



Marty Smith's 125 National Championship Honda Elsinore

By Brad Zimmerman

Just about every kid who owns a 125 Elsinore has heard the name Marty Smith. He won the 125 National Championship on a Honda Elsinore, and ever since racers have been emptying local stores of red paint, trying to get their bikes to look like those from the factory works warehouse.

We thought it would be kind of neat to get a look at Marty Smith's bike. Traveling down to American Honda in Gardena, Calif., we sought out the Racing Department building, got out the telephoto lenses and waited. After peeping out from behind corners and hiding behind some bushes, we weren't getting very far. After we were caught, the guys in the shop were nice enough to wheel the bike out against a wall for a better look. We traded a few issues of *Popular Cycling* and some T-shirts for a bit of information.

First off, let's get one thing perfectly clear. What you are seeing on these pages is not the Honda Elsinore you can buy at the local dealer. Really burst your little bubble of hope, didn't we? But the bike does have some trick parts that you can purchase.

Starting with basics, the frame is a Honda Japanese effort, and was directly shipped from over there to over here especially for Marty. It is very similar to the frames that C&J is working on with American Honda. It's a single down cradle, splitting into two downtubes to allow the upswept pipe through. Ground clearance is slightly higher, due to the absence of the pipe, although we suspect that with a little eyeball measurement you'll find that it's higher than your Elsinore without the pipe.

The pipe itself is a combined effort of the Japanese factory, American Honda and Donny Emler of the Flying Machine

Factory. This you can buy. Emler sells 'em. It snakes up over the cylinder head, around the airbox, and exits out the rear of the fender. There is no stinger sticking past the front of the back tire. It's an extremely short unit, and only extends to the end of the airbox. We peeked inside and it looked as though you could fit a Yamaha monoshock airbox in with the upswept pipe and everyone would be cozy. We're going to try it in a couple of issues.

Enginewise, there is very little that the average privateer can buy. The gears are similar to those that we featured in last month's article with Cycle Products West. It's still a six-speed with the cut gears, but Honda uses some very exotic metals to keep them churning longer, and at the same time, lighter.

The cylinder is trick, porting wise. Although the friendly guys at American Honda wouldn't say what was inside, a little bird gave us a hint. Somewhere inside that engine is a reed valve system that appears to take the incoming fuel mixture and route it through the transfer ports first. Your normal Elsinore won't do this without extensive research and modifications. The piston isn't stock, but made out of lighter and stronger alloys. The only item in the top end that you could yank out of your bike and put into Marty's is the set of piston pin clips. After that, things change.

Moving on to the clutch, you'll notice in the photos that the center cases are designed differently around it. Although there is a vacant space in there now, we have our suspicions. The same little bird told us that American Honda is toying with the idea of running a fuel injection system off the clutch. This coupled with the reed valve setup mentioned earlier, would turn your 125 Elsinore into a good competitor in the open class. Whether Honda goes to this type of research work or not, we couldn't say. But the cases are already matched and designed for such a modification.

Getting back to the porting, you can have something very similar. The Flying Machine Factory builds the upswept pipe, airbox, head, and ports the cylinder for the bike that Smith rides in the local CMC races. Although it isn't as fast as his red frame number, it's definitely more power than any of us mortals could ever leash. Besides, we can get it done now, and not have to wait for a factory ride.

