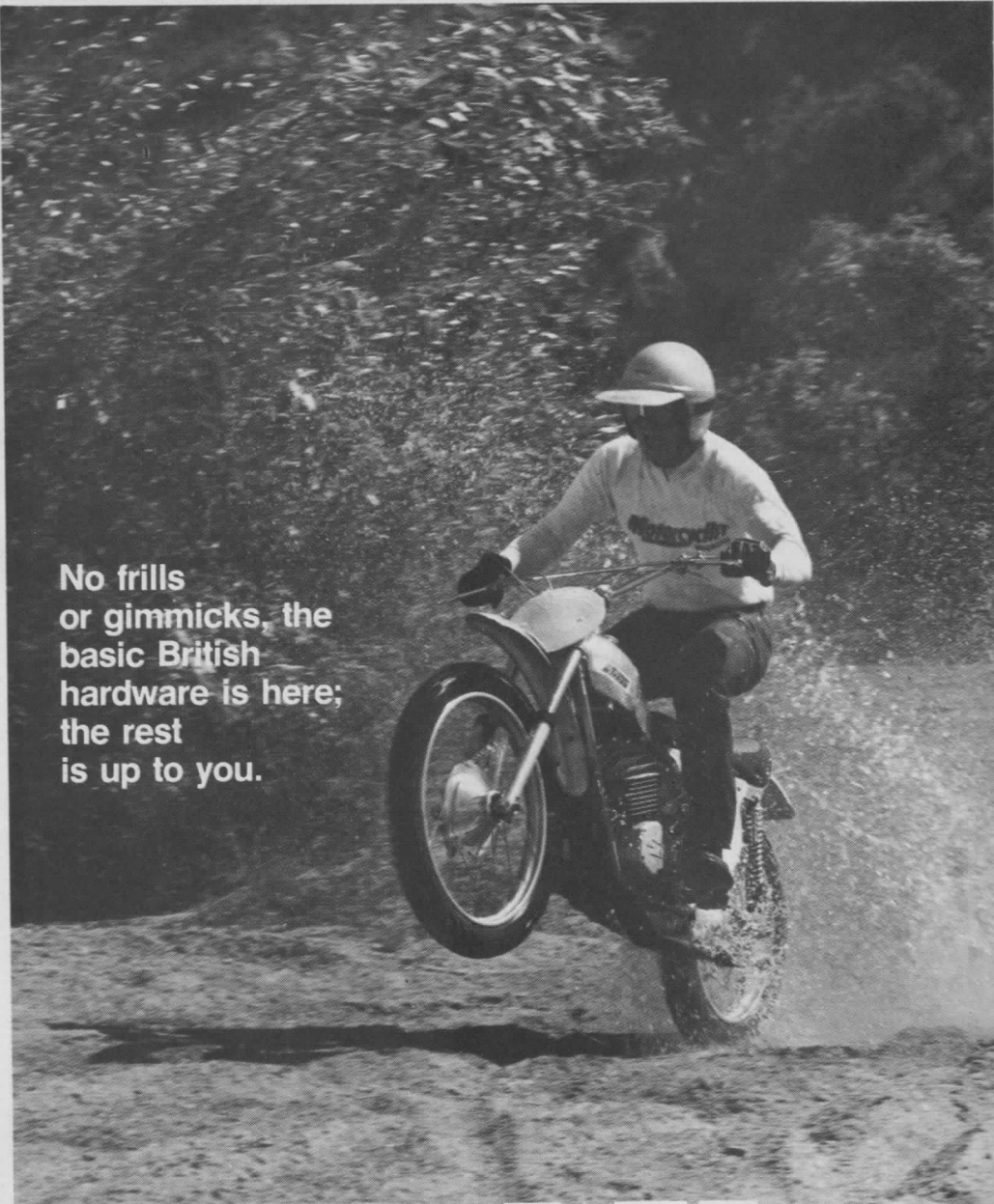


BY BILL OCHELTREE "Tyran" is the name coined by the Mitsubishi International Corporation for a bike which is the culmination of the dreams of nearly everyone who enters the motorcycle trade. "Wassell" is a trademark familiar to anyone who has purchased parts in any British bike dealership and is as common in the U.K. as Hap Jones, Rocky or Webco is in the U.S.A. W.E. Wassell Ltd., England's largest parts and accessory wholesaler, began building the Tyran about a year ago as a natural extension of the manufacturing capability they had developed over the years in building add-on and replacement bike parts. The British home market could hardly be expected to sustain the output required for economic production, so arrangements were made for export through the giant Mitsubishi organization. At present, U.S. distribution is based out of Mitsubishi's New Jersey facilities, and additional distribution points are planned for the future. So that's who builds and sells the Tyran; now let's talk about the bike.

