



AUGUST, 1976

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Two wheels

THE MAGAZINE OF MOTOR CYCLING

**STAY
WARM & DRY**

**CYCLE
SUITS**

**YOUR BIG
GUIDE**

SCOOP TEST!

HONDA'S MR250 ENDURO

PLUS YAMAHA IT400 ...

**THE NEW-BREED JAPANESE TRAILSTERS
OUT TO BLAST THE EUROPEANS!**

PHOTOGRAPH BY ...



TWO WHEELS

THE MAGAZINE OF MOTOR CYCLING

Editor: Mac Douglas

Tech Editor: Mike McCarthy

OUR COVER: That's right — a scoop test of Honda's enduro 250 two-stroke — and it's the best Japanese off-road bike we've ridden! Match that up with our workout of Yamaha's not-so-secret IT400C (against our own Yamaha enduro project) and inside it's a damn good coverage of the Japanese bikes settin' up to challenge in European territory! You'll be surprised how good they are! Gone cold on riding? Check out page 37. Our special accessories feature this issue covers all the oversuits we could find in Australia! On page 46 there's the good oil on motorcycling's pollution-free four-stroke future, but part of tomorrow might be automatic. See page 16.



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Remember our recent report on Marty Smith? The 19-year-old Honda-contracted American whiz-kid faces tough competition in World 125 Championship motocross competition — the established domain of recent Australian visitor Gaston Rahier. Here's JIM GREENING with inside information on the bullets the other big guns are firing with their . . .

BUZZ-BOMBS TURNED BLASTERS!

MANY EUROPEAN schoolboys ride 125 cm³ motocross competition for sheer fun — but like everyone else remotely interested in motocross in Europe, they're closely following the razor-keen competition up in World Championship ranks.

For many bike enthusiasts the interest in the "buzzers" far

exceeds that in 250 and big-bore action! Suzuki's dramatically-successful power play has eclipsed the disappointing void left by Kreidler's withdrawal from competition and the fight for the winning combo of the trickiest bike and most consistent rider has been declared open to all-comers.

The prospect is strong that

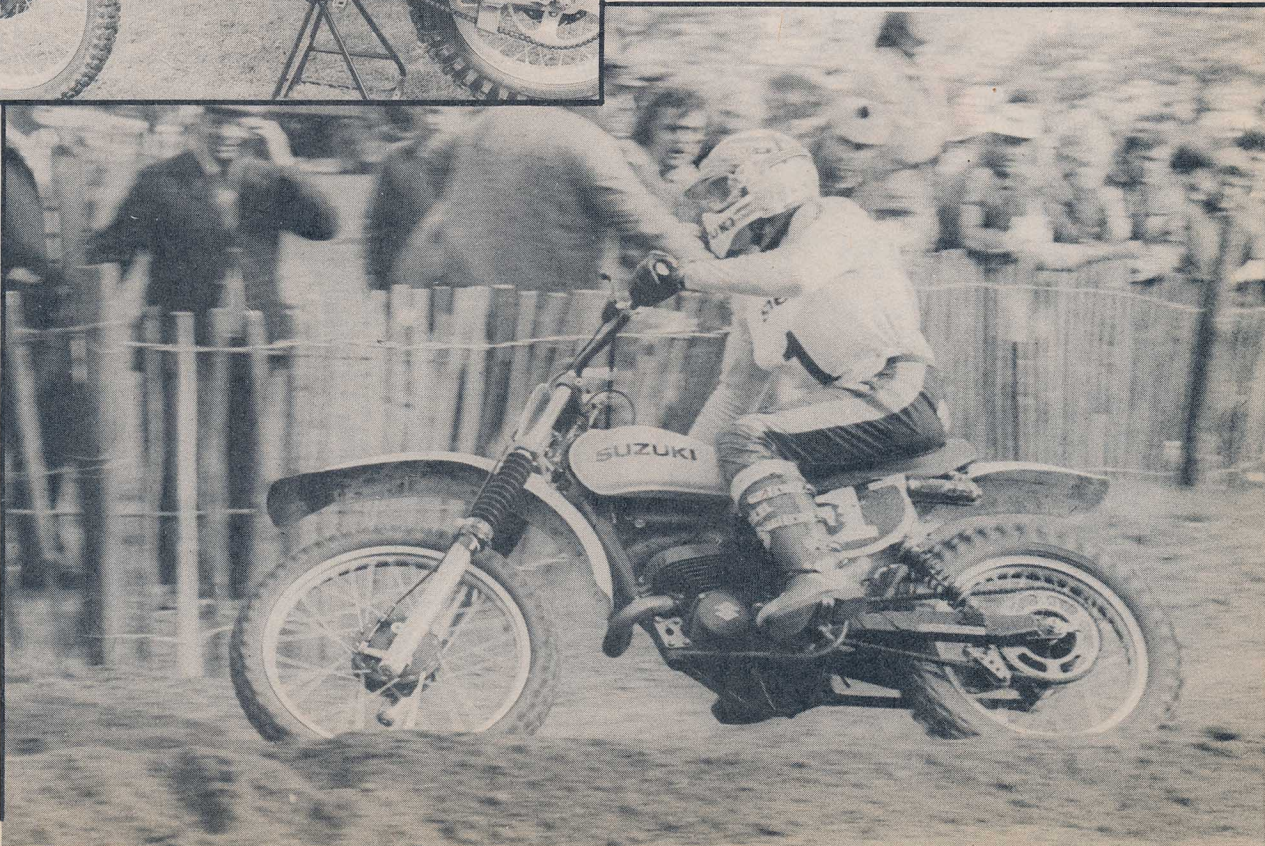
Suzuki's secret big-bucks development that launched the company successfully into last year's all-out effort will take top honors again — before the multitude of Italian factories — and also other Japanese makers — can regroup.