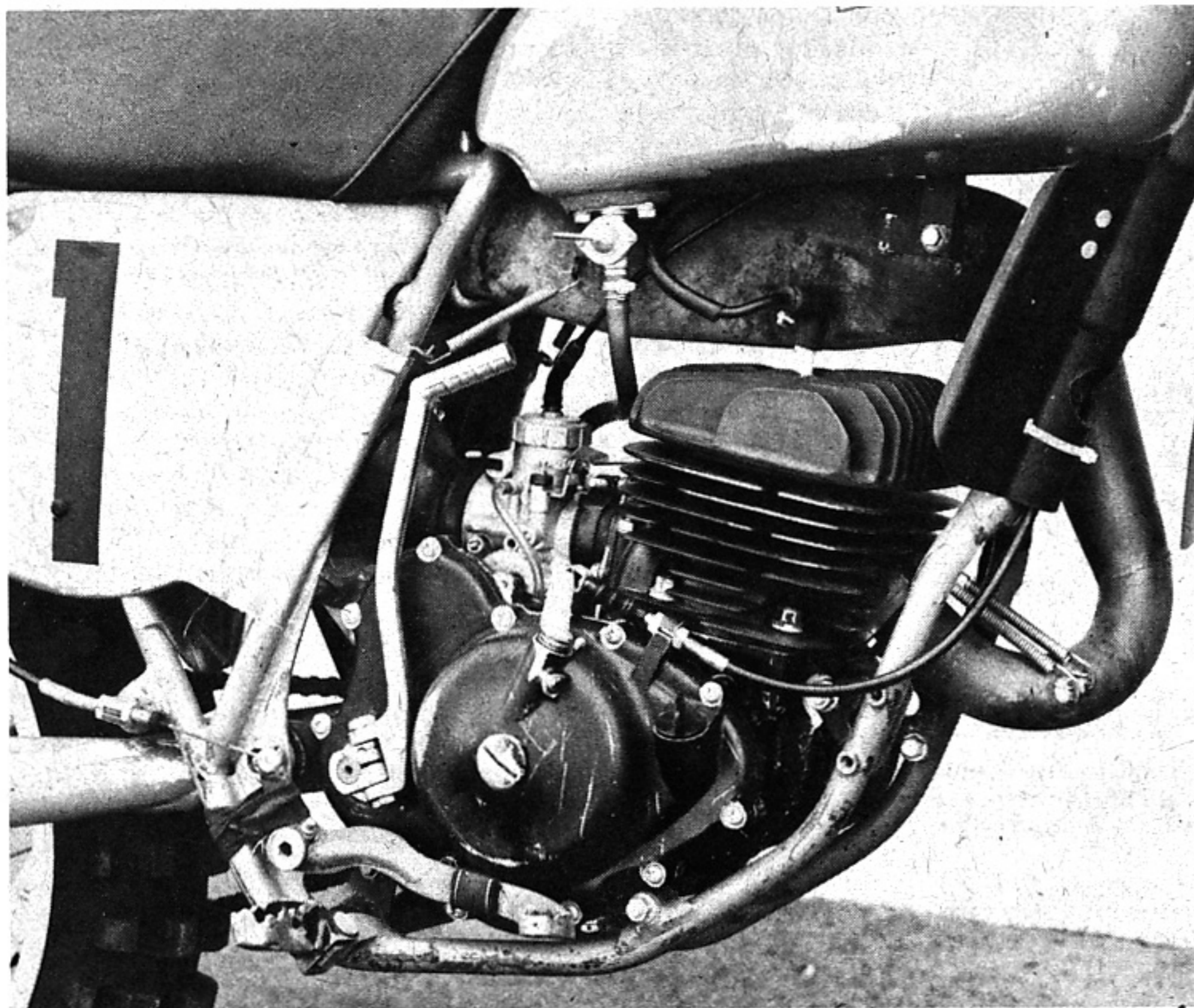
Carburetion is by way of a 32mm Mikuni, which you can pick up just about anywhere. The only difference might be in the fact that Smith's bike probably has the chromed cylinder and slide. Once again, with a little money and some patience, you can have that too.

Ignition is through a CDI unit, much like the stocker, but Marty's is putting out much more juice. The spark plug is a Champion, nothing exotic (well maybe), it's a gold palladium—but who's counting? Shift lever, brake pedal, and rubber carb mounting tubes are all transferable from his bike to yours.

The gas tank can be different for each race, depending on the length of each moto. The assortment runs anywhere from a 1.6-gallon job for the shorter motos, to a full two-gallon unit for those 45-minute jaunts. Both the gas cap and the Honda wings decal are stock (big deal). You could probably get a tank that's similar from one of the many plastic manufacturers around today. Just paint it red and put the stock Honda petcock on the right-hand side.

