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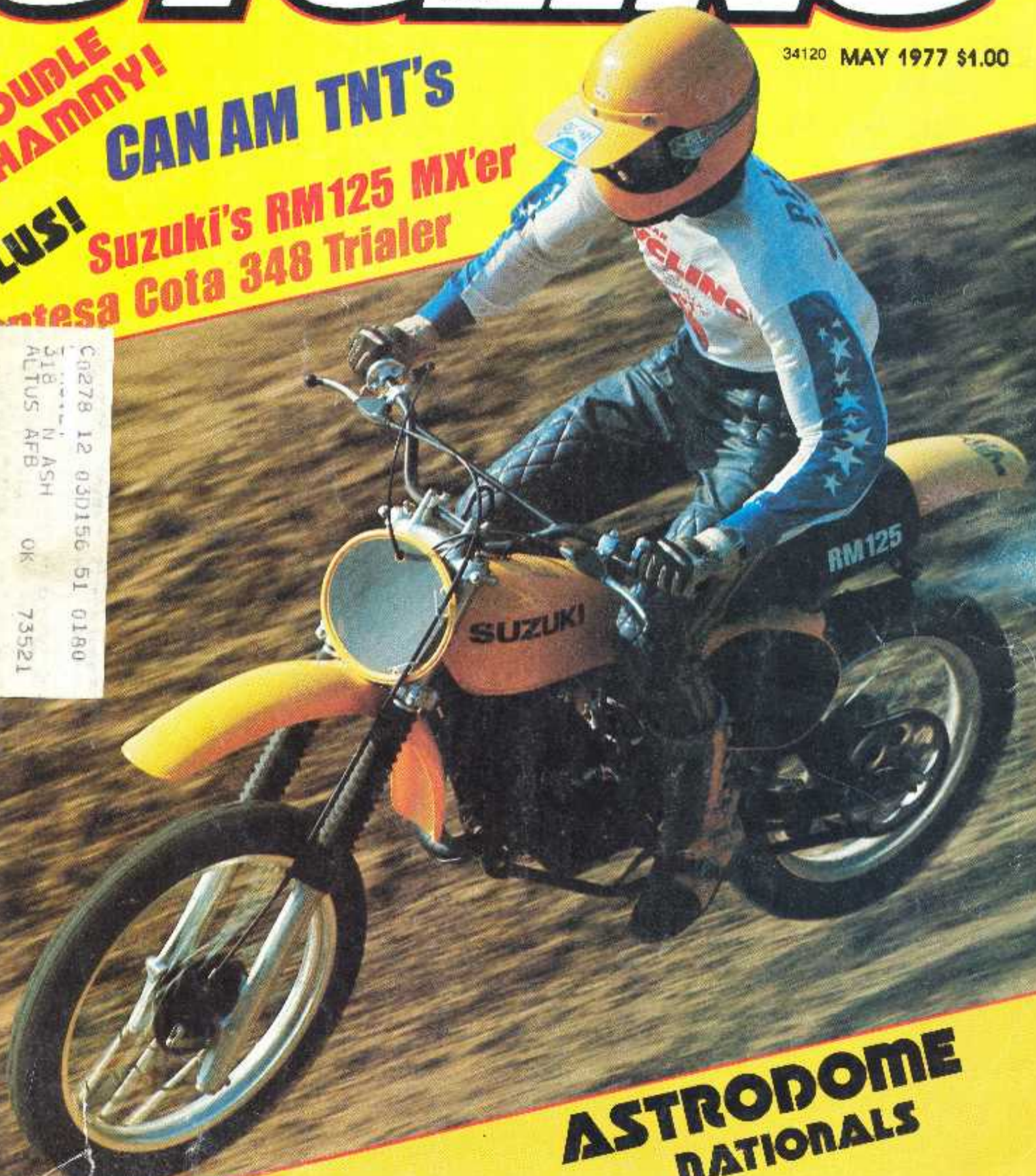
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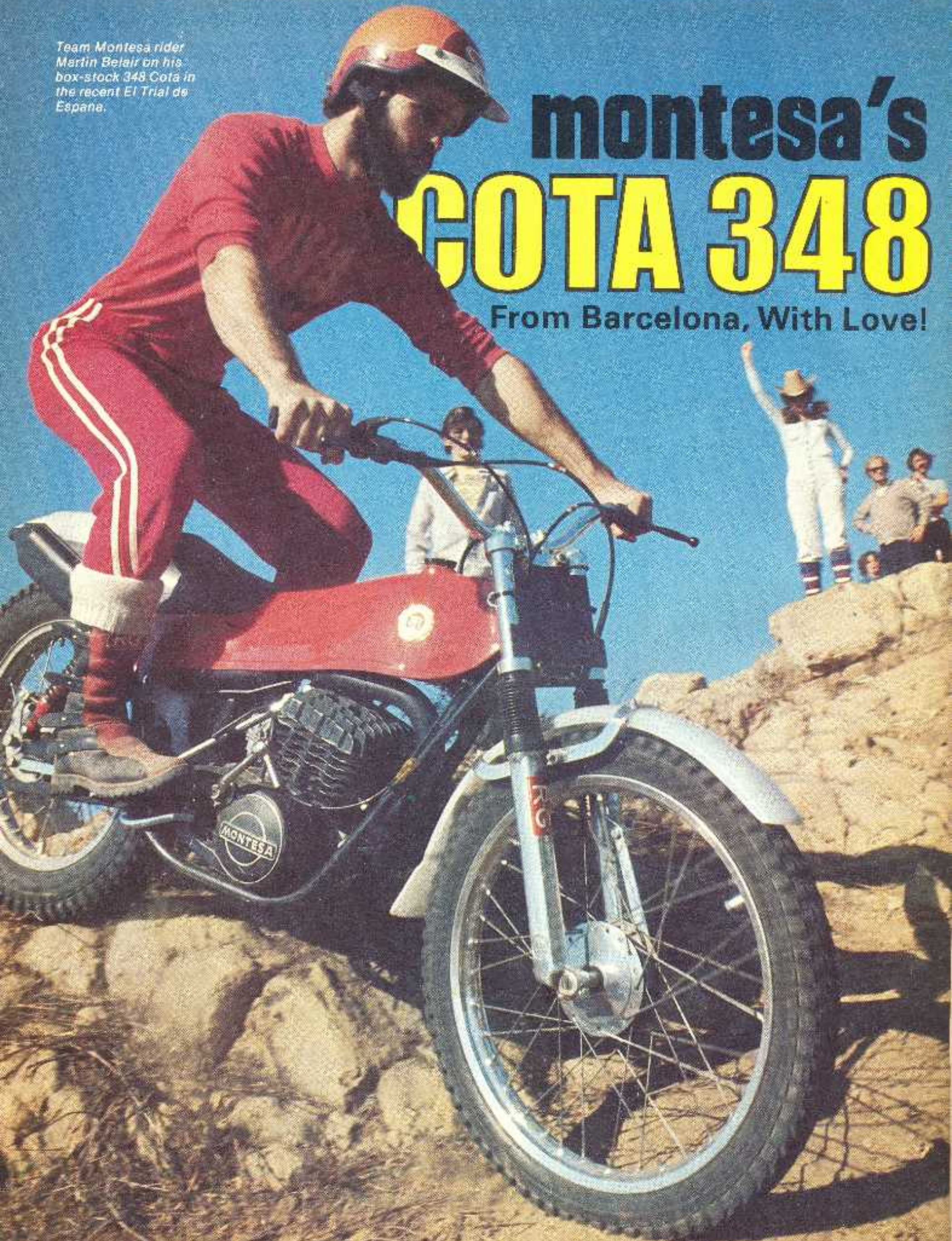


ASTRODOME NATIONALS

Team Montesa rider
Martin Belair on his
box-stock 348 Cota in
the recent El Trial de
España.

montesa's COTA 348

From Barcelona, With Love!



