



I had just gotten off the plane two hours before, after an eight-hour, three-stop flight from Jersey. I had lugged my suitcases around, each feeling like it housed a couple sets of bar bells, until I'd managed to locate a bus to carry me up to the valley where my car waited. I had lost my round trip stub for the bus ride and had to do a suitable amount of finagling to get out of shelling out another three bucks, made more necessary by the fact that I only had two. And I'd thrown my suitcases in the trunk of my relic, sat

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

'77 MAICO AW 250

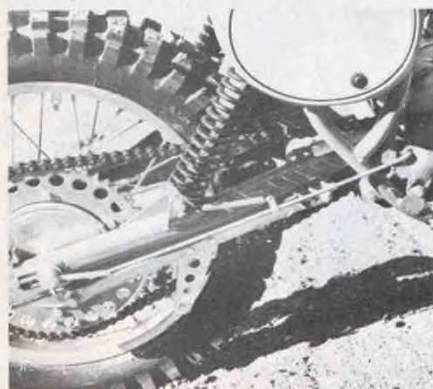
Looks as good as it feels.





New double lipped fork seals/dust wipers adorn the front extensions.

The gas/oil Girdlings are still on the rear, this year also giving out 9½" of travel.



down at the wheel, and then came to the realization that I'd left my set of keys back on the dining room table 3000 miles away.

Now, after an hour of fiddling with the ignition and hot wiring, and with a case of jet lag that left me feeling like a stalk of celery, I sat, vegetable-like, at my desk staring blankly at the pile of mail that had gathered during my two-week absence, and was running back through my head what I was afraid someone had just said to me, "Tomorrow we gotta go out and test the Maico 250. Can you be at my place by eight?"

No, my mind was hopelessly trying to convince itself. *He couldn't have just asked me that. Surely it was an auditory hallucination.*

Then came the repeated question, this time with a tinge of impatience.

How can I get out of this? My mind was working its tired cells to the limit.

Hmmm. Then that one word began to penetrate. *Maico.* The key word. *Hmmm* repeated my frantically working mind. The word *Maico* began to resound louder within my skull, gradually overpowering and dwarfing the previous predominant phrase "my place by eight."

With great effort I stirred my vocal chords into motion, "Maico, huh?"

An impatient nod.

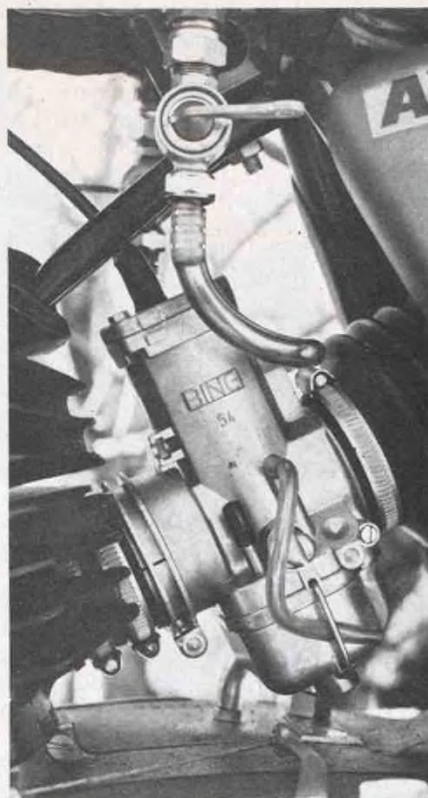
How I managed it comes under the great efforts in man's history, but I considered myself going beyond expectation to only be a half hour late.

Our ultimate destination, in addition, was not one I had an uncontrollable liking for. It was a very rough, makeshift course located a little ways outside of L.A. on which we've had various bikes from time to time and my tolerance span was usually in the neighborhood of three laps before I'd split the course and head into the surrounding hills.

But the opportunity to ride a Maico has always been like waving a magic carpet before my eyes. I would usually immediately question as to who they wanted me to kill. This morning it had gotten me out of my world of warm, comfortable dreams at the ungodly hour of seven, and, in my still terribly jet lagged state, that was quite miraculous in itself.

