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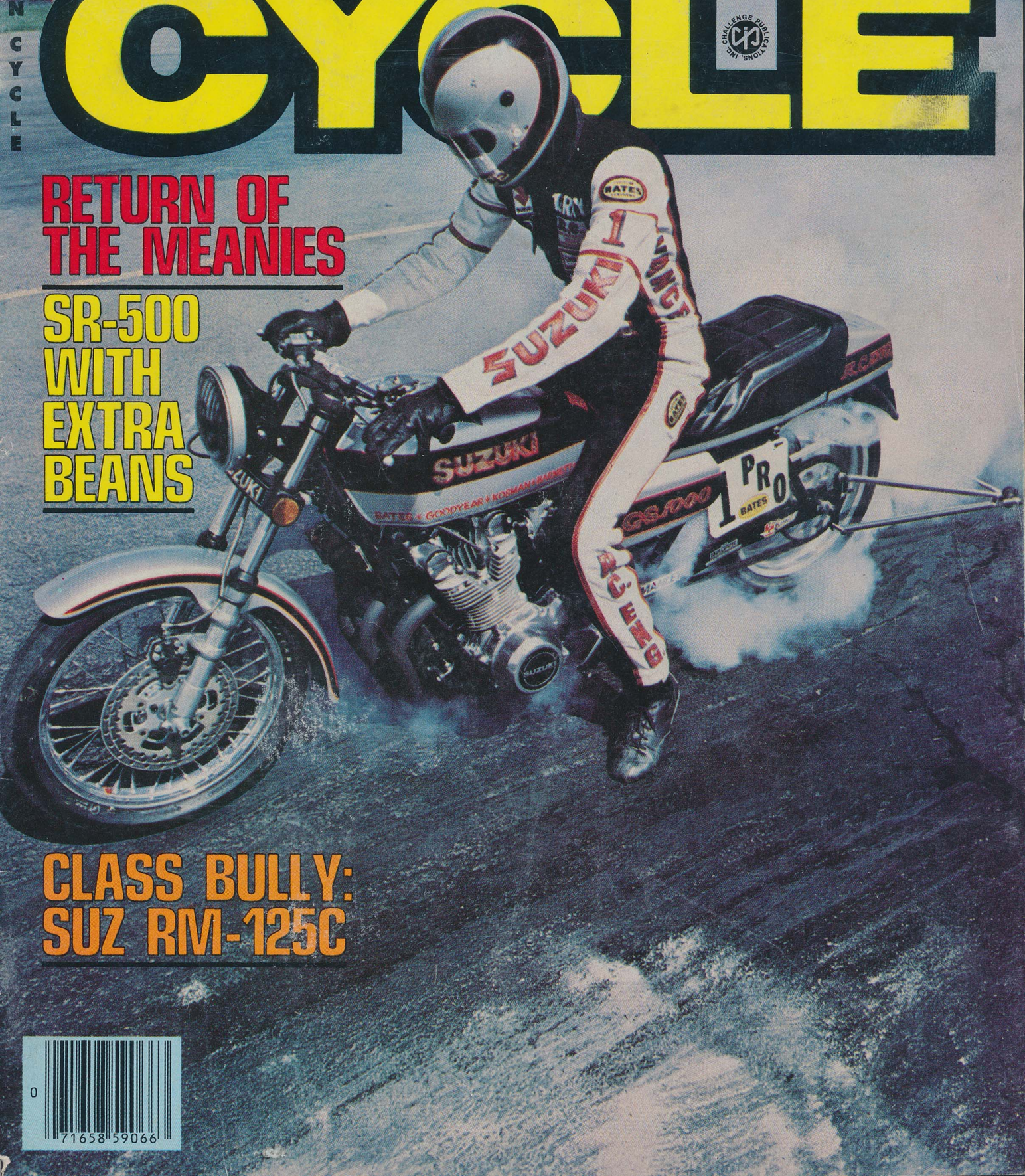
# MODERN CYCLE



