STOP DOWN AT American Honda to pick up a test bike, and the folks there smile at you a lot. You meet the nicest people, etc. It's a big place, but very calm and orderly.

Stop in at Suzuki and you'll see a lot of oriental faces at desks and workbenches. Here, they seem a lot busier and a bit more confused—

STOP OVER AT Maico to get a test bike and you might end up drinking beer half the night and forget what you came for in the first place.

Then, you eventually stop over at American Jawa—the CZ folks. It's totally different from all the other places. Most of the nice ladies there look like someone's grandmother.

By the Editors of MODERN CYCLE

The Motokov Cocktail

Here's to you—suddenly back in Youngstown, Ohio, and wear babushkas to work on cold mornings. Several workers wander around with very conservative haircuts. It's almost like you just tuned into the Lawrence Welk show... ten years ago.

After saying hello to Vladimir and Charley, you are led into the office of our favorite Communist, Emil Sladkowsky. Emil is a neat guy who seems to always know exactly what you're thinking. He holds his cigarettes just like the villians in those James Bond movies and speaks perfect English that is just mildly tweaked.

Emil gently quizzes us about our intentions with the test bike. We assure him that we fully understand the CZ mystique. To make sure that we genuinely understand, he arranges for us to spend some time with an honest-to-gawd factory CZ mechanic. “This way,” says Emil, “you will not make any mistakes when you write about the machine.” He then relates to us several amusing stories about journalistic blunders that have been committed in the past.

It turns out that the mechanic is Charley—a man who was Paul Freidrich's wrench when Paul was on top of the world. He told us about the 52 horsepower CZ that was so violent that even Freidrichs didn't want to ride it. “Please,” pleaded Freidrichs, “all I want is 40, maybe 42 horsepower maximum. No more.” They say riding this vicious bike made an old man out of Paul in one season.

“The factory knows how to make horsepower,” says Charley, “it's just a matter of how much reliability one can build into a bike with the maximum horsepower. For example, the
400 CZ you are about to test is very strong—but it is easy to make it even stronger. However, you make a 400 'anything' rev too much and the motor will fail too soon. This is not desirable. Better to compromise proper horsepower with proper lifespan. Is that not correct?"

It sounded logical to us. After all, how many of the radical reed, stuffed, ported and carbed wonders held together week after week.

After we loaded the stone stock 400 into the Mighty Blue Flame (an El Camino of Dubious Parentage) we steered down to Pete Maly's shop in Costa Mesa. Pete is a 100 percent CZ freak and his shop handles and services nothing else. Since he's been doing this for some time now, we figured he'd know all the secrets we were after. One day later, we emerged from the shop with all the hot setups recorded on film and notebook. But first, we figured we'd better ride the bike in standard trim, just to see what you, the innocent buyer, might be getting into.

Starting drill on the 400 goes like so: turn the two petcocks on (straight down) and diddle with the tickler on the Jikov carb until gas slobbers all over the clean cases; then push down on the kickstarter while exerting outward pressure. A detent ball will
move out of the way if you do it just right and the kickstarter will swing out to the kicking position. It is a great sport watching someone not familiar with CZ's trying to get the kickstarter out. Now, give the kickstarter a few gentle prods to get the feel of the arc, then bring the position up near the top and stomp like you mean it. As long as the throttle is cracked slightly, the motor should light off. When cold, it'll blubber for a moment or two—then clean out. When hot (assuming the Jikov is jetted correctly) it should snap cleanly to life. Part of the trick to making a Jikov allow the engine easy starting, lies with the idle screw. If your CZ is set up to not idle, you should have starting problems. Not a fast idle by any means, just enough to allow a babboom-bab boom tickover. Please don't assume that the Jikov is going to remain faithful as a good starter just because you know the ritual. All the ritual is going to allow is mostly good starts. Every once in a while, the Jikov is going to go tits-up and let the lower end get loaded with mix. They don't call the carb a Jackov for nothing. Pete Malo told us the Jikov is a decent carb for racing—but not for riding to the starting line. It's true.

After we warmed up the big 400, we clumsily rode over to the starting line. You just don't ride a 400 CZ slowly. Trying to plod along in low gear results in bang-bang-bang jerking power impulses. Chain snatch and grabby spats of power are all you get unless you slip the clutch and blip the throttle.