In the eyes of many people in this country the British motorcycle industry has been boiled down to one factory turning out three brands. To the English enthusiast nothing could be further from the truth. For the competitor, there is a greater selection now than there has been in recent years of the fabled strong, light, simple and proper handling British bikes. When it comes to providing the basic ingredients for a competition machine, they're pretty hard to beat. Tyran has all the basics.

The frame is an all-welded tubular steel design built by Wassell, with the swing arm being made of chrome-moly for insurance. The British-built front forks are mounted on Timken tapered-roller bearings, and the rear wheel is suspended from Girling shocks. The swing arm pivots on maintenance-free rubber bushings, and chain adjustment is accomplished at the front end through an ingenious eccentric mount. Steel rims are laced to polished conical alloy hubs with heavy-gauge spokes. All of the body parts, tank, seat base, mud guards and side panels, are fashioned from aluminum alloy sheet stock and are fastened using 'Nyloc' self-locking nuts. Bars, grips, controls, footpegs, numberplates and seat cover are all from Wassell's catalog. But for the powerplant, that's it. Basic British. What more is needed?

Engine building has been a problem for the British in recent years. They know all the theory, but the price of tooling has gone so high, so fast, that they just haven't been able to keep up with the rest of the world in the technology needed for today's high output engines. For this purely economic reason, Wassell went to Europe's largest engine specialist to get the best available for the particular job. The Sachs



**No frills
or gimmicks, the
basic British
hardware is here;
the rest
is up to you.**

TYRAN 125 MX

type 1251/6B 125cc, 6-speed motocross engine may not be British but it sure is basic. Off the top of the head, we can count seven different brands built in five different countries that use the Sachs, and every one is competitive. You can't get any more basic than that.

Our English cousins aren't adverse to sophistication either, as long as it contributes to simplicity and ease of maintenance. In addition to the Timken bearing steering head and the trick swing arm bushing and adjustment, the Tyran features stepped axle shafts and sealed bearings that do away with the necessity of fumbling with spacers, and metal loops are welded to the frame to provide kinkless routing of cables. The

chain guard has a full apron on both sides of the chain, and the forward part of the rear fender is a full-width panel that keeps the underseat area free of water and mud. All of the alloy sheet metal parts have rubber cushions sandwiched into their mounting fasteners to eliminate the problem of cracking.

Of course, no one's perfect. A couple of attempts at trickery didn't pan out too well. Exhaust systems probably take more abuse from vibration than any other part of a racing bike, as witness the amount of oxy-acetylene consumed in repairing cracked brackets. The idea of the resilient hanger used on the Tyran's downswept chamber seemed like a good one, but, for the appearance alone

of the rubber used, it was obvious that it wouldn't last. It didn't; it took less than an hour for the soft biscuit to shear in two.

The air cleaner is the other design weak spot. With all the effort to keep water out from under the seat, the intake faces forward and lacks the necessary shrouding to keep the splashes out. Use of a paper filter element was also a poor choice with its close proximity to carburetor fuel spray.

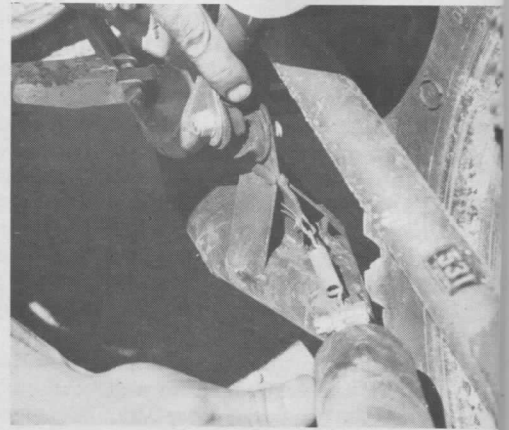
Riding the bike is what really brings to mind the British concept of basic. Getting across rough ground fast is what it's all about, and Tyran does just that. Handling and suspension are superb. Cornering is easy, bumps and pot



LEFT: Narrow profile makes for easy knee hugging and agile maneuvering. Seat looks and feels like trials bench. Small tank won't take you far in the desert but keeps down top-hamper on short motos.

