

\$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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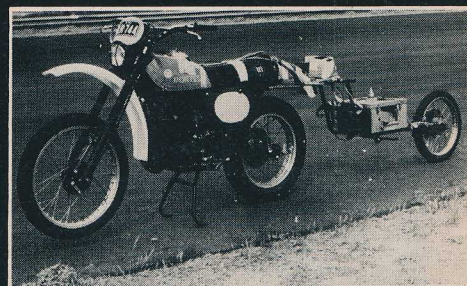
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It happens only rarely that a European off-road manufacturer defies the trend to bikes which are spectacularly specialist and offers a thoroughbred rocket which, in all aspects of performance, equipment and price, will challenge or overwhelm the best offered by Japan. Montesa might even be the first . . .

# MONTESA 360 ENDURO

## The Registerable Powerhouse!

Montesa's first venture into the Open class is an innovative, finely-finished enduro bike which offers something for everyone interested in the trails, whether hard, soft or competition. Its blemishes are minor, and the positive nature of the bike includes having the widest, strongest, Locomotive Power of any two-stroke enduro bike available.

Not only is it a sound reliable workhorse, says enduro buff KEL WEARNE, but it kidney chops the other Europeans on performance and karate kicks the Japanese on price!



ONCE THE Spaniards came to many shores. Came and conquered. Then as time passed they lost their power and slowly drifted out of the arena. It was much the same in the bike scene: a fiery start to spectacular conquest which eventually trailed off into limbo.

Why?

Well the Spanish bikes of the late '60s and early '70s took a lot of time to maintain. Then there came the assault on motocross trials and enduros by the machines from the flag of the Rising Sun. The Spanish bikes lost their magic — and with it the market.

The most efficient of the Spanish brands remains Montesa — still going strong despite the problems which have fallen onto the Spanish (and Italian) industries. From its inception in 1944 it has been a survivor and a winner: it remains as the oldest and largest Spanish bike manufacturer. Surprisingly, the company's real history is found in a superb road race record with two-strokes, and it was only between 1966 and '68 that the firm went into the dirt side of bikes in a big way.

The VA and VB motocross bikes are a long way from the old Cappa models but the heritage is the same — solid, reliable and proven performers. Montesa's 250 enduro was a highlight for about two seasons, winning many major events. But the pace of



Above and far left: Rugged country around Broken Hill offered exceptionally demanding terrain for the Montesa. All it did was drive like a train — as well in the rock-strewn loose red dirt as in the crusty, treacherous claypan.

Left: The Montesa has the most torque over the widest rev range of all the Unlimited enduro bikes. This means simply that it doesn't have to be piloted WFO to be enjoyed.



"It is a bike which requires concentration initially because it takes the rider into rapid motion at low revs and can easily suck you into turns too hot, thinking it's not quite that fast. It will tackle enduros easily as well as cater for the full range of road/trail riders with its registration okay".

top-level competition has put them in limbo here for the past couple of seasons.

Not any more!

From the drawing board and seat-of-the-pants riding experience, and from the rugged and successful VA/VB motocrosser, Montesa engineers have come up with the newest Unlimited class enduro machine, the 360 H6 — and Montesa is really back in business.

The new Open class big-bore is a strong

contender for the best all-round big-bore on the market. It matches the top competition in performance and in terms of all-round rideability it is unmatched. It also falls right into contention as a buyer's machine because the price at \$1895 is only \$115 more than the Yamaha IT400F.

Another factor worth weighing in buying decisions is that the Montesa importers, Lyall O'Brien Motorcycles in downtown Geelong, carries more than \$100,000 of

spare parts. There is everything instantly available to build a bike up from parts. That is one major advantage some Europeans still hold over the Japanese machines, where spare parts can become an embarrassing situation for new models.

