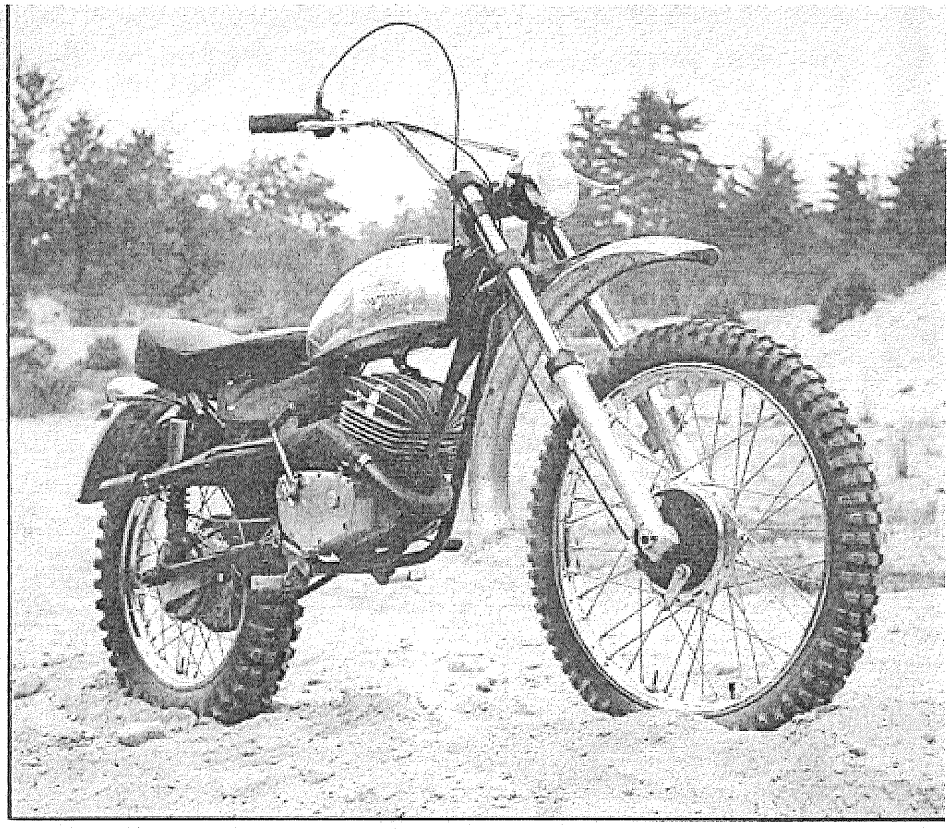


DALESMAN PUCH 125 MX AND 125E

If You're In The Right Frame Of Mind, These Long Wheelbase Dirt Racers Could Be Uncut Gems . . .

CYCLE WORLD IMPRESSION

THEY'RE COBBY looking and the hand-chiseled "British Made" stamping on the engine cases could put you off, if you were in a grumpy mood. The engines, after all, are Puch, and are made in Austria.

But the Dalesman Puch 125 motocross and enduro machines, couched in lithe, double cradle frames, are definitely British in conception. Peter Edmonson of Dalesman Competition Products, England, has chosen the long wheelbase solution to the problem of handling, and the wheelbase on his compact looking frame is therefore 53.5 in. This is as long or longer than the wheelbase on some 250-cc motocross machines.

The engine for both the motocross (125MX) and the enduro (125E) machines is a 123.5-cc, two-stroke, single cylinder Puch, having 55 by 52mm bore/stroke dimensions. With a 12:1 compression ratio, the motocrosser develops a claimed 16.5 bhp at 7500 rpm. The 125E, rated at 12 bhp at 7000 rpm, also has a 12:1 compression ratio, although the particular model we rode—an early prototype—was 10:1.

Unlike the all-Puch 125 featured in our June 1970 issue, the Dalesman's proprietary Puch engines have only four speeds instead of six. Otherwise, the Dalesman Puch engine is of equal quality, with all-alloy unit construction, chromium bore, and the use of roller and needle bearings for all appropriate engine and transmission parts. Both engines run strong, with little vibration, and start easily, although the basic position of the kick starter is awkward. It rubs on the shins when riding in any position.

Fashioned of Reynolds 531 tubing, the frame derives its strength from a massive single backbone used with a narrow double cradle, forming a compact—and therefore strong—loop around the engine. The swinging arm measures 18 in., thus contributing to the bike's long wheelbase. The longer the swinging arm, of course, the greater the possibility of flexing, which is the case to a minor degree in both the Dalesman motocross and enduro models. However, due to the relatively small brute torque of a 125-cc engine, a certain amount of flexure can occur without causing handling problems.

