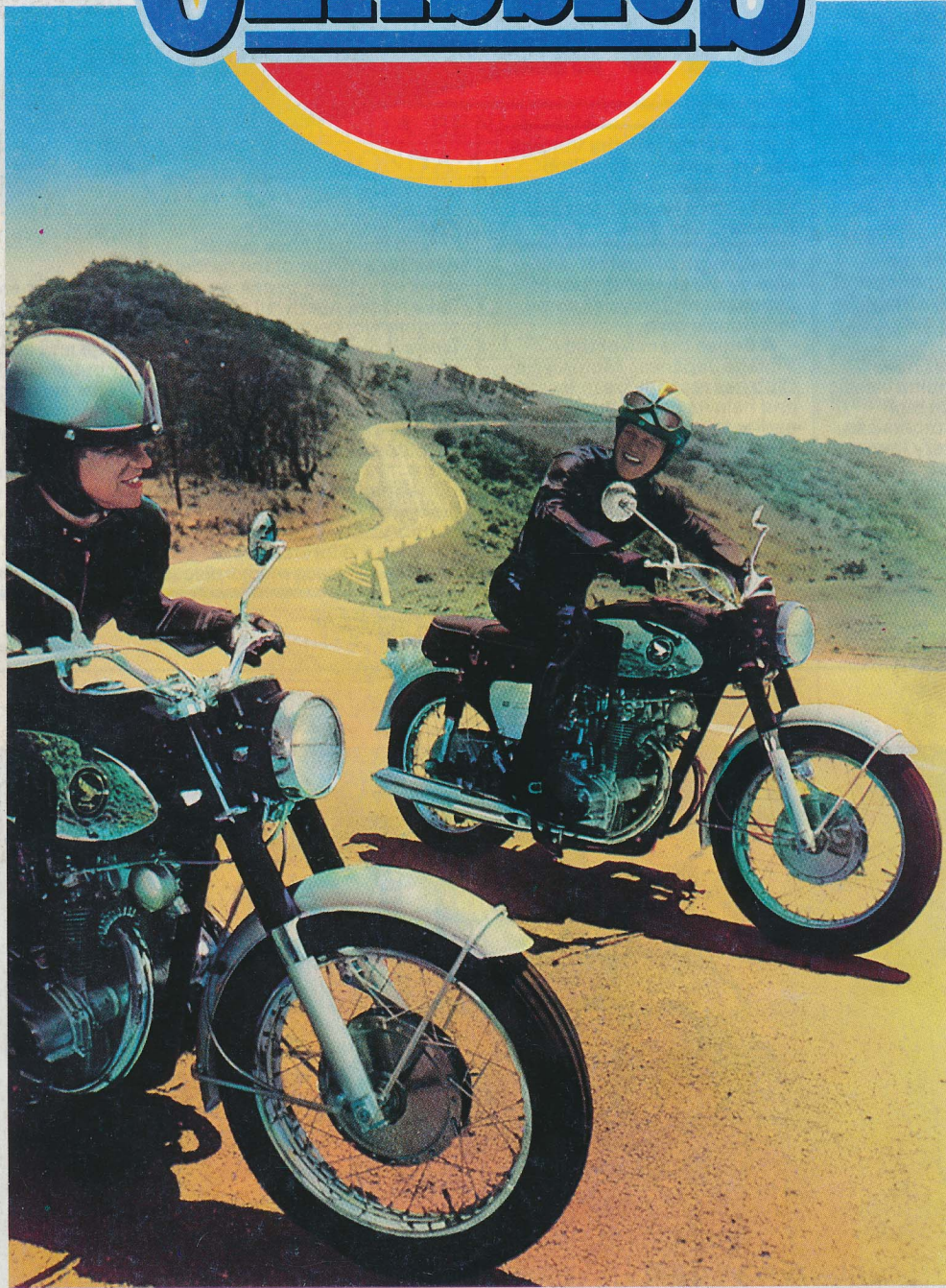


JAPANESE CLASSICS



20 Golden Greats
from the Land of
the Rising Sun
1960-'72

JAPANESE CLASSICS

CONTENTS

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HONDA BENLY 125 ...	4
HONDA CB750 ...	9
KAWASAKI SAMURAI 250 ...	12
KAWASAKI H1 500 ...	16
HONDA CB450 ...	21
SUZUKI STINGER 125 ...	25
YAMAHA XS-1 650 ...	27
SUZUKI GT750 ...	30
HONDA CB72 250 ...	34
YAMAHA YR350 ...	38
KAWASAKI Z1 900 ...	41
SUZUKI SUPER SIX 250 ...	44
HONDA CB500 ...	48
SUZUKI GT380 ...	51
YAMAHA TX500 ...	53
HONDA SUPER CUB 50 ...	55
SUZUKI COBRA 500 ...	58
HONDA XL250 ...	61
BRIDGESTONE GTR350 ...	66
YAMAHA YDS250 ...	69