Although the front forks are factory jobs, they are quite similar to stock. For instance, they are not gas-filled like many folks would have you believe. They still work on the old spring theory. The boot covers can be found at any Maico dealer, and the foam rubber fork protectors are available from Jones Motocross Products. Number One Trickit is now working on a fork kit for the 125 Elsinore that should bring your travel and plushness right up to what Marty has. We'll keep you posted.

The front tire measures out to a 3.00x21 Trelleborg four-ply unit. This also can be taken off the dealer's shelf. The rims appear stock, as do the brakes. Upon closer inspection, you will find that the brake hubs are of rougher cast, and made out of magnesium. Although they are of almost the same dimensions and outer diameters as the stock Elsinore brakes, you can sleep



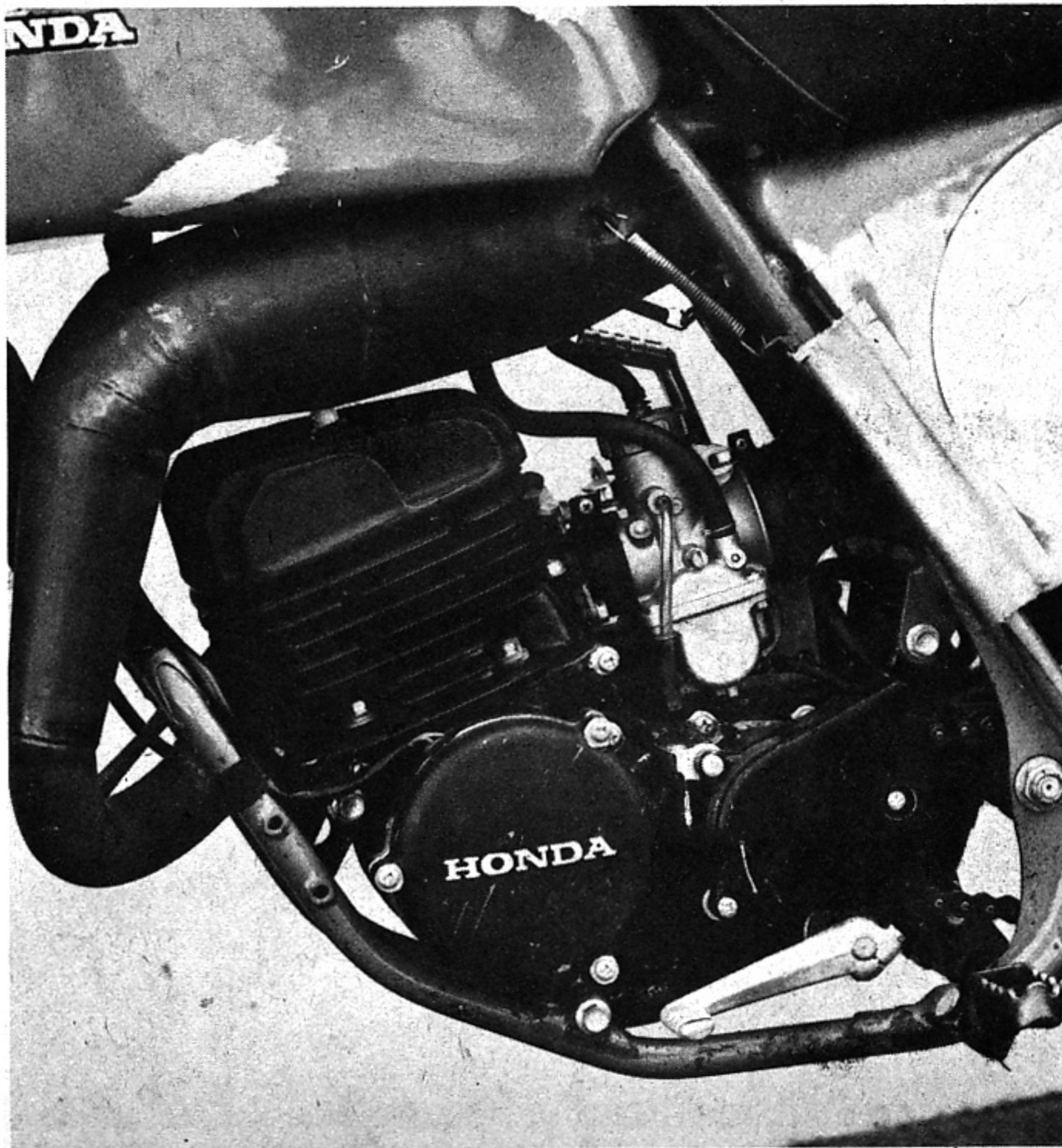
Mysterious bulge in clutch side case is for fuel injection system. Frame is a split downtube cradle, allowing upswept pipe to slip through.

