

\$1.25*

TWO WHEELS

JUNE, 1979

STEPTHROUGHS:
A Shootout
To Find What's
Sacrificed For
Economy

**THE '79 STYLE
DIRT IRONS**

- MONTESA 360
- YAMAHA IT400F
- HONDA'S
XL/XR500s

Plus:
ANA BRANCH:
**OUR WILDEST
SOCIAL
TRAIL RIDE**



two wheels

Volume 20, No. 4, JUNE 1979

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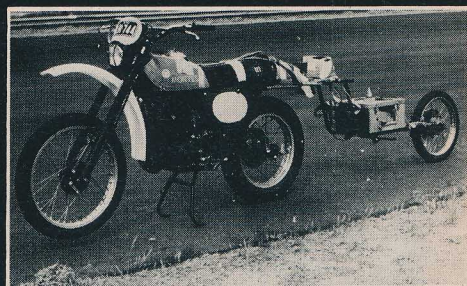
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Would you believe this Montesa is being tortured? See page 16.

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Bengt Aberg's BOMBSHELL!

One of the world's most exotic four-stroke motocrossers is alive and well in Sydney.

And drooling over that for a while sent RAY RYAN on a search for everything else in chrome-moly that could be wrapped around Yamaha's big four-stroke and others.

LIKE MANY dirt riders, Sydneysider Peter Addison was bitten by the heavily-marketed four-stroke bug of Yamaha's TT500 dirt bikes. The bite turned nasty and wouldn't go away, but Pete knew the cure. He'd learned it during a co-ride with nationally-known motocrosser and road racer Jim Scaysbrook in the annual Nepean Six-Hour dirt track race some years ago.

To Peter's constantly-enquiring mind the event highlighted the shortcomings of the standard machine and he went away and created a heavily-modded stock-framed TT carrying the usual Protec engine mods, pipe and aftermarket suspension. But the weight and inherent shortcomings of the TT's "play-racer" design dulled the edge of the exercise.

It was then Peter spoke with the folks at

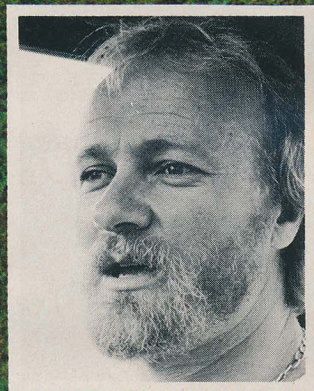
Torsten Hallman Racing on California's west coast, and followed up on the prices of their newly-released Bengt Aberg Replica, a custom-chassis MXer packing TT500 power and the finest suspension available.

Our own quotes for a similar machine came from Hallman executive Lars Larsson. It was awfully straightforward.

"The bike is assembled by Don Vesco and the bill is \$4500," he told us. Add to that the cost of freight, packing and allied charges and you'll begin to get the picture — Aberg racers are not cheap!

The Aberg Replica frames marketed through Torsten Hallman Racing of 1300 Hill Street, El Cajon, California, 92020 are an exact replica of the frame used by Sweden's Bengt Aberg during the 1977-78 500 world championship season. It was designed in Sweden by the former world champion and is hand-made in the US. It's built in 4130 chrome moly tubing and supplied with a solid aluminium swingarm which rides on needle roller bearings.

Each Aberg bike is built to the requirements of the individual client. The range of front forks alone, includes a choice of Marzocchi, Simons, Ceriani, Kayaba or standard



Yamaha YZ400 types. At the rear there are two shock lengths available, both using Moto-X Fox units and offering 250 and 275 mm of rear wheel travel.

Peter Addison initially shied away from the cost involved in building and shipping the Aberg and had temporarily shelved the idea when a call from Torsten Hallman's offices indicated one second-hand machine was available immediately at a "very favorable" price. The bike in question was used by Aberg as a back-up during the previous European season and was to be supplied to the buyer with a selection of swingarms, gearing, carbies and other goodies.

Addison was hooked. Air-freighted to Sydney, the exotic Yamaha was added to the contents of a garage housing his Ducati, a modified TT and a restored Velocette.

A box of goodies

"It just arrived in a box," Peter told us as we fought the Sydney traffic in the cab of his high-riding F100 Pickup.

"The box included a stack of spares but little information. All that I know is that the motor was built by Dick Mann, and a little of the bike's history."

And to this day what remains his strongest impression of the machine?

"The suspension; it's exceptional, even way beyond the performance of the Marzocchis of my other stock-framed bike."

