

DIRT BIKE

VOLUME SIX NUMBER ELEVEN NOVEMBER 1976

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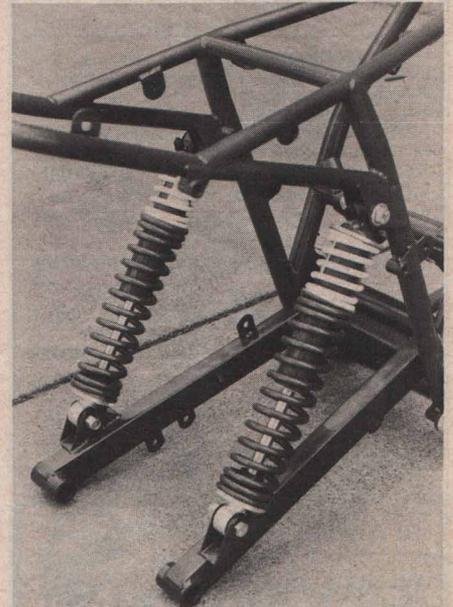
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DICK MANN FRAME FOR THE TT500

A Yamaha that handles or a BSA with a heart transplant?

by Bruce Woods

Northern California, Bigfoot country.

Slowly the soft tendrils of wine country grapes wrest the gradually softening soil from the pucker bushes of the south.

Highway 99 is the conscious man's alternative to Dust Belt 5. Bette Midler and The Grateful Dead sing themselves to the very edges of boredom, being the only two tapes in the DIRT BIKE truck. Hopefully, Schoon and I can slip them onto our expense accounts. Sanity protection as a business necessity.

Northward ho, to pick up a Penton from Cranky Carl and to do a short product evaluation on the TT500 frame offered by twice AMA #1 Dick "Bugsy" Mann.

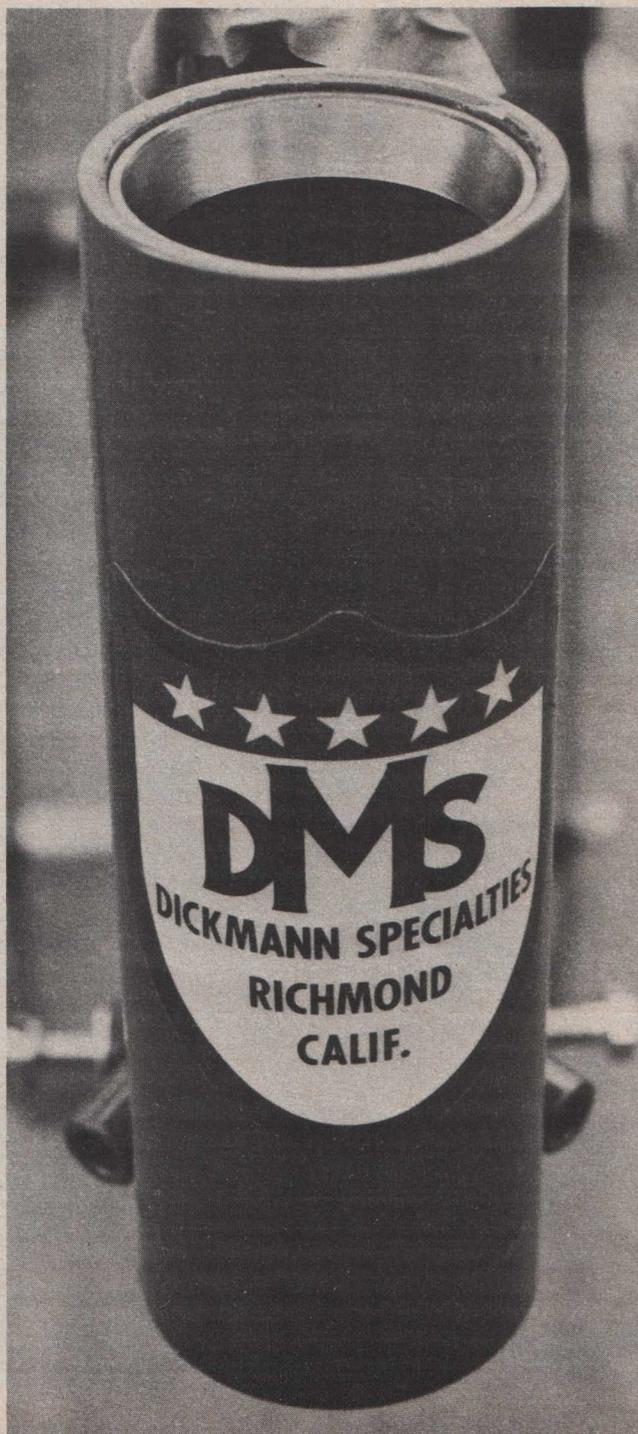
Yep, going down that long, lonesome road, babe. Food on the highway is more dangerous than the drunken driver, more deadly than a washed-out bridge. We find that a cooler lodged in the forward right corner of the longbed *cannot* be reached from the shotgun window.

