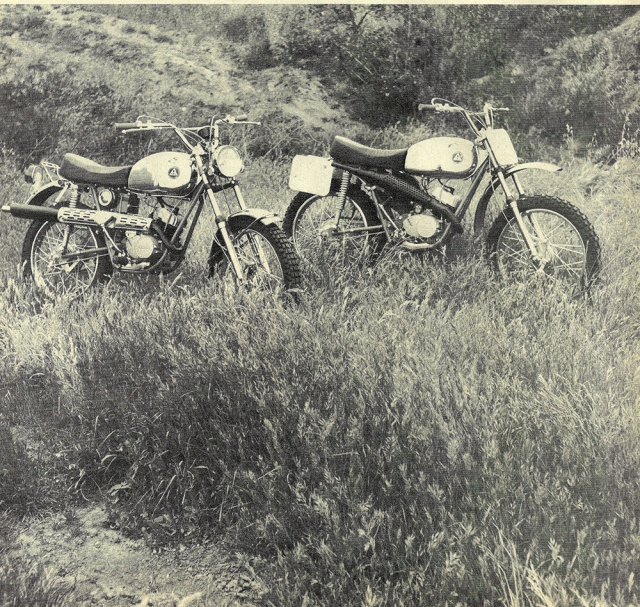
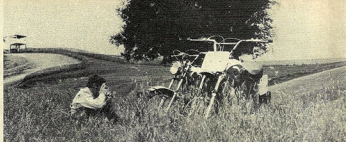
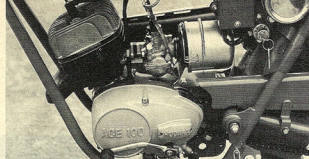


HODAKA SUPER RAT AND 100B

The New Hodakas are
Still Red, but Color
isn't Everything!





CYCLE WORLD

IMPRESSION

THE HODAKA 100B is still another variation on the Hodaka theme, and is therefore very similar to its predecessors. Finish is exactly the same, with the exception of the muffler which is now painted black. The tailpipe is still chrome-plated, and the brushed chrome heat shield is also retained.

The most obvious changes to the Ace 100B are the handlebars, which are higher and wider, and the VDO-type speedometer, which is much larger and easier to read than the unit that was previously mounted in the headlight. The seat has the same new contours as the Super Rat and is very comfortable.

Everything mechanical is exposed for easy servicing, and the tool canister is located directly under the seat. The battery and air cleaner are also exposed and easily accessible. One of the best-liked characteristics was the low noise level. Exhaust muffling is excellent, and intake roar is at a minimum. Mechanical noise from the engine is practically non-existent.

The overall gear ratio of 8.7:1 is a little high for trail riding but is satisfactory for the street in keeping up with moderately fast traffic. With a few simple modifications, the 100B could be transformed into an excellent enduro machine. Ground clearance is a whopping 11 in. and although no engine shield is fitted, the power unit is situated well inside the frame tubes and should be invulnerable.

Lighting is better than the usual trail machine with a huge headlight unit and a correspondingly large tail light. The side reflectors required by law are mounted unobtrusively and don't detract from the appearance of the machine.

Summing up, we enjoyed our visit with the two Hodakas and were once again impressed by the excellent construction and amazing reliability of these delightful lightweights. We'd still like to see a blue (or green or brown or gold) Hodaka, however!

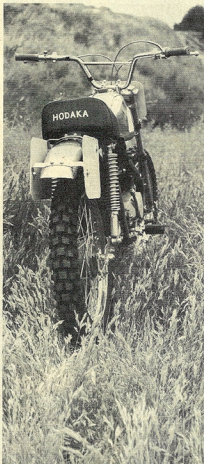
CERTAINLY THE BEST thing to come from Hodaka since the size increase from 90 to 100cc is the new Super Rat, a motocross machine straight out of the crate. Hodaka's "any-color-so-long-as-it's-red" policy has been carried out once again, but this time with more verve. The traditionally-functional styling has been modified only slightly with the restyling of the gas tank (now narrower) and the slimming and stretching of the seat.

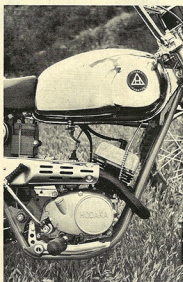
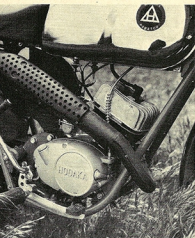
Included in the package are an expansion chamber, large washable foam air cleaner, and competition number plates. Just add gas and oil and you're well on your way to winning a trophy!

Engine modifications include a one-ring racing piston with a Dykes ring, a 13:1 high compression cylinder head, an expansion chamber and a 24mm Mikuni carburetor, which is only 2mm larger than the stock unit on the 100B model. A wide, flat torque range is the engine's strong point, with power coming on strong at approximately 3500 rpm and pulling well right up until it flattens out abruptly, at which time you know you'd better shift up in order to keep accelerating. There are many more modifications that could be performed, but the machine's primary virtue, its excellent mid-range power, would suffer.

Reflecting back, we can remember the first red Ace 90's with the same frame design as today's models and what looks like the same engine unit. Soon came a five-speed transmission and a couple of racing goodies, and the little red machines became the unit to beat at local scrambles and desert races all over the country. A few owners bored out their engines and tried to gain extra displacement to make the machines more competitive, and many companies produced both engine and frame modification pieces to improve the then best handling and fastest bike around.

When the Ace 100 appeared, and then the lengthened swinging arm, the little bikes really started to catch on and





became the most popular machines in their class. Sturdy construction and attention to detail characterized these modern-day marvels of reliability.

Riding the Super Rat at Saddleback Park was a real blast. It only takes a couple of kicks to get the engine running, and it will actually sit there and idle as one puts on his helmet and gloves. Low gear seems a trifle too low until you realize how tight the engine will wind before the power starts to fall off. Upward gear changes can be made equally well with or without the clutch. Gear changes are always positive and crisp, demonstrating the strength and precision of the ball-lock transmission.

Handling is also considerably improved over the earlier Ace 100 models. The front forks are conventional telescopic units with rebound damping being accomplished by oil moving through a series of holes in the fork tubes. Fork travel was judged more than adequate for the machine's weight, and aside from being a little choppy, the rear suspension got an affirmative nod from most of the testers.

It was generally agreed that the machine could be a little longer in the swinging arm section, however, as it tended to handle a little too "quickly" for most of us. Lengthening the swinging arm by about two inches is an old trick used by many successful Hodaka aficionados, and one that might well be performed at the factory for next year's production models.

Brakes are adequate for dirt riding, but required a lot of pressure to get the desired amount of retardation. We even took the wheels off and sanded the brake linings with No. 100 grit sandpaper, but this helped only until the glaze formed again on the lining.

A welcome change was the installation of larger tires (3.00-19 front and 3.25-19 rear) which contributed to the machine's fine handling. With the short swinging arm, however, it was all too easy to get the front wheel airborne, causing some anxious moments while climbing hills. Also appreciated for muddy going is the high-mounted front fender, which reduces unsprung weight and prevents the buildup of mud between the fender and wheel. We liked the spring steel fender mount which would spring back into shape after dropping the bike on its side.

Handlebars are a trifle wide, even for motocross, but they made it possible to ride for long distances without getting unduly tired. The seat-handlebar-foot peg relationship was excellent, allowing a comfortable standing as well as sitting position. This machine was obviously designed with the average American (not Japanese) rider in mind.

With a price of \$495, it isn't really that cheap, but it offers a sound bargain and a well-proven design. □