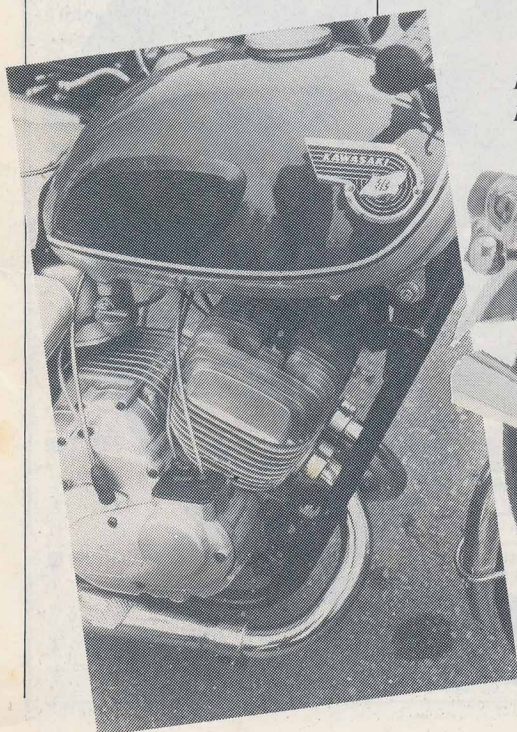
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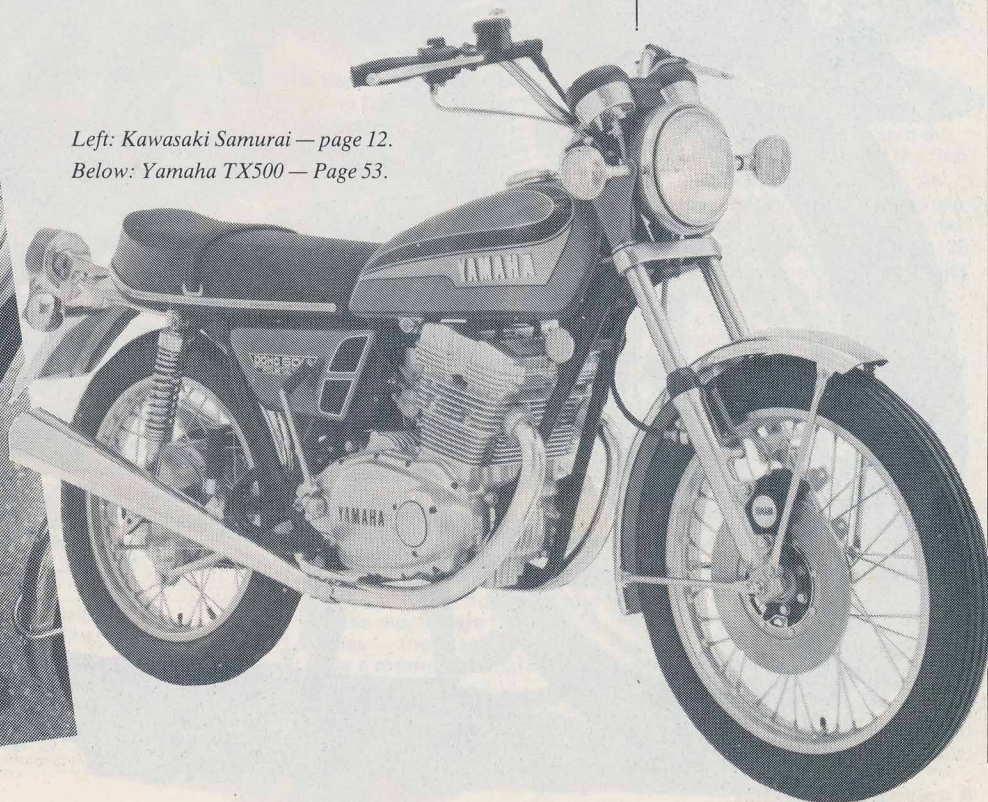
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*Left: Kawasaki Samurai — page 12.
Below: Yamaha TX500 — Page 53.*



HONDA CB72 250

TOPPING DREAM

‘With performance as good as some machines twice its size, it caused a great deal of hub-bub and excitement because of its speed and exotic specification.’