Not that we would expect 360 owners to need buckets of parts. The two 360s we have seen, ridden and used in the ADR compliance testing are as reliable and rugged as any enduro bike we've tested. It's just nice to know that if anything does happen (like hitting a horse) everything is there.

### Lotsa new tricks

One long look at the beautiful Monty and an observer can see it is *different*. Light and lithe. But the Montesa 360 H6 is functional and purposeful — the design says it means serious dirt riding. Yet one major factor to consider is that despite the competitive nature of the 360 it is fully ADR approved and registerable in all states and even okay for the road (if you must).

Somebody who has been into serious enduro riding has helped design parts of the new bike. For example the 360 uses a number of rubber straps and hooks to hold things in and on — innovative little rubber straps with handgrips for quick, easy release without using any tools. The seat, tank and air cleaner element are all attached by these straps. One can also remove the short, thick alloy gearlever and the countershaft sprocket without any tools! Both have rubber-endorsed springs set behind them on the splined shaft. Pressing in either the countershaft sprocket or the gearlever clears the thick retaining circlip and offers easy access to change things. Simple, effective and foolproof as there is more than enough pressure to ensure the circlip will not work off.

The quickly hand detachable items such as the tank, seat and such mean more to the competitive enduro rider than the serious trail rider but either way it shows the care and thought which has gone into the 360.

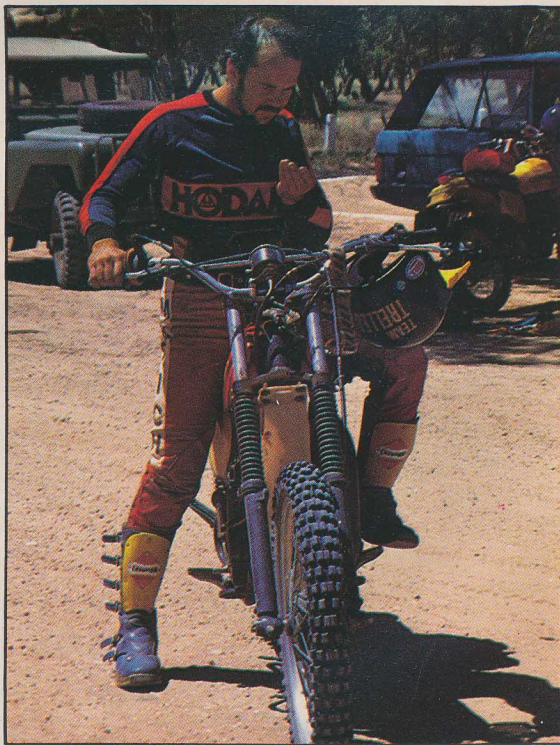
The bike has a basic toolkit under the seat, large speedo, full lighting with integrated one-piece surround and number nacelle, pillion footpegs, a centrestand and high pipe. And for those who may wonder about the 360 motocrosser's four-speed gearbox — the H6 gets a full six speeds in the narrow cases and this means an amazing gear-spread from the torquiest engine in endurodom! The engine and the frame on the H6 enduro are virtually identical to the current motocross model.

The engine: The Bull Terrier of the scene. It just doesn't stop and it has no easily definable power range. It pulls like a Mack truck from 2000 rpm and there is little reason to ride in the upper rev range. The power characteristics of the Monty give it a different nature and it requires a change in riding style, an adjustment, to make the most of it.

The effect of the base of enormous torque is that there is never a *rush*; never any sudden burst. It is all unruffled power which sucks the inexperienced into thinking the Montesa isn't fast because there is rarely need to change gears at corners where it's two gears down for most bikes. The Monty



*We played damned hard on the Montesa — but without a happy ending. The spectacular finale involved a collision with a horse. Result? Surprisingly little damage all round considering speeds at impact — and unplanned proof of the unbreakability of both beast and bike.*



cope comfortably with only one change — if any!

