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ISSN 0364-1546



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ON THE COVER: The 250s take to the air in a dogfight for total supremacy, at the able hands of Shane Trittler, Mike Larson, Jimmy Lewis, Jeff Barbacovi and Pete Murray, who certainly should have known better. Cover design by Dennis West; color separations by Valley Film.

WARNING: Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear. *Dirt Bike* does all of its testing and photography legally on public land, or private land with permission from the owner(s), and we abide by the local laws concerning vehicle registration and muffler/spark arrester requirements. We are not responsible for quality of aftermarket accessories we use.

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*Rating the awesome
stockers on track-n-trail*

CR vs. KX vs. KTM vs. RM vs. YZ

One man's pearl is another man's rat pellet.

Rick Johnson demands suspension settings that would kill the average human being. Jeff Ward wants a bike that hits harder and quicker than Mike Tyson, while Guy Cooper likes a smoother approach. Larry Roeseler prefers the agility of a teenaged gymnast, while Dan Smith wants the high-speed stability of a Boeing 747.

We mere mortals are just as diverse in our

taste for power rushes and handling strategies, but we all want suspension that isolates us from the terrain, brakes that would stop the world on its axis, Mack truck dependability with the sleekness and weight of Michelle Pfeiffer and less maintenance requirements than a houseplant. We also want it for free, or as close as we can get to free.

That's a pretty tall order for the manufacturers to fill, but try they do.

Right now they're out testing the 1991s,

on every kind of track or terrain they can find, with every kind of rider that they can swear to secrecy. They'll test every component on the bike, they'll try a million suspension settings, they'll test a bazillion different ignition and power-valve curves. When the best combinations are achieved, they'll then try to break the bike. All of this and much more went into each 1990 model.

Each manufacturer tried to build a bike so awesome that every rider on earth will want



Superb motors and great layouts make all of the '90 250s style kings in the air. Cruncher landings send shock waves through the CR and KTM pilots, as the forks bottom big-time. The RM, KX and YZ are better balanced.

to rush out to buy it, whether they ride in the peat bogs of West Virginia, the red clay of Georgia or the adobe of Southern California. Each used different approaches to achieve the perfect bike for everyone, a bike that'll win a National as well as crawl over a slimy rock.

None of them achieved perfection.

Some work here but not there, for this rider but not that one. The purpose of this shootout is not only to pick the best overall

bike, but to steer you to the bike that'll best suit your needs for track and/or trail. Right about now the manufacturers are cringing, because they sell the bikes as closed-course-competition-only machines, for legal reasons. Well, you go riding with friends—that's competition—and you start at your truck and end up back at your truck. That's a closed course. With the addition of a quiet muffler/spark arrester combo, these MXers can be made totally trail-legal.

So let's evaluate and rate each stock bike for motocross, compare them for play riding and see what needs to be done to make each one a pearl of perfection. Let's start shooting!

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

We assembled a test crew with various abilities and sizes to ride and rate each of the machines. To get a good cross-section of terrains, we tested at DeAnza Cycle Park, Los Angeles County Raceway and on some



The 250s are surprisingly equal when the gate drops and the first turn looms ahead, but the Kawasaki will be the biggest handful when you get there. It tends to push in tight turns, while the others carve like a Benihana chef.

excellent trails on private property. You're probably thinking, "Oh, boy, another blue-groove test. How will it work in Michigan?" Not so. We were fortunate to have some good rainstorms pass through, making De-Anza very much like the clay mud of Eastern states and LACR resemble the wet sand tracks of Florida or Michigan. Trail traction varied from excellent to snotty, giving the machines a good chance to strut their off-road prowess, if any.

After each tester rode each bike we'd grill him for his thoughts, and at the end of the day we'd ask him which bike he'd buy first, second, etc., to ride stock in those conditions. After three full days of hammering the bikes relentlessly, we tallied the scores like we were scoring motos (see chart) and

emerged with a clear, and surprising, winner.