## RETURN OF THE MEANIES

## SR-500 WITH EXTRA BEANS

MODERN CYCLE

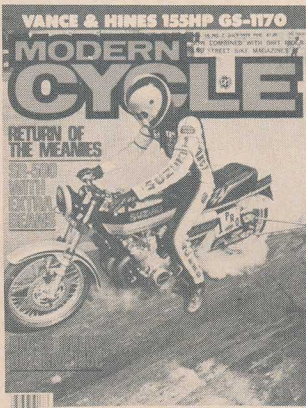


## CLASS BULLY: SUZ RM-125C



# MODERN CYCLE

VOL. 14, NO. 7 JULY 1978



**ON THE COVER:** Terry Vance warming up the skins on the Vance and Hines-RC Engineering GS-1000 plus. Photo by Dan Fitzgerald. Photo by Jeff Peck.

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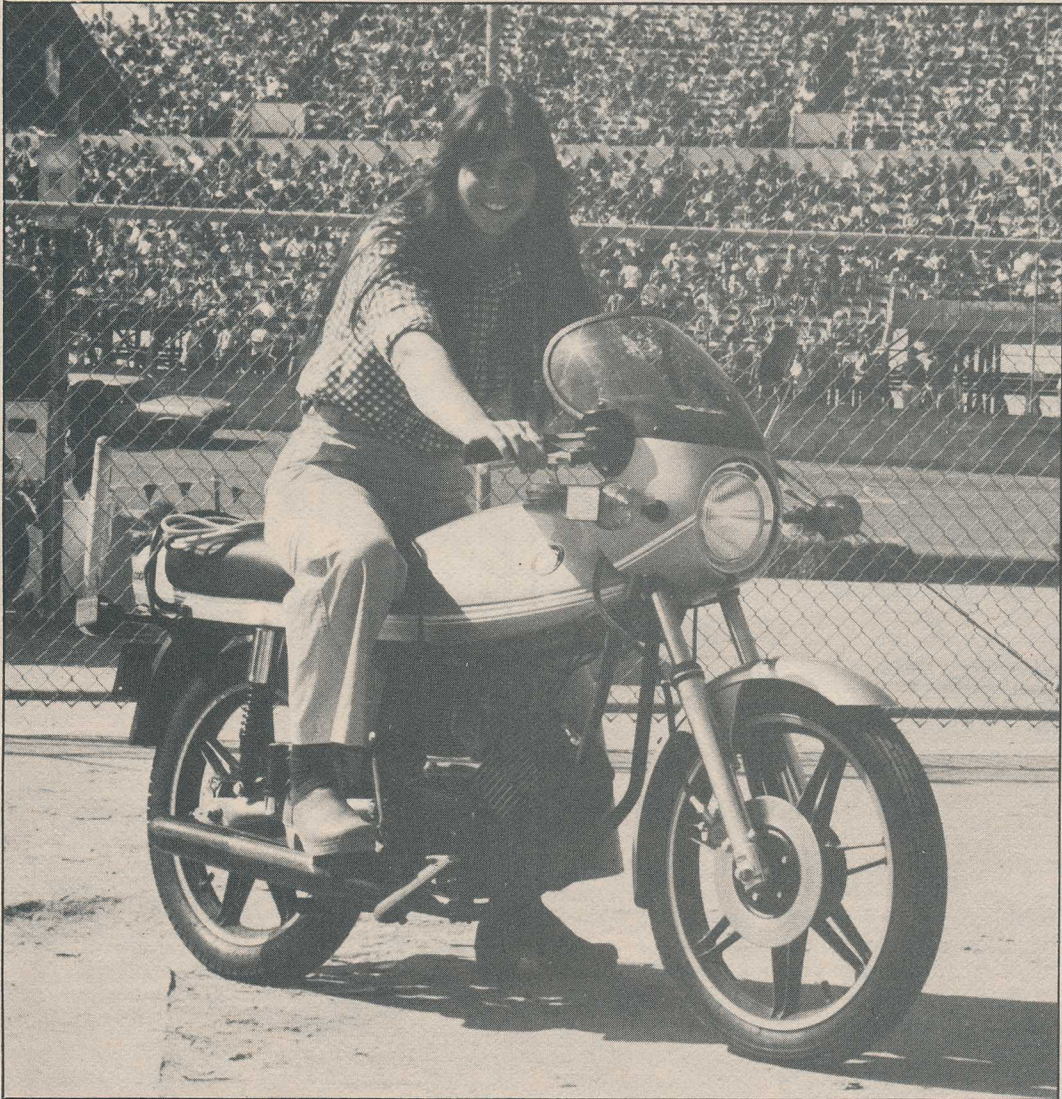
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By Carl Berg

