.....	57 in. (1447mm)
Seat height.....	36 in. (914mm)
Ground clearance.....	11 in. (279mm)
Fuel capacity.....	3 gal. (11.4 liters)
Wet weight.....	262 lbs. (119 kg)
Colors.....	Red
Instruments.....	CEV speedo, 35W headlight, taillight and brake light

PERFORMANCE

Power to weight ratio.....	8.7 lbs./hp
Mileage & approx. range.....	20 mpg/60 miles
RPM @ 60 mph in top gear.....	5758 rpm
Speed in gears @ redline (7000).....	1st 24.47 mph;
	2nd 33.54 mph; 3rd 44.17 mph;
	4th 58.42 mph; 5th 72.93 mph.

Maico 400 Magnum E

However, the correct jetting is still critical for untroubled performance—something Maico owners have learned to live with in the past.

But don't be misled: the E is much more suited to strafing forest trails in the hands of an expert than dilly-dallying around looking for daisies. Clutch lever pressure is, as usual, excessively strong, and the clutch was reluctant to disengage fully at stops despite repeated adjusting. This was no doubt partially the cause for the gearbox's initial reluctance to shift smoothly and slip into neutral at stops. But being mechanically stiff when new has always been a Maico trademark. It took more than 150 miles of hard riding before our test bike's gearbox began to shift smoothly and consistently. We learned to live with the dragging clutch, although it can be easily fixed with a proprietary accessory kit.

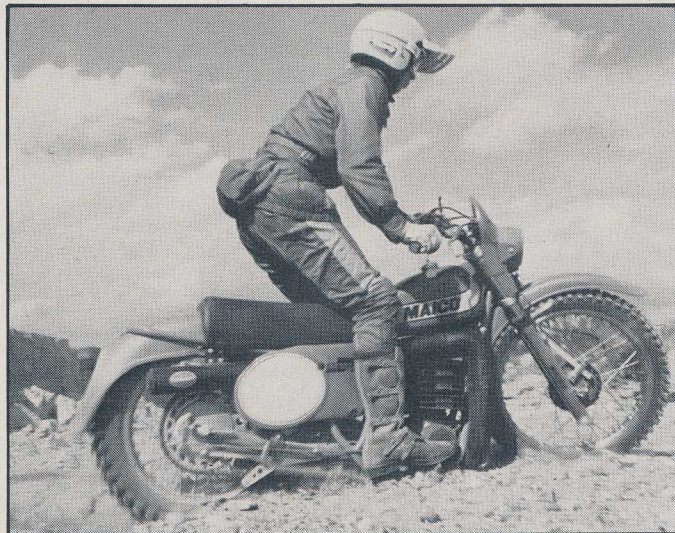
The 400 doesn't feel outrageously powerful (especially in the top gears) and won't win any awards for spectacular fourth-gear wheelies. But with a broad powerband and smooth delivery, it's deceptively fast and a lot of speed can sneak up on you quickly. Such a bike should have an excellent front brake, but the E doesn't. It feels like you're grabbing a sponge, and the brake is almost useless after a water crossing. Maico has never mastered the art of properly matching the linings to the drum. You'll have to do that by hand yourself. And while you're at it, cut several diagonal slots in the linings for wa-

ter drainage, to ensure *some* braking after submergings. Everything works great in the wet but the brakes, for the E can ford rivers with the confidence of a water buffalo.

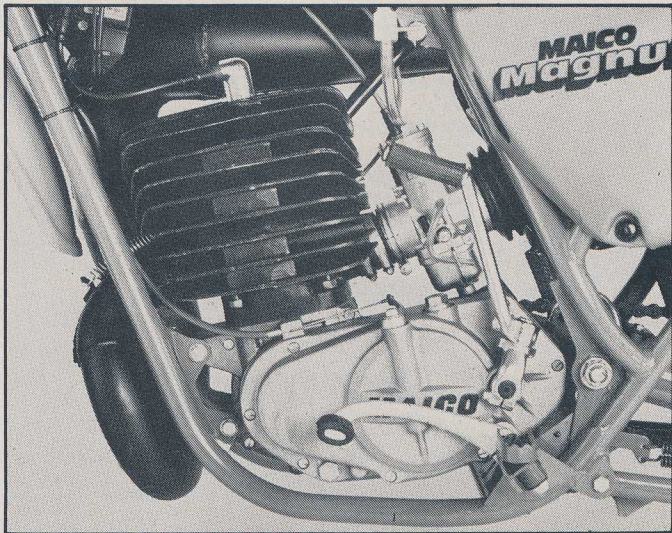
There won't be any problem meeting enduro regulations because the 400 has just about all the goodies: a taillight, brake light, a properly asthmatic horn, a high and lowbeam headlight (neither as bright as a miner's cap) and an adequate centerstand that raises the rear wheel only. The 400 won't have any problems squeaking through the sound test either—a double-wall pipe with the same inner dimensions as the motocrosser, and the Skyway's silencer/spark arrester has really muffled its bark. But in spite of these features, the 400 is still lacking some essentials for serious enduro jobs. The engine remains a gas guzzler and at competition speeds will empty the

fuel tank in about 55 miles. (Maico is working on a whole new set of jets for the Bing carb that will hopefully increase its range.) There remains to be seen quick-removable wheels, folding shift or brake levers and any provision for storing tools. Due to the smaller engine cases, Maico feels they don't need a skidplate any longer, favoring ground clearance for total protection. We don't agree.

In effect, Maico has built what they did last year: a no-frills enduro race bike—only technically it's about 100 percent better. The entire machine caters to experts who like going fast and who appreciate motocross suspension and handling. Use it as a stop-and-go scenic cruiser and you'll be wasting its talents—not to mention \$2278. When ridden seriously in competition or one-on-one against the meanest trail in the mountains, you won't be wasting *your* talents. *M*



This dramatic jump landing shows why the Magnum E should have a skidplate. The undercarriage has bottomed out while there's still a half inch of fork travel.



Magnum engine is smaller, lighter and more sophisticated, but its triplex primary chain still requires replacement at regular intervals. The fuel petcock holds a reserve.