During acceleration testing on tacky clay soil, we found that none of the bikes really walked off and left the others, as the KTM 125 had done in that shootout. All of the bikes are fast, but each has its own distinct power characteristics, or in the case of all but one motor, deficiencies.

ALL NEW KTM 250 MX/C

Honda's Roger DeCoster eyed our pre-production Broc Glover Replica 1990 KTM 250 and mused, "It looks very much like our CR250."

In fact, the new "backwards" 250 looks almost exactly like the Honda CR250R motor, aside from a different power-valve system. The pipe looks much like the CR, only the belly sticks out further, and the Katoom

silencer is a dead ringer for the Honda.

DeCoster took a few hot laps (with Roger, every lap is a hot one) on the bike and said, "Yes, it's very much like our 250, except there's not as much bottom or top, and the suspension is way too soft for me. Other than that, it is a very good bike."

We told the KTM guys what Roger said, and they scrambled back to the drawing board for more power and damping. The porting, ignition and pipe were changed in search of more power and a wider spread, and the suspension got a similar reworking. We received our production model the day before this shootout and noticed a big improvement in thrust and suspension action.

It's still very Honda-like, but the spread of power still doesn't approach the phenom-



enal CR engine. The long-stroke motor pulls very smoothly and builds revs fairly quickly, but it makes most of its power in the mid-range. Pros complain of a lack of run-out on top, but novices appreciate its mellow low-end. The clutch is great but not as light as the RM, and shifting is on a par with the Kawasaki and better than the Yamaha. Carburetion is perfect, like the Honda. Novices to pros will feel at home here, though pros will want more on top, and the bike hooks up very well in slick conditions. Not a bad motor, at all.

We can't believe that KTM would copy Honda's suspension theories, since we've been sniveling about Honda's settings for years, but they did! The fork and shock springs are too soft for anyone over 150

pounds. Both ends bottom easily at speed, and the softness causes the bike to stand up unexpectedly coming out of corners. This is on top of harsh initial travel. We also experienced a loss of rebound damping at both ends during testing, resulting in unexpected big air and bigger eyes off of jumps—with the rebound dialed to the max. Plug in heavier springs and the light rebound will put you in orbit. Plan on spending a few hundred on suspension work, just like a Honda owner.

Handling, on the other hand, is excellent. The Katoom will carve the inside line almost as well as the CR, but it's as stable as the national debt on rough straights and choppy sweepers, despite having the second-shortest wheelbase of the bunch. You steer the

bike with the front wheel, like a Honda, as opposed to steering with the throttle, like a Suzuki. Many testers rave about how easy it is to flick the KTM around over jumps and how it loves to rail berms. Very Honda-like, indeed.

Brakes draw mixed reviews. Some say both ends are better than the CR, but a few riders complain of the rear being too touchy. The Magura controls are excellent, although two testers say they feel awkward compared to the Japanese bikes. Everybody likes the kickstarter being on the right side of the motor now, but it's placed high, like the CR and KX. Layout is excellent; it's easy to move around on and very slim.

Overall, the '90 KTM 250 is a huge improvement over last year and mimics the CR250R pretty well. It's the best and most competitively priced Euro 250 to ever see American showrooms, but the comparative lack of top-end and suspension performance drop it to last chosen (on the average) when we head to the motocross tracks. In motocross voting, the Katoom only drew two seconds (both pros) and a third (novice); the rest were fourths and fifths.

KAWASAKI'S PERIMETER KX250-H1

Kawasaki boasts in its KX250 brochure that "it's over for those other guys."

On paper, it should be over. The ultra-rigid, street bike-inspired perimeter steel frame, combined with inverted forks and additional swingarm stiffness, virtually eliminates frame flex. It also allows a true lowboy gas tank and never-before-seen mass centralization. Tucking the head angle a degree and lengthening trail aid both cornering and straight-line prowess.

Something was lost in the translation between the draftsman's table and the tabletop.