CENTER: The little one-two-five can get even the old rhino airborne. Straight line tracking is excellent in all terrain.

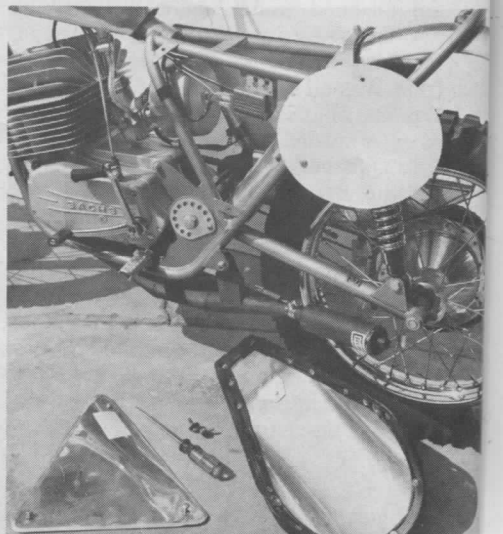
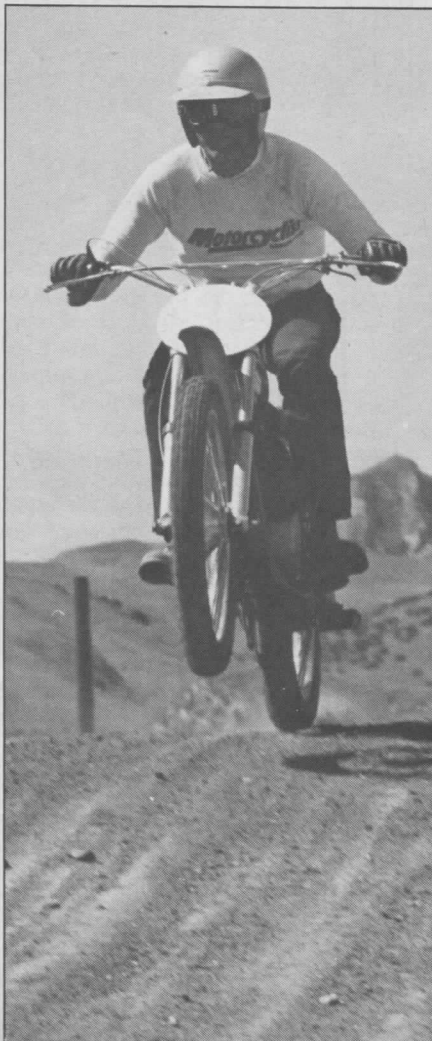
TOP RIGHT: The best laid plans of mice and men oft lead to a broken exhaust. A single bolt with a rubber bush loosely clamped in would be a fail-safe arrangement.



BELOW: Screwdriver is all that's needed to gain complete service access. Silencer is added by importer to comply with AMA rules.



BELOW: Massive engine finning assures adequate cooling. Forward facing air inlet can mean trouble in deep water.





TYRAN 125 MX

TEST BIKE

Serial number.....W2367MX
 Engine serial.....Sachs Type
 1251/68 7339848
 Date of manufacture.....NA
 Base price as tested.....\$943
 Factory warranty.....none

ENGINE

Type.....Vertical, single cylinder,
 piston port 2-stroke
 Displacement.....122cc
 Bore x stroke.....54 x 54mm
 Claimed HP @ RPM.....18 @ 8500
 Claimed torque @ RPM.....NA
 Compression ratio.....12.1
 Lubrication system.....Pre-mix
 Carburetion.....27mm Bing
 Fuel required.....Regular
 Air filter.....Dry paper
 Ignition system.....Magneto, pointless
 electronic
 Electrical system.....Alternator, no
 other equipment
 Battery.....NA
 Starting.....Left foot, indirect kick
 Exhaust.....Downswept chamber, silencer

DRIVE TRAIN

Primary/ratio.....2.10
 Clutch.....wet multi-disc
 Transmission.....6 speed
 Shift.....Left foot, down for low
 Gear ratios.....4.600, 2.930, 2.165,
 1.715, 1.434, 1.240
 Final drive, size.....No. 428 chain,
 1/2 x 5/16 w

Sprockets,
 front/rear/ratio.....14/64/4.571
 Overall ratios.....44.16, 28.13, 20.78
 16.46, 13.77, 11.90