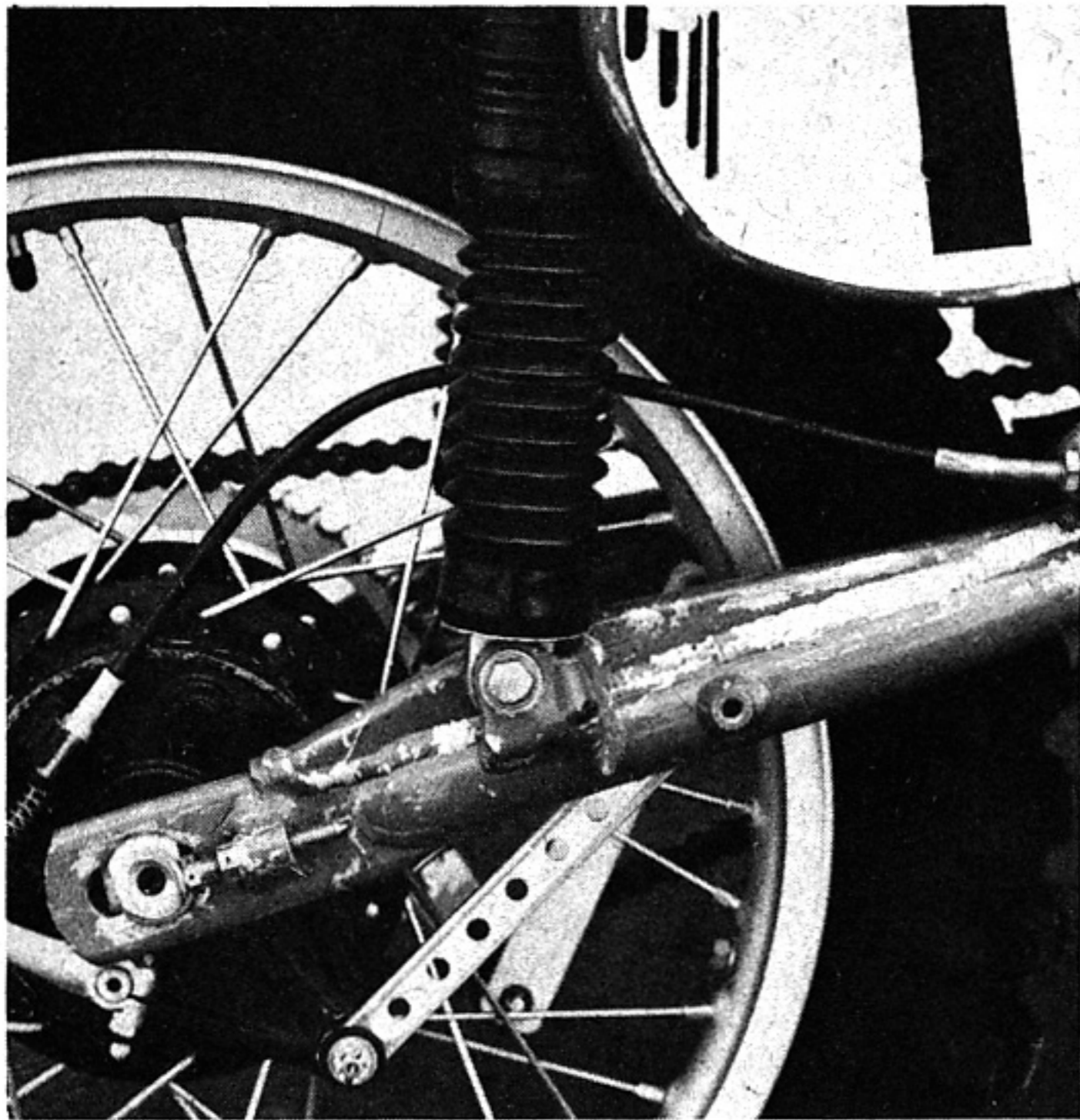
TAKE A GOOD LONG LOOK, BUT DON'T DROOL ON THE PAGES.



