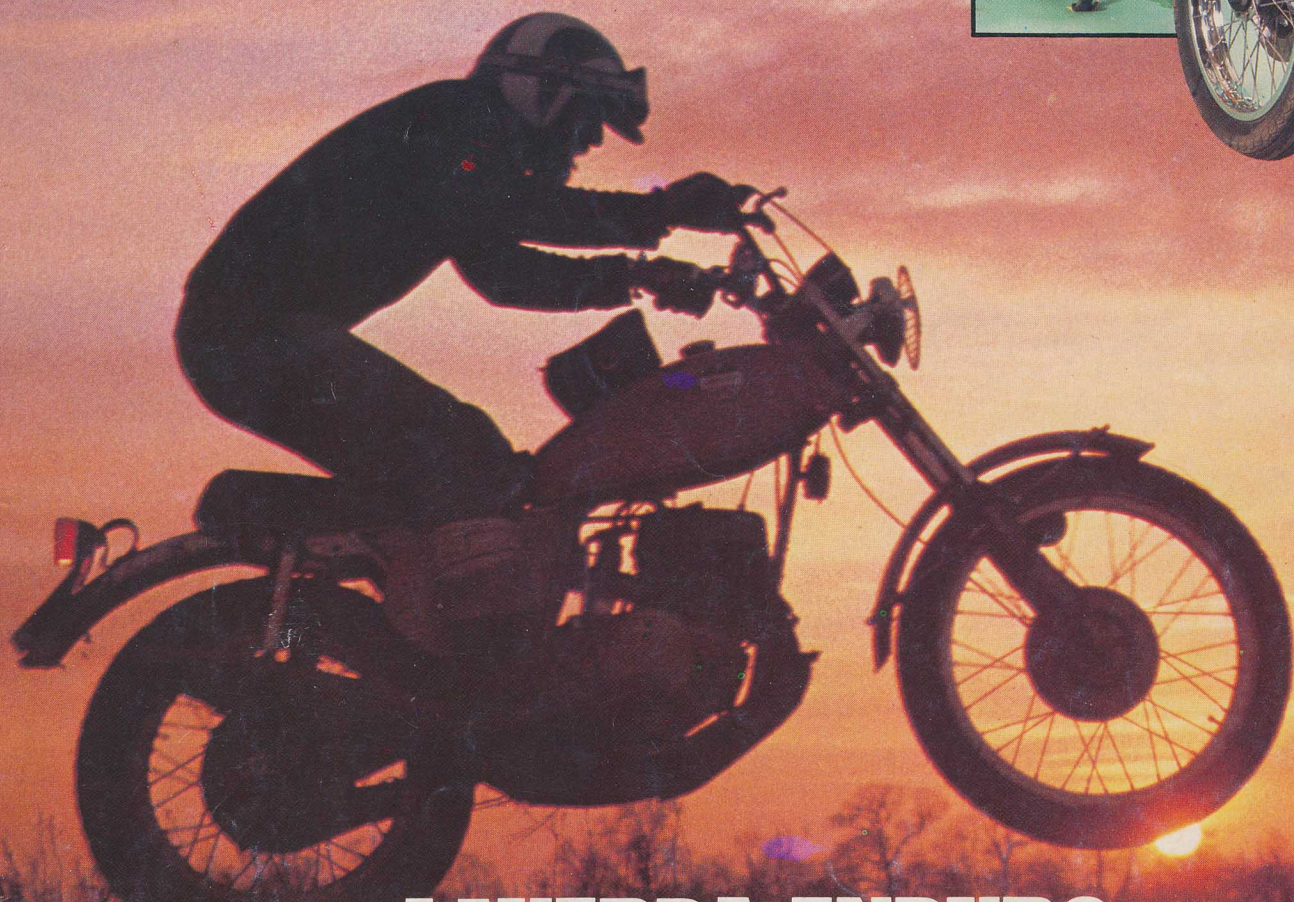


MOTOR CYCLE MECHANICS

MARCH 1977 35p

THE BEST BIG SUZUKI YET
FULL GS750 TEST REPORT



250 LAVERDA ENDURO

SERIOUS PRICE ~SERIOUS RACER?