The reference to magic carpets is more than casual, because Maicos have always seemed rather unworldly to me. Kind of like asking the normal VW Beetle owner if he'd like to try out a Mercedes SL 450.

Immediately the eyes become aglow with the thought of that superb, seemingly supernatural handling. But even as the saliva glands begin their actions and the mind begins inducing a mechanical orgasm, the unworld-



The AW's now sport the new Bing V54 36mm carb.

The engine is basically the same, though with smaller transfer ports and a new pipe.



liness is heightened by the usual stories of the financial aspects to us meager working class.

While Maicos are no more expensive in initial output than some of the other top notch machinery and, though parts are indeed high, so are parts for the other fine European bikes, there remains that never ending debate. Do Maicos still breako or not?

I think there's evidence to show that the long standing legend is not as true as it used to be. The reliability being displayed by Maicos in recent enduros and multi-day trials events tends to lend credence to this.

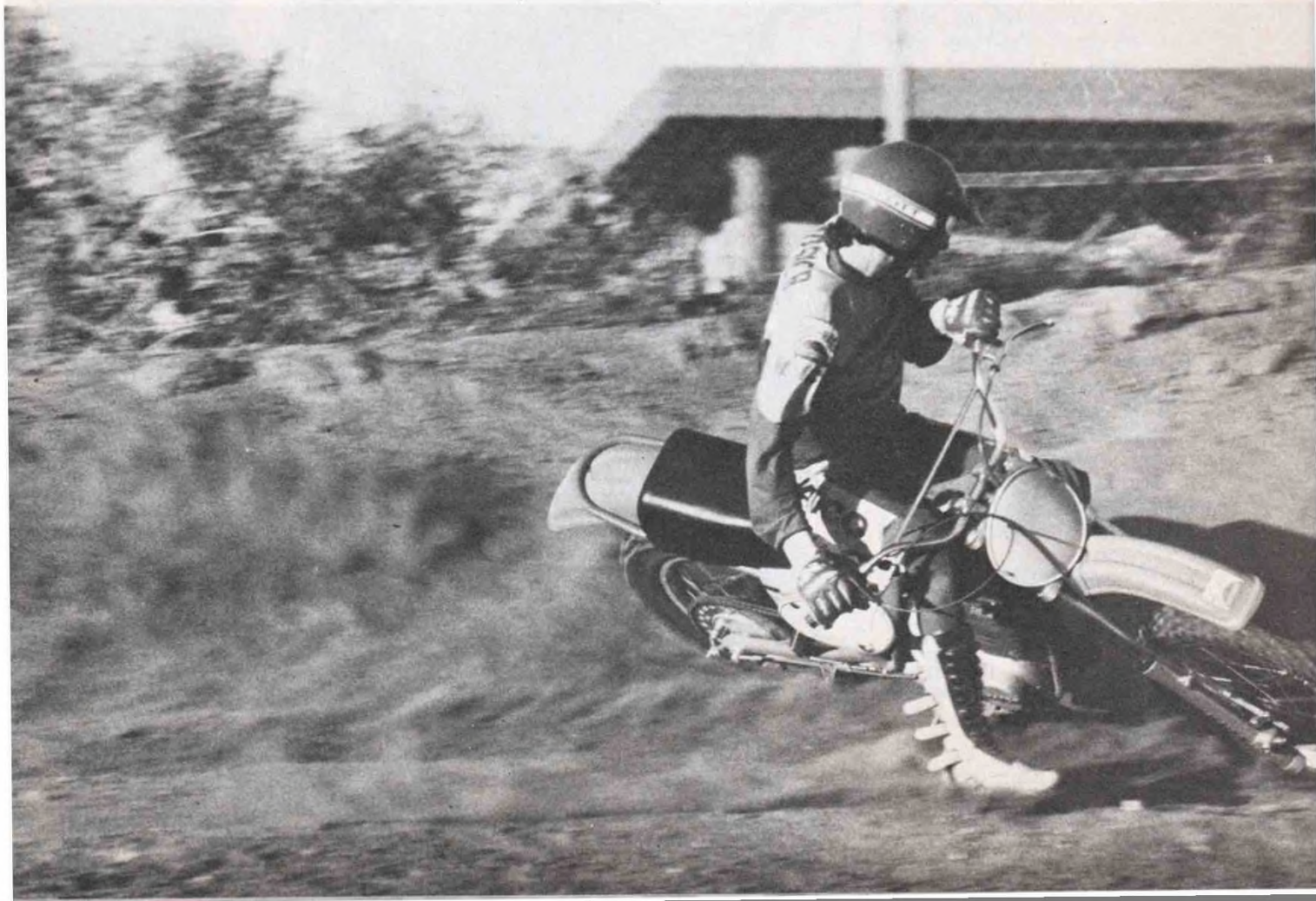
Still one thing is usually admitted by all. Maicos are pure and serious competition bikes, and as such, demand strict maintenance. If an earnest maintenance schedule is maintained a Maico can display reliability with the best of them. If the schedule is not maintained, they will, well, breako as fast as any other competition bike.