The sport of observed trials requires a motorcycle that's as specialized as any racing machine. It's a unique sport and an ordinary motorcycle simply cannot do the things that a trials bike can.

Hence we have trial bikes.

The best ones come from Spain. The Spanish didn't invent observed trials (the English did), but the good old Spanish certainly invented the 'modern' trials bike.

English trials bikes are nearly extinct. Japanese trials bikes (yes, the Japanese decided that trials was going to be the next big sensation and went overboard in building bikes.



The fiberglass tank/seat lifts up to reveal the tool kit and access to the Twin-Air filter, Bing carb and spark plug.



They're okay, but nowhere near as good as the Spanish machinery.) are around and are responsible for a lot of new riders getting into trials.

But if you're serious, or you want the best, you'll end up with a Spanish trial bike. Narrowing it down even further, you'll end up with a Montesa or Bultaco, because the third Spanish manufacturer, Ossa, is in a unique situation. The other two factories produce so many more bikes (and do so much more winning in events) that Ossa is virtually overshadowed. Ossa's are good motorcycles, but for some reason, they haven't caught on like the competition.

So we have Bultaco and Montesa. Which do you choose? Well, right off the bat we'll tell you that you could win the World Championship (if YOU were



Our two-day test session was blessed with hot sun one day, rain the next, giving a completely new personality to the sections. The editor was able to 'score' much better on the 348 than any other bike he's ridden in the sections.

able) on a box-stocker from either factory. Both are incredible bikes.

Both factories are trend setters, meaning that what they do with their trials machines is copied by everybody else. That's what the Japanese should have done, bought a Montesa and Bultaco and copied them exactly.

But they didn't do that, and as a result, the Spanish makes still completely dominate the international trials scene, and it looks as though they're still holding on to a lion's share of the lucrative American market as well. Granted, the U.S. National Champion (Marland Whaley) rides for Honda, but go to any local trial and count the number of Montesa and Bultaco machines compared to everything else. Enough said?

Both factories (Montesa and Bultaco) have the best riders in the world riding for them, developing and (hopefully) winning events and titles. Bultaco currently has the World Champion (Yrjo Vesterinen), but Montesa has had their turn with former World Champion, Scottish Six Days Trial, British National Championship winner Malcolm Rathmell. Rathmell gave Vesterinen a real run for the money in last year's WC chase and ended up missing it by only a very narrow margin.

As this is a test article on a Montesa, we're obviously not going to go into great detail about Bultaco's efforts or machinery. Suffice to say at this point (that means until we get a new Sherpa T to test) that their bikes are very, very good. Frankly, choosing one or the other is one hard choice. They're both red, so that won't help. From there, you have to make up your own mind.

Early in this article, we'll go ahead and tell you that if we had to go down to the local shop tomorrow and buy a brand new trials bike, we'd go for the Montesa. It's a most impressive motorcycle and a fairly inspiring one to ride.

But then so is the Bultaco. Maybe if you ask us tomorrow, we'd tell you that we'd buy a Bultaco. Who knows?

Anyway . . . Why, you ask, would we buy a Montesa tomorrow? Well, it's because that new Cota 348 Malcolm Rathmell Replica is, we think, the best thing going. Our opinion is based on the fact that we took the bike out to our favorite back yard practice sections and rode it hard for two full days of riding the same sections. We've ridden the same sections in wet and dry for several years on Bultacos, other Montesas, and every Japanese bike. If we had had observers at each section and had had a punch card, we reckon that we would have ended the two day 'trial' with about 1/3 less marks accumulated.

Now that has to say something about the Cota 348. We could get through our 'traditional' practice sections easier and

Cota 348



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS MONTESA COTA 348

ENGINE

Engine type	2-stroke, single
Bore and stroke, mm	78x64
Displacement, cc	305.8
Horsepower/rpm (claimed)	n.a.
Torque/rpm (claimed)	n.a.
Compression ratio	9:1
Air filtration	Twin-air foam
Carburetion	Amel
Lubrication	pre mix
Ignition	Motoplatt

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission	6-speed
Clutch type	multi-plate, wet
Primary drive	gear
Final drive	5/8 in. chain

