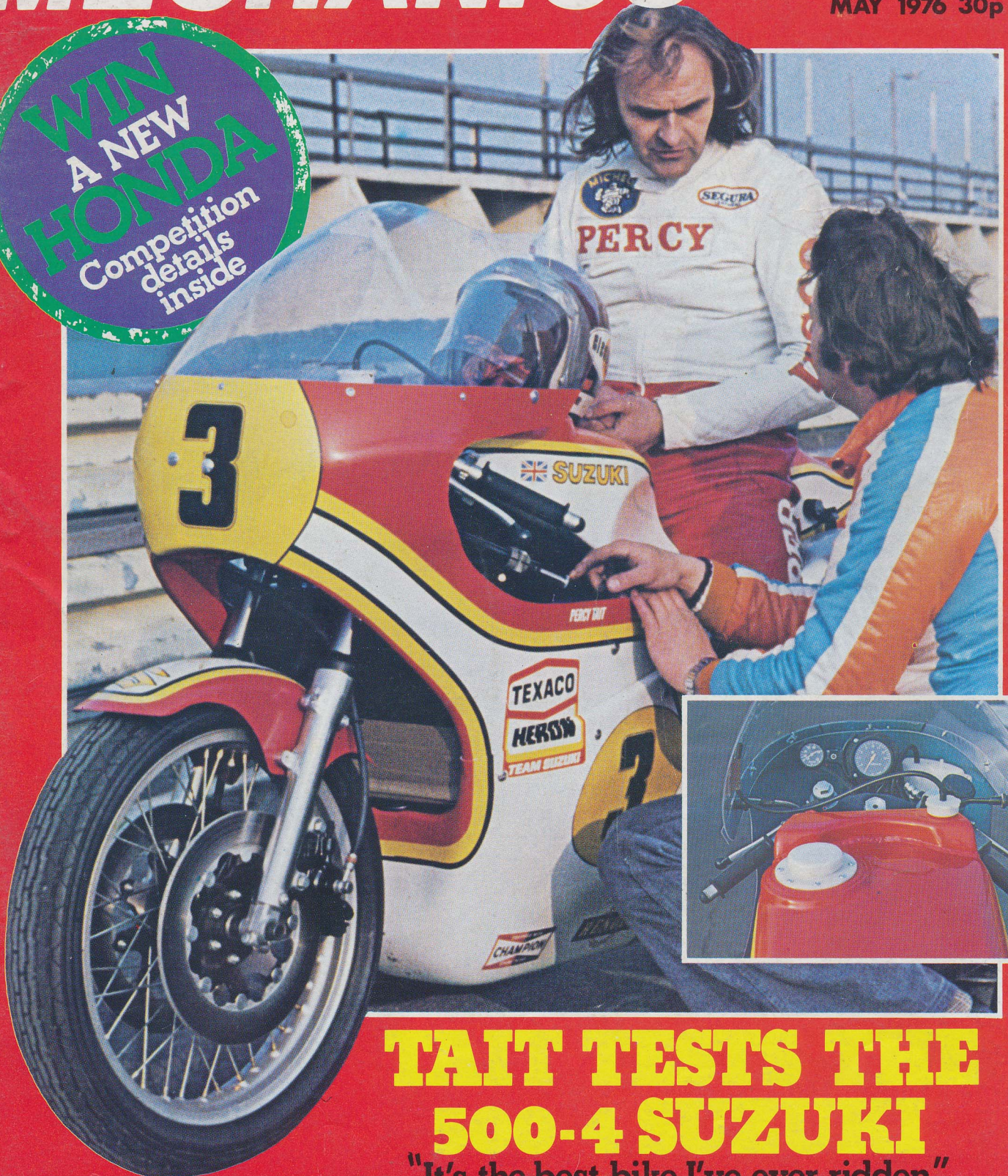


MOTOR CYCLE MECHANICS

Road Tests
KAWASAKI KH250 & BMW R60/6
DAYTONA '76
Alex George's inside story
HONDA 125 ENGINE REBUILD

