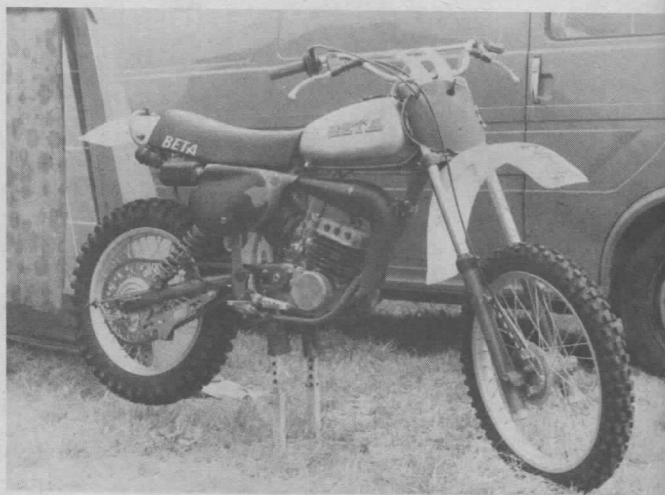


If These Are 125's, Then This Must Be Rahier

STORY AND PHOTOS BY FRED CALDWELL

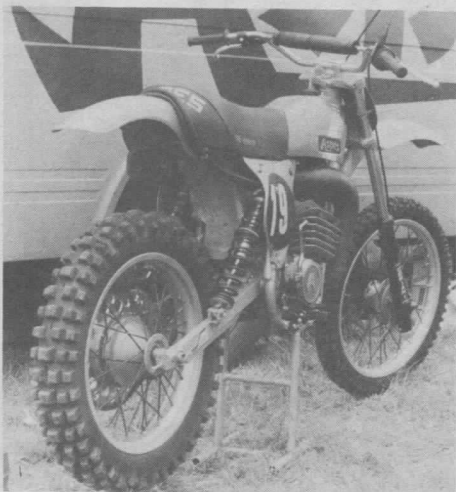


The Italian factory Simonini factory special.



Works Beta ridden by Gilbert de Roover and Paolo Piron.

Aspes is another Italian make in the 125 chase.



One of the many Kramer bikes seen in the 500cc support class. They sell for about \$3,000 and are based on either Maico, CZ or Rotax (shown here) power plants.



Gaston Rahier got one step closer to his third World Championship by winning both motos of the West German round. His wins, however, did not come easily, as Gerard Rond on the factory Yamaha hung on Rahier's fender from start to finish in both motos.

What started out as a grassy hillside near the small, remote village of Schrecksbach, turned into a hard, dry, high speed course as the riders made their mark. Horsepower was the No. One asset, and both Rahier and Rond proved they had it as they ran away from the rest of the field.

In qualifying, Rahier immediately set the pace by turning in the fastest time at 2:18. He was followed by Gil-

bert de Roover on the works Beta with a 2:19 and Gerard Rond with a 2:30. Filling in the fourth and fifth spots were Korrado Maddii on the works Aspes and Belgian Andre Massant on the second works Yamaha.

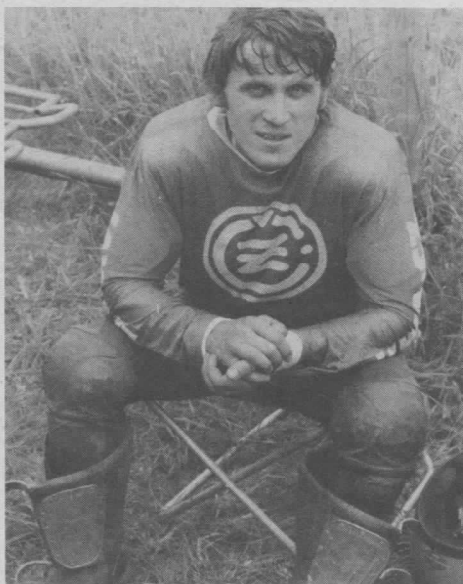
A small crowd of about 7,000 witness the start of the first international moto, with Rahier jumping into the lead, Maddii following in second and Rond in third. Rond took over the second spot on the first lap with de Roover in fourth, Guisepp Andreani (Simonini) in fifth and Massant in sixth. Paolo Piron (Beta) quickly began working his way up by moving into fifth on the fourth lap. Luck was not with the two Czech riders, Jiri Churavy and Zdenek Velky, as both came up

with clutch problems. Velky dropped out on lap 2 and Churavy was held back in thirteenth place until he too dropped out of the race with two laps remaining.

Rahier and Rond pulled away from de Roover, opening up an eleven-second lead on the fifth lap. On this same lap, Maddii overshot a corner, allowing both Piron and Massant to slip by. On the tenth lap, Rahier and Rond, a mere three seconds apart, began lapping riders and by lap fifteen, had pulled out a 28 second lead over third place de Roover. The positions now were: Rahier, Rond, de Roover, Piron, Massant, Maddii and Matti Autio of Finland, the first privateer, in seventh, Piron closed in on de Roover, as the



Gerard Rond



Zdenek Velky

Roger Harvey

Gaston Rahier



Flying Rond



Rahier with Rond in pursuit—repeated in both motos.



two Beta riders fought over third.

At the finish, it was Rahier in first, Rond a close four seconds back in second, de Roover and Piron still battling, Massant in fifth and Maddii, Autio, (Yuri) Khudiakow working up to eighth on his works CZ, Minne (Belgium) on the second works Aprilla, and Goete Liljegren of Finland (KTM) filling out the top ten.

As the start timer hit Zero for the second time, Rahier again grabbed the holeshot, followed by Rond, de Roover and Piron. Austrians Michael Weiss (CAN-AM) and Werner Fasching (KTM) surprisingly filled in the fifth and sixth place spots, followed by Massant in seventh.

Rond immediately jumped on Rahier's back in all-out effort to get by. On a fast uphill jump, Rond pulled alongside Rahier, but was cut-off and then let off to settle for a secure second.

A bobble by de Roover and Piron allowed Weiss to move up to third, but he then fell and dropped out of contention. At the halfway point it was Rahier, and Rond, again alone, with de Roover, Piron, Massant, Austrian Gerhard Huber (CAN-AM) and Autio all in pursuit.

It was obvious from the start that the Czechs had not sorted out their clutch problems, as they both got last place starts. Velky dropped out, but Churavy made a race-along progression up to ninth at the finish, netting himself two world championship points for the day.

Two laps from the finish, fate struck de Roover, as his chain came off, allowing both Massant and Piron by. Massant had passed Piron on lap ten. In a desperate move, de Roover overtook Piron with one lap remaining, but could not get by Massant.

At the finish, the order was: Rahier and Rond, who lapped the tenth place rider, Massant in third, and de Roover, Piron, Autio, Huber, Liljegren, Churavy and Frenchman Patrick Boniface (KTM) filling out the top ten.

Due to Rahier's insistence on a recuperation period, the victory ceremony was postponed until after the second 500cc support moto. His two moto victories, making it ten out of sixteen motos, have given Rahier a total of 195 points, followed by Rond with 148 points. If the 29-year-old Belgian should choose to continue in this class next year, it looks like his only competition will come from a hopefully healed Watanabe and the muscular Dutch twenty-year old Rond.

Despite the fact that the factory water-cooled Yamahas have 36 hp. and Rahier's Suzuki has 34 hp, a privateer on a modified stocker can still break into the top ten, as was demonstrated by Matti Autio. ●