### It'll torque your arm off!

There is such a depth of pulling power that the Montesa 360 engine is simply superb — the best. Yet the engine, which started life as a four-speed motocross power-plant (and the engineers wanted to use only three gears) is a basic piston-port two-stroke. The oversquare 83.4 × 64 mm bore and stroke give a neat 349 cm<sup>3</sup> which means the H6 can be entered in the 350 class into those one and two-day events which follow the full FIM classifications.

The most significant part of the engine lies in its massive strength. The crank spins in huge roller mains, a large rod has caged roller big end bearing and needle roller at the small end. The piston is a two-ring variety, the top one a Dykes-type. All porting is aimed at producing useable power from medium-low through mid-range. There's two medium-size transfers with a large single exhaust port; a booster port which operates in conjunction with a port in the piston for scavenging, plus the large, scooped inlet port.

A long inlet manifold connects to a 36 mm Bing. Lubrication is by mixing quality oil such as Bel-Ray or Castrol at 30 or 35:1. Montesa has done away with the uncommon crankshaft mounted clutch which appeared on the first 360 VA motocrosser but has retained the separate compartments for the clutch/primary drive/selector mechanism and the gearbox itself. This means heavier oil in the gearbox and lighter stuff in the clutch.

The clutch is unique; a robust 17-plate metal-to-metal unit which is apparently indestructible. The long take-up, good leverage and soft action make it one of the best in the whole scene. However the Montesa still lacks in-gear starting. It can be tricky on mountain slopes when facing the wrong side and it can be especially troublesome to short riders with the high seat. The new 360 requires a 950 mm straddle to touch the ground while the IT400F is down at 900 mm. But that's because the Montesa has the full current motocross frame.

Ignition is Motoplate CDI from a crankshaft alternator. There is a lot of mass in the flywheels and this helps towards the 360's plugging, lumpy power under tight, slow, low throttle going. It doesn't stall very often.

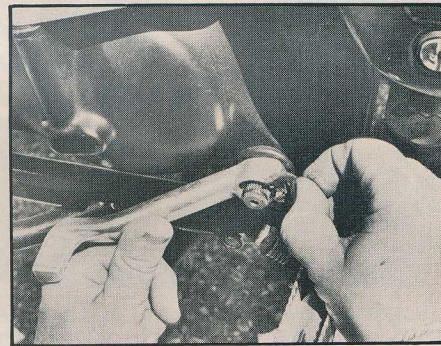
Another factor in the efficient range of torque from the Montesa engine is the "up" pipe. Most small manufacturers avoid the expensive tooling necessary on the 360's pipe. The Montesa has fully stamped sections with a long-waisted header leading to large "L" shaped chamber running through the frame, over the air box, tapering to a large diameter pipe and culminating in a flat, rectangular section silencer. It's a torque formula pipe. It's also strong and well-made.

The famous crinkle-cut head and barrel remain — ideal for cooling. A separate two-piece Y-section alloy brace runs from the frame to the head. The odd kick start arrangement still remains. The lever is on the right side and folds forward towards the forks, well out of the way. To reach it while



*Left: The Montesa's in-line forks have air caps and soft springs allowing for full range of adjustment. Note engine case protective loops on frame. The up pipe is strong with excellent stampings. Frame is full cradle large diameter chrome moly — also strong. Neat equipment includes headlight guard/number plate nacelle.*

*Below: Neat Montesa tricks: Pressure against spring-loaded gearbox sprocket releases the circlip and the change becomes a one-finger job! It's a quick-change gearlever too, although it's unlikely the solid alloy lever will break easily.*



seated one needs to lean forward, lock the upper part into position, then bring it back until it can nestle into your instep.

Sharp kicks are needed and it is awkward, but thankfully the Montesa proved the easiest-starting big-bore we have tested for a while. The best technique when cold was to stand by the bike and kick with the left leg. Three to four kicks when cold.