# TEST? PUCH 50cc STREET RACER



Dear Jeff,

I made it to Daytona! Escaped the wintry subzero blasts of the Adirondacks to drown and freeze in subtropical luxury. I left my down parka in the Van at the Montreal airport—who needed the hassle of carrying it around, right? It was what you call a mistake, but, what the hell, Daytona is Daytona and it did warm up for the weekend.

My, but the crowd was friendly. I wore my squeak Honda jacket into the Boot Hill Tavern where there was more black leather than worn by the entire German High Command in WW II, and I didn't even get mugged! FANTASTIC!

By the way, where were you? It's kind of funny going all that way and not hooking up with you until Sunday afternoon. You were so rushed to get to the infield to cover the 200 that I didn't get a chance to tell you what I'd been doing during the week, something I intend to rectify here and now.

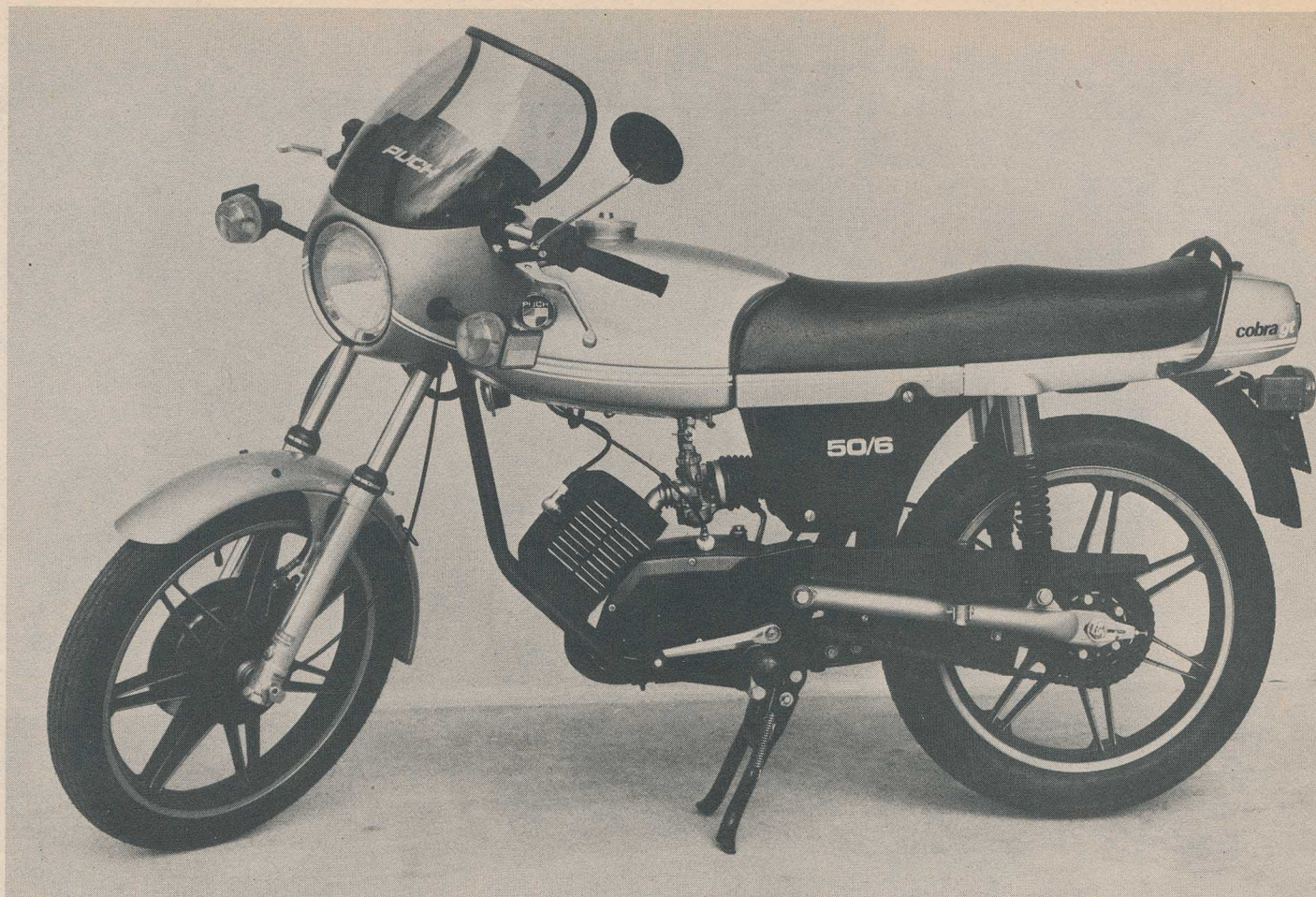
Remember last year at the Plaza show? The Puch Moped display included the neatest little Cafe bike you ever saw and I kept saying, "Hey, Jeff, let's get that bike and do a road test on it," and you kept changing the subject? Well, anyway, I talked to the distributor and, lo and behold, he called the week before Daytona and said the latest model was on the beach waiting for me. So Daytona I came.