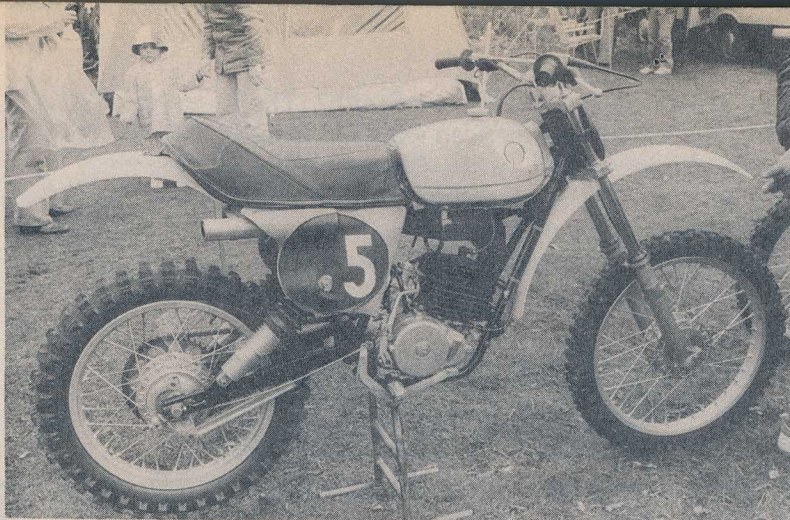
As it stands the totally committed manufacturers are CZ and Suzuki, with Honda in as deep as



Something very secret is happening . . . and it ain't about to happen to the over-the-counter model! Marty's machine's trick goodies include cam adjuster for front fork spring rate (just below gaiter), and frame downtubes appear to offer alternative engine mount positions. Take a look at that chain run with its guide, protectors, tensioner and whittled out rear sprocket.

Gaston's is hardly standard, either. Note non-standard forks, mammoth torque arm to rear brake and footrests positioned on bridging tube (possibly for Rahier's short legs).





CZ's weaponry features distinctive "high bum" look for '76. Springless shocks are huge by comparison to diminutive powerplant (where do they put the guts?). Double-single toptube and big gussets are visible forward of petrol tank.