The overall width of the engine is 305 mm, making it one of the narrowest. Yet inside the alloy cases are six new wide-ratio gears, all strong with the heavy-duty, shifter mechanism below the layshaft. First is a stump pulling 25.4:1 (the IT400F is 21.7) with even jumps through the remaining five gears to sixth at 6.8:1, providing a top speed of around 150 km/h actual! Whether such a torquey engine needs six gears is debatable but as it comes the H6 can be potted through tight, treed sections at trials speeds and still blast into the 150 km/h region on

faster trails. And that makes it a very easy bike to live with.

### Frame and suspension

A production frame dedicated to strength and lightness can't quite do both in the enduro/serious trail school. In fact even in motocross there can be problems with frames that are too light. Montesa has stuck with reliability and strength in the motocrossers and the H6 enduro gets the same frame. It is chrome-moly tubing of "medium" diameter. Because it's slightly larger than some others it weighs just that little more which explains why the Monty is heavier than its lithe looks imply. Dry weight is around 108 kilograms — still about seven kilos less than the IT400F.

The frame is a full double cradle design, well triangulated and gusseted where needed. It doesn't flex; nor does the massive oval-section swingarm. Neat detail includes

**"The Montesa matches the top competition in performance and is unmatched in rideability. All this from a rocket which is both registerable and extremely competitively priced!"**

"The new engine is pure Bull Terrier: it operates from a base of enormous torque and its smooth, pulling performance is simply superb — the best. It is all unruffled power which sucks the inexperienced into thinking the Montesa isn't fast".

two loops from each side of the lower cradle frame tubes which act as engine protectors in place of a full bash-plate.

The air box sits between the rear units and the rear upper frame loops. The toolkit sits on the top and the air entry is behind this platform. Access to the Twin Air double layer filter is by removing the left-hand side-cover. Rubber straps hold the filter in place.

Like the IT400F, there is a need to take special sealing precautions when fitting the air filter and also in replacing the side-

covers. The filter is fine, it's around the cover's edges that problems will eventuate.

Suspension is not full house motocross but the factory has the forks built by Betor to its own design and specs. The forks have 35 mm legs with in-line axle and not the in-vogue leading axle. The company claims experience has shown that for steering precision in enduros the in-line axle is superior. The forks have coil springs and two-way oil damping and, for 1979, air caps and improved seals. The springs are soft to allow for a

range of air pressure to suit rider's weight and riding style. Full rubber gaiters protect the legs from mud and grit. Travel is a healthy but not spectacular 200 mm.

The rear features the motocross LTR with the Telesco gas/oil units (no reservoir) mounted well forward of the axle, more than half-way down the 508 mm long swingarm. The upper mounting position just rear of the air box gives an angle of around 40 degrees.

The springs proved far too soft for our riding and for everyone who rode the bike. In addition, the damping rate of the Telescos is also suspect, especially under faster desert riding. If Montesa doesn't change them we suggest the Fox Air Shox will add another dimension to an already-sound bike. As is stocko the bike still handled well enough to race despite the bottoming out of the rear end. Rear wheel travel is 220 mm.

The wheels use the thicker (by 2 mm) Akront alloy shoulderless rims. The beautiful alloy hubs are the same — conical at the front and half-width at the rear. The lace pattern runs each spoke across three spokes in a strong pattern. Tyres are the latest Pirelli knobby ones which are a long way from their reputation of the past — good tyres these now. Not in the same class as Trelleborgs but certainly not the same price either.

The front brake is progressive; not as touchy as the Yamaha but providing excellent stops under all conditions without any twitchy lock-up. The rear is not fully floating and on LTR bikes it should be. It gets chattery on downhills and under hard-charging conditions can be locked up over large suspension changes, particularly when it's needed approaching corners and the like. The rear wheel is "semi-quick" release and chain adjustment is by snail cam.