Once I got there, things were a little loose for a while and I didn't get my hands on the Cafe bike right off but the Elliott and Hutchins people; they're the distributors of Can Am bikes and Ski Doo snowmobiles too, you know, along with the Puch Mopeds. Well, they lent me a few of the Mopeds so I'd have wheels to get around on.

Remember last year when you got me that production road racer to run with? No plates, bump starts and me zipping up and down AIA trying to

grow eyes in the back of my head and stone paranoid out of my mind? Well, mopeds were a little better than that, even though they didn't have plates either. But mopeds don't need plates and you don't even have to wear a helmet when riding them, at least in Florida.

While doing this, one of the things I learned is that the various states have special sets of rules governing the use of mopeds or motorized bicycles on the public highways. Generally these rules are easier to satisfy than the ones governing motorcycles so the moped experience is more casual. Interestingly, the same various states have various definitions of what constitutes a moped or motorized bicycle and there are differing restrictions on horsepower and top speed. The Puch Moped line has something that satisfies the rules in whatever state you happen to find yourself.



There is an incredible array of Puch Mopeds, each in 3 (three) different horsepower configurations, so their top speeds of 20, 25 and 30 mph, respectively, will conform to the rules in the state they're sold. The lowest common denominator is the Puch Maxi. The one I rode had one whole horsepower and a top speed of 20 mph, though occasionally, when the 49.9cc motor ingested a particularly tasty hydrocarbon molecule, it may have surged to a heady 21 or 22 mph. It's also available in 1½ and 2 hp configurations.

To start a Puch Moped, all you have to do is turn on the gas, tickle the carburetor, depress the choke lever, start pedaling and then engage the engine with a small lever situated under the left hand grip. Brrrup, it starts and off you go.

