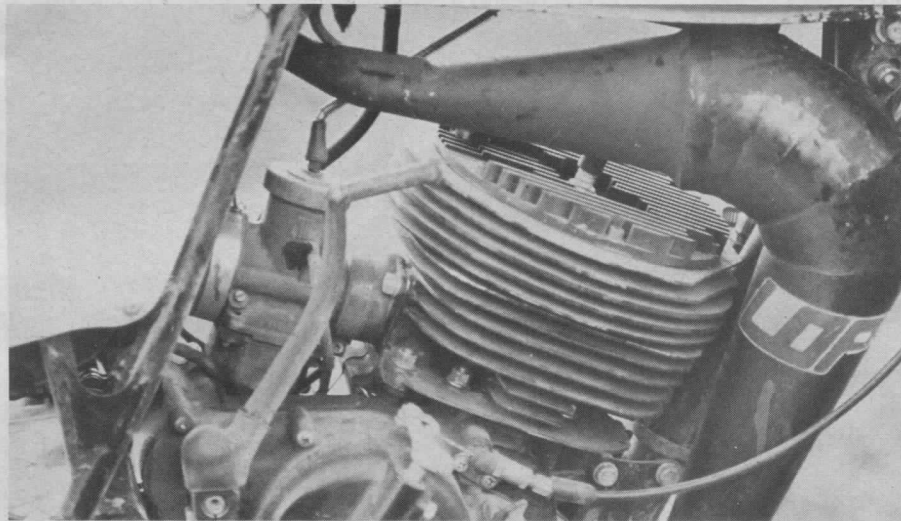


PACKAGES: THE ULTIMATE KIT RACER?

PART TWO

STORY BY KRAUSE

PHOTOS BY JACK ANDERSON AND KRAUSE

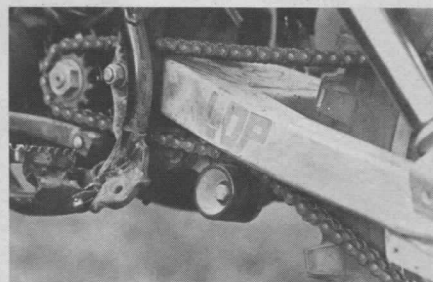
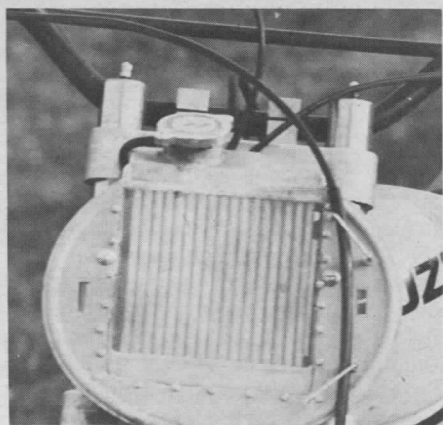


Multi-section pipe tuckered in to the max and provided one of the smoothest power deliveries of any of the high strung eighth-liter racers.

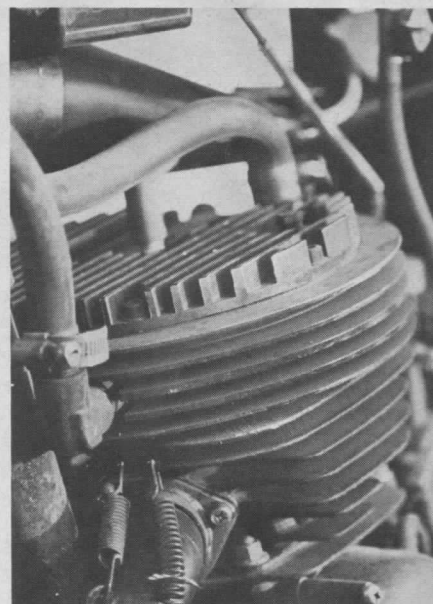
Magnesium Mikuni 36mm carb will not be offered on the package bike. They cost over \$400 a copy and Mikuni will probably even deny making them.

Water-cooled head installation was very sanitary. Innocent bystanders were awed and impressed by the size of the unit.

Hard to get used to seeing a radiator cap where the number plate used to be. Profile was very slim and cabling routed cleanly.



Spring loaded skateboard wheel is an excellent chain tensioner system.