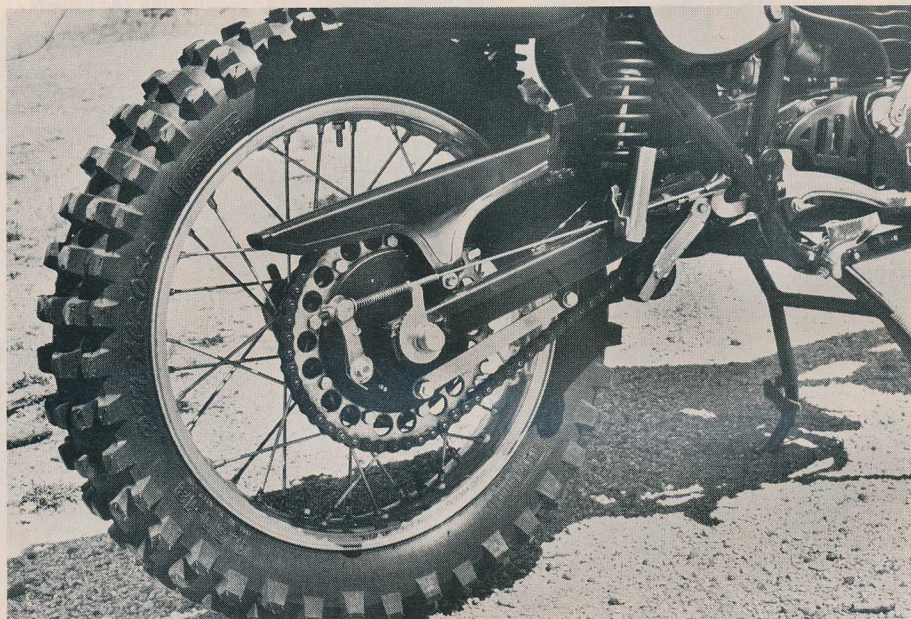
The firm, narrow seat is more comfortable for experienced riders. Montesa's quite reasonable demand is that those who have had a softy life will have to toughen up for long rides. It's high too, but the narrow seat profile makes it seem lower. The 9.8-litre tank fits evenly into the bike and allows for rider movement from seat to tank in tight cornering situations where one has to drive the front into the turn with weight.

Controls are alloy, but not the large indent Magura-style and owners will no doubt change to the Magura at some stage. The throttle is a semi-slow action and again the faster riders will go for one of the new "Gunnar Gassar" right-angled quick action throttles for sharper response.

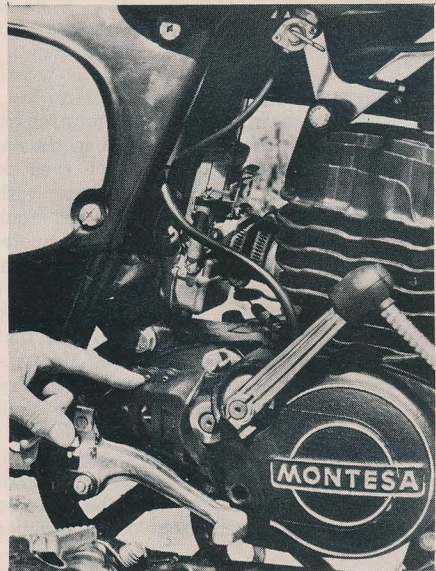
### The ride

Riding position is comfortable. The bars are wide but can be cut to suit. The foot-pegs, high by anyone's standard (515 mm to the IT400F's 370 mm), mean that the folding pegs are well out of harm's way but the position requires a slightly more bent leg position. However the bike is still comfortable over long periods. Standing position is average; one is fairly high over the tank and must lean forward to get a good balanced feel. The advantage for enduro riders is that one rides with straight legs and good lean, taking shocks on the shoulders and