Riding the Maxi on the beach was okay. You can only go 10 mph anyway and it's easy to keep up with the traffic flow. Out on A1A at night in a light drizzle with convoys of Harleys splitting their ranks to pass on either side, it's a little different story. Lighting is pretty good, better than my enduro bike even, and it's ably assisted by the twin beams of the Detroit iron sitting impatiently on your rear fender. Along about then you're overcome with a desire to see what's a bit further up the line. The seat leaves a lasting impression after 20 straight miles or so, too.

Realistically though, this model is only intended for the distances and circumstances you'd ordinarily ride a bicycle.

Next up is the Maxi Luxe, again in the three different horsepower configurations. There's also the Newport and, at the top of the line, the Sport Mark II Auto Shift 2 Speed. It's got cast wheels, and a much better seat, as well as a range of accessories available for it. The model made available to me had two big horsepower with a top speed of 30 mph. It made a lot of difference. 30 mph is what you need to get around town with the traffic flow. It even did wheelies.

All these Mopeds have engines just half an eye dropper full under 50cc. The performance differences between them are remarkable and due solely to meeting government regulations. What happens if you've got 50cc's and let it all hang out? I'm glad I asked; you get a PDG Cobra GT.

The PDG part of the model name stands for Porsche Design Group. That's an organization that designs things mechanical and is directed by a descendant of Herr Doktor Porsche himself. It's not only a family relationship; it's intellectual and spiritual, too.

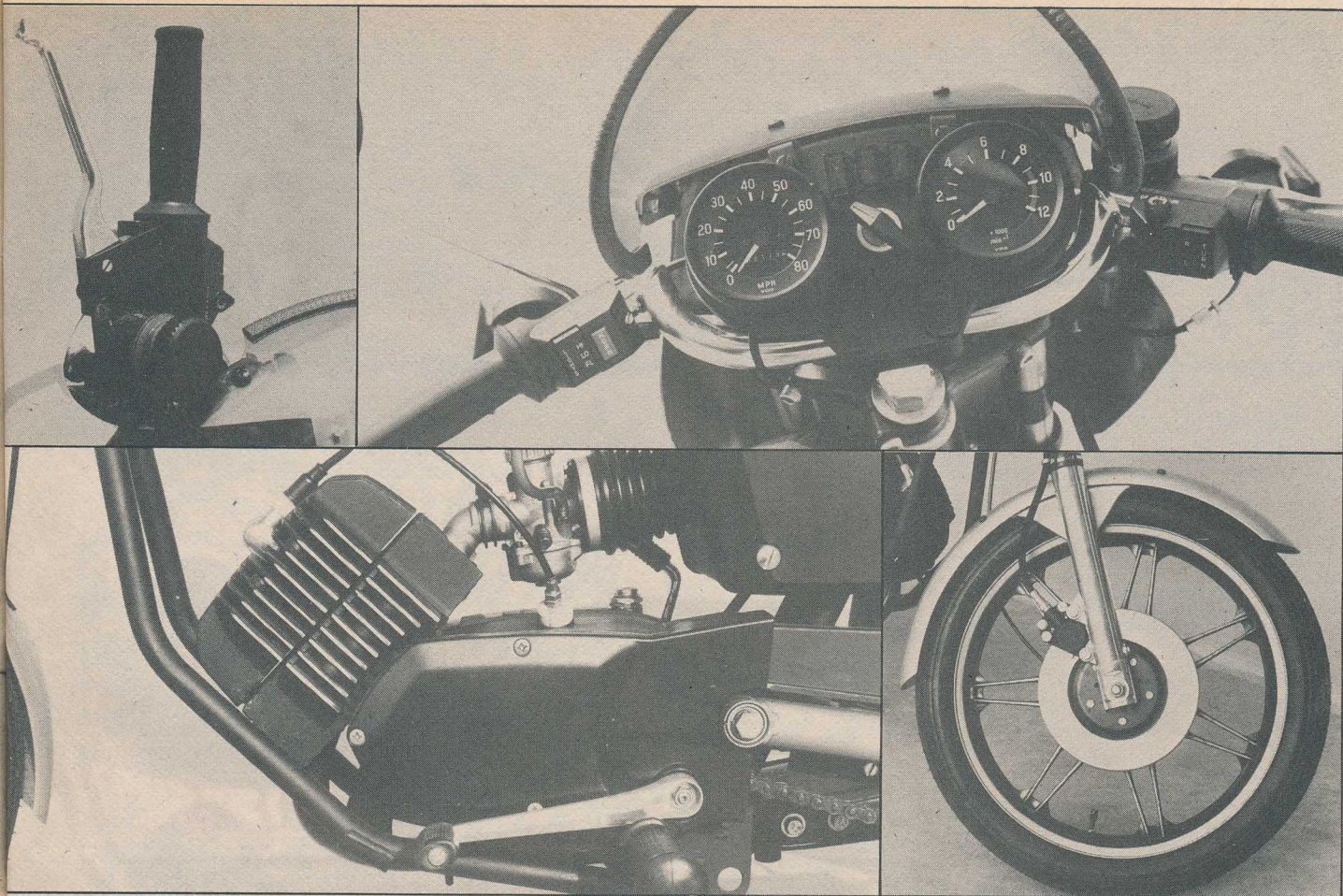
In some European countries, riders under the age of eighteen aren't allowed to operate bikes over 50cc displacement. Given that barrier, an appetite for performance and rich parents,