Each Aberg frame carries three litres of oil in the upper frametube and single, large diameter backbone. The Yamaha YZ125C and YZ125X fuel tanks are the popular choice on most Aberg machines and Addison's import has the tank repainted in the original Aberg team colors. Local brushman Alan Puckett handled the paint and the one-up "Hallman & Eneqvist" logowork.

Lightweight Sun alloy rims are used on all Aberg models with the 17 in. rear hoop carrying a trench-digging 5.00 x 17 in. Trelleborg Ten Masters or the equivalent-sized tyre from the German Metzeler range. Front and rear brakes are standard TT500 or YZ Yamaha but Addison's ex-Aberg racer scores some added stopping power with a works style Yamaha front unit with the customary large diameter grand prix hub.

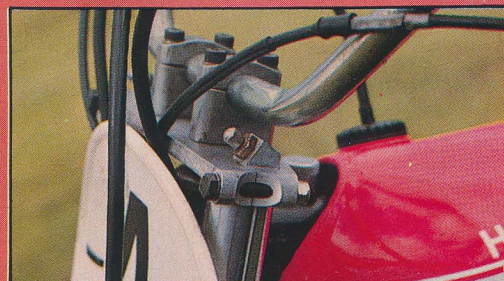
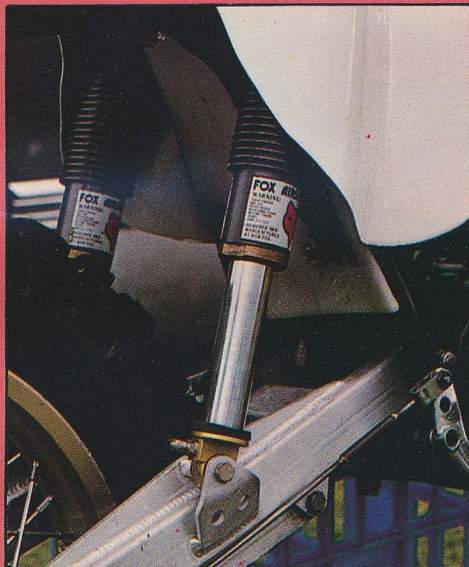
Front forks of the Addison bike are also rather more exotic than the usual production options offered to Torsten Hallman clients. They're one-off leading axle items by

Kayaba, seemingly identical to those used on the factory Yamaha racers campaigned by US star Bob "Hurricane" Hannah in the national Trans-AMA motocross series.

The motor of the model was built by former US champion and frame builder Dick "Bugsie" Mann, still remembered for his legendary expertise in extracting every drop of power from his once-conquering BSA dirt-track singles. The Mann spirit is alive in the retired Aberg racer. The engine's lubrication efficiency has been boosted by a Pro-Tec high-volume oil line kit and internal refinements include a gas-flowed cylinder head with larger valves and a boost through the inlet ports with a giant 38 mm Mikuni. The exhaust pipe is a specific match for the Hallman-Aberg frame and the camshaft is a special grind for GP conditions.

"Traction is the biggest problem with this type of bike," says Peter. "It has so much power it's prone to wheelspin everywhere and even very good suspension doesn't help then!"

"I can come off a big jump — I mean a 15 or 20 metre job — and just nothing will bottom out. The suspension just soaks it all up and that back tyre will break away as soon



Left: Peter Addison (inset) and his Aberg-inspired exotic. "It was a bargain really," he told us. Two former world motocross champions feature in the thumper's development. Sten Lundin designed the US-built frame; Aberg used it as a world championship back-up.

as you hit. It's a 5.50 x 17 in. and the motor just rips that to shreds!"

One of the Yamaha's biggest failings, a poor choice of gearbox ratios, has been eliminated in the Addison machine with a close ratio cluster exclusive to Aberg's own personal machinery. The choice obviously works: Addison's is the only four-stroke on the local scene to regularly give YZ400 riders added grey hairs.

The local scene

Drooling over Peter Addison's superbly-crafted Aberg special prompted thoughts about the other trick dirt bike frames we'd encountered.

Where'd they all go?

Mostly out of the picture apparently, burdened by the 27.5 percent sales tax and the high costs inherent in importing specialises chassis or complete machines. Australian riders rarely encounter specialist-built frame work of the style of US-based industries Champion, C&J or Redline. Even in the US significant changes in the last two years have seen the end of at least two nationally-known frame specialists.