The telegram from the West Coast had the following terse instructions; "Contact Mr. Lorenz Offner at his Waukegan, Illinois facility and arrange test of new 125 package racer." Yawning, I set the message aside, and thought to myself that there was already too many of these concocted pieces of machinery on the market as it was, and how could anyone come out with much of an improved, original design at this late date. Noting the gentleman's name had a heavy German ring to it was the only thing that kept me awake. Perhaps, this fellow would turn out to be an old war buddy.

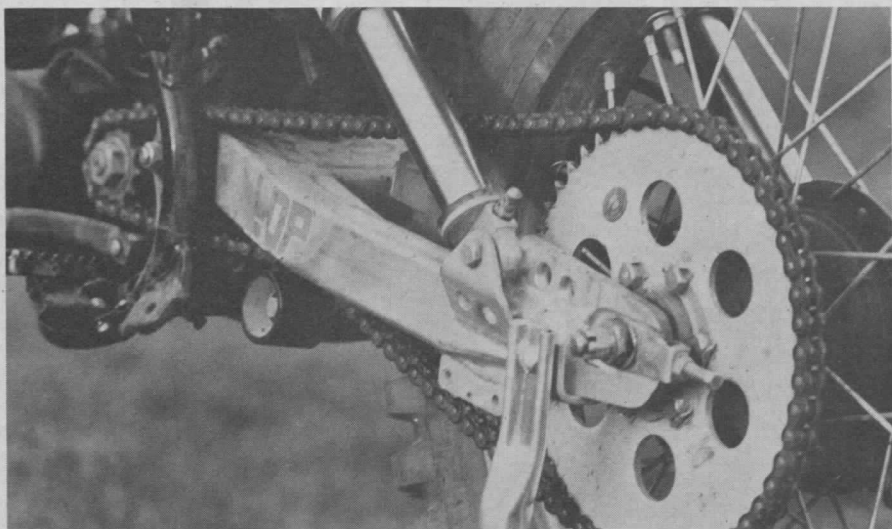
I dutifully placed the call to plan for the testing. Three secretaries later,

I finally penetrated his office, and we agreed upon a testing date. The man seemed a bit pre-occupied, and slightly formal. Besides that, he didn't even know what war I was talking about. I shined-on attempts at further conversation, and politely terminated our chat. I pictured the man as a rather reserved businessman of German descent, middle-aged, and terminally square. Another drag of an assignment Ned Owens stuck me with, I speculated.

The appointed day for the test arrived, and the decided hour faded into history as the big hand on the hour clock went around three and a half revolutions past the time we were supposed to meet. I was just preparing to

put all the cameras and riding gear away, when my senses were totally assaulted by the sight and sound of a brown Dodge Van sliding into my parking lot, in a 4-wheel drift, just missing an Allis-Chalmers front-end loader, which was excavating for a broken water main. No need to call the police—there was a parade right behind the maniac. The police were furious; Wrong-way on a one-way street, reckless driving, no license plates, etc., and even with my sparse knowledge of the Spanish language, I could tell the workmen on the digging crew were getting ready to draw their switchblades. I started dialing my insurance man to see if I was covered for small riots and





Power transmission to the rear wheel is accommodated by 520 chain and sprocket kit. Featured are the upgraded 10mm bolts on the rear sprocket.



Simons front end is probably the best available anywhere.



A pair of 17½-inch Fox Airshox did it all on the back end.



Lorenz and Krause are caught "gassin' it." Eighteen pounds was the magic number for the nitrogen pressurized forks.

insurrections, when I was informed that the originator of this chaos was a certain Mr. Lorenz Offner. It's the first time I have had to post bond on a test bike and its builder, before testing.

I peeked through the van window and groaned as the machine was laid on its side for lack of any tie-downs. Lorenz apologized for being late and I suggested a hasty departure before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War —PART II.

The ride out to the farm, converted-to-test-track, was punctuated by Led Zeppelin at #10 on the volume scale of a 250 watt Sansui receiver he somehow wired into the vehicle. At this point I was looking forward to some test riding at break-neck speeds on a strange bike just so I could relax.

There was a crowd at the farm when we arrived. Laying on its side, the remade RMB Suzuki didn't look like much, but once unloaded, it drew a collective "WOW" from the assembled throng. All the components balanced out with real visual harmony. The bike looks super. From front-to-rear the machine sparkles with quality. The

front forks are the newly-released Simons forward axle units with 10 full inches of travel and 10 inches of engagement. The clearance between the lower slides leg, and the stanchion tube, is set up at .0002"—true precision workmanship. We further were told that Simons pulled an all-nighter just to get this set of forks done in time for the test—an industrious fellow. Bel-Ray LT-100 was the choice for damping fluid, and experimentation led to the use of 18 psi of nitrogen, as optimum for the forks.