BUZZ-BOMBS TURNED BLASTERS!

possible in Europe without interfering with American events. The whole object of Honda's European MX exercise seems calculated to increase Stateside publicity and sales through the exploits of Californian Marty Smith who commutes between America and Europe by jet. Four special Hondas, two on each side of the Atlantic, are kept ready for Smith to make rapid transfers from domestic AMA competition to the world ranking stuff, then rapidly back again. Honda, of course, appreciates how essential it is to have bikes prepared specifically for local conditions.

Works 125 Hondas have the same sort of similarity to pro-

Below:

The others: Gilera (below) can boast the biggest finning in all 125 motocross. The Beta 125 looks good but has yet to feature prominently.

duction Hondas as OW31 Yamahas have to standard TZ750s. They are special, through and through, and if we don't know exactly what goes on internally, there are plenty of changes for everybody to see. The suspension, for instance — that's special. Extra long, massive air-damped front forks have external springs guarded by large-diameter gaiters.

At the rear, gas/oil shocks are fitted near-vertically but well forward along the swingarm fork which is square section, and fabricated in aluminium.

The frame is best described as multi-tubular — and then some! A large diameter backbone is supplemented by a smaller tube angled upward from below the steering head tube. Where they meet at the rear, a seven-tube structure takes over, forming mounting points for seat, shock absorbers and swinging arm pivot. The strongly-gusseted single front downtube separates into two widely splayed tubes at the engine exhaust port, allowing room for an up-and-over exhaust to pass through.

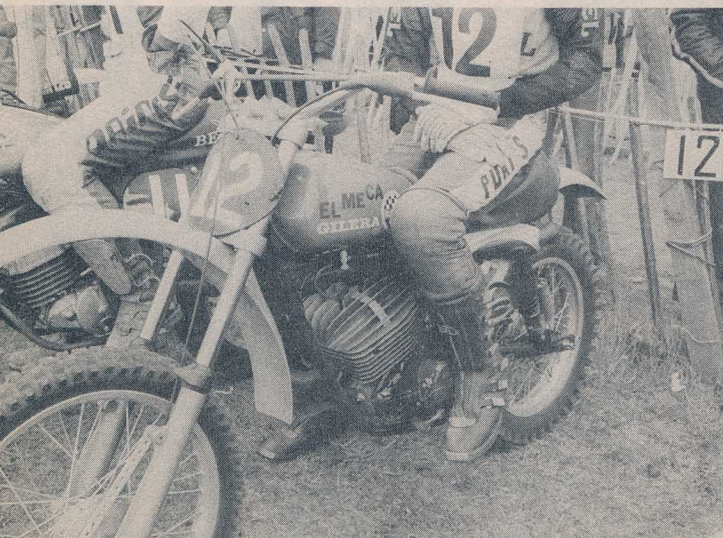
Trick internal engine parts

remain Honda's secret. However nothing disguises the reed valve box between carburettor and cylinder so it's reasonable to assume there are revised ports to match reed characteristics. And the powerplant itself is fitted lower and further forward than in the CR125M-11 (featured in TWO WHEELS May). Estimated (guessed!) weight is 80 kg (176 lb) although it's been suggested to be as low as 61.5 kg (135 lb) — a saving of 17 kg (37 lb) over the production CR125M!

Spying on an FIM-controlled weigh-in is not all that revealing because you cannot tell the weight of fuel carried when bikes go on the scales. A works CZ, for instance, swings the needle to 82 kg (180 lb) and allowing for a few litres of fuel it's clear the CZ is in little danger of breaking the FIM minimum weight regulations. At present that's 76 kg (167.5 lb) and nothing we've seen so far is capable of nudging that. Perhaps super-lightweights would prove ultra-fragile — or maybe nobody wants to try that hard!

Anyway, Smith's early-season European itinerary included the Italian and British GPs. In Italy, he collected a morale-boosting first and second, then enjoyed mixed fortunes in England when adding 14 points (a third and a seventh) to his world championship score. Surprisingly for a bike originally developed for American conditions, the Honda consumed a large quantity of English dust and its performance suffered accordingly.