Once we got to the starting line, we dispensed with all the slow stuff and blipped the throttle. Baaaarrrrrrraaaap! Hot damn! A giant rooster tail and the rear end slithered heavily under power.

Now that's how a motorcycle should feel. When you turn the loud handle, great heaping gouges of soil should blow back and knock down any one directly behind you. After a few blasts, we circled back around to directly behind the starting gate. Lessee. Nestle right up on the front of the bike and lay the chest on the cross bar. Now . . . wing the sucker up to about 6000 thou and dump the clutch. The front end tries to claw up, but the wheel breaks loose and thump-thumps over the metal of the starting gate. No more than a dozen feet on the other side...
When under power the CZ turns very good.

Come off the gas and you may find the bike doing strange things.

Extruding boss on the swingarm axle is the portion that sticks.

Slots machined by the factory to hold backing plate sometimes cause internal warping; Jawa warrantee all the ones that are bad.

By drilling this hole completely through, the forks become a bit softer.

If there's any corrosion on the boss, it'll turn itself into a vicious monster next time you try to remove it.

Accessory fork spring really makes those forks work; use a 20- or 30-wt. oil.

All the mysteries about timing a CZ are revealed by Pete Maly.
You better do this, or buy an accessory pipe.

We had gone along to try the PRO-FORMANCE PRODUCTS PIPE. Not only was it quiet, but it allowed the big 400 to rev an additional thousand rpm in each gear. It has a built in silencer and tucks in closely. CMC likes the SONIC-WELD pipe, but we never got a chance to try one. The PP is a good one, though, and doesn’t take anything away from the bottom. It even softens the snap a bit, making slow corners easier.

Ah ha! A sneek peek at the frame of a true CZ freak. Cuts are clean and simple.

That’s how far CZ guys are moving their shox forward.

Trick bikes use a chain tensioner, keeps the chain from dragging on the swingarm.

Rear end of the swingarm has a kink in the tube. Looks like a weak spot to us, but no one has bent the arm yet.
of the gate, we hit second and the CZ snorts and pulls strongly. What the hell. Without waiting any longer, we hit third and lo! the 400 squats down and digs in. Third gear takes us all the way deeply into the first turn just as fast as we’ve ever gotten there.

Gotta idea.

Back to the starting gate. This time, we try a second gear start. Shit. First try is a bummer, as the engine momentarily bogs and the front end jumps to near vertical. Once more. Apparently we didn’t have enough revs, so we get on tippy toes, lean forward and tweak the throttle until the bike starts to buzz at the grips. When the imaginary flag drops, the clutch gets rudely dumped and the CZ absolutely bolts out of the hole. Right away, we hit third gear and the power curve is snared in the fat part and the CZ lifts the front wheel a few inches off the ground. We arrive in the first turn a full second sooner than the first time. If you have the balls to wing the 400 CZ up to peak revs and dump the clutch while in second gear—there’s nothing around that’s going to beat you to the first turn. Nothing.

Your first few laps around a course on the CZ will reveal nothing in the way of surprises if you’ve ever spent any time on CZs. Brakes are strong—perhaps the most sensible in the game. Not as touchy and engine-sapping as Yamahas, but every bit as powerful when you lean on them. You don’t have to stretch for anything when straddling a CZ—like some of the awkwardly placed controls on many bikes. Apparently, the CZ is designed by someone who can actually ride a motorcycle.

However, when you begin to push the bike after a few familiarization laps, you’ll immediately notice the changes. The front end doesn’t bite like the CZs of the past. There’s a bit more rake and trail—making the bike respond somewhat like a Bultaco in smooth turns. In the past, CZs used to bite like hungry rats in tight corners and the rear ends used to move around a great deal. Not any more. Now, the bikes are very stable in back and the front end tends to push a bit in tight turns. To keep the front end from wandering out, we found it best to get body weight well forward and press down on the inside grip. Also, if the power isn’t kept well on during cornering, the machine will start to move outward. Often, both wheels break loose at the same time if the rider has his weight forward and insufficient power turned on.

While the frame geometry change is a trade off of sorts, we feel it’s a reasonable one. Stability over whoopiedies is far better than with any previous CZs—and ranks among the best overall.