CHASSIS AND SUSPENSION

Frame.....Tubular, double cradle
 Forks.....Telescopic
 Caster/trail.....31degrees/NA
 Turn radius.....73.5 in.
 Steering damper.....none
 Rear shocks.....Constant rate spring,
 3-position adjustment

Brakes,

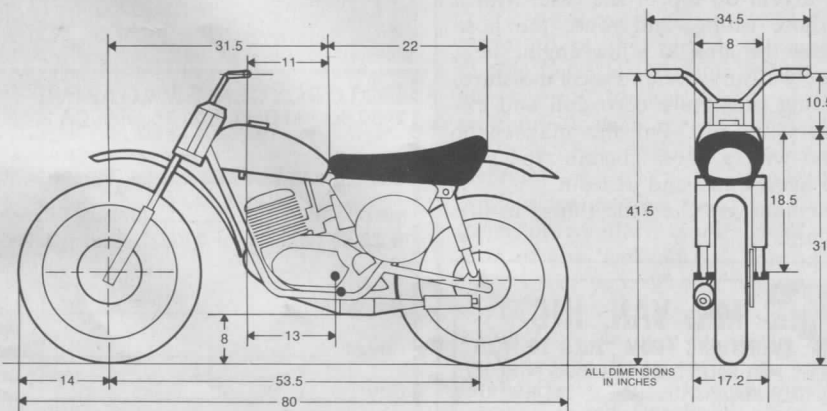
front.....6 inch drum, single leading shoe
 rear.....6 inch drum, single leading shoe
 Tires,
 front.....3.00x21 knob
 rear.....3.50x18, knob
 Balance weights.....none
 Rim locks, front/rear.....1/1

WEIGHTS AND CAPACITIES

Weight, wet, unladen.....201 lbs.
 Weight bias, front/rear.....93/108 lbs.
 Allowable gross weight.....NA
 Wheel loading, front/rear.....NA
 Fuel capacity.....1 gal.
 Engine oil.....Pre-mix
 Gear oil.....0.6 qt.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Controls,
 left hand.....clutch, choke, kill button
 right hand.....Throttle, brake
 Tools.....none
 Stands.....Right side



holes are smoothed to ripples and tank slapper hoop-de-doo's can't make it deviate from the line. The Sachs engine puts out pretty close to the claimed power through a set of gears that are ideally ratioed to the narrow powerband. First gear is quite a bit lower than the rest of the set, but it will guarantee getting through a hillside traffic jam. Once rolling, the top five gears are all that are needed, and for maximum performance they all see a lot of use. Here is where the greatest, and most widely criticized, weakness of the Sachs powerplant shows up. Its typically Germanic shifting requires a heavy foot in both directions in order to avoid the five possible neutrals.

Much to our disappointment, the gear shift wasn't the only thing lacking in good old British 'buttery smoothness.' The first two laps around Indian Dunes' Shadow Glen course required several stops for brake adjustment with the hope that the shoes would soon seat and dispell the surging. The only time the brakes felt smooth was after a thorough drenching in water, and then they didn't work at all. The toughest thing was the force required to activate the hand levers. A lack of lubrication in the levers and cables along with brakes that were assembled without any Lubriplate on the cams gave one the feeling of having worked out with hand grips.

To further bring about rapid fatigue is the peg-seat-bar relationship and the seat cushion itself. Offhand, it would seem that the bike was intended for a rider under 5'6" with 48-inch shoulders who stands up on the pegs all the time. To put it simply, the bars are too wide and too close to the pegs, and the seat is too low and hard as a rock.

Which brings us to the basic reality of 'Basic British.' As we said, the Tyran has all the basics for a competition machine and these are what the British stake their reputations on. Handling and performance are what they consider basic to a bike, and that's where all their efforts are expended. After all, re-padding a seat and buying new handlebars costs a lot less than reworking a frame or experimenting with rear shocks. This is the reasoning that is based on the British tradition that an enthusiast must be as good a mechanic as he is a rider. He must rely on no one but himself in the preparation of his machine. Its failure is his failure. The English bike rider has never been coddled with carpeted showrooms and iron-clad guarantees; even the factory-backed pros have to make it on their own during the season and are expected to put in a full day at the plant during the week. It may have cost the Empire the glamor of Grand Prix limelight in recent years, but to the British, what counts is the tradition of the sport, and in motorcycling it's the combination of the man and his bike. That's basic. ●