CHASSIS

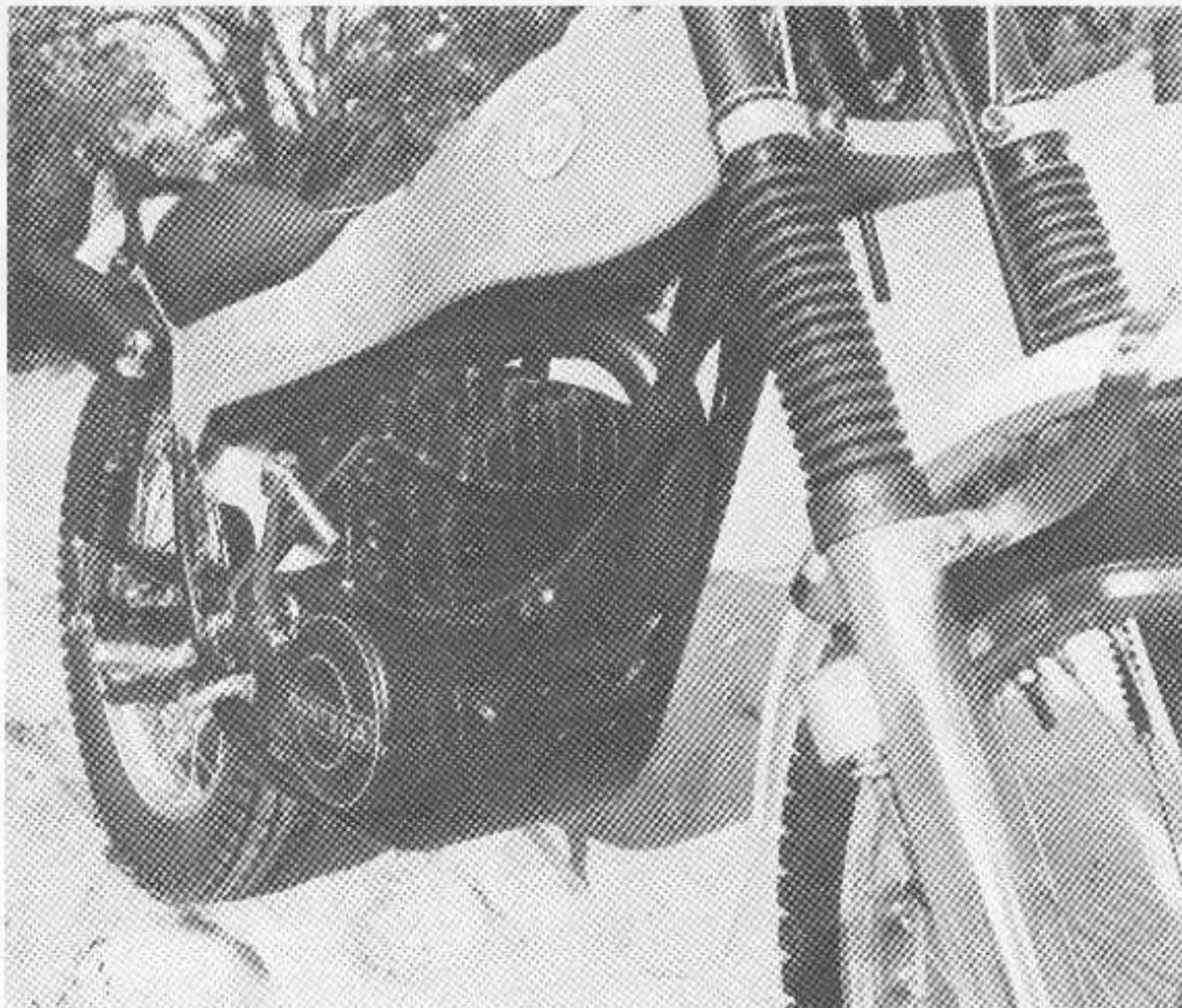
Chassis type	double downtube
Overall length, in.	79.5
Seat height, in.	31.7
Ground clearance, in.	12.3
Wheelbase, in.	51.5
Weight as tested, lbs.	196
Tires, front	2.75x21
rear	4.00x18

Max. Pts. NUMERICAL EVALUATION

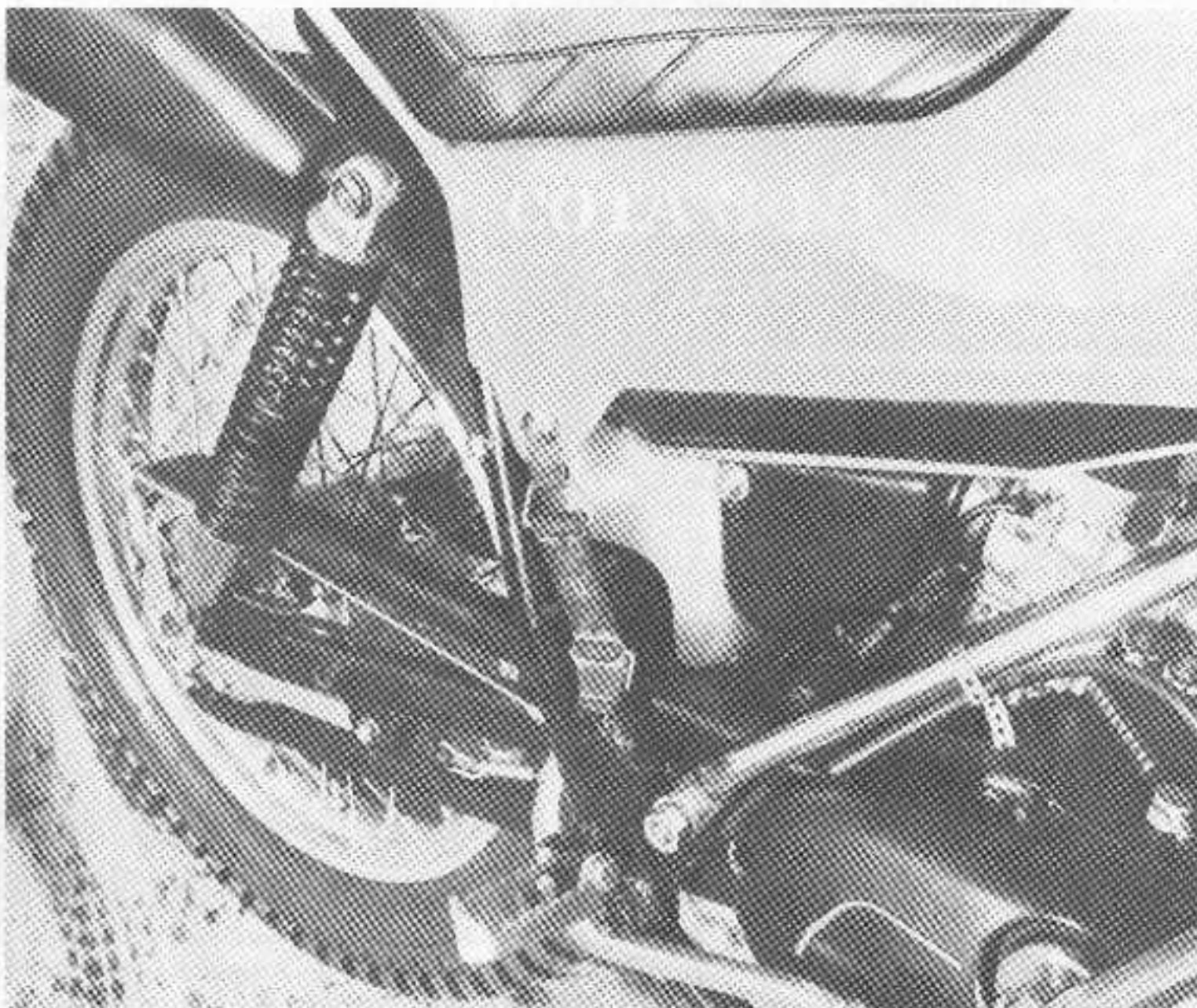
10	Starting	10
10	Power	10
10	Powerband	10
10	Transmission	
	(5) Ratios	5
	(5) Operation	5
10	Suspension	
	(5) Front	5
	(5) Rear	5
10	Brakes	
	(5) Effectiveness	5
	(5) Waterproofing	4
10	Handling	
	(5) Low-speed maneuverability	5
	(5) High-speed stability	4
10	Comfort	
	(5) Sitting	4
	(5) Standing	5
20	Miscellaneous	
	(5) Quality of craftsmanship	5
	(5) Instrumentation	4
	(5) Electrics	5
	(5) Noise level	5

100 pts.