As long as the rider approaches a tight corner properly and executes the actual turn with sufficient power, the CZ will snuck through very quickly. We were especially impressed by the ability of the machine to change from side to side through some tight switchbacks. Steering cannot be considered as accurate as a Maico, but the front end tracks reasonably well.

One thing to be avoided is the use of too low a gear in tight corners. Power is so strong at low rpm’s that the bike tends to lift and flop. Let’s say you’re in a turn that will make the engine lug in second gear, but you (daring soul that you are) want to get out of there in a hurry, so you punch it down to low and screw it on. That big 4.70 x 18 Barum on the back will get so much traction that the machine will rocket off in the direction that the rear wheel is pointed to—not the front wheel. At first, it takes getting used to the fact that the CZ will pull down as low as it can. If the engine does start to protest lugging out of that second gear corner, then it’s best to fan the clutch lever quickly. This is usually more than enough to take the power band over its hump and get the motor pulling properly. If you ever have to use low gear on the 400 for anything but a start situation, it’ll have to be a really gnarly track.

Pete Maloy told us that he never had to mess with the gearing on his 400; the 14-tooth countershaft and the 52-tooth rear gave him enough for any situation. Compared to his 250, which demanded a gearing check from track to track, the 400 is very flexible. The 250 CZ has 62 teeth at the rear and either 13, 14 or 15 up front. Even with the tallest gearing the 250 will accept, the stock 400 will outpull it.

Just about the only gripe we had, was with the suspension. In today’s competition, a conventional rear end is simply not going to cut
On works bike, the Czechs use this neat little bracket to keep pipe and muffler as a unit.

Light weight air box cuts a hundred and twenty-six pounds off all by itself. It's a CMC item.

For those of you who ride the desert a light weight skid plate is available—and a must. CZ cases go for over $400 a pair.

it. No way. Compared to any of the long travel rear suspensions on the market, the CZ is a stone age throw-back. We asked American Jawa about the problem and they told us they were currently "proving" out the air/oil suspension that Falta used in his world title chase. They said they don't want any of the accompanying problems of a long travel and when it was totally satisfactory, then and only then, would they come out with it. Quite frankly, we feel that if Falta couldn't break it, who in the hell could? Whatever they do, they'd better do it soon. Even though many shops offer an inexpensive frame cut, some riders are not willing to spend the extra money on the modification. Even though the CZ is an easy frame to modify, the rider will dump a fair sum of cash into the conversion. CMC (Maly's shop) charges around ninety bucks to do all the cutting and welding. (Check out the photos for details and measurements.) They've had good luck with the new Boge shocks with 90- or 100-pound springs installed—depending on rider conditions.
weight. Cost of these is $47.50, plus $12.95 for springs. You can see that this is at least 150 bucks outlay, and possibly two hundred total if much experimenting with oils and springs is needed.

With a properly setup rear end (one that's identical to the Falta-type frame), the racer will get 6 to 6½ inches of travel out of the rear end. Compared to the meager four inches of the standard frame, this is a huge improvement. We've had several rides on the modified chassis CZs and can reliably report the difference is great.

One additional side benefit of this conversion is that the small amount of front-end washout we were talking about earlier completely disappears. And, the rear end stability actually increases. The bikes we rode were equipped with Poppy bodied Koni shocks—as of yet, we haven't had a chance to play around with the Boge shocks CMC is so stoked about. Strangely, Peter Maly hasn't dabbled with the aluminum bodied shocks at all; he finds that the Boges are very easy to alter and feature a huge range of adjustments.

Forks on our new CZ measured
out to an actual 7 1/2 inches of travel and worked quite well. However, CZ has been having a great deal of trouble with the forks made in the last year or so.

It seems that the left fork leg has a boss machined in that often leaves a warp in the inner fork surface. This causes the damper to bind some distance from the bottom of the stroke, effectively cutting off an inch-and-a-half of travel. Most riders never even notice this and dismiss it as a “normal” set of legs. The way to check it is to remove the fork springs and stroke the fork legs up and down. If you feel any binding, then take the leg to your dealer, or

High points of this latest CZ include liberal use of lightweight materials that you had to buy in the past. Our bike came stock with plastic fenders, a foxy aluminum tank held on with a leather strap, and alloy rims. Unfortunately, you’ll collect mud on the shoulder rims, unlike the new DIDs.

