



APRIL, 1978

\$1.00*

two wheels

EXCLUSIVE
ASPES 125MX
FLIER

HOW
TO HOT
XT/TT500
Yams

INTERNATIONAL
VINTAGE RALLY
PREVIEW

3 BIKES TESTED

two wheels

VOLUME 18, No. 2, APRIL 1978

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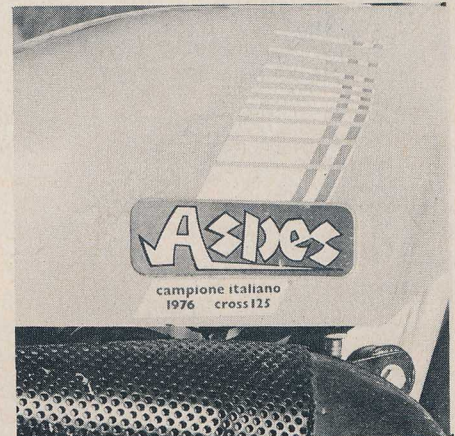
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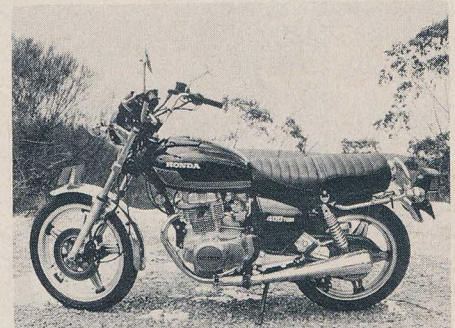
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COVER: The Aspes 125 (test p10) through a crystal stream. Photo by BARRY ROSS.



Aspes 125CRC

THE DEFINITIVE MX-ER



Unless you've got super-long legs the Aspes 125 takes some getting used to, but once you're moving the supple suspension, tight frame and mini-rocket engine take care of everything.

NOT MANY bikes can pull interested observers as quickly as a super-trick motocross bike. They invariably look lean, mean and light and draw comments like "where are you racing" from uninitiated garage workers to in-depth quiz sessions from dirt riders.

The Aspes, sitting in the TWO WHEELS trailer with a YZ125C and a TM250 Suzuki, behind photographer Barry Ross' Mercedes 280SE coupe, drew heaps of people.

The bike looks potent and a day of trail-riding it with the YZ125 and TM250 proved the old adage that function equals form. For a start the Aspes is light enough for one man to lift on to a trailer if there's no ramp available. For another the engine pumps out one hell of a lot of power, and the suspension is superb. There's no other word for it.

TWO WHEELS January had a preview of the Aspes and also mentioned that it was the first one in the country and we had it exclusively for testing, evaluation and racing.

After our trail-riding day TWO WHEELS road racer (and occasional MXer) Alan Blanco took the bike for its racing debut. We'll have a full report on its ability against the top Japanese bikes soon.

Moto-Aspes, Gallarate (Varese), Italy, seriously became involved in motocross when it ran a factory bike ridden by Corrado Maddi in 1976 and won the Italian 125 championships. In the same year an Aspes-powered Juma 125 won the French 125 championship.

The factory's method was simple, and the only logical method for an Italian manufacturer; make its own powerhouse with reliability and performance the aims, and make a frame of utmost rigidity and lightness for the engine, then buy the very best of the locally-made ancillary components.

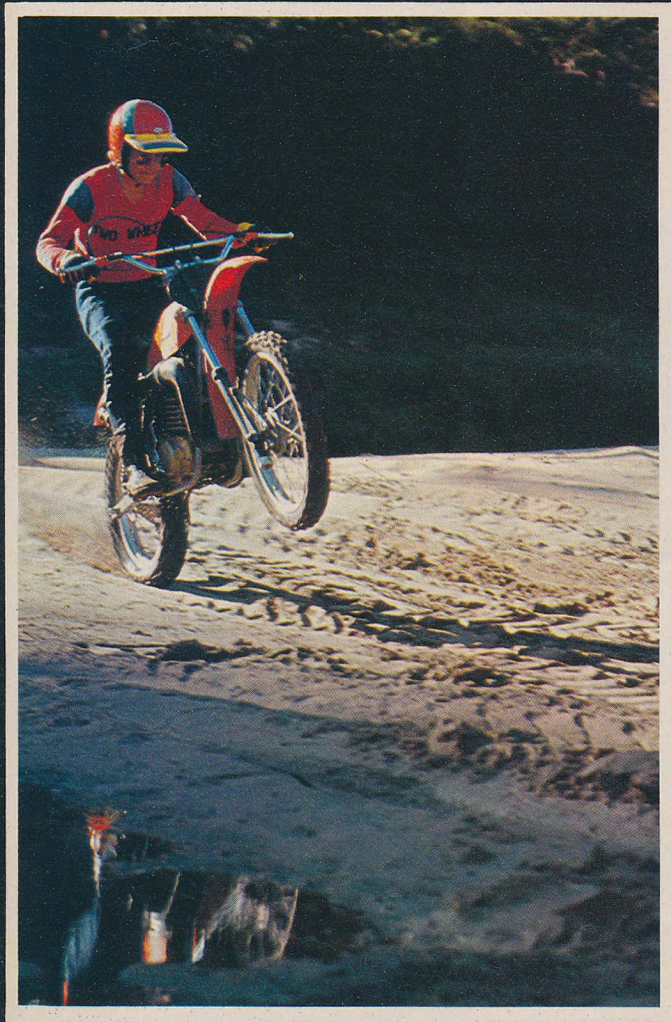
So the Aspes ended up wearing a who's-who of top Italian parts: Ceriani, Marzocchi, Grimeca, Magura, Tommasselli, Pirelli, Akront, Motoplat, Dellorto, Regina . . . and Preston Petty, a ring-in from the US.