it takes only a little thought to realize there's a potential market for high strung, short fused scooters whose price tags are not of primary concern. This is the marketplace for which the Cobra was designed and, after riding it, I'd say European teenagers don't have it half bad over there.

It's trick. Whatever else you care to say or think about it, it's really trick. People stop in their tracks and look it over. A show chromed ton up go fasty couldn't draw more attention. I loved it.

Number 1 Jay Springsteen eyeballed it, zeroing in on the front disc brake. Said he had one just like it on his TT bike. I got Carter Alsop *AND* Gina Bovaird to pose for pictures on it. Carter, as you know, was the first woman to get an AMA professional roadrace license while Gina is the first woman to complete an AMA pro roadrace at Daytona. They're both very pretty, which should give any male over the age of 12 the right idea. And, if all this de facto endorsement isn't sufficient, be advised that none other than West Coast hustler and Motorcyclist Extraordinaire, Loyal George "Crash" Truesdale, III, cadged a ride around the Daytona pits! CAN ANY MORE BE SAID?

I was thinking on the plane trip down, what would the Porsche Design people do to make an interesting ride out of 50ccs? In all fairness, they're not



going to come up with a cookie cutter replica of somebody else's effort; they're going to give it their best shot, else why do it at all? So riding this bike gives us a chance to critique PDG.

They get an "A." Hmm, give 'em two "A's." One for visual appeal and the other for that feeling of enjoyably comfortable business you get while operating the machine. In the saddle you get this sense of presence, that regardless of its size, everything is right. When I put my Cafe bike together, I was trying to find a certain feel while riding it. It didn't succeed as much as I wanted to. I know how wide of the mark I was after riding this one.

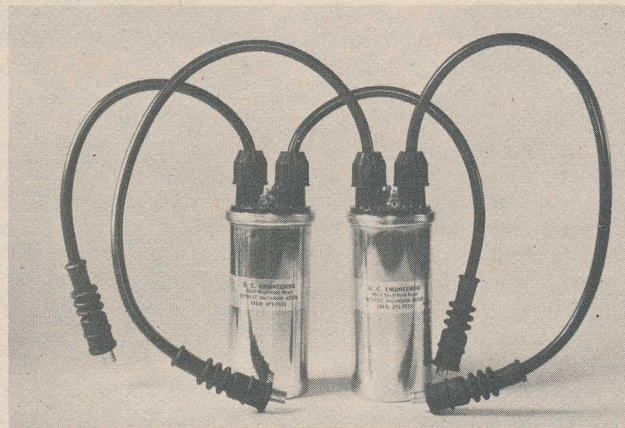
I'm overplaying this but bear with me. With 50ccs you can't expect blinding acceleration and the bike handles well enough so you can enter any corner I was able to find at speed, lean it over satisfyingly and come out again. There's really not enough grunt to scratch with it, so what's left? That presence.