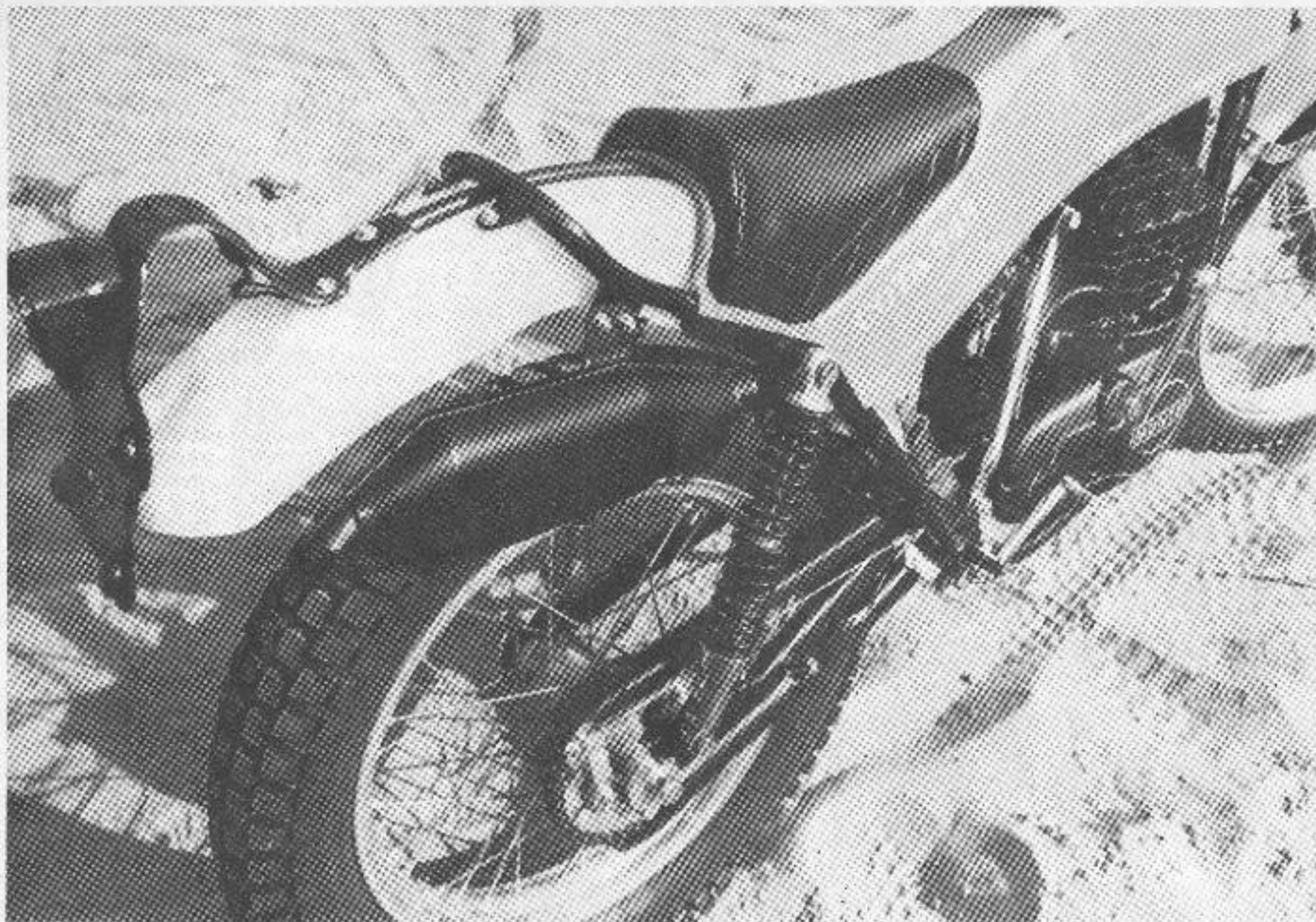
Overall Rating 96 pts.



Cota engine is all new, very powerful and quiet. Accessory skid plate would be a very wide investment. Note weird location of speedometer, right behind fork leg.



Below the Cota 348, Malcolm Rathmell signature are the rubber straps that hold the tank/seat in place. Note full length chain protector; one of the best ideas we've seen on a dirt bike in a long time.



Bulky muffler is nevertheless quiet. Seat isn't made for sitting much, so isn't particularly comfortable. Non-street-legal lighting is optional.



Front forks work well. Bike has Akront alloy handlebars. We were really impressed with the new Pirelli trials tires.



No, it's not Malcolm Rathmell in the Scottish Six Days. It's only the intrepid editor displaying his best body English.

smoother every time. Not only that, but we built a bunch of new sections, strictly in honor of the Cota, and we were able to clean them as well (except one, which to date only Lane Leavitt and Mike Griffiths have cleaned: It's a bear!)

Montesa's Cota 348 is complete state-of-the-art trials iron. It has power that you wouldn't believe and handling to match. The bike isn't going to get Bultaco owners to switch brands, but

Oh, yeah, back to the Cota 348. (We just love talking about trials; can't you tell?)

Now that we've told you that the Cota 348 made us into instant superstars (at least in our own sections. We didn't get the chance to ride the bike in competition for a very sad reason: The bike was completely destroyed in the Beesley garage/house fire. We hadn't finished testing it, but we had ridden it enough to know something about it.)

cota 348

it is very definitely going to provide a darned good alternative (read that as competition) to the rider who's decided to go for it and get good at trials.

Competition is very healthy (who said that, maybe Knute Rockne?) and we think that the Cota 348 is going to generate some high powered thinking at Bultaco. Not that they need it, necessarily, but the same thing will happen in reverse. Vesterinen's World Championship for Bul will have the wheels turning across town (Barcelona) at the Montesa factory. The two rivals will end up helping each other by trying to outdo the other in building the world's best trials bike.

We love it all!

We'll continue.

As far as technical specifications and features, the Cota is a very innovative motorcycle. And as we've already said (at least a couple of times) if it isn't the best trials machine in the world, it's just as good. Six of one, half a dozen of the other, as the saying goes.

First off, be informed that actual displacement of the motorcycle is 'only' 305.8cc. Why they call it a 348 is far beyond us. Ask Montesa.

As a comparison, the '350' Bultaco is 326.2cc. Whatever the actual displacement is, take our word that power on either motorcycle is more than adequate. Don't worry about it. Unlike motocross and other dull go-fast sports,

displacement and horsepower aren't necessarily secrets of success for the 'feet-up' crowd.

What counts in this field is the application of power. It's a matter of quality, not quantity. You must have low end power and instant throttle response. Top end power is secondary and heretofore hasn't been a significant feature of trials machines. Older model Bultacos and Montesas weren't at all fast and didn't have very much top end. The latest models change that. ESPECIALLY the 348.