Calling Carl from the *Denny's* in Placerville, a friendly freak asks if we needed money to eat. We look worse than we had thought.

We take a road break at chez Cranke. Carl's lady, Nancy, feeds us spaghetti. Carl gives us the Penton and the location of his secret fishing hole. We like the spaghetti, the bike and the fishing just fine.

* * *

Back to the TT500. Since its inception, the thumper has been a personal favorite of certain members of the DIRT BIKE staff. Some of us, it seems, have a weakness for heavy bikes that make phumphing sounds. Trouble was, though, that those same folks had a hard time manhandling the long bike over the



tight trails which they love. Suspension, too, has been a sore point, particularly for riders who sit down a lot. Finally, due to the wheelbase and weight distribution, the thumper had a tendency to wash out the front wheel when pushed hard on less-than-perfect traction surfaces. In short, all the usual problems. None insurmountable, none sufficient to make us dislike the TT. One had to wonder what could be done with a good frame . . .

Dick Mann needs no introduction. See?

So. After sleeping with the

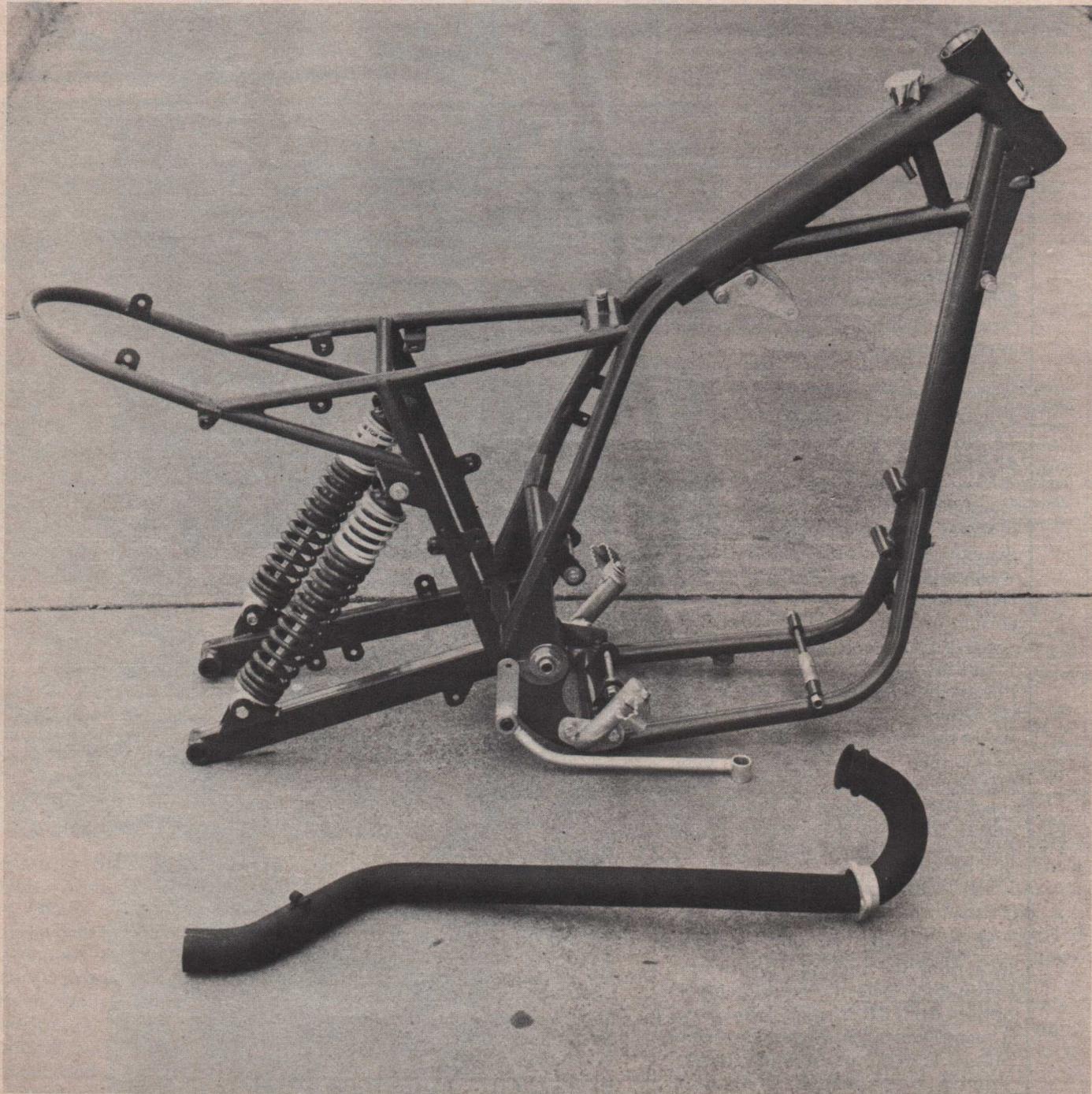
aforementioned Penton in a semi-reputable hotel near Richmond, with the couple in the next room filling our night and morning with a blow-by-blow of their fighting and making up, we arrived at Dick Mann Specialties.