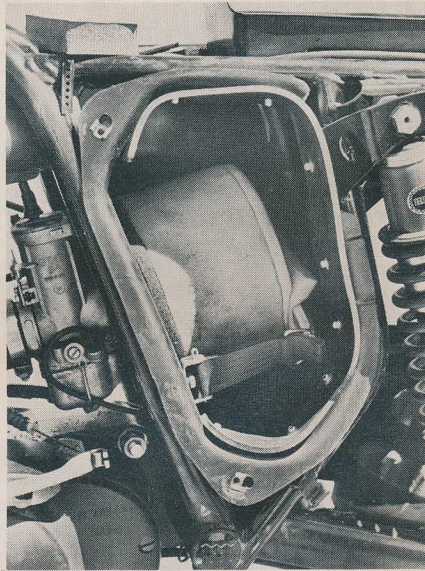
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Superb swing-arm just doesn't flex. Chain tensioner operates well and full length guard stops mud being flung onto chain. New Pirelli tyres are fine. Centrestand is another good point.



Rubber sprocket guard pulls off to get at sprocket. Kick start lever is well out of the way but requires long legs or trick technique to get at and use.



Rubber tabs hold on the Twin Air foam air filter. Box breathes from top of case but care must be exercised to ensure the sidecover is a waterproof fit.

# Montesa 360H6

## ENGINE

Single-cylinder, air-cooled two-stroke. Piston port controlled induction. Pressed-in iron liner, alloy cylinder and head. Two-ring piston with needle roller small end bearing, caged roller bearing big end. Pressed and pinned crankshaft with full circle flywheels, two large roller mains. Lubrication by petrol and oil mixture.

Claimed power	28.4 kW at 8000 rpm
Claimed torque	44.8 Nm at 6000 rpm
Bore × stroke	83.4 × 64 mm
Displacement	349 cm <sup>3</sup>
Compression ratio	12:1
Maximum engine speed	8000 rpm
Carburetion	1 × 36 mm Bing
Air filtration	Washable, double layer, oil foam
Ignition	Motoplát CDI

## TRANSMISSION

Straight-cut primary gear to wet oil bath clutch (17 plates, all metal). Six-speed wide ratio gearbox. Left side change, one down and five up. Final drive by single roller chain No. 520.

Ratios (overall) and speeds at redline:

First	25.44	(39 km/h)
Second	17.11	(58 km/h)
Third	12.72	(80 km/h)
Fourth	9.97	(102 km/h)
Fifth	8.36	(124 km/h)
Sixth	6.89	(154 km/h)

Primary reduction: 2.65 (20/53)

Secondary reduction: 4.00 (12/48)

## FRAME AND BRAKES

Tubular, welded chrome moly full double cradle frame, oval section swingarm with bronze bushes. Betor oil-damped hydraulically controlled coil spring/air forks. Long travel rear suspension with Telesco gas/oil damper units and external springs. Adjustable for spring pre-load only, 130 mm drum brake at front and 150 mm drum brake at rear.

Front suspension travel	200 mm
Rear suspension wheel travel	220 mm
Fork rake	30 degrees
Fork trail	120 mm
Front brake diameter	130 mm drum s/s
Rear brake diameter	150 mm drum s/s
Front tyre	3.00 × 21 Pirelli
Rear tyre	4.00 × 18 Pirelli

## DIMENSIONS

Dry weight	107.5 kg
Seat height, bike unloaded	950 mm
Wheelbase	1425 mm
Ground clearance	275 mm
Footpeg width	480 mm
Footpeg height	515 mm
Fuel capacity (inc reserve)	9.8 litres

## PERFORMANCE

Standing start 400 metres	14.9 secs at 148 km/h
Zero to 60 km/h	3.3 secs
Zero to 100 km/h	8 secs
Maximum speed	152 km/h
Braking from 100 km/h	38.6 metres
Braking from 60 km/h	7.8 metres
Dirt fuel consumption (average)	10.4 km/l

## TEST MACHINE

Manufacturer	Montesa, Barcelona, Spain
Test machine	Lyall O'Brien Motorcycles, Pakington St, Geelong, Vic.
Price	\$1895