Yes, the bike is very rigid, so rigid that vibration is annoying. It has a rock-solid feel, so much so that it has a mind of its own and you have to fight it to make it do what you want it to. Jeff Barbacovi, our resident 140-pound 125/250 pro, says, "It seems heavy in the air—you have to fight it. Turning is okay. It's harder to get in the groove on sandy berms, but once you muscle it in it stays there."

On flat surfaces turning is more of a handful, as the bike oversteers. In tight, slow corners it feels downright clumsy. It is also skittish on choppy sweepers, with Mike Larson and others complaining of headshake. Many complain of the awkward feeling on the bike. It has the shortest wheelbase and second-tallest seat height (the CR is tallest but settles a lot due to the soft suspension). It feels both much taller and shorter, due to the highly placed steering head (what happened to the gullwing lower triple clamp?) and wide midsection necessitated by the perimeter frame. The KX weighs only three pounds more than the RM but feels 15 pounds heavier on the track or in the air.

This tall feeling is exaggerated by the suspension, which is initially stiff but bottoms on the big hits with 160+-pound riders on board. The initial stiffness virtually elimi-



nates settling into a turn and surely contributes to the oversteer problem, but backing off of the compression adjustments results in bottoming. Other than the initial stiffness, nobody voiced any major complaints about the KX suspension, and the package was voted second-best.

These traits add up to a very input-intensive machine, and the motor provides the kicker card to make this a poker hand only for fast intermediates and pros. The KX doesn't produce much in the basement, then it hits like a tornado in the midsection. It revs a bit into the top-end then falls on its face drastically, where the CR and RM will keep pulling. All of our non-pro riders feel the power is too much too quick, and, though some riders prefer that instantaneous hit, they voted the CR motor better.

Many testers noted stiff shifting from the KX and the more abusive got the clutch to fade. On the other hand, the footpegs are the widest in the business. Everyone likes the controls and braking power, though two riders note that the rear is a bit touchy, but not like the KTM. The relatively girthy midsection also drew some complaints, but former Yamaha pilot Mike Stahlman, who won the Open A Championship at Loretta Lynn's, is stoked with the KX250: "It has great foot-

pegs and controls, good suspension and handling, and an incredible hit."

What we have in the 1990 KX250 is a machine aimed at serious pros and intermediates only. The handling, turning, shifting and throttle control demand total concentration and constant input. It produces the most peak horsepower but over the most narrow powerband. Three experts chose the KX for second-place MX honors, while one pro rated it last. Averaging all of the votes produces third overall in motocross ratings. Such is life on the perimeter.

RAILING THE YAMAHA YZ250A

Yamaha, for some strange reason, neutered the famous YZ250 midrange hit for 1990. The short-stroke motor now produces less low-end with a smoother midrange hook and a longer runout, but it can't approach the top-end pull of the CR. The more sedate hit allows the bike to maintain better traction on slick surfaces, but the hitmongers on the crew missed the old rush. This leaves one with the impression that it does just about everything well but nothing really spectacularly. Shifting is notchy and it really balks under a full load in soft terrain.

Several riders note that the YZ pulls well out of corners, whether you fan the clutch or simply roll on the throttle. The YZ mo-

tor is more novice-friendly than the KX and RM but not as mellow as the CR and KTM.

However, the suspension is the opposite—novices complain of harshness, while fast guys give the YZ high ratings. Like the CR, the YZ gets better as you hammer it harder. Pro riders from 140 to 160 pounds give the suspension good ratings, but not as high as the RM or KX.

Handling also draws mixed reviews. Cornering notes range from "it feels really long" to "steering and cornering are good, but it requires a lot of input, compared to the CR, RM and KTM." Testers also note the tendency to slew sideways on choppy sweepers. On the other hand, it feels neutral and flickable in the air and has good high-speed stability, as long as you're on the gas. Let off, and it'll kick.

Ergonomics, brakes and controls (aside from shifting) are good but not outstanding. As a package, the YZ250 is a great choice for intermediates and experts, right out of the crate, but slower guys won't have all that much fun riding it. For motocross, the YZ comes in a close fourth behind the pro-oriented KX250.