KAWASAKI 900 SERVICE TIPS

TRIUMPH TRIPLE ENGINE REBUILD

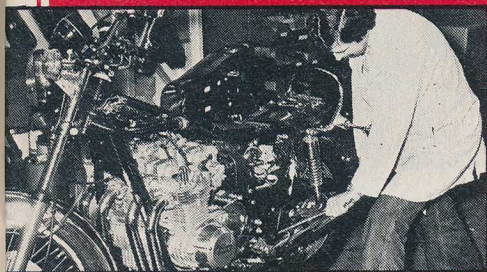
EXCLUSIVE: **VAN VEEN TRACK TEST**

WE RIDE £5,500 WORTH OF ROTARY-ENGINEED MOTORCYCLE

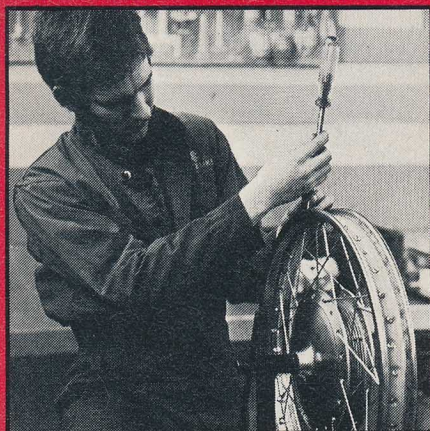
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WIN MCM's CUSTOMISED 750 HONDA
GREAT NEW COMPETITION STARTS INSIDE

MOTOR CYCLE MECHANICS MARCH



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Editor: COLIN MAYO
Deputy editor: JOHN ROBINSON
Features editor: BOB GODDARD
Technical editor: DAVE WALKER
Designer: KATHERINE LELOUP
Photographer: ROD SLOANE
Advertisement manager: PETER CREW

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN NICHOLSON
FRANK MELLING
JOHN HARTLEY
BRIAN LECOMBER

WIN our fabulous CUSTOMISED 750 HONDA

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JOHN ROBINSON RIDES LAVERDA'S NEW 250 ENDURO

THE 'phone had rung without its usual ominous sound. We have one of those GPO devices which actually tolls but this time it had been a cheery tinkle which shattered the mid-day calm of the office. It was Phil Todd, action man of Morphy Motors, who had found a new toy and was itching to share it. Would I like to ride one of their 250 Laverdas? "Drop in for a Chott," is what he said.

When I arrived there were three Chotts, a selection of other trail bikes and a lot of anticipatory grins as the Laverda riders tried to fire up the 250 singles. Phil explained in great detail how to achieve this with a cold motor, casting great aspersions on my faith when my wellie slipped off the kickstart on the fourth attempt and I hooked it into second before proceeding to push it down the road.

Apart from the high, awkward kickstart, there is just one throttle position in which the motor will readily fire, about one degree due North of "shut". All this made a run and bump the most attractive proposition.

PUTTING THE CHOTT

Once running, the Husqvarna - developed motor was a very willing source of power, responding instantly to the throttle and only sounding like its name when you pressed the decompressor. The low gearing and lively engine give the machine a respectable performance right up to its ceiling of 70 mph, where the motor goes into the red in top, running out of gears before it runs out of steam.

There is a harsh noise from the primary drive as the clutch takes up the load but as soon as the wheels are turning the clutch becomes redundant anyway. That's probably what Phil meant when he asked me to sample the local whine.