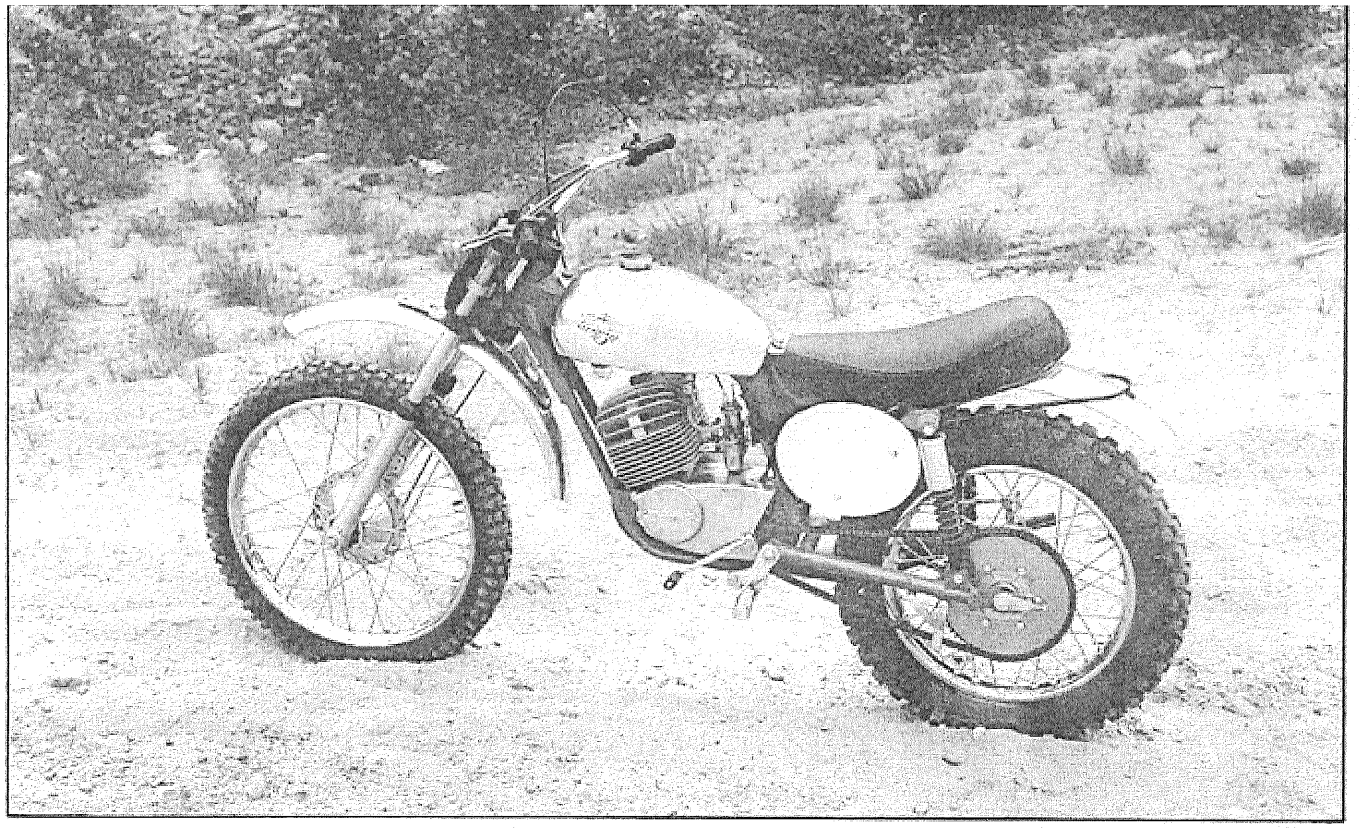
Both machines have Girling shock absorber units at the rear and English Profile telescopic fork units. The rear brake hub is the "quick detach" variety, and the front is a lightweight, conical REH. The front forks on the motocrosser were not functioning well at all, and would clank loudly when the front end became light, to the extent that the vibration could be felt in the hands, and the directional control was affected adversely.