While taking a motocrosser trail

riding isn't testing the bike in its natural habitat (and make no mistakes — the Aspes definitely isn't a trail bike!) we would otherwise have been restricted to one track for the day, so we thought a certain trail would have enough variety to try the bike in widely different conditions, and with a good photography area close to the car so no valuable camera equipment would be subject to the abuse of trail riding.

In many ways the ride was frustrating, because the Aspes was difficult to get up slow, rocky slopes that any proper enduro bike would make mincemeat of. But the Aspes fared as well as the YZ125 (though it's peakier power delivery made it more of a handful) and better than the TM250 which had all the disadvantages of the other two MXers as well as weight. And that's apart from the fact that it was old, very well-used and neglected.

The Aspes is a lot faster than the YZ, despite its five-speed gearbox to the YZ's six, and its peakier engine. Though the power delivery is at higher rpm and in a narrower band, it doesn't explode



At rest — temporarily — the Aspes makes a nice match with our tow car for the day, a '71 Mercedes 280SE coupe.





quite as suddenly as the YZ's. But the narrower power band is more difficult to keep to, particularly for the first time on a new trail.

But on the way back the Aspes can be powered, front wheel rarely on the ground and the back wheel occasionally breaking traction on loose rocks.

The Aspes bounces off berms beautifully and scoots out of bends like a KTM on the pipe. Both front and rear suspension is excellent, the leading axle Ceriani tele forks providing great steering feel and soaking up bumps and landings from jumps with suppleness, ease and control, from an amazing 230mm of travel.

The rear Marzocchi gas units are mounted almost half-way along the swingfork and angled at a steep 45 degrees from horizontal, giving 190mm of superbly sprung and damped travel. Naturally, a chain tensioner and guide are fitted. The gas units and lines for the Marzochis appear fragile and susceptible to damage, mounted just under the rear seat base, but didn't suffer any damage from one slight spill (a sudden unexpected right hand turn off a hill when a large rock moved under the back wheel).

The bike is well protected from damage, even though it doesn't have a sumpguard. There's 320mm of ground clearance beneath the frame tubes and the engine is about 20mm above the bottom of the tubes, and well tucked up inside the frame. The only item at all vulnerable is the brake lever and that bends instead of breaking.

The swingfork also pivots in line with and about 70mm behind the countershaft sprocket — a good design point which ensures maximum chain life, as well as efficient power delivery.

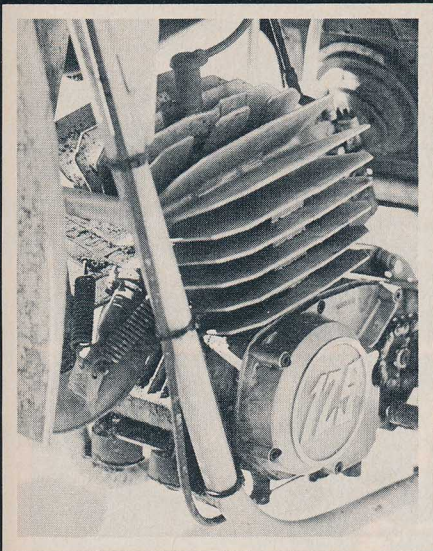
The conical, all alloy Grimeca front and rear single leading shoe drum brakes also live up to expectations and provide strong, controlled braking on hard or loose surfaces, though the rear brake is a bit susceptible to lock-up because of the overly complicated pivot arm/cable connection.

The Aspes has no sidestand — it's a serious racer. This also shows in its comfort rating (apart from suspension) which is fairly low with the rider seated because of the exhaust stinger/silencer's lack of efficient heat insulation. It's pretty comfortable apart from the hot leg, but the bike is at its fastest with the rider standing.

Is it good enough to win races? Yes. It has a few minor faults, but they have nothing to do with performance.

One is that the Magura grips, while the most comfortable available, rip like wet cardboard if the bike is dropped, or even if the grip rubs against anything, in a trailer, or just leaning against a garage wall.