The frame is still mild steel and heavier than just about anything else on the market, but it never breaks. Chances are if you break a CZ frame, you won’t be around to talk about it.

Lots of old familiar pieces are still on the bike, like the welded-on levers and the funky flap on the saddle. Our bike came with a good

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<th>Price, suggested retail (approx.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>$1300 + tax &amp; lics.</td>
<td>CZ-900 MX/DESERT</td>
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**Motor**
- Single cylinder, air-cooled 2-stroke
- Bore/stroke: 82mm/72mm
- Displacement (cc): 383cc
- Compression ratio: 10:1
- Brake horsepowor (Sae): 90bhp
- Ignition: Flywheel magneto

**Recommended spark plug**
- Pal 14-15

**Specified timing and spark plug gap**
- 3.5-4.0mm

**Primary drive**
- Straight cut gears

**Final drive**
- 94-1/4 chain

**Gear ratios**
- 1: 1.84/1
- 2: 1.42/1
- 3: 1.05/1
- 4: 0.87/1

**Air filtration system**
- Still air box

**Lubrication**
- Paper filter

**Gasoline and oil mix**
- 20:1

**Castrol GP**

**Fuel tank capacity**
- 8 litres

**Oil tank capacity**
- None

**Recommended gasoline (factory)**
- Premium grade

**Frame (type)**
- Single down tube

**Wheelbase**
- 66 inches

**Ground clearance**
- 7 inches

**Seat height**
- 33 inches

**Front suspension**
- Telescopic, internal spring 7.5 inch travel

**Rear suspension**
- Trial shocks, swingarm, conventional angle

**Wheels:**
- Front: Akront alloy 21-inch
- Rear: Akront alloy 18-inch

**Tires:**
- Front: 2.75-21 Barum
- Rear: 4.50-18 Barum

**Brakes/hubs:**
- Front: Conical internal expanding brake
- Rear: Conical internal expanding brake

**Fuel tank material**
- Molded alloy

**Fender material**
- Plastic

**Instruments (if any)**
- None

**Weight (actual with oil in forks and gearshift)**
- 238 lbf

**Weight (actual with oil in forks and gearshift)**
- 109 lbf

**Rear wheel**
- 129 lbf

**Exhaust system**
- Expansion chamber

**Silencer/spark arrestor (if any)**
- Factory silencer

**Starter (kick, electric, location)**
- Kick start

**Primary start**
- No

**Guaranteed, if any**
- Factory defects on workmanship only

**Intended purpose of bike**
- Motocross and/or desert

**Country of manufacture**
- Czechoslovakia

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Filtron, unlike some models last year that came with the paper trash.

You’ll still find that super expensive shift lever that can cause you to break the shift shaft when you fall. Savvy riders replace it immediately with a Yamaha lever that gives a bit and only costs a fraction of the stock item.

Oh yeh, cost. CZ parts are probably the most expensive to be found. But, if care is taken, the bike shouldn’t break. Nothing happened to ours, even after Billy Payne spent a whole day thrashing the bike. The only way to break a CZ, is to neglect

(Text continued on page 79)
it. Neglect comes under two categories: (1) Failure to keep clean air and gas coming in the engine, and (2) Failure to keep things tight and adjusted properly. This means nuts and bolts and ignition timing. If the rider even gives the bike a half chance with decent maintenance, he should have no hassles. But if he is one of the dolts who doesn’t clean the filter and lets the timing wander, then it’s bankruptcy city in a big hurry.

Other than the suspension we mentioned earlier, riding the bike is a very natural thing. It’s almost impossible to miss a shift, even though the long throw takes some getting used to; savvy CZ riders adjust the lever up high and learn to stab at it with their instep. As long as the lever is punched, it’ll find its way into the next gear. The gearbox still retains the bearings of old, unlike the 250s gearbox, which has bushings in it. Long time CZ lovers swear the four-speed box is good, very good, while the five speed is much less reliable. Still, even the five speed is superior to almost anything else on the market in terms of reliability.

DETAILS

Stock CZ points wear quickly and are prone to breaking the phonedelic rubbing block. When you buy a replacement set, it’ll be of American manufacture (CAMCO) and they’ll be better than the stockers. You cannot buy original points in this country—even the stuff stocked by Jawa is made here.