SPECIFICATION IN 1963

■ ENGINE:	Twin cylinder (54 x 54 mm) single chain driven overhead camshaft four-stroke, 247cc. Compression ratio 9.5:1. Twin carburettors with twin paper element air cleaners. Claimed output 24bhp, at 9,000rpm. Wet sump lubrication.
■ GEARBOX:	In unit with engine. Ratios: First 18.63, second 11.10, third 7.83, top 6.68:1.
■ IGNITION AND LIGHTING:	Twelve-volt 60W alternator with 12v battery, with high tension coils for ignition. Starter motor. 35/35w headlamp. Trumpet horn.
■ FRAME:	Tubular steel cantilever with engine acting as part of frame.
■ SUSPENSION:	Hydraulically damped telescopic front fork, with pivoted fork rear controlled by hydraulically damped adjustable dampers.
■ WHEELS AND TYRES:	Front 2.75 x 18, rear 3.00 x 18ins. Eight-inch full width brake hubs with two-leading shoes.
■ PETROL AND OIL CAPACITIES:	Fuel 2½ gallons. Oil 2½ pints. Steel petrol tank with reserve tap and sediment trap.
■ GENERAL EQUIPMENT:	Combined speedometer and rev counter; steering damper, finger adjustment for brake, clutch and throttle, grease nipples on cables, anti-thief lock, twin handlebar mirrors, folding kickstarter, rear mudguard flap.
■ FINISH:	Red, chrome and silver-grey.
■ WEIGHT:	336lb.
■ PRICE:	£259 19s (including tax).

Right: The Honda CB72 Super Sport featured twin carbs, twin leading shoe drum brakes front and rear, and a comprehensive toolkit. Price in 1962 was £293-14-5, and it actually went down to £259-19-0 in 1965! *Motorcycle Mechanics* tested one in their July 1965 issue at 88mph and 74mpg.

This example was recently restored to concours condition by 28-year-old Keith Newton from Gt Wyrley in Staffordshire. He and his wife own 12 Hondas. No other make gets a look in!

TWIN megaphones either side were the “in” modification for owners of the CB72 Honda Dream Super Sport after the works four cylinder 250 road racer swept the GP board in 1961.

Honda’s success on the track was so overwhelming that race customising of the high revving sports 250 twin was inevitable.

The works replica style exhausts to make the road twin look like a four, plus silver fairing with orange Honda striping really made the CB72SS stand out from the crowd.

Owners who liked to keep their machinery looking standard were still more than impressed with the sporting looks of the Dream Super Sport.

It projected a much racier image than its touring brother, the C72 Dream and just about every other road 250 when it was introduced in 1961.

With claimed power of 24bhp at 9000rpm it was rated to be capable of a genuine “ton” with rider prone. Advertising figures also quoted 110mpg at 25mph, though no-one who owned one at the time ever went that slowly!

Motor Cycle News checked out an example in the October 30 1963 edition and tester Pat Braithwaite had this to report about the four-stroke favourite of the popular 250cc class.

RIDE the bright red and chrome 250cc Honda sports twin anywhere and you’ve got to resign yourself to answering one particular question: ‘What’ll she do?’ The reply is, simply, 90mph!

And while the twin carburettor overhead-camshaft motor makes the Honda Super Sport incredibly fast for its size, it does its work with turbine-like smoothness at any speed.

The 24bhp power plant offers three more remarkable features! There is almost a complete lack of mechanical noise, a high standard of machining ensures that lubricant stays inside, except for a slight weep around the cylinder head to barrel joint;

the twin silencers keep the exhaust note down to a pleasant vacuum-cleaner sound.

But for all that, I think that the model has been made with too great a potential. High up in the rev-band, an extraordinary power-punch makes the temptation to ride it as fast as a five-hundred overwhelmingly great.

The Honda is no machine for the novice. Frankly, it is a difficult bike to ride. To be kept going quickly on an “ordinary” road, the rider needs to keep the rev-counter needle pointing between 7,000 and 8,000 — and more — rpm, and to change gear much more often than usual. The gap between third and top gears is too large.