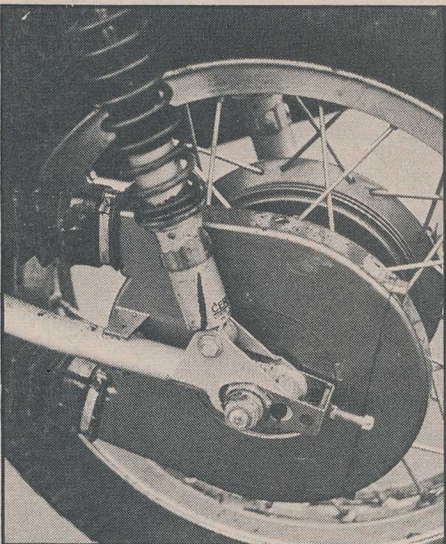
Although the two-stroke really starts to scream into its power band when it gets over 6000 rpm, it turns on early making the Chott very flexible. The first thing I noticed about it was that the engine seemed unboggy and would pull full throttle virtually from tickover. You could ease it through deep mud with the motor barely turning, break traction with a hard blip of the throttle or feed it in, feeling for grip, and power the machine away. It could also be plonked around for some time without any sign of gassing up.

With the trials' type tyres fitted, the top half of the power band was more of an embarrassment, letting the wheel spin much too easily. One of the other Chotts had enduro tyres and their extra grip made the machine a lot more usable, both for cornering and for taking power.

I'd decided early on that the machine was potentially much quicker than I was and, although the lack of grip partly cancelled this out, I was going along pretty carefully. Choosing a precise path, winding around obstacles and going slowly enough to be able to plan six puddles ahead is not what the Laverda is good at. In fact it makes very hard work of it and eventually I found that it handled and responded more positively when it was pushed harder. It seemed to skim over the



The Chott's bolt-up adjustable steering head allows a choice of three castor angles for on- and off-road riding.



Fully enclosed rear chain and five-position gas filled rear shocks are included in the Chott's £840 price tag.

difficult bits, the steering lighter and not so soggy. The sight of Phil entering a deep, muddy puddle sideways at about 40 mph confirmed this. Despite all his efforts the Laverda managed to straighten itself out and emerged on the far side in a spray of mud and steam, apparently without slowing down. Now I understand why he's known to his friends as "Spill" Todd.

A sedate rider might appreciate more steering lock than the Chott has to offer, and at low speeds, lighter steering and softer suspension might be an improvement, too. Actually, lighter steering can be arranged as the steering angle is adjustable, but low-speed, trials-type riding still wasn't easy. We tried the Chott over a tight and twisting gravel pit course which, apart from the uncertainties of navigation was pretty exhausting as so much effort had to be used to force the machine where we wanted to go. The off-road circuit at our test track was another matter and much more in line with the Chott's specification. When its performance could be used the 250 proved very quick, and more to

the point it seemed to get more sure-footed and lighter to handle, the quicker it went.

Whether it is good enough as a serious racer is another point altogether, though. The Chott is a nice bike which thrives on being ridden hard and is quite satisfying to use. But it is also quite tall and heavy, with a lot of unnecessary trimmings. An enduro bike which doesn't start easily is less than useful and poor starting is one of the Chott's quirks. Low gearing gave the bike very rapid acceleration, but restricted it to 70 mph. It would get there quickly, with no hesitation and with the rider sitting upright, holding its speed on about three-quarter throttle so quite obviously it could pull a higher gear. How much this would affect acceleration and flexibility is a moot point.

Its real fault is that it's too much of a compromise. It doesn't match the performance of competitive, expensive enduro machines yet at £840 it costs a lot more than a good trail bike.

It has all the essential basic ingredients, robust construction and a good quality finish with well-thought out detail points. There are Allen screws all over the place, the engine castings have a neat, gold finish which appeared to be protective as well as looking pretty. The chain is fully enclosed, the steering geometry can be set in one of three positions, and so on. It adds up to a good, lively trail bike which is more at home off the road than on it but, for enduro use, it is lacking.