Forks are conventional spring jobs, but are turned down and protected by Jones Motocross Products fork protectors.

The pipe snakes through the left-hand side of engine. Notice different side case over electricals and AMA-approved chain cover.





Rear brake cable setup is different from stock, swing arm is lighter and stronger, hubs are magnesium and shocks are gas filled.

Here's the 125 Honda that everyone wants, but only one guy has. Don't drool on the magazine please.

well knowing that Marty's bike will stop better than most. A little internal trickery on the shoes is the secret.

The seat has more padding, and is lighter than the stock unit. It probably has a fiberglass or plastic base, although we don't know for sure because our wrenching hands aren't fast enough to slip it off without anyone seeing. It mounts similar to the stocker, being held in front by the frame and bolted to two bolts in the rear.

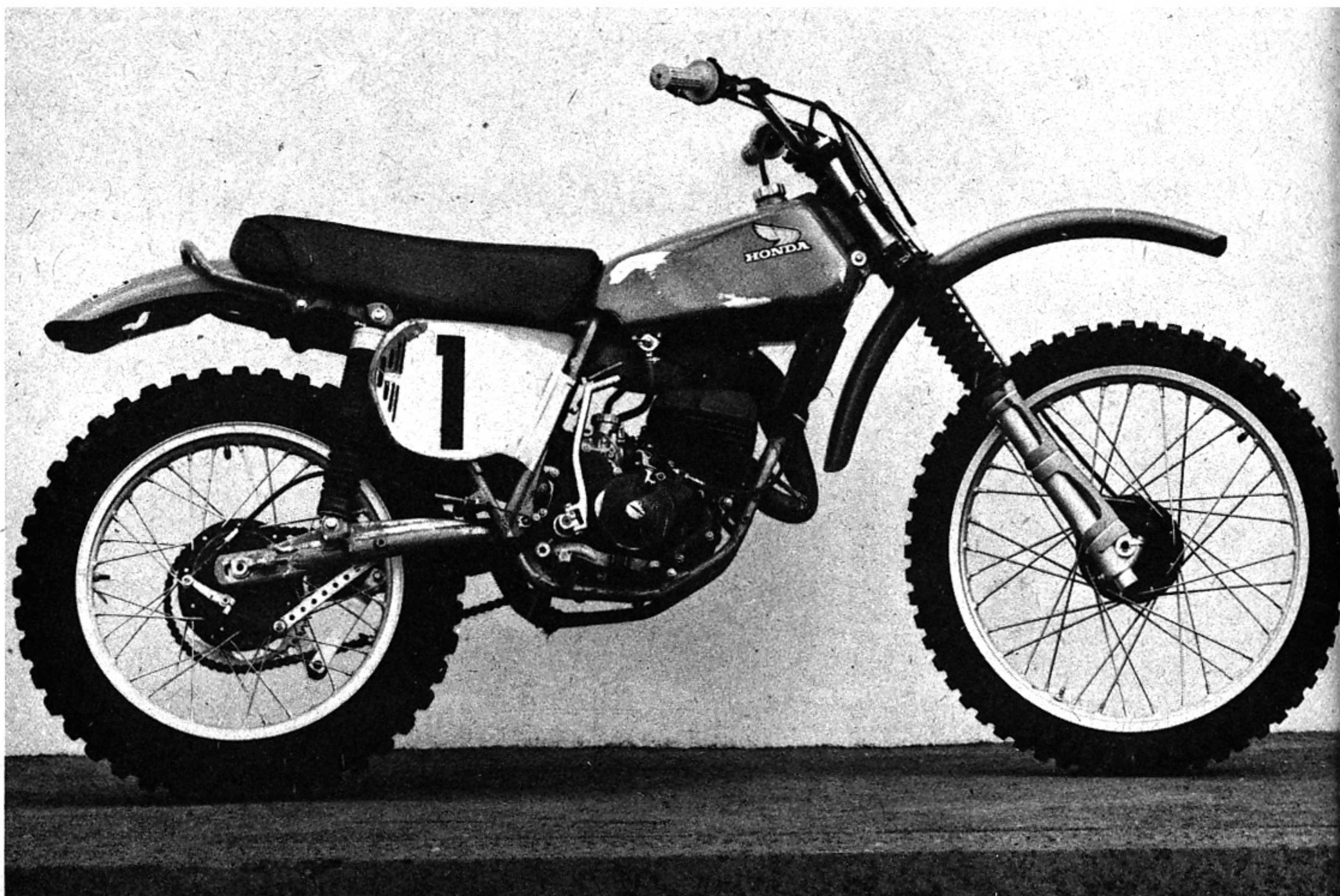
Both front and rear fenders are Honda factory items and not available to the public. They're made of plastic, the front looks very similar to a Preston Petty, and the rear is close to a Bultaco fender but slightly slimmed down. There were no mud flaps on either fender when we saw the machine, although there is that little plastic protective guard on the frame just in front of the engine. This was supposed to come on the stock bikes last year, but it never appeared, even though there are holes drilled in the frame so it can slip right on. With a little arm-bending you might get your local Honda dealer to yank one free from Honda.