Primarily through a six-speed gearbox, not only does the Cota have a great abundance of low end pulling and 'plonk' power, but when you do have to wick on the throttle (like for a hill),

there is something there. It's also a pretty fast motorcycle on the trail, but it isn't at all happy being ridden as a trail bike. Mis-using it like that will probably shorten the life span of an otherwise reliable motorcycle. If a trail bike is what you want, maybe you better look elsewhere. We don't want to turn you off, but riding trials is what this motorcycle is built for.

Of course if you want to do that (ride trials) and want to do it better and with less effort, look no farther. Here's the bike for you. (I think we've already said that).

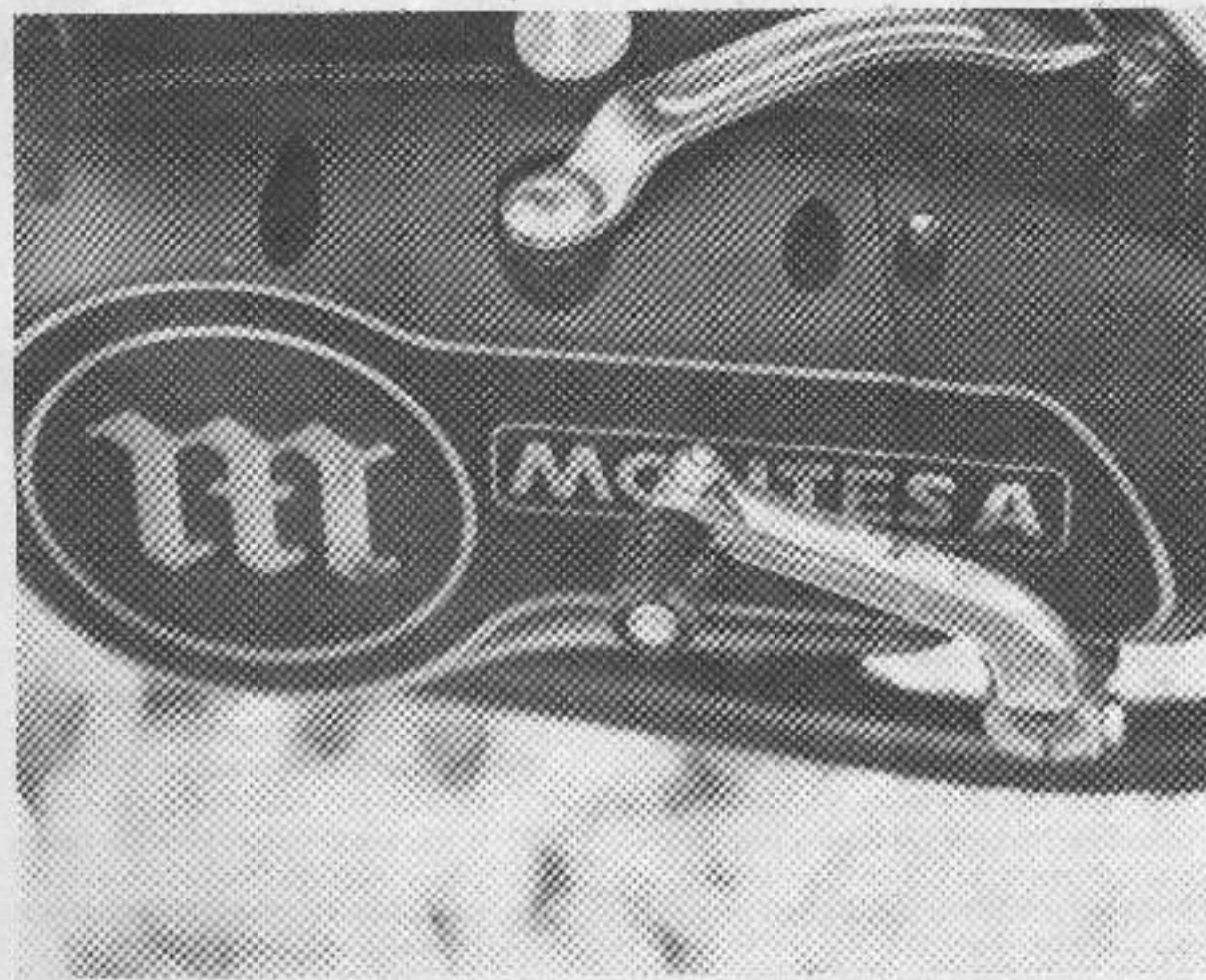
Back to basics . . . The Cota 348 only weighs 196 pounds and it does have enough torque and low-end power to pull fully grown trees right out of the ground. That combination adds up to one big handful of motorcycle if mis-used. Be wary of turning on that throttle and you'll do fine.

Fortunately, the Cota almost seems to have a mind of its own. You don't have to do anything except stand there and hang on to the handlebars and tweak the throttle a little bit once in a while to keep the engine going. Of course, you could just set the carb up at a fast idle and the bike would probably clean the sections by itself.

Seriously, the suspension, chassis and engine of the Cota are so good that the bike is much easier to ride than anything else. Best testimony is that during one of those two days of riding in our own sections, we had three riders present. One was Martin Belair, a top-graded Expert rider who has European win experience under his belt. Martin is a Montesa factory rider, but he genuinely thinks that the Cota 348 is the best trials bike in the world.

Next came Beesley, the editor, whose sections we were playing in. He's a novice class trials rider (but he's heck in his own sections!) who has been riding trials for a couple of years (he doesn't practice very much, or he'd have made expert by now). 'OI TB also

Continued on page 65



Folding shift lever. Brake on the other side is similar type, except it's knurled rather than equipped with a rubber 'pad.'

thinks the Cota 348 is the best thing going, because he could mark his 'performance' in familiar sections against that on other bikes.

Also present was total newcomer to trials, Kim Haskell, who instantly fell in love with the bike, because he could figure out what to do with a trials bike on the Cota. Anything else and his motocross experience would have told him that to get along with the bike, you have to turn on the throttle a lot.

Anyway, all three of us loved the Cota. That's a complete range of experience and knowledge of trials and that's a good testimonial of the Cota 348.

Another pretty impressive 'testimonial' to the quality of the Cota 348 is that the factory polled their riders and dealers and said parties asked the factory not to make any changes in the model A1 ALL! Now, that's impressive!

The big-bore Cota started life in 1973 and at that time, the works prototype was a 348 (that's probably where they got the designation). In a commendable (and successful) effort to get the ultimate performance from the engine, Montesa began working diligently. They found themselves whittling away at the displacement and eventually ended up with the present 306cc. as THE ANSWER. Okay . . .

We already told you how much it weighs (196 pounds in case you missed that part). Wheelbase is 31.5 inches, height is 31.7 inches (at the seat) and ground clearance is 12.3 inches. Frame is double cradle, of mild steel.

Suspension is Bector 6-inch-travel forks up front and Telesco shocks on the rear. Alloy Akront rims are on both ends. The bike comes with Pirelli trials tires, which we think are the hot set up for the sport. (We used to use English Dunlops but have come to like the Pirellis better).