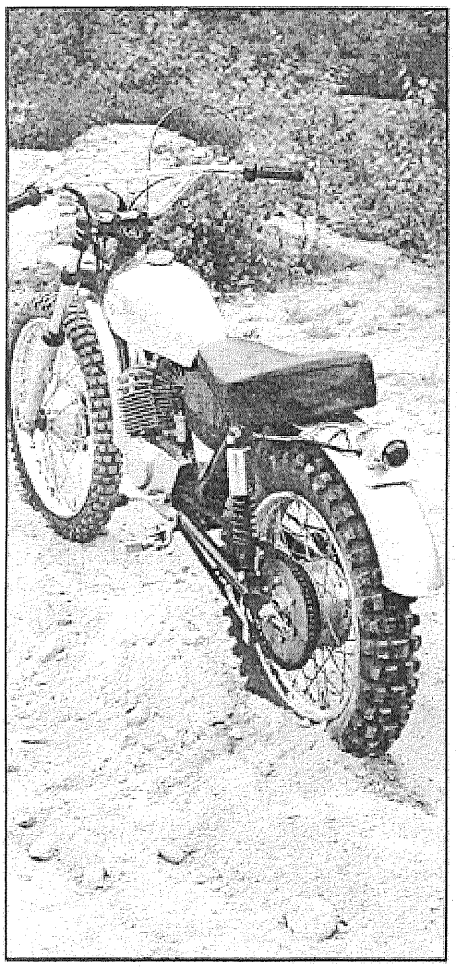
Those on the enduro machine were better, if not superb, so we can assume that the motocrosser was suffering from an individual sort of malady.

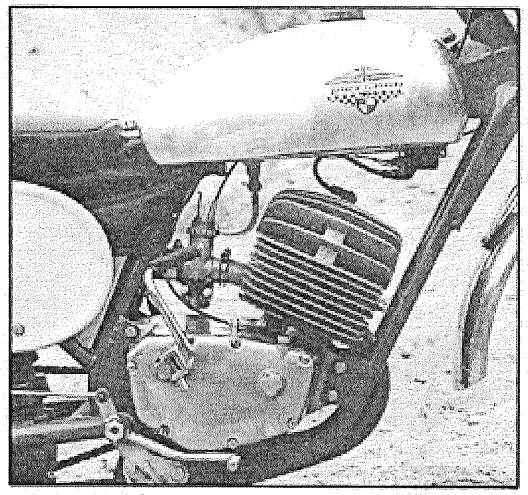
In spite of the noisy distractions from the front end, the handling of both machines was better than average, the long wheelbase being a major asset when riding at a fast clip over rolling sand wash bumps and the like. Rear damping was typically Girling, i.e., good.

Gearboxes on both machines functioned smoothly, but the chosen ratios seemed odd—particularly on the enduro, where there is a grotesque gap between first and second gears, thus preventing a smooth transition from one to the other, as well as slighting what would otherwise be considered a wide power band. It would make more sense to close up the gaps between the first three gears and make a larger jump to top gear, which must be high to take advantage of the smooth, fast roads that always constitute part of an enduro schedule. On the motocrosser, which is supposed to have the same internal ratios as the 125E, lower overall gearing makes the jump from first to second more forgivable. But the gap makes little sense on two motorcycles priced at a premium $750, which would presumably guarantee purchase of a highly specialized competition mount that has been properly tittled.

For the purpose of conforming to public highway regulations when a section of an ISDT-type event wanders onto the highway, the 125E has been fitted with lights. There is no horn, but, as







anyone knows, a European-style endurance machine would not be complete without a bicycle bulb horn hanging inconspicuously, and uselessly, from an unobtrusive frame member. The 125E, therefore, is not meant to be a dual purpose machine for the dirt rider who wants to ride regularly (and legally) on the streets. In a forgiving atmosphere of an enduro, where the organizers have made peace with the local constabulary, the enduro machine's lights will get you by. In the middle of town, you're on your own. If the small lights don't get you busted, lack of effective silencing will.

Both Dalesman Puchs are full-sized motorcycles, and quite comfortable to ride, due to seat height (31.0 in.), peg height (13.0 in.) and seat width (8.5 in.). The handlebar width on the 125MX is an extra-wide 35.5 in., which allows the rider to cut off the ends to suit his personal preference. On the 125E the handlebar width is 32.0 in., a more or less classic dimension for an enduro/trials machine. Ground clearance on both machines is an ample 12.0 in. Tire sizes are full-standard for dirt work—4.00-18 knobby at the rear, 2.75-21 at the front.

The advantage of buying a machine like the Dalesman is that of frame configuration. It is intended for competitive riding in the dirt, and no basic changes need be made. As delivered, both machines need some race-readying. But the raw material is there.