(Continued on page 75)

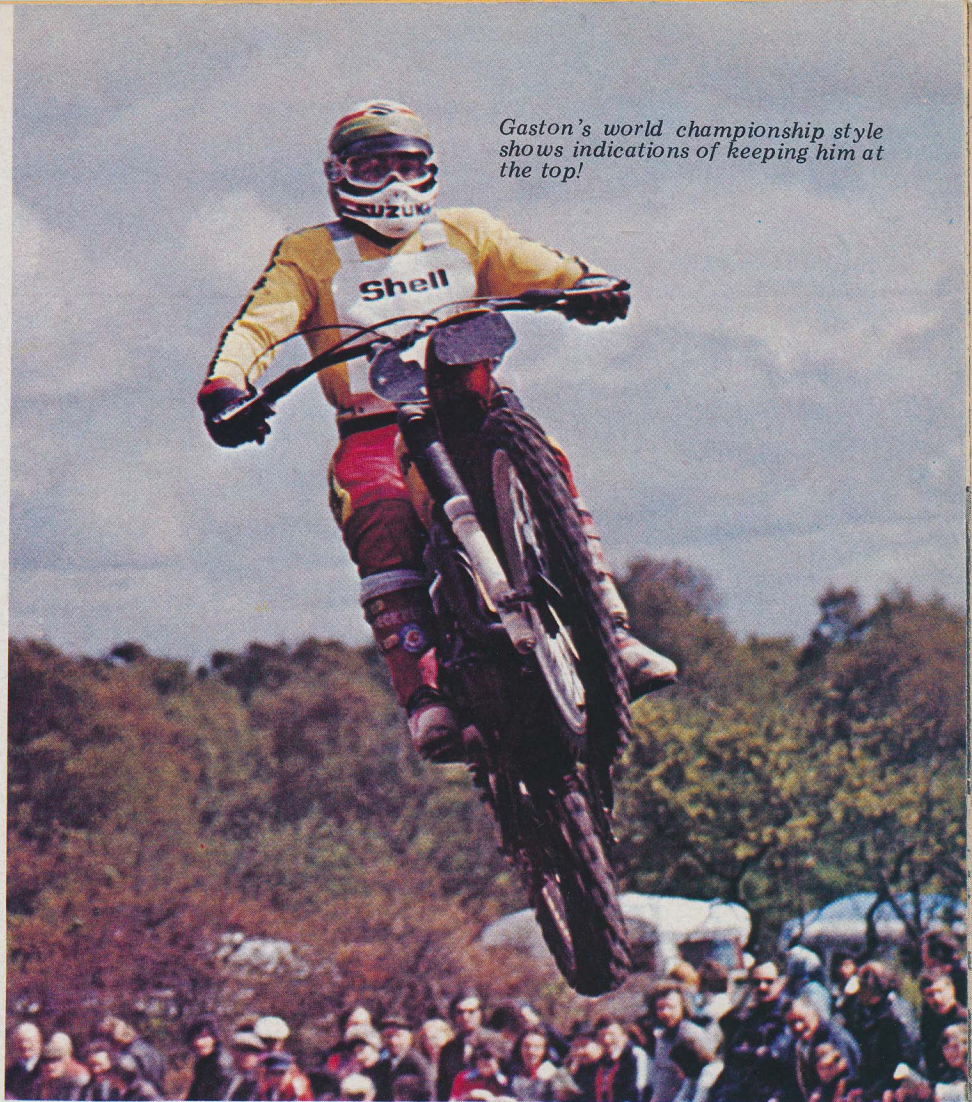




Gaston Rahier. Suzuki's man and world champ.



Marty Smith. Honda's "publicity machine" can ride too!



Gaston's world championship style shows indications of keeping him at the top!



American Marty Smith has bought a lot of interest to competition — and surprise placings in early rounds!

BUZZ-BOMBS TURNED BLASTERS!

Continued from page 20

As observers at Amaroo and elsewhere during the Aussie international season will know, Gaston Rahier is one heck of an asset for Suzuki. When engaged in his main job — winning the 125 world title — he is the factory rider to beat! And although forecasting *anything* in motocross is chancey, Rahier's skill, determination and professionalism must surely put every other title-chaser among the also-rans.