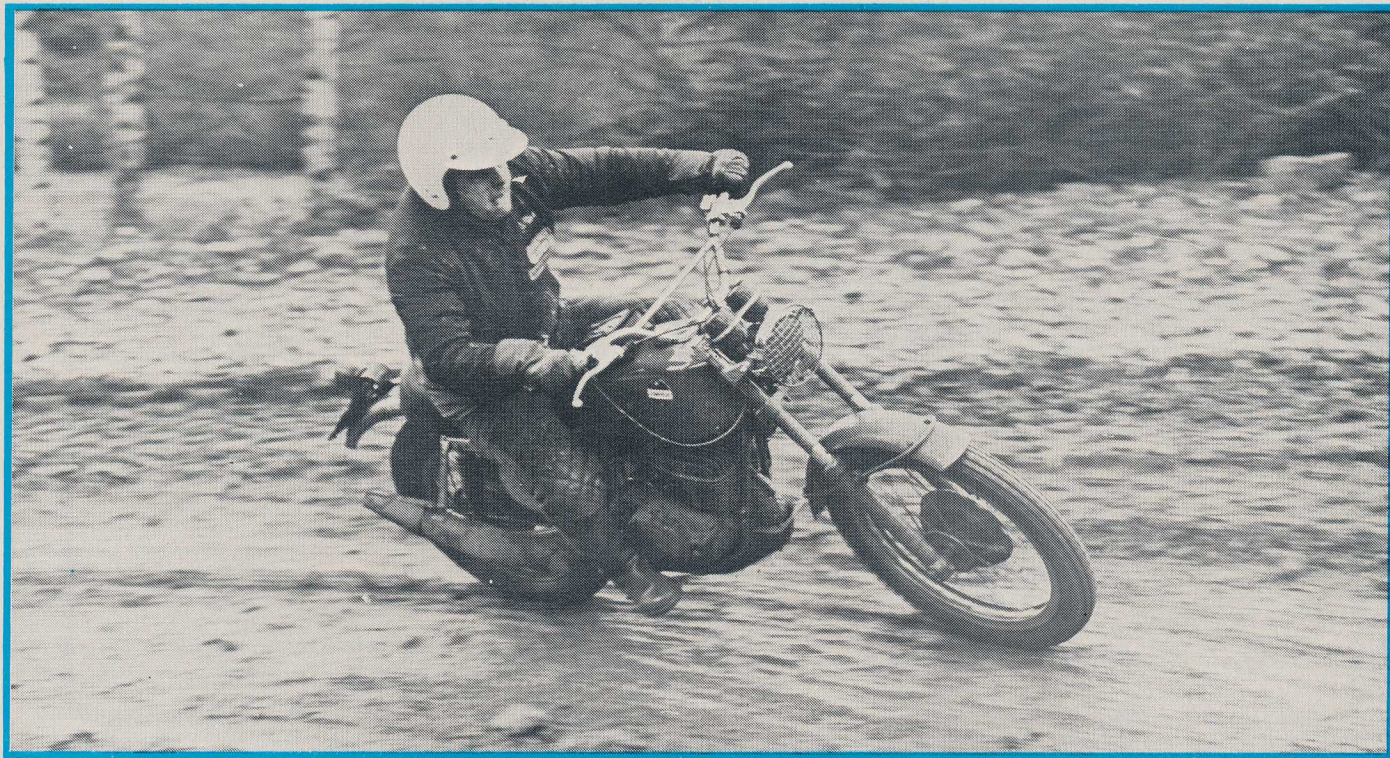
There are superfluous extras like the rev counter, items which could be better, like plastic replacements for the steel mudguards, more reliable electrical parts and the brake linkage and decompressor valve, both of which got clogged with mud.

The bolt-up steering head has three positions, allowing the castor to be altered quite simply and easily. The overall effect on handling is to change it from OK to skittish. In other words there is one position which is suitable for road use and capable of handling speeds over 50 mph and two positions giving progressively lighter steering. These are for off-road use and let the rider set the machine up to suit the conditions and his own riding style.

The difference between the three positions is most noticeable on the road where the lighter, off-road steering slightly reduces stability, while the "road" setting leaves the front too heavy for off-road use. The lighter steering helps at low speed and the difference also shows up in the way the bike is more ready to steer on the throttle.

