

DIRT BIKE SHOOTOUT

We first saw it as we pulled into the pits at a local motocross track. A long line of excited and impatient riders and spectators had formed to subject the thing to a really close examination. We waited until the crowd thinned out and

then wandered over to have a look for ourselves. Wow! Modern technology and design features have finally been applied to a device of vital importance to all racing motorcyclists and race fans.

Our immediate reaction was to

arrange for an exclusive test of this exciting new unit. After giving the idea a little thought, we decided that it was much more logical to conduct a comparison test. After all, the old standard unit has stood the test of time and it has certain



The rustic facade on the new unit seems to be nothing more than a feeble attempt to mimic the more traditional design.

HEADS: Head-to-Head

by **GORDON KARREL**

Modern Plastic vs. Good Wood

features that all users have found invaluable. Yes, a comparison test seemed to be the only fair way to evaluate the new unit.

From a distance the resemblance between the two units is quite pronounced; however, as you draw closer, it becomes quite obvious that the newcomer is considerably the smaller of the two. Whoever is responsible for the dimensions of the original unit conceived a brilliant and classic design. However, within parameters, a great deal of latitude can be applied to the design of this sort of thing. There's absolutely nothing wrong with reducing the overall dimensions, but, it's important for the designers to remember that as internal capacity is reduced, facilities for breathing must be increased. Adequate ventilation, particularly on hot, humid days, is of vital importance.

Traditionally, the older unit comes with a front step as standard equipment. This gives the device a long base. And the step is not even available as an option on the new unit; it rests on a considerably smaller base. This small base coupled with the overall lightness of the unit can cause some problems for the user. In strong winds the plastic side panels tend to vibrate. When really heavy, gusting winds hit the unit it will actually rock slightly. Needless to say, both the vibration and the rocking motion seriously distract the user.

One of the advantages of the plastic side panels on the new unit, other than lightness, is the fact that they are translucent. On a gray, overcast day, the interior of the new unit is much more pleasant than that of the old standard. Conversely, on a really cold race morning the interior of the older unit is more comfortable. Everything in design is something of a compromise. While the plywood construction is admittedly heavier, it does offer a high degree of insulation; a feature that will be appreciated by any user on a really chilly morning.

Two flaws, one which we consider major, the other minor, are readily apparent on the new unit. First, the serious design error: Through either sheer ignorance or pure disregard of the needs of the user, the designers of the new unit have failed to install a roll holder.

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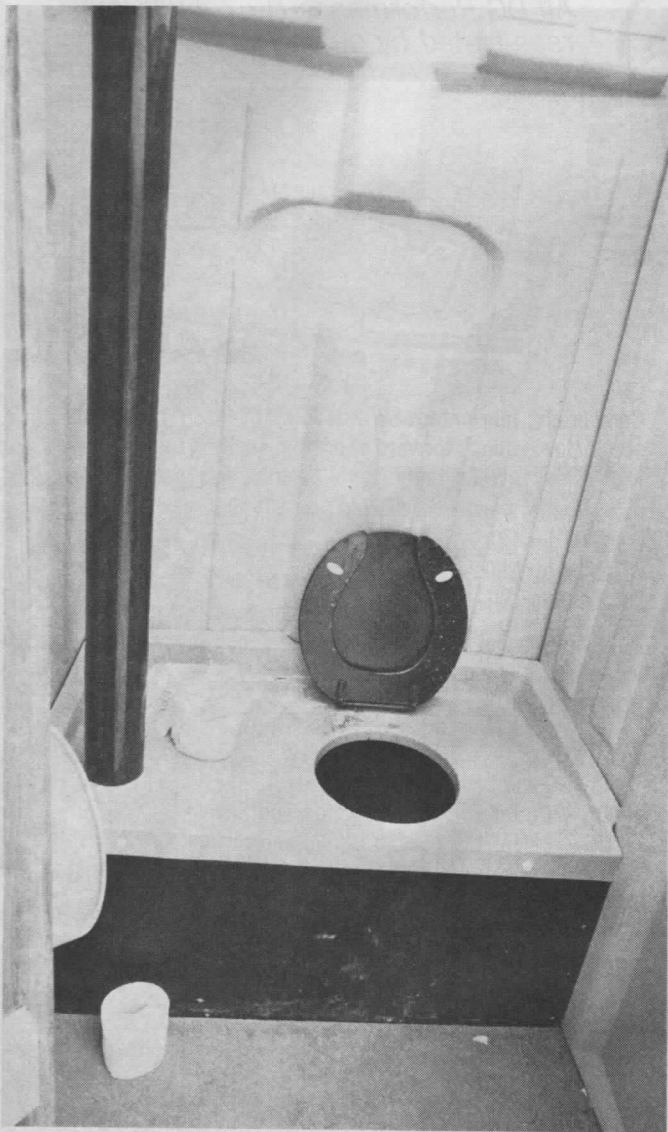
Old Faithful! The Pacific Sanitary version of the basic unit has set the standard against which all other such devices must be measured.