## SUMMARY

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Outstanding
<b>RATINGS</b>					
<b>ENGINE</b>					
Responsiveness			●		
Smoothness			●		
Low rev power					●
Midrange power				●	
Top end power			●		
Fuel economy					
Starting				●	
Quietness				●	
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>					
Clutch				●	
Gearbox operation				●	
Ratio suitability				●	
Drivetrain freerplay				●	
<b>SUSPENSION</b>					
Front			●		
Rear	●				
Front/rear match			●		
<b>DIRT RIDING</b>					
Ground clearance				●	
Steering (overall)			●		
Braking on dirt				●	
Sliding			●		
Jumping			●		
Hillclimbing				●	
Slow, nadtgery work				●	
Ease of throwing around				●	
Ability to forgive rider error			●		
<b>STREET RIDING</b>					
Riding position			●		
Seat comfort		●			
Ride comfort			●		
Highest cruising speed				●	
Touring range				●	
Street handling (overall)			●		
Stability at speed				●	
Braking on tar				●	
Tyres				●	
Pillioning				●	
<b>GENERAL</b>					
Location of controls			●		
Lighting			●		
Rearview mirrors			●		
Horn			●		
Toolkit			●		
Quality of finish				●	
Overall styling				●	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>					
					●

**Best points:** Easy starting combined with widest useable spread of power, huge torque; clean jetting all the way. Well thought out design; tough, rugged, robust engine and frame. Everyman's brakes; a bike totally capable of fitting into all forms of dirt riding and yet fully ADR'd. Fast at the top end yet with trials-type plonk at the bottom. Good balance and light front end.

**Worst points:** The soft to woeful rear units which limit overall performance. The need to know how to dial-in the front forks. The "iffy" steering at times and the understeer characteristics in standard form. Tank capacity too small for some longer rides.



# Montesa 360H6

Continued from page 14

arms and this means long periods of standing will not tire the legs. Probably the best stance, all things considered, but also the least used.

The forks can be dialled in well and with air pressure adjustment and correct oil weight, can be honed to work just fine. Even with the rear end wavering and bottoming the bike could be raced in tough competition. It will be superb with the Fox Air Shox and firmer forks for the WFO brigade. Vibration from the big single is felt through the bars at speeds in excess of 110 km/h but it's less than on the IT400F and KTM 400 and on a par with the Maico 400.

The beauty of the big 360 is that there is never any need to fish around for the right gear to Make It. Just leave the Monty in whatever gear, dial it on and Away You Go. The narrow feel of the Montesa and the inherent balance make it a feet-up bike and by not worrying about rapid gear shifts a rider can concentrate on the terrain and the corners.

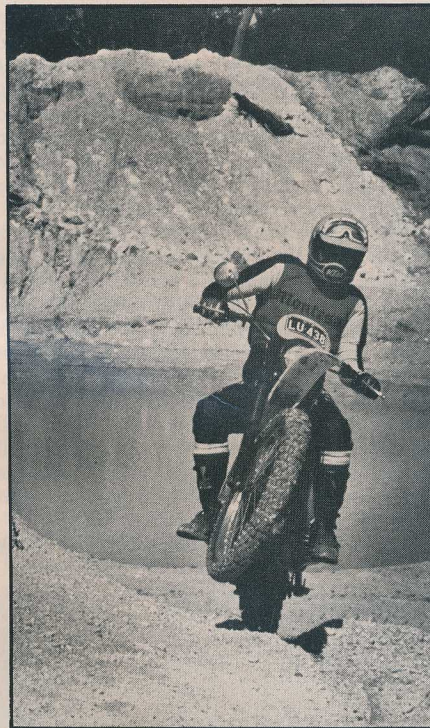
And concentration is most necessary as the bike drives much better than most riders expect. Not in the same league as the new Husky 390 but not far behind. There is little point in revving this enduro bike as it will just dig in; by shortshifting in a small band above 4000 rpm the effect is like a giant catapult.