In many ways the Chott's low speed performance sums up its character. If you try to make a very tight turn, feet up with the motor plonking away, the Chott won't do it because it probably won't have enough steering lock. Go into the same bend again, slightly faster, point the bike into it and tweak the throttle and you get immediate back wheel steering, the bike turning on its own axis for as long as the throttle stays tweaked. The good thing is that the Chott stays stable and you can straighten it up by lifting the bike or backing off the power. This kind of thing could be managed predictably, without needing a super-skilled rider and most of the time,

CHOTT TODDY



as long as the throttle was used with some confidence, the Laverda would virtually steer itself.

It needed stronger brakes, particularly for road use. After a day in the mud the rear linkage was also sticking quite badly where mud had got clogged around the rear frame and even the front brake was partly sticking on.

CHOTT IN THE DARK

Our model was fitted with a chromed stone-guard over the headlamp. This was not only a poor fit and didn't seem up to the quality of the rest of the machine, but reflected too much light back into the rider's face. The electrics generally were quite powerful — for an off-road bike — the headlamp giving enough light for a safe 40 to 50 mph cruising speed along dark country lanes. But between the machines we rode on the first day, mainly in rain, there was a variety of lighting and switch failures.

The Chott has electronic ignition firing twin spark plugs, a pretty fool-proof system on the face of it, but it can still get fouled. The starting on our model got worse and worse, running and bumping my way to work, the runs got longer and the bumps got weaker until I finally gave up altogether. Both plugs had fouled — due, we suspect, to an over-enthusiastic oil/fuel mix caused by good ol' trusting Chris Murphy adding a drop extra to allow for the journalist factor and then a bit more for luck.

For competition use, pre-mixed fuel is no problem. For everyday use it is a pain. Either

March 1977

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: piston-ported two-stroke single with Bosch electronic ignition and twin spark plugs. Lubrication by petrol/oil mix, 32 mm Dell'Orto carburettor.

displacement	246.9 cc
bore x stroke	68 x 68 mm
compression ratio	10:1
claimed output	30 hp at 7500

TRANSMISSION: gear primary drive, dry clutch, five speed gearbox, fully enclosed chain final drive.

primary reduction	3.15
final reduction	2.86
gearbox ratios: 2.82; 2.00; 1.47; 1.1 and 0.91	

CHASSIS: Ceriani front forks, 5-way adjustable gas filled rear shocks, drum brakes front and rear.

front tyre	3.00 x 21 Metzeler
rear tyre	4.00 x 18 Metzeler
wheelbase	57 inches
caster (road)	60 deg
(cross)	62.7 deg
(trail)	65 deg
overall length	82 in
dry weight	238 lb

PARTS PRICES inc VAT

front mudguard	£ 8.85
speedo cable	3.24
exhaust system	78.35
piston plus rings	26.38
handlebar	8.85
list price	840.00
warranty: 6 months or 6,000 miles, parts and labour.	

you carry a bottle of oil around with you or you take a chance on whatever the next garage is offering. This varies from nothing at all to the highly suspect, over-priced contents of an anonymous dispenser. Having guessed how much the tank will hold you measure out the appropriate dose of oil and then hope you can get enough petrol into the tank after it. Or you put the fuel in first and risk not mixing the oil properly so that the motor might be running on neat petrol for the first couple of miles.

One thing about the Chott is that it could be very economical on the road. Used gently you could look for 70 mpg but of course this drops dramatically when the bike is belted around off-road and the lower gears are used more.

Overall the Chott has a good motor and a rugged chassis but would need streamlining for competition work, bringing the cost up close to that of, say, the PE Suzuki. The less serious rider could be just as happy with a more mundane trail bike — which narrows down the field as far as the Chott's market is concerned. It's a pity because it really is a great bike to ride and have fun on — I was left with the feeling that Laverda had settled for too many compromises. Presumably they can't get the price down to compete in the mass trail market so they should have committed themselves to the performance end of the spectrum and aimed at a lighter, faster, still more functional machine.

Our thanks to the ever-enthusiastic Morphy Motors of Long Marston, for supplying us with the good-looking 250, which incidentally, inspired the cover pic, "Chott at Dawn."