Visually, against a plain background, it's hard to guess its size; the proportions are all so well done. I got that impression while photographing it. Sure, there are telltales but the illusion of size, of proportion, is a remarkable achievement.

I've got a spec sheet, a metric conversion chart and my calculator with me here, so how about some numbers?

*(Continued on page 74)*

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## TEST? PUCH 50cc STREET RACER

(Continued from page 25)

Wheelbase is 1240mm or 49.6 inches; the cast wheels themselves are 17 inches wrapped with Semperit tires, 2.50x17 forward, 3.00x17 aft. Overall height is 1 meter or 39.7 inches. Weight is 187 pounds. Fuel tank capacity is 3.25 gallons. Fuel consumption is a moot point. Every time I looked, the tank was half full. It takes premix.

Marzocchi forks and, it looks like, Girling shocks, hydraulic disc in the front, drum in the rear. Hand controls are Magura as well as the hand grips—which are just right. They're medium soft, have a slight barrel to them and a faintly hexagonal cross section.

Rocking switches handle the lights and turn signals. The high beam switch even has a position to flash it so you can urge slow pokes out of the way! There are indicators for neutral, high beams, and turn signals. The tach and speedo nestle in under the fairing.

I know you're just dying to hear about the engine and performance. It's a piston port, air-cooled, two-stroke single displacing 49.9ccs. Bore and stroke is 40mm by 39.7mm, making it practically square. With a compression ratio of 11:1 and a 20mm Bing carburetor, it produces 6.25 Din HP at 8500 rpm. Ignition is by Bosche Thyristor.

To start it you just tickle the carb and kick. It pulls clean right into the red, which is what you go for in every gear.

There's nothing under six grand but you'd kind of expect that anyway. When the light changed, I'd ring her up to 7.5, feed clutch and away we'd go. Running around town dodging Hawg I kept the tach needle wagging between 6 and 9.

The shift lever has a longish throw and sometimes didn't fully engage the next gear. However, that's something you can compensate for with practice

and boy, did I get practice. I didn't get into 6th gear often because around town you were using 3, 4 and 5. Third gear had a whine to it.

There's one point I might mention: for all the charging around I did on it, I never came to the attention of the Daytona Police force which, you may or may not know, is one of the most attentive custodians of the Vehicle and Traffic codes in the Western World. Imagine it, redline shifting practically all the way through the gear box and the boys in blue didn't so much as spare a glance from their studied observation of the chopper crowd, eh, eh, eh.

It was because of this that the Chicago gang let me lead the pack. There they were with their GL 1000s and their GS 750s and they said, "Let Carl lead. After all, with him out front, there's no chance of us getting into trouble!"

Well, that's pretty much it. Daytona 78 was a fine happening by me. I kind of overboogied it a bit Saturday night but that's what it's for.

We ought to do something about getting into contact earlier in the week next year. I was even going to buy you and Ned a round. Whatever.

\* \* \*

PRICE? Well now, isn't that something. I cleverly disguised this article in the form of a letter and I didn't even mention the price of the Cobra GT. What was I thinking of? My, My.

Understand that this is a limited production machine for a very special market and it's the kind of bike you won't be passing on the street everyday. That should be worth something. And don't forget the appeal it has for lovers of fine design. Anyway, money isn't everything and there's even a positive side to the price. At 1600 or so dollars a copy, you can be sure it won't be falling into the hand of the riffraff. ●