But we're drifting, and besides there is a whole other side to the Maico image. The handling.

The bike we had in our paws this morning was the new AW 250. There are no radical changes on it, which, in reference to Maico, continues to be good news. There are, however, many minor improvements which each year continue to further round out the package.



Two seats are offered. This is the slim version, while a thicker one is also available.



The most readily noticed change is the new brilliant red paint job covering the frame, tank, and fenders. The Japanese aren't the only ones who can be flashy.

One has to look closer to find the additional changes. For one, the 250 has been fitted with a new pipe. It's still a down pipe, but it's been designed to give more power across the range. The power is also helped by the new V54 Bing carb and the shrinking of the transfer ports to increase the velocity of the incoming mixture.

There is an inch more travel in both the front and back bringing each up to 9½". To allow for the extra inch of clearance in the rear the frame loop has been redesigned wider, longer, and higher.

The sidestand has been removed this year, along with its mounts.

The tank is a 2.2-gallon aluminum unit in, of course, the traditional coffin shape.

The fenders and side panels are all of an unbreakable plastic, substituted for the old fiberglass that brought so many moans.

Ours had a stock, slimmer seat, although we were told that an optional thicker one is also available.

Gussetting has been added to strengthen critical areas on the frame such as footpegs and shock mounts.

That takes care of the basic tech-



The forks have grown another inch since last year now giving 9½" of travel.



Redesigning of the rear frame section allows more clearance for the rear tire to move around in.



nicalities. The next matter of concern was what it all came down to on the course.

Foolish of me to wonder. From the start it was . . . well, like riding a Maico. The handling and cornering are simply unmatched by any other machine. There is no effort in turning the thing, no bullying it to go where you want it to go. You know that when you place that front wheel in the line of your choice that it's going to lead the rest of the bike through with no deviation. The bike is helped in this area by its nearly fifty-fifty weight distribution. It keeps the front end down and tractable.

The power, too, is very smooth and controllable. And present in abundance. It gives a strong solid pull from the bottom, and contains no explosive points in the range. It lets the rider decide how that ample supply of power is going to be used.

Needless to say, there is plenty of suspension there also. The gas Girlings are not particular favorites of a lot of people, including yours truly, but the particular pair we had on our bike seemed quite sufficient to handle the knobby course, and outlasted me every round.

The forks? Well, they're Maico forks. I'll let that stand as it will. The only thing that might be noticed about the forks are that they feature a new double-lipped seal that may produce a little extra drag when the bike is new.

The brakes too, gave a strong solid feel on each end.

The 250 weighs 211 pounds dry, which on paper might seem a tad heavy to some, but the maneuverability of the bike is so superb that no excess weight factors are noticeable to the rider.

