



Vintage Days West 2001

by Paul Parkinson

The MotoXmuseum crew was lucky enough to attend the Vintage Days West 2001 this April 29th. The event was held at the Sonoma raceway in the beautiful Sonoma Valley in Northern California. We want to give a big thank you to Mike Tillman for his efforts to bring over Jaroslav Falta and the other visitors from Czechoslovakia for this years event. Mike's outstanding efforts have enhanced all of our enjoyment of vintage MX.



The big field enjoyed a big start area — horsepower won the race to the first corner!

The Vintage Days is a complete celebration of vintage motorcycling, not just vintage MX. The schedule included vintage road racing, flat track, trials and of course MX. Since this was the first vintage days for the MotoXmuseum crew we really weren't prepared for all the activities. We did take time to watch some of the road racing and trials. The trials event was well attended and entertaining to watch. Certainly the trials event offers a good Saturday event for those Motocrosser's looking for something extra to do before the race on Sunday.

However the swap meet was our must do event for Saturday. Like a young child heading to the fair for the first time we entered the swap meet with great anticipation. And lots of cash in our pockets. As the ad says; "Bring your Cash since Visa's not honored here!" Fortunately there was an ATM machine at the track and we were able to reload the wallet to keep our fun going for a while longer.

There seemed to be something for everyone at the swap meets. The swap meet had parts for all years and makes of motorcycles, not just MX bikes. A number of vendors were selling old magazines, brochures and manuals. There were also a number of bikes for sales; everything from basket cases to some beautifully restored Maicos and a Mugen Honda.

We picked up a pair of 17.5" FOX Air Shoxs for a friend, a fender for our Project Yamaha SC500 and some manuals and magazines for the web site. There were more items that would have been nice to take home but taking them home was a problem. The airlines have limits on baggage and complete bikes seem to be a NO-NO as carry on. The Vintage Days East is coming up soon and will offer us a better opportunity to purchase bigger items that we can transport back with us.

We walked around the MX pits on Saturday just before we were scheduled to interview Falta. For those of you who didn't

The highlight for everyone was the 40+ expert with Brad Lackey, Billy Grossi, Marty Moates, Jaroslav Falta and others.

make it to the event we took

Brad battling in the 40+ Exp Moto#1



Vintage West 2001



Falta in action in 2001

some pictures of some of the bikes in the pits. The feature bike had to be the CZ twin pipe brought over from Czechoslovakia. The bike was restored by Jiri Starec and was an outstanding example of this famous manufacturer's dominating bike from the mid-sixties. A number of other excellent examples of various makes were also present. See the last page of this article for some pictures of teh bikes at Vintage West 2001.

Saturday ended with our interview of Jaroslav Falta. Falta was joined on this trip by his daughter, Martina. Martina was a big help as she served as our translator for the interview. Martina is clearly a big fan of her dad. She is currently living in Boston and working hard to get Ivo Helikar's book on her father translated into English and published. Jaroslav brought over some pictures for the MotoXmuseum's "I WAS THERE" web section.

Sunday was race day and the weather was perfect. The day started early to accommodate the approximate 500 racers in attendance. Even with the excellent stewardship by AHRMA the planned 5 lap races had to be shorted to 3 laps for the second motos in order to get the race day completed. Can two day events be very far off?

The racing was fast and furious through out the day. The highlight for everyone was the 40+ expert with Brad Lackey, Billy Grossi, Marty Moates, Jaroslav Falta and others. The first moto featured a constant battle between Brad Lackey and JP Morgan. The second moto featured an outstanding example of riding by Marty Moates. Nobody was even close to Marty as he really dialed in the track and rode out of sight. For those of you haven't attended or participated in a Vintage Days it really is a must do event. Until then we took some photos to show the fun and action.

Then and now — the real 1974 250 CC. World Champion Jaroslav Falta



The feature bike had to be the CZ twin pipe brought over from Czechoslovakia.

**Team Czecherd Past**

(left-right) Zdenek Polanka,
Jiri Starec, Bedrich Bendik Jr.,
Brad Lackey, Jaroslav Falta,
Mike Tillman & Bedrich Bendik Sr.

On Sunday we also got a chance to interview Zdenek Polanka. Meeting Zdenek turned out to be my personal highlight of the event. Zdenek has been involved in Czechoslovakia's MX and ISDE efforts since the mid-fifties. His career includes numerous Gold Medals with the Czech team, coaching England's Dave Bickers MX efforts at the end of the sixties and developing the CZ 250 and 360 engines. Zdenek had first hand stories about Joel Roberts, Vlastmil Valek and other notable racers and events. He also brought over an incredible selection of photos and information on CZ bikes and Czechoslovakian MX and ISDE riders.

Heading back to San Francisco with lots of dust on our boots but a big smile on face we started to make plans for Vintage Days East. Yes this time we will get a motor home and stay at the track. Yeah and maybe we will bring a bike to race. Yes Maybe.....

Heading back to San Francisco with lots of dust on our boots, but with a big smile on our face, we started to make plans for Vintage Days East!



Swap Meet Scrapbook Bikes at Vintage West



Paul Griffin's MAICO



Maury Austin's super clean MAICO



Jiri Starec's beautiful twin pipe 360 CZ



Don Richardson's clean AJ5



Jiri's 360 was incredible!



Brad Lackey's late model CZ



Robert Farr's bike shows a good example of YAMAHA's early MX efforts



Butch's TRIBSA shows some of the ingenuity present in Vintage MX