Melbourne-based distributor John Burrows, of Malvern, had initial involvement with the Dick Mann/TT frames designed for both motocross and enduro riding. The pro-

ject was short-lived and far from profitable for Burrows, who retains only one of the Mann-framed specials as his own playbike and will now only import on a pre-paid order.

"I was struggling to sell them for under \$1100," John told us. "There just isn't the interest or the money to support this type of gear on the local market.

"The Dick Mann frame is a masterpiece in every way, but the riders just don't have the money anymore. It's unfortunate!"

C&J makes sense!

C&J Precision Products of 3873 South Main Street, Santa Ana, California, 92707, also offers two different frame designs solely for the TT500 Yamaha. One style uses an oil-in-the-frame design similar to the stock Yamaha frame while the other has a remote aluminium oil tank which puts the weight lower to the ground. Differing frame designs and geometry are available to cater for the motocross, enduro, desert or dirt track rider. Each C&J frame is built to an individual customer's needs with a full range of optional fuel tanks, seats, airboxes, swingarms and suspension and an impressive weight-saving over stock which puts a complete TT500 bike weight at about 109 kg.

It means the chrome-moly C&J chassis set-

up compares admirably with the lighter, but far more expensive, Hallman-Aberg framed bikes (approx. 105 kg) and the 113 kg mild steel-framed machines of other specialist manufacturers.

The C&J units have been the unanimous choice of many top engine builders for some years and have been the basis of many Baja-winning racers designed and built by west coast tuner Bill Bell. Bell's Long Beach Honda operation offers complete built-up machines with a full range of modified XL powerplants tuned for everything from short track to motocross.

The quality of the C&J units is exceptional and the landed cost of approximately \$1100 is far more realistic than the US\$845 quoted by Torsten Hallman Racing for its frame alone! The C&J is supplied complete with all necessary tank mounts, side panels, seat brackets, footpeg and brake mounts and is the most economical of the US-built custom chrome-moly frame designs.

What Kenny offers

Kenny Roberts Racing Specialties Inc. of 9600 Pioneer Avenue, Oakdale, California, 95361 offers a mild steel alternative which retails in the US for approximately US\$550. The KR frames can be supplied in a choice of either flat track, motocross or "cow trailing" designs and each frame is supplied in kit form complete with roller bearing-mounted square section swingarm, engine mountings and chrome moly rear axle. The K&R frame will accept either stock Yamaha suspension/running gear components or a selection of catalogued items which include mag wheels, various fork sets, rear disc brakes and S&W suspension. The frames reduce all-up weight to approximately 112 kg but it is the improved handling from the KR's refined chassis geometry which makes it so popular in the US.

The Roberts organisation will construct a bike to any buyer's individual specifications and can also supply frames and components to suit such powerplants as Honda's XL range and the Yamaha YZ two-strokes.

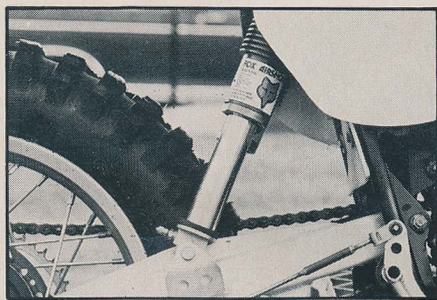
Machines such as Addison's Aberg TT offer the ultimate in weight-saving and handling for the must-have-a-four-stroke fanatics of the world. Even Peter is the first to admit that he wouldn't have bought the bike unless the price had been abnormally "special".

Importing frames from the US in bulk has met constant lack of success in the hands of several local accessory distributors. The costs involved are sufficient to push the finished cost of a custom-framed machine to beyond \$3000 without a hint of hesitation.

The only alternative, the latest in revamped vintage iron from CCM, retails in Australia for around \$3500 from either Lester Rowley of South Australia or Clem Nunn Honda in Perth!

We loved Addison's bike. A full-on sophisticate aimed at nothing short of a four-stroke win in the world championship title hunt.

The Aberg is a machine that will send Honda XL owners bind with lust and hasten some impure thoughts into the mind of even the most God-fearing TT500 owner.



Above: Rear end uses Fox Moto-X "Airshox" of 365 mm length which offer 275 mm of rear wheel travel. All-alloy swing-arm runs needle rollers.

Right: Individually tailored for Aberg, the big Yamaha's front end uses one-off leading axle Kayaba forks and an OW front brake/hub.

Below: Compact YZ125 tank received some new paint from local airbrush ace Alan Puckett. Colors are red and white with Hallman-Aberg team logos.