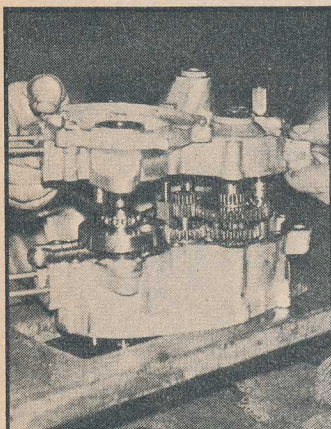
MAY 1976 30p

**WIN
A NEW
HONDA**
Competition
details
inside

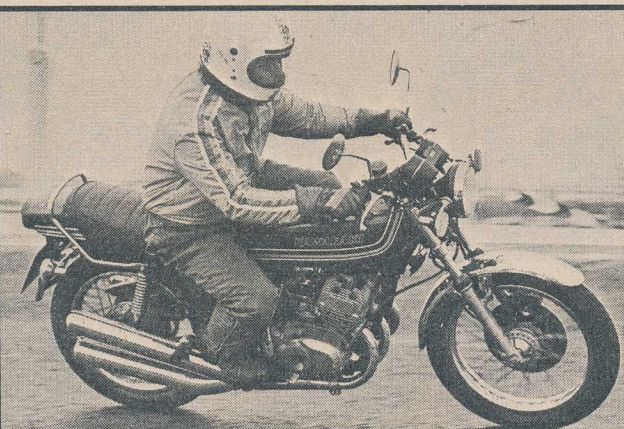


**TAIT TESTS THE
500-4 SUZUKI**

"It's the best bike I've ever ridden"



Puch engine rebuild. Page 74.



Kawasaki 250 test. Page 70.



Euro-Touring. Page 82.

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WIN A HONDA
LATEST CB125S
TOP TEN COMPETITION
DETAILS — PAGE 15



A MEANIE

by Bob

When we tested the 250 Kawasaki triple in August last year, the only major complaint was that the front drum brake was insufficient for stopping the rapid progress of this impressive lightweight. Now the mini-meanie has been fitted with a single disc front stopper and braking is improved, although the brake has an unusual tendency to lift the bike upright when applied hard in a bend. This is a phenomenon we have noticed on other disc-braked machines — perhaps something to do with gyroscopic effect — but it is not dangerous

and would probably pass unnoticed by most riders.

The brakes are now well up to keeping pace with the KH's speed — especially as this latest model is down on the performance of its predecessors, a legacy of the new exhaust system internals which cut down the motor's noise and pollution emissions. The exhaust is very quiet. One prod on the over-long kick starter crank has the motor whirring smoothly like a turbine, and that is just as well, because the kick starter is so long you have to hoist your knee almost to shoulder height to get your foot on it at the start of the stroke.

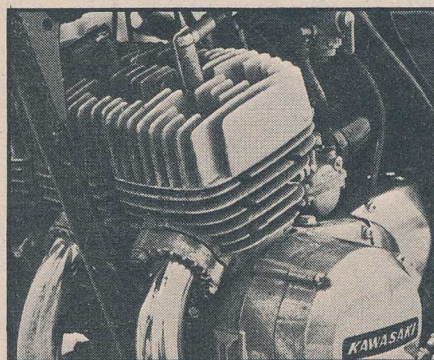
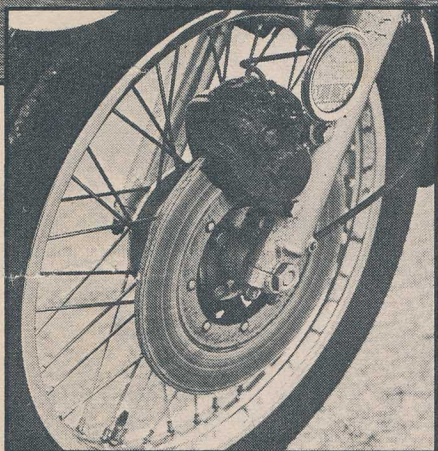
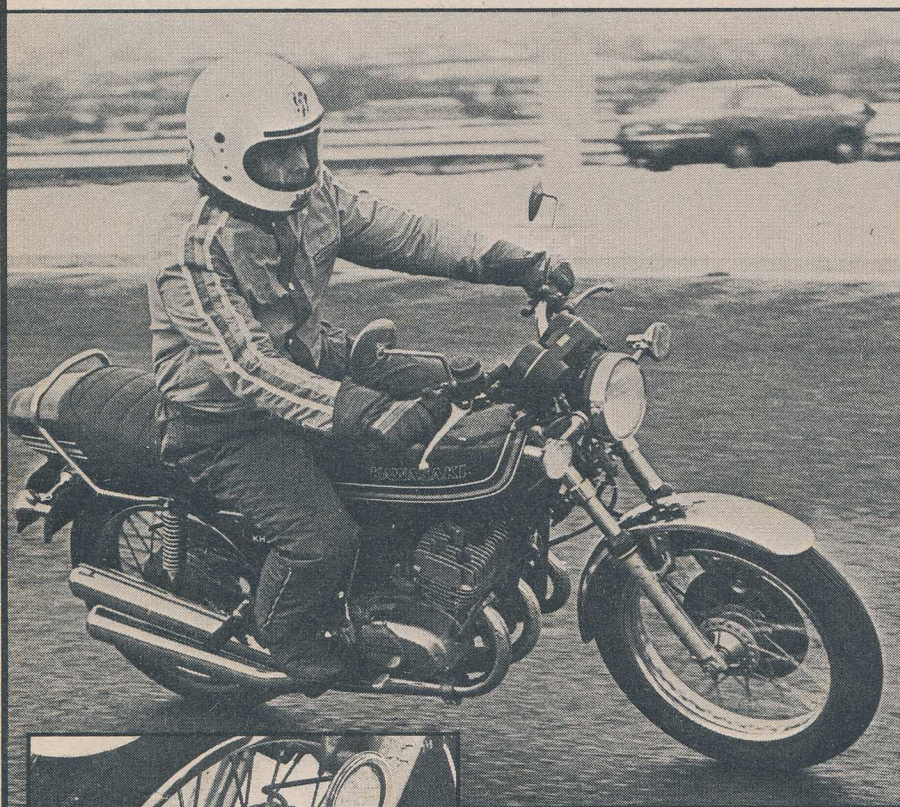
INAUDIBLE

