





DOORSTOP TECHNOLOGY

# PUCH 125, THE UN-CROSSER

by the Staff of DIRT BIKE

## I'D RATHER GO BOWLING

You don't see many Puchs in the 125 class these days. Strange, because Puch has had a good reputation for reliability and fine handling. Why, one of our staffers (Don "Cantaloupe Rancher" Phillipson) used to race desert with one, and usually placed in the top ten percent as an Amateur. In the 250 World Championship, Harry Everts finished third this season. Give you the idea that there are some relatively serious people running around the Puch factory? But, if you didn't know all that, and you stood back and took a good look at our 125, you'd swear that it was right out of the '60s.

To the fun-loving staff of the mighty DB, riding most any bike with two wheels and an engine is as gassy as circumnavigating the earth in a dirigible. You notice we said *most* any bike. Well, that's because there are certain exceptions. One very good example is the Puch 125 MX. Taking one lap around the course would surely show you how this machine can take all the fun out of riding.

Out front we should explain a few things. When the bike was delivered to us, it was obvious that it was not fresh out of the crate. Probably two or more mags had tested the beast, and it looked like it had gotten a fair workout. Evidently, our little Puch had not been serviced since the last test, but merely washed.

Just rolling it down the ramp out of the van told us that it wasn't going to be the most fun-to-ride unit. The bars felt like they belonged on something like a chopper. And halfway onto the ramp, its humongous skid plate bottomed out on the edge of the van, leaving us helpless. Either have someone lift the front



end or forget about the ramp altogether.

And lightweight? You bet. At 217, it's only about 30 pounds heavier than an Elsinore. If you remove the skid plate, rear fender bracket and chain guard, it'll be down to 211 already.

Sitting on its own two wheels in the dirt, ground clearance was between five and a half and seven inches. Yanking up on the bars to get the forks to stick at their fullest extension would give you seven. Letting it fall back on the sacked springs gives you five and a half inches.

We took some time to make sure that the wheels wouldn't fall off by attacking it with wrenches, and found some good stuff. The tank is rotationally molded plastic and stays out of your way. Fenders are plastic as well. Not the decent plastic found on some bikes, but at least plastic. Sitting directly behind the tank is what appears to be the seat. We weren't sure, because sitting on it was a lot like sitting on a block of wood covered with a paper towel. The clutch was a lot like a shift lever on the bars, or an off and on switch. On the swingarm is a little sticker that says it's chrome moly. Frame is the regular (for some) stuff: mild steel. Rims are the old-style mud-carrying Akronts. A lightweight-looking conical hub is attached to the bottom of the forks. At the rear is a huge steel sprocket with not nearly enough holes in it. Good Magura levers and throttle, trashy Magura grips. The kill button, in keeping with questionable Puch practices, was under the carb/number plate shroud on the right side. Very handy. If they were going to go to that kind of trouble, why didn't they mount it inside the air box.

Let's take it out on the track and see what she'll do.

Right off you could tell that the Girlings on the rear had passed their usual life span and were imitating solid steel spacers. The left fork seal was blown and pumping oil all over your leg, the right one soon followed.

Once you were moving along quickly — say, a long downhill — you could start to appreciate the frame geometry. Its stability and the ease with which you could make directional changes made you think that maybe there was something to be salvaged. In tight turns, it was a lot like a Maico. Just flick the bars



Roll your eyes across our test unit . . . and Jeff Wright's super-modified version.

**Zeal would rather ride a full-dress hawg on an MX course than have to swing a leg over the Puch.**



and it headed where you pointed it.

Remember where we just said you were moving along quickly. Well, that long, steep downhill was necessary. Of all our complaints, the motor would have to be considered the major one. Or, should we say, the lack of motor.

George was out making a serious effort to move it around the course swiftly. Rounding the last right-hander before the uphill, he slid up behind an XR75 Honda. Now, this wasn't the steepest uphill, nor was it the longest. By the time they neared the crest, the XR had pulled two bike lengths on the Puch. Surely our motor was on the unhealthy side, but

even a healthy one is not all that quick. Without some major engine mods, the only way you'll make it to the flag first is if everyone else DNFs.

Don't get us wrong, we know of at least one Puch that blows off Elsinores. Jeff Wright, for instance. He's got a sponsorship from Puch. Chuck Daly at Hercules did a complete goose job on the motor. Mid-Valley Cycles shaped the chassis and keeps it ready to race each weekend. Some of the major modifications that were made to Jeff's bike are: countershaft sprocket is changed from a 13 to a 12, rear is changed from 58 to 66 teeth. Padding is added to the seat. Up front, 327



Chevy valve springs about 1¼ inches long are added, along with Molly Blue medium oil. Rear shocks are 13.4-inch aluminum bodied Boges with the bottom mounts moved up 2½ inches and 90-pound springs. CZ-type bars, Mid-Valley fenders and pipe round out the chassis and plumbing end of it.

Chuck Daly opened and raised the exhaust ports, raised the transfers,

and lowered the intake 6mm. Six millimeters? Makes you wonder what the R&D people at Puch are thinking about. Head is milled 60 thousandths.

If you do most of the labor yourself, all of the good stuff is going to cost you at least \$250-plus. Add that onto a list price of \$1098 and you have an expensive 125. Wonder why you don't see many Puchs? ●



Maybe the two most decent pieces on the bike, except for the grip.



Pipe worked as the rear portion of droopy right footpeg, gas poured out around the cap, and the rear brake stuck.



Check out that lightweight conical hub. The brake was for real.

## PUCH 125

PRICE: (retail, approx.) \$1098

ENGINE TYPE: Two-stroke, single cylinder

DISPLACEMENT: 123.5cc

BORE & STROKE: 55mm x 52mm

COMPRESSION RATIO: 13.8:1

CARBURETION: 33mm Bing

CLUTCH: Multi-disc, wet

PRIMARY DRIVE: Gear 2.516:1

TRANSMISSION RATIOS:

1) 3.500:1

2) 2.214:1

3) 1.667:1

4) 1.278:1

5) 1.000:1

FINAL DRIVE: Jwis chain

13-tooth countershaft

58-tooth rear sprocket

AIR FILTRATION: Paper

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM: Bosch transistor

LUBRICATION: Pre-mix 25:1

RECOMMENDED FUEL: Premium

FUEL CAPACITY: 8.71 liters (2.3 gallons)

FRAME: Two-piece, double cradle

SUSPENSION: Betor forks, 17 cm travel (6.7 inches)

Girling shocks, 8.7 cm travel (3.4 inches); measured at the rear axle

WHEELS & SPOKES: Akronts, steel

TIRES:

3.00x21 Metzeler

3.50x18 Metzeler

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase: 137.3 cm (54.1 inches)

Clearance: 18 cm (7.1 inches)

Seat Height: 78.4 cm (30.8 inches)

Handlebar Width: 84 cm (33.1 inches)

Weight: 98.4 kg (217 pounds);

weighed with oil and one gallon of gas

43.3% on front wheel

56.7% on rear wheel

BRAKES: Cable-operated conical, front drum

rod-operated full width, rear drum

INSTRUMENTS: None

LIGHTS: None

SILENCER: Yes

PRIMARY KICK: No

WARRANTY: No

PARTS PRICES

Piston Assembly: \$43.76

Rings: \$9.98

Clutch Cable: \$3.00

Cylinder w/piston: \$150.00

Sleeve only: \$43.12

Shift Lever: \$7.50

Brake Pedal: \$7.20

Clutch Lever: \$5.95