The frame, on first examination, is beautiful. Clean welds, nice lines, a red somewhere between Honda-fire-engine and Gallo Ruby port. After we took a few photos and ogled the shop, Bugs asked us if we'd like to go for a ride.

Lives there a thumper freak with soul so dead?

We arrived at Carnegie Cycle Park with the TT, the Penton and, my heart stirs at the memory, Dick's 400cc BSA Two-Day bike of yore.

(Before a new rash of Beezer freaks fill Dick's mailbox with requests, let us tell you that we have just learned that CCM has acquired the jigs and tools necessary to build and supply parts for the B.50 series BSAs. Anglophiles should address inquiries to CCM Imports America, Inc., P.O. Box 475, 4452 W. Bull Valley Road, McHenry, Illinois 60050; phone (815) 385-4661. Keep the faith, babies.)



A fine piece of workmanship. Would that we could show it to you in color . . .

The afternoon's testing comprised play on the MX track with the assorted bikes, and a trail ride over the brick-baked Carnegie hills. The park, like most of California, has had a hard, rainless year. Even the deer were too thirsty to run away, and watched us with hot disinterest.

To say that the Mann frame made a difference would be understatement. Directional control is improved greatly. Stability over whoops also. The loss of weight and improved ground clearance make cornering a safer and saner proposition. In fact, tight dry-wash

running becomes perfectly possible where the stock TT would have lodged itself tighter than a square peg in a round hole.

Suffice it to say that we were impressed. Impressed enough to con Dick into loaning us a frame to use in our TT project bike (remember?). Next month we'll give an ease-of-installation report along with discussing the other goodies we've come up with for the thumper.

The frame is available at a cost of \$595, complete with footpegs, brake pedal, exhaust pipe and all nuts, bolts and brackets, from Dick Mann

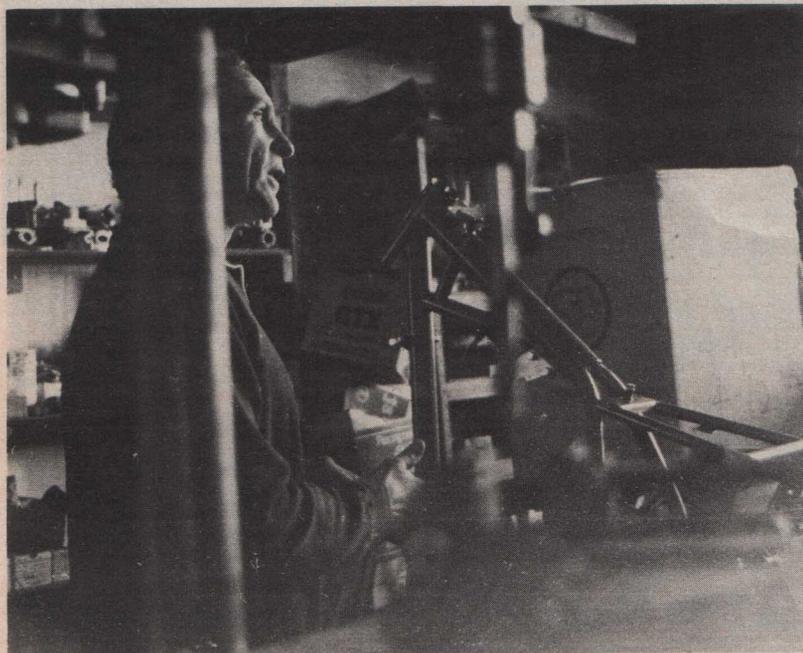
Specialties, Richmond Industrial Village #34, South 10th and Wright, Richmond, California 94801. In the future, like before this sees print, Dick will also have available carb and air box kits, skid plates and rock guards. In the works are an SL/XL125 Honda frame and a Cafe frame for those street scratchers who covet the TT's thumping power.

Oh yeah. After considerable begging and effacement I was able to ride Bugs' BSA. No one can buy one, so I won't make the description long and enticing.

I just think I'm in love . . .



The completed package doesn't look *that* different from stock. Super-Trapp silencer reaches a fine compromise between power and quiet.



Bugs in the shop . . .



. . . and out.