The handlebar-mounted and spring loaded choke lever cannot be left on inadvertently, and saves fumbling about under the petrol tank for an air lever. Stopping for traffic lights I frequently had to check the rev counter to tell if the motor was still running — the purr of the engine being inaudible with a full face helmet on in traffic, and the triple's inherent smoothness gave no tell-tale tingle.

Three cylinders also pay dividends in terms of torque. For such a high performance two stroke, it will pull from a surprisingly low 3,000 rpm in top right up to the 8,500 red line and way beyond. It is here in the high rev range that the Kawasaki loses its impression of smoothness. A little tingle from 6,000 rpm builds into a mirror blurring buzz at 9,000 rpm, bad enough to be annoying, but it does not detract from the sheer fun of riding the bike on country roads.

Peeling off England's thundering main artery, the M1, and onto the sweeping country roads of Bedfordshire, the Kwacker came into its own. Here the subdued wail from the three pipes, the slick five gears and surefire handling helped me forget it was only a 250, and not a particularly quick one at that. Its two stroke rivals from Japan are all quicker and faster — the Suzuki twin we tested at the same time had much crisper throttle response and was over one second quicker on the standing quarter — but the Kawasaki has more of a big bike feel. It retains the nimbleness of a lightweight, but heavier steering holds it on line over the bumpiest bends, and the rider is not left fighting the steering over a series of ripples, as was the case with the Suzuki.

The whole front fork assembly is new on the KH, with alloy legs in place of the earlier steel ones, the frame is modified with strengthening gussets, and the rear suspension units have improved springs and damping. The result is a firm ride devoid of the tail-wagging tendencies of some of the Kawasaki's earlier brothers. People usually associate Kawasakis with fearsome acceleration needing lightning quick reactions to control, but this one feeds in its power in



NO LONGER

KAWASAKI KH 250

ROAD TEST

Goddard

such a progressive fashion that there is no real start to the power band, and the throttle can be rapped open in first gear without fear of a wheelie. The gears are ideally spaced and engage so quietly and quickly that I didn't miss a cog on the whole test.

CONFIDENCE

With the confidence the new disc brake set-up inspired, the Kawasaki was a delight to hurl into fast bends. Drop it down a gear, feather the brakes as you peel off, heel it over to the footrest, feed the throttle back on at the apex and back into top as the bike drifts out to the edge of the road — then tuck yourself away behind the two big clocks until the next bend.

I was enjoying this boy racer fun so much I found myself extending my journey by diverting onto minor roads every time the signs said I was nearing home. When I did eventually roll into the drive, and switched off, I began to feel the pain in my numb fingers, and realised I hadn't noticed the cold at all during the ride. The lean-forward riding position and well-padded dual seat were near ideal.

As the February gloom descended, one flick of the right thumb brought the lights on. The switch on the right bar — the same side as the senseless engine kill switch — is superior to the Suzuki design where both lights on/off switch and dipper button are next to each other on the left bar, where they can easily be both switched off at the same time. The Kawasaki's lights were really good with dip beam a sharp cut off that prevented dazzle yet lit up enough of the verge to stop you running into it. Main beam illuminated enough of the road ahead for 70 mph cruising on unlit roads.

The mirrors give a perfect view of your elbows should you want to check they are still there while riding!