The wheels were real Hollywood. Copper-Gold anodized D.I.D. full-lip rims laced with 8 gauge Buchanan spokes. Rubber was courtesy of MR. METZELER (3:00 x 21 front and 4:00 x 18 rear). The rear suspension was a state-of-the-art, 17½ inch Fox Airshox bolted to an L.O.P. swingarm. The swingarm is made from extruded box #6061 aluminum T-6 heat treated. Check it out; it is really beefy. Currently, bronze bushings are used in the swingarm, but future designs are planned to incorporate needle bearings. (Rear wheel travel—10¾".)

The 520 chain and sprockets were an expected mod, however, the spring loaded, skateboard wheel tensioner and the 10mm sprocket bolt conversion were an un-anticipated improvement. The chassis is trimmed with white L.O.P. nylon fenders and side panels, and the fuel tank is from a 1978 250 RMC Suzuki. Air filtration is twin element foam, of course. The dry weight is a claimed 189# for the package.

The engine is where a good deal of the exotica resides. The upper end is equipped with a heavy duty forged rod kit built to withstand the 13,500 rpm's at which point peak horsepower is developed. The cylinder is ported and stuffed to the max, and the head is the real beauty. A massive creation with large input/output hoses, the water-cooled head couples into a hand built radiator mounted integrally with the front number plate. The package is compact. The mounting screws in the number plate looked a little cobby but nothing loosened up the entire test ride. The finishing touch was the magnesium 36mm Mikuni carb which is absolutely unobtainable, and will not be offered



on the package replica. If you could buy one, the price tag is close to \$450.00 a copy.

This machine is actually a working prototype of the L.O.P. 125 RMX bike that will be offered to the public. The cylinder head was hand machined as well as the radiator unit on this model. The estimated cost of this proto is \$4,400.00. The projected cost of the production package replica racers is \$2,750.00 apiece. These bikes will be equipped with cast heads and refined production radiators.

As we suited up, Lorenz explained that the motor, as yet, had not been broken in. It started on the first kick. We shut off the motor 2 hours later to add premix. The bike was literally driven till nightfall non-stop. No one rode the bike for less than an hour at a crack and the comments were all the same: "You just can't get tired riding the bike." Power delivery from the engine was snappy all the way to the top, jetting was spot on. Surprise!!—the low end and mid-range were extremely healthy for a high-energy 125. The water cooling is definitely the an-

swer for a class winning one-two-five. Power output remained constant despite the marathon riding it endured, keeping in mind that the engine was brand new with no break in period at all.

Without a dyno run an exact horsepower figure is unavailable, but the performance rivals that of any factory bike on the circuit. Lorenz commented that a slightly lower acceleration time would be available if a lighter rear tire were used, but a Metzeler was selected for its superior traction—a trade-off, I think, that is worth the added weight. The test riders for the day weighed from 150 lbs. up to 190 lbs., and yet no one had to resort to fanning the clutch or over-downshifting to clear any section of the track.

The suspension was so cream-puff you couldn't believe it. There was no flexing in the front end. The bike is a tight handler. One of the riders complained about cornering, and mentioned the limited lock-to-lock travel of the forks. After observing we decided that his technique of severely squaring the corners just wouldn't work that well with the geometry and the

suspension. The bike was ultimately stable by pushing the front end down and sliding into the apex of the turn. Once this malcontent experimented with this technique, he was smoking the corners with no problem. For someone not as flexible it may be a problem. Other than steering, no complaints were heard.

A good basic bike with a lot of high quality improvements and they all work together efficiently. The only audible gasps were from stunned pre-teens when they heard the price tag, \$2,750 a unit. The alternative is to piece-meal it. L.O.P. offers every single component of its Replica RMX bike for sale individually. The complete water-cooled head assembly with radiator, hoses, and fittings sells for \$200. The trick pipe is \$79.95. The swingarm is \$129.95. The Simons forks are \$325, etc., etc. The consensus of the test was that water, gas and oil, do mix; all it takes is money.

As for Lorenz Offner, I will temper my phone impressions in the future, and I only hope he doesn't jump bail and forfeit my bond. ●