The drive chain is fully enclosed in a unique, free-floating chain protector which minimizes the amount of exposed chain. The inside of the protector is H-shaped to match the profile of the chain. This device does one good job of keeping the chain clean and it's definitely a feature that we'd like to see other manufacturers adopt.

The chain rolls around a relatively small, 33-tooth rear sprocket (compared to 48 teeth on the 247cc Cota). That protector covers about 95 percent of the length of the chain.

Controls are nicely fitted out, with alloy Akront handlebars. They're mounted further back than we were used to but we got along. A token speedometer is mounted way down on the right fork leg. We're not sure why

the Spanish mount their speedos there but it seems to be a tradition they want to stick with, so who are we to argue?

The bright red fiberglass tank/seat lifts up (after release of two rubber fasteners just above the footpegs) to allow access to the air cleaner (Twin-Air oiled foam, by the way), the spark plug and the carburetor (Carb is a 27mm Amal). The toolbox tray also rests nicely under there, on the frame tubes just above the air cleaner. Nice little tool kit it is, too. Even comes with a Montesa-monogrammed flannel rag.


Shift and brake levers are folding type and that's a neat feature. We wish they were spring loaded though, because a couple of times we managed to fold one or the other up against a rock and it didn't return to position. Caused us some grief once when we went fishing for the already minimum-sized brake lever and couldn't find it. Definitely went careening down a 'cliff' on that one!

Neat white plastic fenders front and rear. We probably wouldn't even feel inclined to switch to Preston Pettys if we bought a Cota 348, the stock fenders are so nice. Trail lighting is an option (our test bike didn't have them but the bike we borrowed for an hour to shoot static pics did). Take 'em or leave 'em.

The footpegs are very good and they're positioned higher and further back than most trials bikes. That and the different handlebar position made for a very strange riding position at first. The first few sections had us completely tired out, but as we began to adjust, we began getting on better with the bike and the sections. Considering the possibility that we have been riding 'wrong' all this time, we're experimenting with different height bars and maybe re-locating the footpegs, although that's a pretty major task to consider.

What else can we say? Just about everybody that has ridden a 348 Cota (including some well known Bultaco riders) have had praise and very kind words for it. We could probably go on and on, telling you every minute detail of the motorcycle, but we think that's not necessary. If you're interested in the best, you'll seek out a Montesa dealer and see if he has a Cota 348 left to sell. Take a good look at the machine and decide for yourself. We guarantee that you can't go wrong. You'll be buying the best.

The Montesa Cota 348 will enable you to do things on two wheels that even you didn't know you could do. It's that good.

One final word of advice: Keep your feet up! 



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Montesa-sponsored trials rider Martin Belair returned a few months ago from a six-month-long stay in Europe, where he worked at the Montesa factory's Barcelona main plant and rode local, National and World Championship trials. He also spent time with Jim Sandiford, the Montesa distributor for England, and again rode trials every weekend he was there. He also rode the tough Scottish Six Days Trials while he was in the U.K.

Twenty-one-year-old Belair returned to the United States to accept a position as Service Manager for Viva Distributing, the West of the Mississippi distribution arm for Montesa.

Since he did some development work and early competition riding on the sensational Cota 348, here's a brief interview with Martin Belair, Team Montesa trials rider.

PC: First of all, Martin, how did it come to pass that you went to Europe?

MB: Well, I've ridden for Montesa for quite a few years and we've always been good friends with the factory. Then about a year or so ago, a couple of Japanese factories made me some offers to ride but I elected to stay with Montesa. Mainly I just like Montesa, and the sort of family attitude and enthusiasm I'd encountered there.

Anyway, I stayed with them and somehow, I guess that impressed them and they invited me to come over to Spain. At first they only invited me over for three months, but I sort of imposed myself and stayed longer.

But I guess the the only object of the trip was for them to express their appreciation by having me to Barcelona to work at the factory and ride trials.

PC: What did you do at the factory?

MB: On the very first day I started right in on the assembly line, putting motors together. Then I went through every stage of the factory, ending up in the competition shop where I got to spend most of my time.

PC: Did you actually do development work on the 348?

MB: Well, when I arrived in Spain, it was only two weeks before the first 348 rolled off the assembly line, so most of the development work had already been done. Most of the work I did was on the relatively minor changes from the '76 to the '77 models.

But when you realize how minor those changes are, you begin to realize just how much work goes into a new model. There's a lot of hours testing and working on those minor changes.

PC: And while you were there, you rode several, or a lot, of events?

MB: Yes, it seems like we rode just about every weekend. The first trial I rode was the Spanish round of the World Championship. It was weird,

Interview with Team Montesa trials rider Belair on trials in Europe, trials in general and the 348 Cota, which he helped develop

MARTIN BELAIR

Popular Cycling interview conducted by Tom Beesley



because they rushed the first 25 348 Cotas off the assembly line to get out for the event. I was so busy working on the other bikes that I never got a chance to ride my bike until I squeezed in an hour of practice the very morning of the event. Up until then, I hadn't even swung a leg over a 348.

PC: Was it different?

MB: Boy was it! I made a lot of mistakes, because I was on a completely strange motorcycle, but I just missed finishing in the top ten. I guess that's not too bad.

PC: But how did you feel about it?

MB: I don't think I've ever felt so

'together' as I did in that trial. I knew that I was on a totally different bike, but I really felt good.

PC: How many World Championship rounds did you get to ride?

MB: I rode three actual World Championship points-paying events: Spain, France and Switzerland.

Switzerland was beyond me.

PC: What do you mean?

MB: It was too slippery. I couldn't even walk, much less ride. The trial was in deep, dark, black forests. This mud was on everything about a half-inch thick, and you couldn't even stand up.

PC: What about France?

MB: I was pretty pleased there. I didn't finish well, though. There are so many riders and the competition is so fierce that a couple of threes or a five drop you right down in the standings.

PC: *Didn't you do really well in a couple of events?*

MB: Yes, everything clicked together in a couple of big Spanish National rounds. Also in a big three-day International event, I finished ninth which was neat because just about everybody was there. It was just about like a World Championship round.

PC: *What did the people at the factory think of you?*

MB: Well, at first I was a stranger to them, and the Spanish just don't open up with strangers. But then they found out that my mother was from Barcelona and I became like a long-lost relative. After that it was good. The surprising thing was, when I won a couple of trials, the journalists and everybody would come up and say, "You must be the American Champion." They couldn't comprehend it when I told them I was only ranked 11th in the National standings last year.

PC: *This is a hard question. Why did you do so well in Spain and Europe when you were 'only' ranked 11th here at home? Surely, the 348 couldn't make that much of a difference.*

MB: Believe it or not, it was strictly a matter of motivation. I was just pumped up. The atmosphere is so good, you really want to ride well. It was just a state of mind.

PC: *What did you think of trials in England?*

MB: I spent two months riding with Sandiford and it was a lot different. The sections were a lot different, and I don't think I got along as well there as I did in Spain. Also, I had a hard time beating Jim (Sandiford) in several events.

