

With Laeger's
CR500 3-Wheeler Conversion
You Get . . .

Maximum Movement

BY BRUCE SIMURDA

There was a time when it looked like you would soon be able to walk right into your local ATV dealer and purchase a brand-new, 500cc, mega-powered 3-wheeler. One manufacturer got pretty close, too, with Honda stopping just short with their 350cc four-stroke-powered X machine. Then came the sudden demise of the 3-wheeler, and the entry of the 4-wheelers. Now they got the big, powerful two-stroke motors! Sure, they had more weight to lug around and needed cubic



horsepower dripping from the exhaust pipe just to keep up with the lighter 250cc 3-wheelers, but to many 3-wheeler lovers, especially the heavier riders, it just didn't seem fair. They too deserved all the horsepower they could want.

One person who set out to do something about this obvious injustice was Mark Laeger of Laeger's Custom Fabrication & Welding. Mark saw that there were a lot of big boys that liked to ride ATVs, and a lot of them preferred 3-wheels over four. There were also a lot of riders who liked to go fast, *real fast*, without having to build their smaller engines into timebombs. His solution was to build a machine with maximum reliable horsepower. After all, there were 500cc 2-wheelers, and there were 500cc 4-wheelers...why not a 500cc 3-wheeler?

After much R&D, Mark finally came up with an almost bolt-on kit that takes the best parts of a Honda CR500 motorcycle (engine, frame and suspension), and combined them with the best part of a 3-wheeler (three wheels). The conversion is so straightforward and simple that the transformation can be accomplished in an afternoon with mostly hand tools. One nice feature of this kit is that since none of the CR parts are drastically altered, it can be converted back to a 2-wheeler if the owner so desires.

The conversion basically goes like this: The CR is stripped down to its engine and main chassis, with both front and rear suspension and rear sub-frame removed. Then the front CR forks are tapped to accept an ATC250R front axle and a special adapter is bolted to an ATC250R front hub to accept the stock CR front disc. Fins on the front brake caliper must be ground down slightly to clear, and the center stud in the CR triple clamp must be pressed out. The 3-wheeler front end is then assembled on the CR frame with a special spacer and triple clamps. Out back it's simply a matter of removing the stock swingarm, pressing the bushings out and then back into the new 3-wheeler swingarm, and then reassembling everything using Laeger's new, longer link. All that's left after that is installing the rear axle assembly, brakes, rear sub-frame and plastic, and adding a spacer to the stock CR pipe.

Most of the parts needed for the conversion are included in Laeger's kit (\$815), including triple clamps, front brake adaptor/hub spacers, rear bolt-on frame section with master cylinder and reservoir mount, seat pivot, pipe extension and the lengthened swingarm. Depending on your needs, Laeger can supply between a 6-inch or 12-inch oversized swingarm. To complete the kit, you'll also need a front tire, wheel,

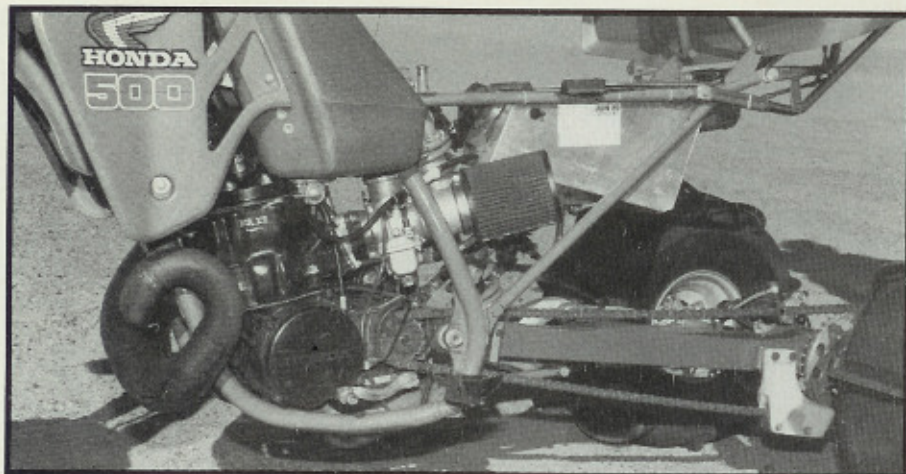


ABOVE, Mark and Jim blast off during a little friendly competition. Unknown to the casual observer, that cooler on the back of Jim's bike is where the battery for the nitrous system hides—sneaky!



