This show-quality Falta 125-framed C2400 fetched a whopping $3500, but you can go racing, Chay-Zed style, for $1000 or less. Once dialed in, CZs are as reliable as an anvil but handle better.

Pipers were built, so they’re a rare find in the United States. A good ’69 or ’70 “Side Piper” can bring $1500. Early ’70s CZs are more available and can be had for around $600. With a little suspension massaging, a carb and tuning, you can relive the Glory Days, Czech-style, for $1000-$1200.

KEEP AN EYE PEELED

Though most motor and chassis parts are readily available, be on the lookout for certain parts as you shop for CZ bikes or hardware. Clean expansion chambers for Twin Pipers or Side Pipers, aluminum coffin or Side Piper tanks and gas caps, original seat covers, straight handlebars with welded-on lever perches, ’73-’74 400 headpipes and rear hubs with riveted sprockets (from Twin Pipers and ’69 Side Pipers) are worth big bucks to hardcore CZ enthusiasts.

If you find a CZ 125, it’s best to steer clear, unless you are buying the bike for parts (cases, trannies and chassis parts were identical to 250/360/400 parts); 125s (model 984.5 or .6) were heavy and slow, and any attempts to make them fast usually resulted in grenaded motors.

Faltra Replicas are prized, but the 250s and 400s have too much rear wheel travel to meet the American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association’s four-inch rule. Falta 125s did not have the canted shock, so you can either run a 125 frame or modify the shocks to meet the rules. All other ’74 and earlier CZs
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meet the travel limits, stock, so steer clear of bikes with modified (moved-up or laid-down) shock mounts.

When searching for a Chay-Zed, avoid rusted fork tubes, which won't hold a seal and are costly to re-chrome. Damaged fiber-glass seal bases are also a haggling point, though seat covers can be replaced inexpensively. If you can find a CZ with a Mikuni carb and/or Motoplat ignition, jump on it, because you'll be that much closer to running competitively.

HOT TIPS FOR A HOT TIME
- Points ignition is the weak link in an otherwise stone-reliable motor. Motoplat is the way to go, with internal rotors for 125s and 250s and external rotors for 360s and 400s. The hotter spark puts more stress on the clutch, so check the dry clutch regularly — look for grooves in the basket and deformed or sheared dogs on the friction plates. An aftermarket or original equipment Japanese motorcycle two-wire kill switch is a must.
- Timing should be set at 2.4mm BTDC for 125s, 2.9-3.0mm BTDC for 250s and 3.4-3.6mm BTDC for 360/400s. If you run points, set the gap between .30mm and .40mm. Instead of PAL plugs, switch to NGK B8HS.
- If you can find Barnett friction plates, buy them. New plates, springs and throw-out bearings are readily available and should be installed for better racing performance. Magura levers and Motion Pro’s Terminal clutch cable provide better disengagement and feel at the lever.
- Engine and fork seals should also be replaced. Vintage Iron has complete seal and gasket kits for $49.95, and the main seals can be replaced without splitting the cases. Honda 305 fork seals (part #91253-273-000, available from Speed & Sport) offer three sealing lips for longer life than stock. Use two in each leg.
- Mikuni roundslide carbs are the hot setup over the stock Jikov. Use a 32mm for 125s; jetting should be 190 main, 45 pilot, 159-Q8 needle jet, 5F19 needle (middle) and a 3.0 slide. For 250s, go with a 34mm with a 240 main, 40 pilot, 159-Q8 needle jet, 6F16 needle and 2.5 slide. For 360s, use a 34mm with 270 main, 40 pilot, 159-Q6 needle jet, 6DH2 or 3 needle and a 3.0 slide. The 400s need a 36mm with 280 main, 25 pilot, 159-Q5 needle jet, 6FS needle and 2.5 slide. Toss the N20 airjet. Manifolds for Mikuni conversions are available from Vintage Iron, as are cables and throttles.
- Use a 2.5-inch ID radiator hose between the Mikuni and the airbox. If you run the stock carb, keep an eye on the boot, as it's flimsy and can pass dirt. Also, use a new manifold gasket and apply gasket sealant to prevent air leaks. The stock air filter is grim, so use a UNI NU-1801, available from Vintage Iron or directly from UNI.
- Steel wheels on older bikes are weak. Beef them up with modern rims and Buchanan heavy-duty spoked and nipples. Vintage Iron also sells freer-rolling sealed bearing kits for $74.95 (front and rear).
- Ceriani and CZ damper rods are interchangeable. Older CZ forks only had six inches of travel. You can extend that to seven inches (the AHRMA limit) with spacers (1" x 3.75" ID x 6.25 OD) and longer damper bolts. Simply drop the spacers into the fork sliders (it should seat in the recess at the fork base) and bolt back together. This won't work on red-framed bikes, which are at AHRMA's limit, stock. Out back, Works Performance shocks are the way to go.
- Keep a fresh chain on the bike and never let it get loose, or you can throw the chain. Also, keep your rear axle really tight and watch out for bent axle adjuster tabs on the swingarm. An inner tube rubber band, run from the axle adjuster to the brake rod, makes a handy brake return spring. The stock CZ shift shaft has the same size and spline as most Yamas but is very soft. A folding shift lever (IMS, Vintage Iron, Yamaha dealers) is also a good investment.
- If you do plan to race your cherry Side or Twin Piper, it's a good idea to replace the cherished metal fenders with replica plastic and cover or replace your gas tank. Hi-Point's aluminum tank (for Pentons, available from Vintage Iron) fits well and looks good (although a bit Husky-like). Replacement plastic airboxes and cone expansion chambers are also available from Vintage Iron.

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