PC: *What about the Scottish? For a fairly devoted trials enthusiast, that had to be quite a thrill, riding that one event.*

MB: Section-wise, it is. There just aren't any better sections than Scotland. And the whole atmosphere is neat. But I was really disillusioned with all the road riding. It's such a neat place, it seems like they could send you out through the country instead of just down the paved roads.

I was impressed with the way everybody visited and partied all week long. You haven't seen anything until you've seen Martin Lampkin (who won the event last year) putting away the ale in the headquarters hotel every night, then going out to ride in the morning. I don't know how those Yorkshiremen do it!

Scotland was fun!

PC: *Are you going to get to go to Europe this year?*

MB: No, I'm staying home to get

settled down in this new job this year, but I'm going back next year. Also, I need to concentrate more on the Nationals here this year.

PC: *Do you have a hero?*

MB: I guess that'd be Mick Andrews. I admire him a lot. He's got ability, he's a good technician and he's really a neat guy.

PC: *That's neat, because he's my hero too! Well, I guess we'd better get back to the 348. Is it the world's best trials bike?*

MB: Yeah, I think so, and not just because I ride one. Just look at the features the bike has. If it's not the best, it's so close that it doesn't make any difference.

PC: *Oh, I forgot. I wanted to ask you about your new job.*

MB: I'm the service manager for Viva Distributing. Mr. Adams, the man who bought the distributorship came to Barcelona about two weeks before I was to leave and he offered me the job then. I think I'm going to like it. I really wanted to work in the motorcycle industry.

PC: *How old are you?*

MB: I'm a ripe old 21.

PC: *What do you want to do? Do you want to be the World Champion?*

MB: Boy, I don't know about that. I've seen what it takes.

PC: *What DOES it take?*

MB: It takes a very serious attitude. The only person I can't understand is Martin Lampkin. He defies all the rules of seriousness, practice and training, yet he could be the World Champion. He was, last year. Everybody else has to try their hearts out.

PC: *Who do you think is the best trials rider in the world?*

MB: Rathmell. He's the best rider on the best machine. But Vesterinen beat him for the World Championship last year because Vesterinen wanted it more.

PC: *Well, Vesterinen is no slouch.*

MP: I know it. I've seen him show all the Britons tricks. He's really impressive, especially in the mud. We watched this one section in this important trial in Spain that was a super muddy long hill. Spectators on the side of the hill were having a hard time just standing there. I was talking with Pedro Pi and I said I didn't think anybody would make it at all. He said that they'd throttle up it, using the best throttle control and body English and balance.

Well, Vesterinen hit the bottom of the hill in probably third gear, flat out. He threw mud everywhere and went all the way up, still at full throttle, but just barely moving. But he made it.

PC: *I remember seeing Sammy Miller do something like that once. That's a pretty significant thing, that trials need not necessarily be slow. You can have*

high speed, very aggressive sections.

MB: That's why it frustrates me a little bit when I come back to Southern California and I see people riding 348s and they don't even realize what they're riding. They use maybe one-third of the potential of the bike. They don't realize how much testing and development went into getting the perfect amount and type of horsepower.

PC: *That was my favorite feature of the 348. I liked having that much top end power on tap if I needed it. But I like tweaking the throttle. Mick Andrews said that I'd probably get along better with a 250 than my 325 Sherpa T because of that.*

MB: It is neat, isn't it?

PC: *What else? What do you want to do?*

MB: I'd like to buy a sailboat and sail out of Marina del Rey (California) and be gone for awhile. Maybe live on it and sail back and forth in the Caribbean.

PC: *That sounds like a pretty good deal.*

MB: Seriously, I want to work at this job for a while, then take things as they come.

But I'm afraid that motorcycles have a pre-determined future in this country. They'll probably remain in existence as a form of transportation, but other than that, they'll probably be legislated right out of existence in the future.

PC: *Let's get back to talking trials. We'll save the politics for later. What do you think of the artificial type of trials that Don Smith is such a proponent of? Where you've got completely artificial sections like Volkswagens, in a confined arena and the riders do a loop, then another rider does a loop, and so on.*

MB: I might be old fashioned, but I don't like those kind of events. I like riding in areas of trees, rocks, sand and water. That's trials to me, not riding over a VW or a 50-gallon oil drum.

I don't care if trials becomes a million-dollar sport. I think I don't want it to. It's nice having a sport that only pure enthusiasts are in. You have something in common that way.

PC: *It's like 45-minute waits in the lift lines at the ski resorts. To me, that takes a whole lot of the fun of skiing down the slope out of it to just stand there for that long. The same thing goes for waiting in a long line to ride a section.*

MB: Fortunately, that only happens at a few of the bigger events, though.

PC: *What about rider professionalism in trials? A lot of people have blasted Honda for coming up with exotic prototype machines and buying the best riders. What do you think?*

MB: First I don't think that that's the only reason why Marland Whaley is the national champion. I think Marland

Continued on page 64



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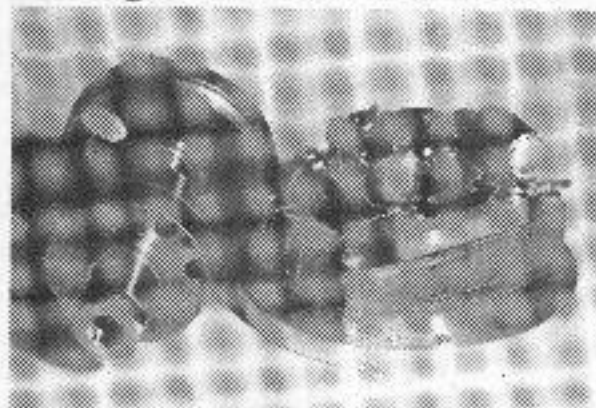
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CAN-AM

Continued from page 57

your legs rub against the black part, which doesn't look as bad when it does get rubbed, and is easier to replace.

Little Things: Good, easy to read speedometer... Turn signals are nicely protected (by the handlebars on front, by rubber mounts on the back)... Ignition key is also well protected but we sure wish the Feds didn't require both a key AND a kill button. We forgot one or both for awhile... We didn't like the tool kit. It didn't have much in it and was nearly impossible to get back into the little corner set aside for it. Also, the side cover bolt is a little thing that requires some sort of tool (like a dime) to get off to get at the tool kit in the first place. What do you do if you ain't got a dime?... There isn't even enough room for a spare spark plug in the tool compartment... Cheng Shin trials universal tires are okay, but once again, you have to compromise. They're perfect for neither dirt or street.