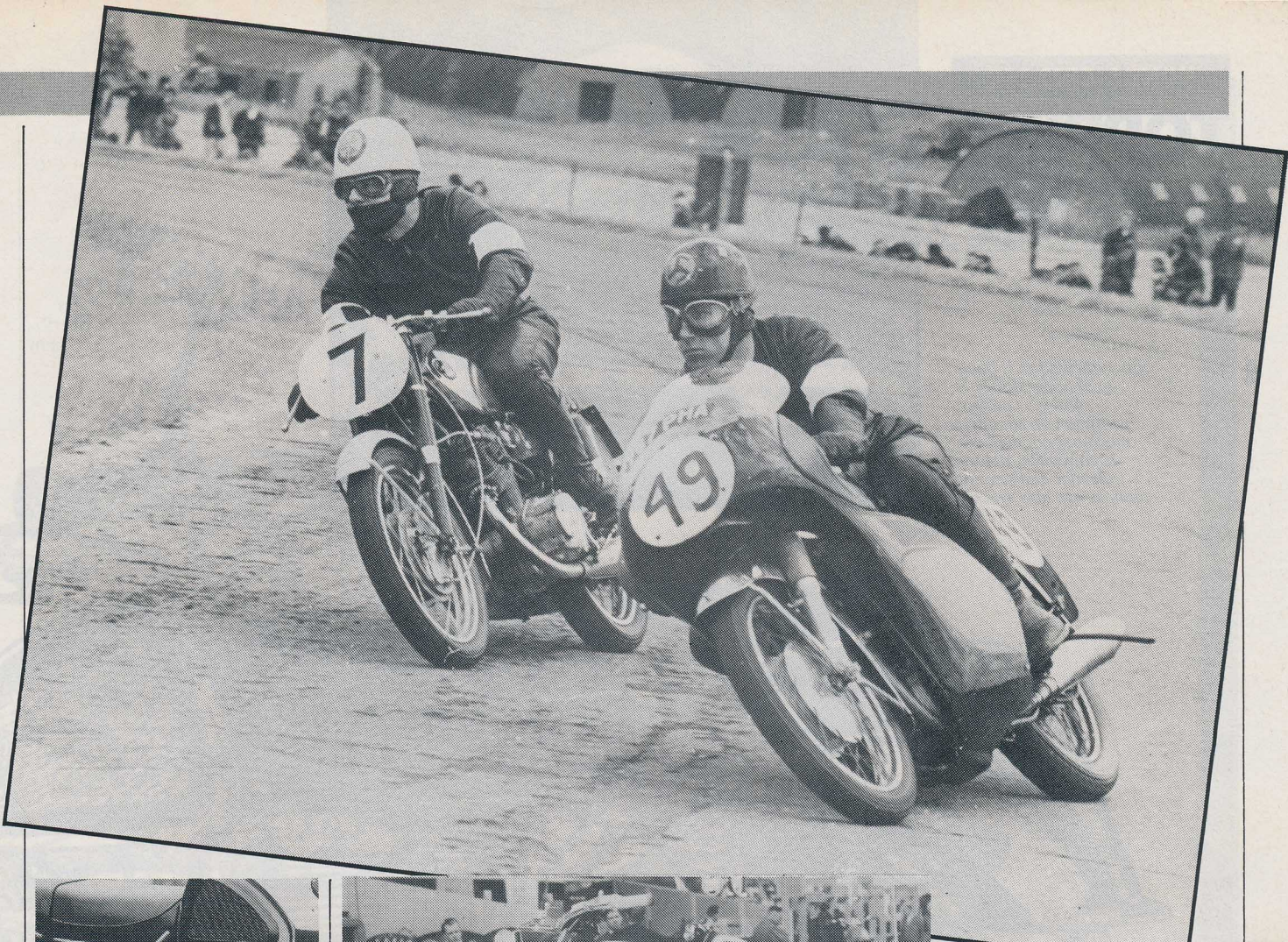
I found the very firm suspension much to my personal liking. It gave the bike a safe taut feel on fast bends, and there was no pitching. The steering, however, I found a little disconcerting at first.

On “tight” corners, the Honda tends to “oversteer” and drop into the turn. This, however, was not so noticeable on long bends and other swerves when the engine was driving hard.

Fantastically powerful and super smooth. This is the only way to describe the performance of the front and rear two leading shoe brakes. From any speed you can make the front tyre squeal and smoke from the torture. If you want a figure, the Honda stops in 28½ feet from 30mph.

The Honda proved to be thirsty at high speeds. An all-round figure of 62mpg was recorded.