The bike's super traction ability combined with the light front end and the slow steering head angle offers interesting variations. In sand the bike needs heaps of power and lots of weight on the front or it will understeer into the trees. Ouch! In loamy forest the bike can corner tight on a steady to trailing throttle and power out with the front lifting easily, even in muddy conditions. The steering is accurate under most conditions.

The soft rear end made it difficult to assess the 360 precisely at racing speeds but it will be very competitive when fitted with alternate shocks. The in-line forks mean there is some wavering over desert whoopdis at speed but with the light front end we found one could loft the front to pace it out — but then get clobbered by the bottoming

rear end! It was uncomfortable at times yet we never had any real "moments" and again it showed the basic stability and strength of the 360. It is the sort of bike we would buy if contemplating racing enduros on a privateer level or if we wanted a serious fun trail bike to just use and leave until next ride.

Gear changes require solid boot movement but can be made with or without the clutch. There is so much bite at times that we had to learn to leave the bike in a much higher gear than normal. As the front end lightened under drive as the power was applied halfway round a sweeper the steering became very fast. Yep, the Montesa requires a technique to ride and yet it is also simple and easy to motor along. In hill country or tight, mean sections it is among the easiest of the big-bores to ride rapidly.



*Montesa is fully ADR'd, even comes with pillion pegs but is also serious Gold Medal runner in Open Enduros. It's the first real European all terrain challenge we've seen.*

The H6 does not have the neck-snapping-off-the-mark reactions of the IT400F or the KTM 400 but it doesn't have the hair trigger these bikes come with either. And at the top end with standard gearing it is just as fast. But the Montesa doesn't tire the rider or expect every owner to be an expert. It handles all trail conditions with ease and will make gold medalists of the serious but not so talented who have been silver medalists on other big-bores.

It is a bike which requires concentration initially and then takes the rider into the rapid motion at lower revs and can easily suck a person into turns hot, thinking it is not going quite that fast. It will tackle enduros, serious trail stuff and even the quiet pillion putt through the bush.

A rubber countershaft sprocket guard, full length chain guard, rugged chain tensioner and separate guide, good, solid alloy brake and gearlevers, semi-unbreakable white plastic guards (front could be wider for better mud catching) and speedo, plus working lights, all add up to a bike which can be raced or just ridden.

We managed between 8.1 and 11.1 km/litre during the testing. Don't bet on any more than 85 km on a tank if you are Going For It with the boys.

## Conclusions

In summing up the 360H6 we can say it represents an impressive alternative in big-bore enduros. It has strength, light weight, an exceptional engine and fine detailing; is less costly than most bikes and has the credentials to not only win events, but also cater to the wide range of road/trail riders with its registration okay. And it shapes up super reliable and long-lasting. There's also impressive spares back-up.

Sure the H6 is not perfect. The rubber straps may need replacing each season and the rear suspension is not worth having when you buy it. And the steering is iffy in some circumstances. Perhaps you'll also need a bigger tank if you are into long rides with your mates. None of that's major surgery.

The Montesa gets our vote as the broadly best and most sensible (it's registerable!) of the breed on the open market right now.

It's got heart; it won't short-change anyone! Don't underestimate the H6 and don't ignore it when buying time comes round!



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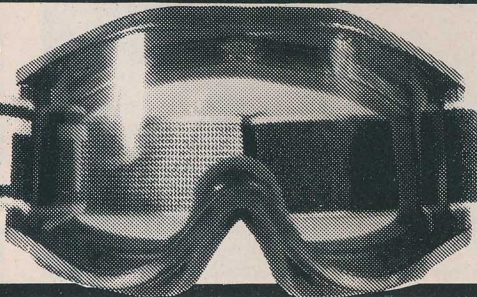
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