CONSUMPTION

I was surprised to find the Kawasaki averaged in the mid forties miles per gallon after a test which consisted of harsh standing start quarter mile runs, flat out top speed blasts at the track and several hundred miles of full bore road riding. Oil consumption worked out to around 120 mpp which isn't very good, but when you consider the oil has to lubricate three pistons and three big ends it has a fair amount of work to do.

The seat lock doubles for a helmet fastener, and releases the seat which hinges up to reveal oil tank filler (capacity 2.6 pints), battery and toolkit in the hump at the rear of the seat. The tools were about average, and up to tackling most servicing jobs.

The overall finish was good, but despite criticism over the years, the standard of welding has not improved. In the dirty

winter weather, the Kawasaki was soon looking a bit grimy, and I found that the clutter of three exhaust pipes and silencers made cleaning more difficult.

The KH 250 came through the test very well overall, and can be summed up as a smooth, comfortable, pleasant little bike that

seems to lack something. The earlier SIC 250 the KH replaces was a sportster that needed a disc brake. Now it's got the disc brake the new silencers have taken the edge off its rorty performance and for me, a lot of the appeal of this unique three-cylinder lightweight has gone — I hope not for ever.

PERFORMANCE AND SPECIFICATION

TEST CONDITIONS:

dry, ambient temperature 51 deg F, wind 25-30 mph.

PERFORMANCE:

maximum speed..... 86 mph
braking from 30 mph..... 32 feet
fuel consumption:
hard riding..... 39 mpg
average over test..... 45 mpg

MINIMUM SPEEDS IN GEARS:

first..... 4 mph
second..... 7 mph
third..... 9 mph
fourth..... 12 mph
fifth..... 14 mph
standing start quarter mile: 17.2 sec at 75 mph

ENGINE:

249cc; piston ported; two stroke in-line three; bore x stroke 45 x 52.3mm; compression ratio 7.5:1; claimed output 28 bhp at 7,500 rpm; lubrication Superlube oil injection; carburetors three Mikuni VM22SC; triple contact breaker and coil ignition; charging/lighting 12v ac/dc alternator 5.5 ah battery.

TRANSMISSION:

multi-plate clutch, coil springs; primary drive, gear, 2.22 reduction; final drive, chain, 3.43 reduction; gearbox sprockets 14T (13 and 15 available); gear ratios 2.86, 1.79, 1.35, 1.12, 0.96.

CHASSIS:

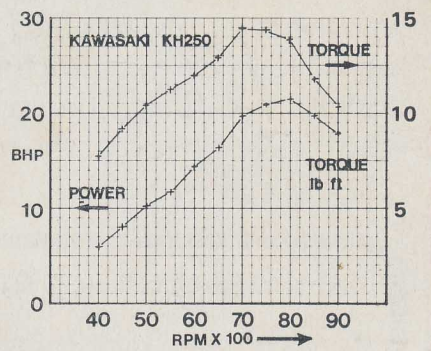
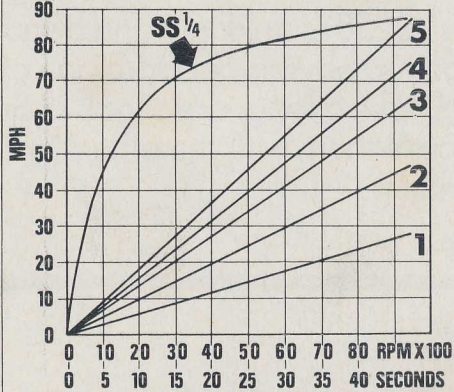
front tyre 3.25 x 18 Yokohama; rear tyre 3.50 x 18 Yokohama; front suspension telescopic fork, rear suspension swinging arm with three-way dampers; front brake 8.9 in disc; rear brake 7 in drum; wheelbase 54 in; castor 62 degrees; trail 4.3 in; overall length 82.1 in; overall width 29.9 in; seat height 31.5 in; ground clearance 6 in; dry weight 348 lb tank capacity 3.2 gallons; oil tank capacity 2.6 pints.

WARRANTY:

6 months or 6,000 miles, parts and labour.

PARTS PRICES inc VAT.

front mudguard	£ 7.96
handlebar	3.28
speedo cable	1.41
exhaust system	63.00
pistons/rings	18.22
cb points	6.04
list price	539.00



HOW IT COMPARES:

Model	Price inc VAT	Max Speed	SS 1/4 mile	Dry weight lb.	Average mpg.
Kawasaki SIC	£539	86	17.2	348	46
Benelli 250cc	£599.94	92	17.2	296	55
CZ 250 Sport	£335	74	—	310	59
Yamaha RD250	£535	100	15.9	318	40
Suzuki GT250A	£529	92	15.9	322	44