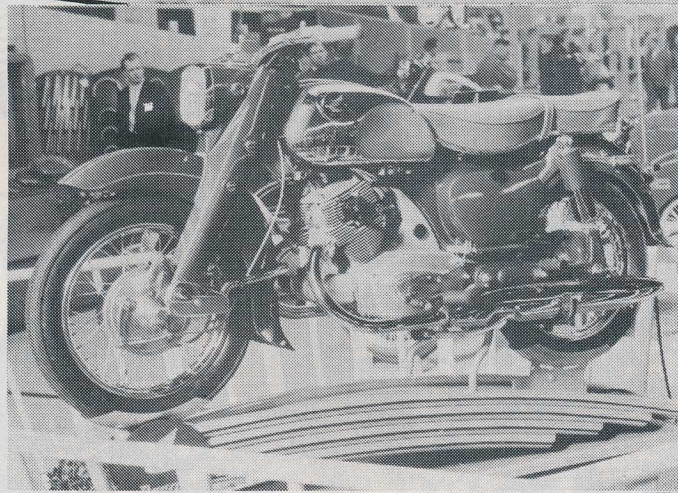




A CB72 (1962 registered) at the 1964 Thruxton 500-miler. Pilot is Malcolm Bailey. Dicing with him is Peter Morgan (1962 650 Norton).



Instant rearsets were a feature of the CB72. You can see the alternate rearset mounting hole on the footrest hanger plate.



Fore-runner to the 250SS model this is the soft performance C72 Dream. Here it is shown at the 1959 Amsterdam show, the first time a Honda had been put in a European show.

Origins of the four-stroke Dream start back in 1951 with the introduction of the E-type 150cc single cylinder Dream which was a great early home success for Honda.

The twin cylinder ohc 250cc Dream was first built in 1957. Its angular style made it stand out. It sold well in Japan and the following year 64,000 units were made. By 1962 this figure had increased to 71,000.

Two 250s were part of Honda's first ever exports in 1957. And the following year two were exported to America.

It was a small start, but from these export acorns mighty chestnuts grew. Honda were aiming their bikes at the man in the street as well as the enthusiast.

The Dream with its ease of handling, electric start and good performance caught on. Britain first saw a few examples late in 1958. The Dream's impact was made in Europe when it was exhibited for the first time. Venue was the 1959 Amsterdam show where the C72 was the first Japanese machine to be put in a European motor cycle show.

The Dream Super Sport was first exhibited in Britain in 1961 at London's Golden Jubilee show. By this time Honda were established as the world's leading motor cycle manufacturer. The Super Sport version of the Dream was its leading product.

It helped to stimulate the bike scene both in Europe and

America. With performance as good as some machines twice its size it caused a great deal of hub-bub and excitement because of its speed and exotic specification.

A line drawing of this tube frame machine is featured overleaf. It is a tribute to Honda technology of the time.

The model was so advanced and so popular it wasn't superceded until 1968 when Honda sent the 7bhp more powerful CB250 five speeder with twin clocks to replace it in Britain.

While the CB72 is well respected by Honda classic rebuilders they take a less enthusiastic view of the restyled '68 version.

During its long reign the 12 volt CB72 Super Sport was proficient and successful in road racing.

It was born during a period of great excitement in the road race world. In 1961 Honda won ten of the 11 250cc grands prix and took the first five places in the 250 TT.