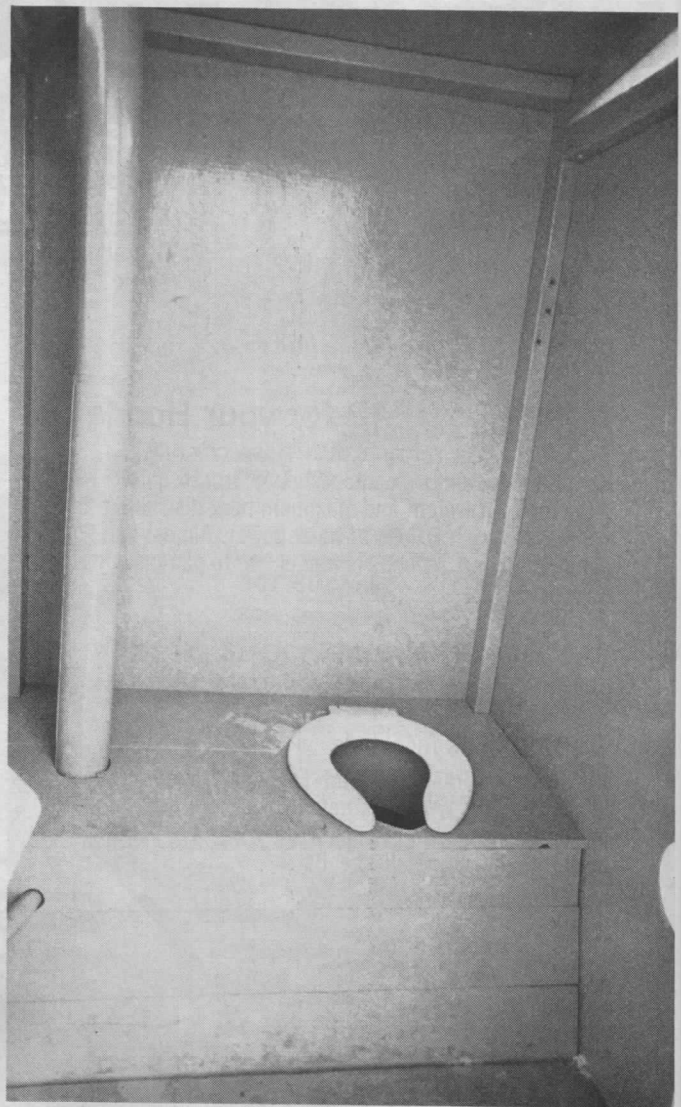
The plastic sides and roof are apparent in this picture of the new unit. Much lighter than the older unit, and easier to transport, the new unit displays some squirrely handling in high, gusting winds.



The all-wood construction and broad base give the old standard good stability in crosswinds. The insulative qualities of the wood makes this unit the choice for cold mornings.



The light and airy interior of the new device. The lack of a roll holder is a serious design flaw. . .



For interior space, the old standard is a hands-down winner. Variations in vent pipe location seem to have no bearing on overall performance of either unit.

The unit which we tested was equipped with two rolls, but they were simply placed on a shelf within the cubicle. A designer unfamiliar with the needs of racers and race fans might think that this arrangement was acceptable. However, those of us who have been attending race meets for any length of time know that many racers, with no concern for their fellow competitors, rip off these all-important rolls and use them for things like cleaning goggles and wiping off number plates.

The other, minor, flaw which we noted during our evaluation of the new unit was the hasp and shackle mounted on the outside of the door. We can certainly understand the fact that any occupant might want to secure the door from the inside, but putting a locking device on the outside is a real invitation to trouble; there is a certain

type of person who frequents the pits who would take great pleasure in locking some unfortunate soul inside.

Both units handle in much the same manner. Tradition is followed in that both doors hinge on the left. Internally, both wall-mounted receptacles also mount to the left. We're frankly curious about this standard traditional concept. . . . perhaps mounting the aforementioned receptacle on the right might give the unit better balance. It's something worth thinking about. Maybe we will obtain one of these units and in a future issue, explore the possibilities of tricking it out. . . . things like a more comfortable seat for enduro riders, a quick-release roll holder for motocrossers and better breathing for Six Days competitors.

One other thing — of no great importance — that offended us

about the new unit was the phony facade that graces its front. The rustic exterior seems to us to be nothing more than a copycat bow to tradition . . . a very obvious sop aimed at the user who might be put off by some serious design innovations. We really wish that the manufacturers had allowed the new unit to stand on its own merits.

As frequently happens with comparisons of this sort, we can make no really firm decision in favor of one or the other. The older, traditional unit will appeal to some race fans, while others will be attracted to the new, lightweight unit. Of course there's always the situation that will occur when the enthusiast, racer or fan, will be forced to make use of one of these devices. When this time arrives, the user will probably opt for the unit that is most available.