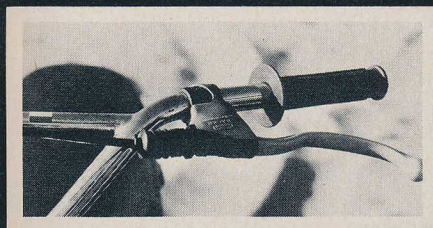
We'd also rather see an alloy tank replace the fibreglass item, purely for our peace of mind while barrelling along. And the last complaint is the dual



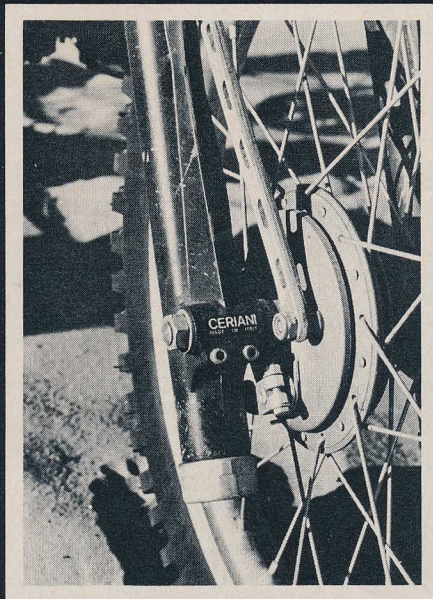
Aspes 125cm³ powerplant's small engine cases are dwarfed by huge fins on barrel and head. Engine runs very cool thanks to radial head with porcupine bits around the spark plug. Note two rubber blocked engine mounts at front.



Front right-hand petrol tap is very hard to get at after engine has been running and chamber is hot. Note rubber mounting of exhaust to frame.



Controls are all Magura and Tomasselli, top equipment for light weight, easy adjustment and use. Brake and clutch adjustment is by one knob. Note excellent dust protection.



Ceriani tele forks are excellent and with conical alloy Grimeca SLS drum brake, make for one of the best dirt front ends in the business.



Swingfork is double braced behind pivot point for maximum rigidity. Entire frame is very rigid.

fuel taps, at the forward end of the tank on the exhaust side and at the rear on the left hand side. Both are knurled screw on and off jobs, which while offering distinct on and off positions, are time wasting, and easily jammed by dust and mud. The right hand side one is difficult to get at without burning fingers on the hot exhaust pipe.

Non-primary kick starting means the Aspes can be started only in neutral, which is usually hard to find, and then the rider must be off the bike and

kicking with the left foot. Kicking with the right will lead to broken toes and injuries from the serrated steel footpeg. But it bump starts easily; the first time we fired the bike (the first time since it left the factory) it was pushed for about 10 metres. After that it always kicked or bumped easily, apart from once when ham-fisted Brown flooded it after his inadvertent right turn off the hill.

The Aspes is simple, beautifully designed, light, efficient and has heaps of performance. The two-stroke

piston-port single (which is rubber-mounted too) is the '76-'77 Italian state-of-the-art racing two-stroke and produces the goods accordingly.

And it doesn't get crossed-up. If the rider causes it to, though, the light weight and instant power make straightening up a quick and easy exercise.

Put it this way: If you were to have the time and money to build the definitive 125 MX special, the result would be the Aspes. *



SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE ASPES
MODEL CRC125
PRICE (projected) about \$1800
ENGINE: Single cylinder piston port two-stroke. All alloy construction, radially finned cylinder head. Engine rubber mounted to frame.
 Bore x stroke 54 x 54 mm
 Capacity 123 cm³
 Compression ratio N/A
 Claimed power N/A
 Claimed torque N/A
 Lubrication Petrol/oil mix, 20:1
 Carburetion Dellorto 34 mm
 Air filter Dry pleated paper
 Ignition Motoplatt CDI
 Starting system Non primary kick start
TRANSMISSION: Five speed constant mesh gearbox, multiple disc clutch in oil bath, gear primary drive, Regina racing chain final drive. Left-side foot change, one down four up pattern.
FRAME: Full twin-loop duplex cradle.

SUSPENSION:

Front: Ceriani leading axle, telescopic hydraulic forks, internal coil springs, two-way oil damping, 230mm travel.
 Rear: Double braced alloy square tubed swingfork. Dual forward-mounted Marzocchi rear units with remote gas reservoirs. 190mm travel.

WHEELS, TYRES AND BRAKES:

Front: Akront alloy rim, 3.00-21 Pirelli knobby tyre, Grimeca alloy single leading shoe drum brake.
 Rear: Akront alloy rim, 4.00-18 Pirelli knobby tyre, Grimeca alloy single leading shoe drum brake.

CAPACITIES:

Fuel tank 7 litres

DIMENSIONS:

Dry weight89 kg
 Wheelbase 1450 mm
 Overall length 1082 mm
 Overall width 310 mm (sidecovers widest point)
 Overall height 1190 mm
 Footpeg height 322 mm
 Ground clearance 320 mm
 Seat height 940 mm