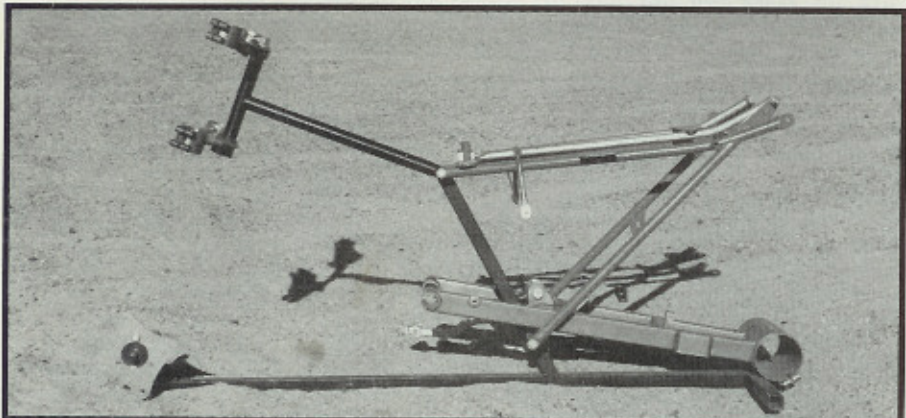
ABOVE, the super-sano setup uses many of the stock CR components, including ultra-cush front forks and rear link suspension. OPPOSITE PAGE, the steep Dumont Dunes were the perfect testing place for animal ATVs like these. Any takers? BELOW, even with 6-to-12-inch oversize swingarms, the 500s will occasionally get the front end up... way up!





Maximum Movement

LEFT, Laeger rear sub-frame bolts onto the CR frame using stock mounts. **LOWER LEFT**, the main components of the conversion kit mounted. **BELOW LEFT**, Mark has no problem getting a little air with the long machine. **BOTTOM**, a special link is needed to use the stock CR suspension.



hub, axle and front fender from an '83-'87 ATC250R, an ATC rear fender assembly and seat, as well as rear tires, wheels, brake and axle assembly from a late-model 250R. You'll also need an extra length of chain, dependent upon which length swingarm you choose. Mark also recommends a 6-inch-wider axle for better handling.

To demonstrate just how potent these machines are, Mark and friend Jim Kramer met us at the Dumont Dunes complex with their own personal 500cc screamers. Now, you'd think that the performance of a stock 500cc CR motor would be plenty to satisfy these guys, but not so. Mark has gone one step further by having the cylinder ported by Mr. Ed in San Jacinto, and by adding a 44mm Mikuni carb on a custom manifold. Jim went to the extreme and included porting by Mr. Ed, a 40mm Mikuni carb, FMF pipe, CR480 clutch parts, Barnett clutch springs and a nitrous oxide injection system! He also runs automatic transmission fluid in the transmission to help prevent clutch slippage.

How well do they work? Let's just say that these guys can idle up dunes that modified 250s have to work at! Call them rockets, call them awesome, these machines have incredible, instant straight-line acceleration. Power is available in abundance anytime...anywhere! And with the stock CR suspension they also have an impressive amount of wheel travel, so they don't just sit at the hill all day—you can actually ride these machines through the rough. Obviously with so much horsepower and a very long wheelbase they can be a bit tough to handle, so they're definitely for better, more experienced riders only!

If you're the kind of 3-wheeler rider who's constantly looking for a way to make his machine the king of the hill, maybe a CR500-powered machine is the key to your crown. For more information on the conversion you can contact Mark at Laeger's Custom Fabrication & Welding, 30434 Rolling Hills Drive, Valley Center, CA 92082; (619) 749-7402. We couldn't imagine anyone wanting more!

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