The rear shocks are moved up, the top about four inches, the bottom about 3.5 inches. We didn't get exact dimensions because the factory frame differs a lot from the stocker. The shocks are gas-filled, with little nozzles on each to regulate the amount of gas in each unit.

The back brake is the same as the front—magnesium but with better stopping power. The rear tire on the bike is a 3.50x18 Bridgestone, same as stock. Occasionally they run the 4.10x18 Dunlop Sport Seniors for those gnarlier tracks.

Both wheels are laced up very intricately. The front consists of a cross-four pattern and the rear is strange too. Bucannan's Frame Shop does a lot of wheel-lacing and truing, and they have done some of the wheels for Honda in the past. They can do a little number for you too, probably for under 20 bucks.

The gearing on the bike changes from track to track, but



Marty prefers the 15-52 setup. The most that he varies from this is to substitute either a 51- or a 53-tooth rear sprocket. He likes his geared down a bit. Oil in the gearbox is Pennzoil. The gas tank gets a shot of Pennzoil two-cycle racing oil mixed with premium-type gas.

Although Smith's bike is very trick, there are a lot of ways that you can take your own 125 Elsinore and get it quite similar. The only place where you might get stuck would be on the gas-filled shocks, reed valve, fuel injection and the exact same shade of red paint. C&J is working with the frames, Emler ports engines and builds upswept pipes. Bucannan will lace up the wheels and you can buy similar fenders. Magnesium brake hubs can be had, but you'd better be rich.

Overall the machine sounds ultra-light. You would think that with all that magnesium hardware on it, you'd have to tie it down in the pits to keep it from floating away. A little trip to the official *Pop Cycle* scales told us that the machine's weight is 178 lbs. Considering that your stock Elsinore is right around the 180 mark, give or take a pound, Smith's Elsinore doesn't really have an advantage in weight. The minimum weight limit for a 125 in professional AMA racing is 176 lbs.

What Honda has done is to reduce the unsprung weight of the bike, concentrating on wheels, swing arm, brakes and lower fork tubes. We suspect that the frame is exceptionally sturdy, compensating for the light weight and keeping the AMA ref happy.

If you're so inclined, tack this article up on the wall of your garage. See how close you can come to Marty Smith's number one Honda. You can buy a lot of parts that are very similar for the most part, and will do what the average rider expects, plus a little more. Now comes the part that is a real bummer: You've got to beat Marty for that number on his plate!



Tank sizes range from 1.6 to two gallons. Bars are nothing special, levers are stock and you can buy the cables and grips anywhere.

Overall view of the 125 shows custom fenders that you could probably match without too much difficulty. The engine and frame would be hard to find though.