Oh yeh, that Yamaha shift lever we talked about earlier goes for $3.95, while the CZ lever is $18.00.

Part of taking care of the 400 (or any CZ) is the ritual of filling the swingarm up with oil after every race. A 27mm socket will fit the big nut, which should be safely wired in place. The oil drains out while the swingarm is moving, but not while sitting in your garage, making it a sort of constant loss system. Let that swingarm run dry too long, and you’ll never be able to remove it without a torch or a hacksaw, or both. Be warned.

Also, keep a close eyeball on the steering head, as those holldown nuts tend to work loose, no matter how much Loctite is used.

When you’re timing the CZ, always get the strongest mag field before you start the timing ritual. The X mark (it’s visible if you squat down and look) should be between the two marks when the points open to be at peak efficiency. The 400 functions best at 3.5 to 3.7mm B.T.D.C., while the 250 is happiest at 3.0 to 3.4mm. Timing should be checked after every race.

One of the problems we have heard as a common complaint with Czs, is clutch slippage. Most of this is caused by filling the gearbox up too full. The seal will blow and the plates will get drenched, causing the slippage. The box takes one pint and one pint only. 80 weight oil in the 400 is fine and 90 weight is preferred in the 250.

Motor mounts can and will come loose in the 400. When this happens, the bike will start to vibrate in a manner that cannot be ignored. Fortunately, there are steel inserts in the main mounts that will prevent the case holes from being distorted. Maico should be so lucky.

Back to the forks. If you want to pre-load the stock springs after they take a set (which they will), use a valve spring that’ll fit in the fork tubes. Make sure it’s no longer than 1¼ inch. While you’re at it, check the entire fork assembly for burrs, or rough spots.

Most riders prefer 20 or 30 weight fork oil in Czs. 200cc is the right amount if the forks have been flushed, or 190cc if oil is merely being changed.

To further improve the fork action, there are several springs on the market that last longer and are softer than the stock CZ. All of the 200 pound riders loved the stock springs, so it seems that the bikes are designed with beef eaters in mind.

That Jikov functions best on the West Coast with the following combination: 140 max, 40 pilot, second hole from the top on the needle position. There are no needle jets available, as the Jikov has a fixed needle. Most riders end up with either a Bing or a Mikuni. Of the two, the power will be the smoothest with the Mikuni and the mostest with the Bing. Start with this combination for a 36mm Bing. 35 pilot jet, 280 or 285 needle and a 180 or 185 main jet. To jet a Mikuni, refer to our Mikuni carb tuning manual featured in last month’s Modern Cycle. Oh yeh, one important thing. The Jikov will not work in the desert. You will simply run out of gas in the float bowl and stuff a motor. OK?

The 34mm Mikuni seems to be the favorite for the 400. Here’s a starting point on the Mikuni jetting: 260 or 270 main, 35 or 40 pilot jet, 2.5 slide, a 6DH3 needle and a 150 PO needle jet. But still take the time to read that Mike story, anyway.

CMC showed us how they do their frames for the forward mounted shocks. Pete Maly says he was very pleased with Boge shocks, and uses the 13” MX1300 Boge. That sells for $47.50 a pair. He sets the shock up with 90-pound springs for most riders, uses the heavy compression valve and the standard up stroke, with 100cc of Molly Blue Medium shock oil. Springs for the Boge go for $12.95 a pair. Be prepared to experiment with different rates.

The pipe on a stock 400 is a two-fold source of irritation: it’s louder than all hell and it frequently comes apart at the joint, leaving the rider in an instant pole vault. To keep it from surprising you, take a look at the sketch.

SUMMATION OF ALL THE ABOVE

The 400, unlike the 250, is plenty fast and has competitive power out of the crate. On a smooth track, the rider can use the handling and the wide power band easily. But the way things are today, he must change the rear end to a long-travel setup to do well on a true motocross track. The bike will beat him to death if he doesn’t, compared to the new trick equipment available. You can buy a CZ 400 at a good price most anywhere, no matter what they say the claimed retail price is. There are plenty of deals to be had. However, be prepared to add $150 to $200 to the purchasing price for the trick rear end. Or else be prepared to get passed a lot in the bump stuff. And that’s the truth.