To see Rahier at work on the first (practice) day of a Grand Prix is to see the master in action. He may pass up the initial practice session to make a detailed study of the circuit, and to assess rival form. In the evening he'll discuss times, debate the advantages of this carburettor jetting or that suspension setup. On race day he eats a meal of minced steak exactly two hours before racing starts. Then he rests alone for half an hour, tucked away in the back of his transporter, allowing digestive juices to work. His strict dietary program is part of a training schedule listing gymnasium workouts, at least three runs a week, and plenty of sleep. But don't get the idea of Rahier being a stand-offish freak. Far from

it. He's friendly, humorous, communicative, and great value for the public's adulation.

You may take it that the Suzuki Rahier rides is non-standard. Or as a factory spokesman cautiously put it: "As a *generalisation* you might say our team bikes are a little special." Specifics we noted were longer front forks extending well below wheel spindle level, lighter frame tubes, a deeper square-section swingarm and extra frame tubes carrying the footrests. Like everyone else, we failed to get inside the engine!

The little buzzers from CZ have been changed, if that's not understating it too much. Gone is the single loop frame, along with the squat head and barrel, and the heavyweight farm-tractor look. The new mini is much more like a scaled down 1975 250, with sunburst head finning and Mikuni carb. By any 125 standards the engine is tiny. Looked at from either side it's almost impossible to imagine where they've stowed the guts. The carb is nearly smothered in plastic pipes, and two of the tubes are engine breathers, one running from the ignition compartment, and the other emerging from the crankcase/gearbox casting.

The CZ frame is full duplex down below, and double-single (one above the other) under the tank.

Gusset plates of generous proportions suggest the use of thin wall tubing.

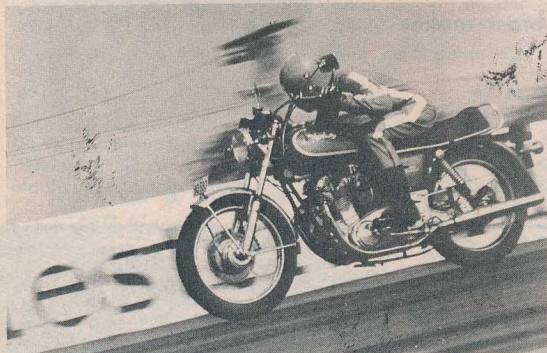
The long-movement front forks have air valves in the top, and bottoms siting the wheel spindle ahead of the leg centre line. Laid-down springless units (like the 250's, but with greater travel), control the rear end which boasts a fashionable rectangular section swingarm. A chain tensioning wheel is fitted to engage with the lower run.

Everything adds up to this being the neatest bike yet from CZ.

And the Italians? What they lack in sophistication and heavy factory money, they make up in numbers: Beta, Gilera, Simolini, Tecnomoto, Ancilotti — they're just some of the names involved. It would take an army of agents to discover the makes and origins of engines, frames and component parts, such is the interwoven nature of the Italian industry and the numbers of specialists manufacturers. But think Italian, and think variety. They certainly have that! *

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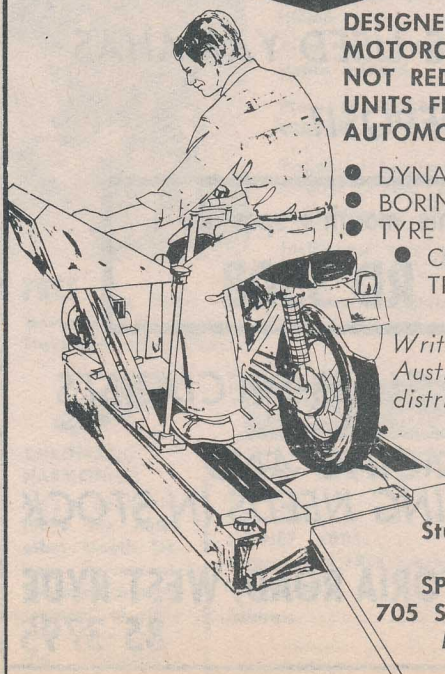
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