The muffler/spark arrestor is big and bulky, but that's the price you pay for 83 dBA... we liked the handlebar fraps, especially in comparison to the snowmobile grips the Can-Ams used to come with... snail cam chain adjusters are nice... good chain guide... weak bulbs (apparently) in the speedo because you could hardly see the neutral light... Actually, we might wonder about the street electrics because not only the instrument lights but the horns went away as well... Very good heat guards on the exhaust pipe. It's almost impossible to burn yourself, unless you're reaching down under for the choke lever... But then again, you shouldn't have to reach for the choke lever once the engine is hot anyway... rather brittle control levers. The 175 toppled over once and snapped the lever off clean. Looks like pewter or something inside. Normal use (meaning don't let the bike fall over on the concrete) should see the levers bearing up satisfactorily... improved air inlet with trap and drain tube to keep water away from the oil impregnated foam air filter... sturdy headlight mounting... Headlight is good for the street...

Final comment: We think the Can-Ams are pretty neat. As we've said, they aren't perfect at either street or dirt, but about as good a compromise as you can logically expect. Repeating ourselves one last time, we say that the 175 and 250cc Can-Am T'NT motorcycles are the perfect brace of motorcycles for the casual motorcycling family.

You can't ask for much more than that!

BELAIR

Continued from page 49

would still be the champion if he rode a Montesa (which he used to ride), a Bultaco, or just about anything else. I don't think it's harmful to be paid to ride trials. Leavitt was paid (by Bultaco) a long time before most other guys were. It used to be a big deal if somebody furnished you with a motorcycle and spares. Money is not a factor. I know that in most cases, it merely enables the rider to live while he rides and practices more. Marland and Bernie (Schreiber) practices a lot. That's probably why they're the best.

What I don't agree with is win incentive money. It's okay to get a bonus when you win, but if you're depending on it, you might tend to resort to cheating, or protesting. There have been a couple of cases of that in the AMA/NATC National Series.

I don't think that Marland Whaley's National Championships have sold that many bikes for Honda. The trials guys know better. It's the motocross guys who have been 'taken in' with the all-red 'Marty Smith Replica' motocross bikes.

Actually, I don't think that Marland's \$18,000 Honda is as good as a stock Spanish bike. It's the rider that counts there. That's better for us, though. It just shows the enthusiasts: "Look, they did their best and they can't even beat our stock bikes."

PC: This is getting too long. What do you want to say last.

MB: I just want to tell you my goals in life. This is what I told my Dad when he asked me once what I wanted to do with my life.

I said I wanted to restore a stable economy, ensure world peace and bring the most devastating insect to its knees.

He got quite a kick out of that.

PC: Well, your dad is quite a guy. He's one of my favorite people.

MB: I can't argue with that. He's still bigger than me.

PC: One last question. Have you ever had go-fast ambitions?

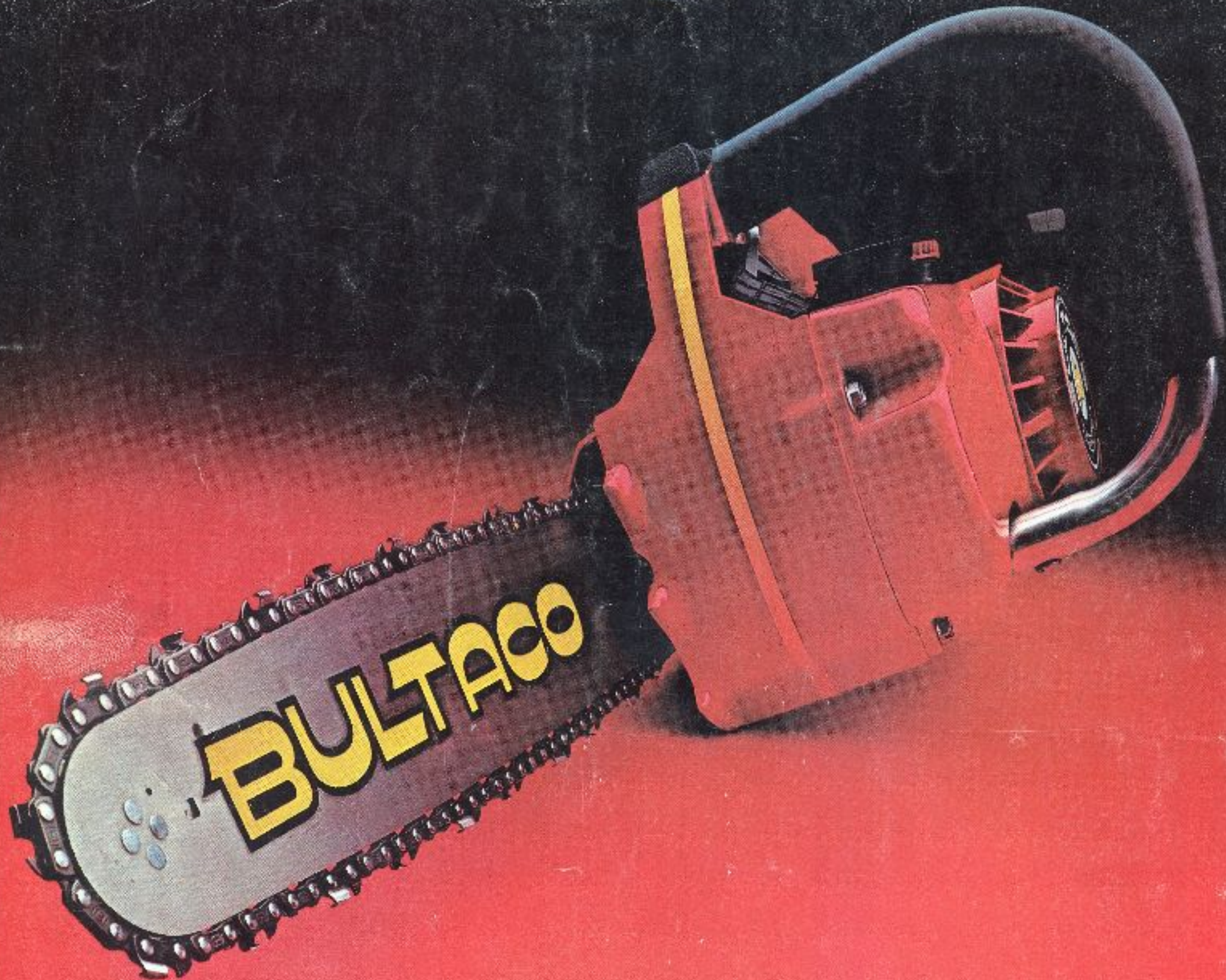
MB: Not really. I did try motocrossing on my brother's Pursang a couple of times, but I gave that up when I nearly totalled the motorcycle and myself. I enjoy gassing it up between sections sometimes on my trials bike, but not often. My biggest problem is that I always forgot to shut the throttle off.

PC: Boy, you've sure done a turn around from that trait.

MB: Really. I just like relaxing and taking it easy. I really admire the motocross guys because they maintain such a high level of concentration and strength for such a long time, but I'll leave them to it.

Yep, I've made up my mind. I think I'll stick with trials.

PC: Me too!



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