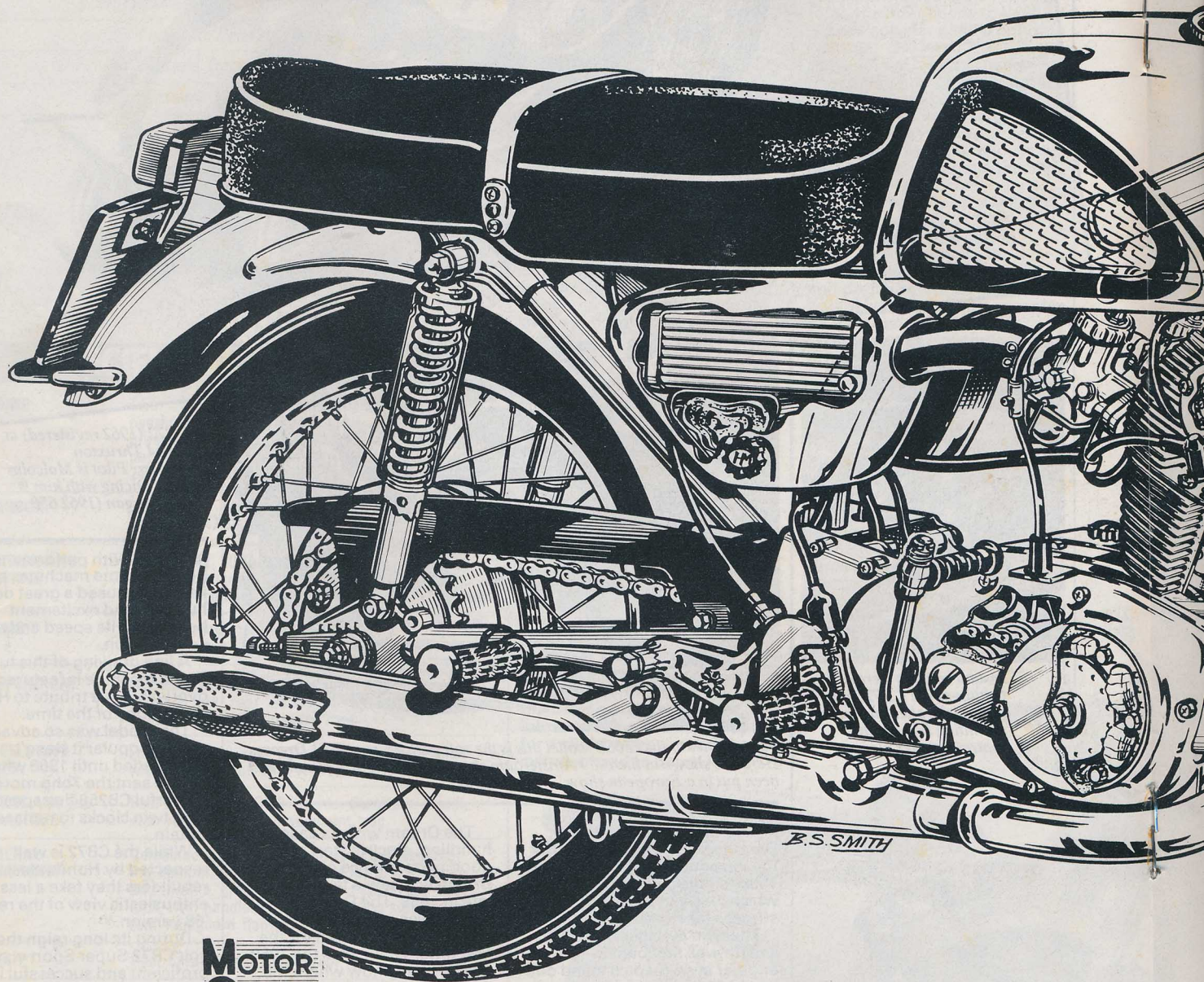
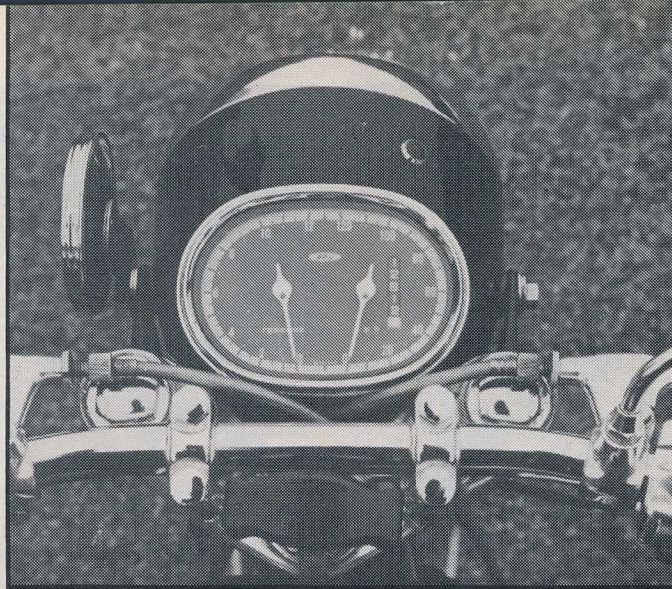
The sight and sound of the works 45bhp 250-4 was unforgettable. It was no wonder that sports riders began taking Honda, and in particular the new 250 CB72 Super Sport seriously.



HONDA CB72 250

TOPPING DREAM

Instrumentation is made up of integral speedo and rev counter, common on Japanese machinery of the time. Light switch, neutral indicator and steering damper are also shown.



**MOTOR
CYCLE
NEWS**

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Possibly the most impressive competition result from a CB72 power unit was the supercharged version sprinter Mike Hand used to improve his world SS¹/₄-mile record to 10.5 secs in 1973. He bought the motor for only £2.50!