SUZUKI'S STEALTH RM250L

Suzuki managed an engineering miracle with the '90 RM250—they made the bike



◀ Look, Ma, no stands! The usual adobe of DeAnza Cycle Park turned to clay goop for testing. Our fashion-conscious test riders boycotted this photo, leaving the bikes to stand on their own.

All but the KX250 have mellow motors to tame the tightest trails, but the KX's midrange hit can be smoothed out for better trail manners. Off-road fun on a 250 is at a premium in 1990. ▼



much faster than the anemic '89 without making it unridable for slower guys. The motor doesn't hit like the KX but it revs quickly, due to a very light flywheel. This is great in sand and loam but can be a handful on slicker tracks in the hands of less experienced riders. It also stalls easier than the others. Power comes on smoothly in the lower revs (but not as low as the CR) and climbs into a strong, broad midrange. We dropped the main one size and got it to pull as well and as long as the CR on top. Impressive and easy to use.

Suspension action is unequaled in '90. From beginner to pro, the Kayabas soak up chop, holes, whoops, G-outs and jumps without transmitting any jolt to the rider. Handling is excellent—just point and shoot. It corners extremely well with very little rider input and feels obscenely light in the air. The RM slides predictably and is stable at high speeds, but some riders complain about the front end feeling too light, resulting in a slight twitchiness in sweepers.

Clutch pull is the lightest of the bunch and shifting is on a par with the Honda. Brakes are as strong as the KX and YZ with a lighter feel, but still not in the CR league. The Bridgestone M23/22 tires are excellent on hard-pack but not as versatile as the Dun-

lop K490/695s on the CR and KX.

With all this going for it, you'd think the Suzuki would be the hands-down choice for motocross, especially since the suspension stomps all over the Honda's Showas, but voting put the RM a close second to the CR. Suzuki has an excellent package for beginners and pros alike, but the Honda overshadows the RM with the motor and handling of doom.

HANGING IT OUT ON THE CR250R

Honda attacked their suspension woes of '89 with a vengeance, made slight geometry changes and mellowed their awesome motor a tad for '90, but they still didn't get the suspension action right. The fork internals still suffer from particulate contamination and the fork springs are too soft for anyone over 160 pounds. Compression damping is harsh at both ends over stutter bumps, but the action is excellent on supercross-like jumps and rockers—but how many CR250R owners ride supercross? Suspension action is the CR's only weak point and it'll cost the owner around \$300 to get it right. This puts the Honda in the \$4300 price range. Yowza.

Still, the magic CR motor is worth the price of admission. The long-rod motor comes on lower than any other 250 and keeps building well past the point where all

but the Suzuki sign off. Comments range from "power is incredible—it'll power over anything" to "it's got great, smooth power and it's easy to control." It does nothing sudden except get you to the next turn quicker than you expect. Clutch pull is the heaviest of the group, but the slick-shifting tranny and electric powerband make up for that—tenfold.

Handling also draws several votes of "perfect." "It'll turn wherever you want to go, no line is too tight;" "Stability is unequaled and it's very easy to whip in the air." Only heavier riders have any snivels towards handling, as the too-light fork springs allow excess diving and headshake. Those weighing under 160 pounds have no complaints about turning or stability.

Brakes are first-rate. Controls and layout also take top honors, as do the tires, although the rear is the only 18-inch holdout in the bunch. The Honda draws complaints only about its suspension, which is "harsh" and "kicks unless you keep it on the gas."

In motocross scoring, the CR received eight first-place votes to the Suzuki's six. Honda takes a close win here with an admittedly flawed machine, but the motor and handling override the harsh suspension action.



250 MOTOCROSS SHOOTOUT

RIDER PREFERENCE CHART*

	MUDDY/TACKY MX							SANDY/LOAMY MX					OFF-ROAD					TOTAL	RATING	
	Pete Murray Vet Pro	Shane Trittler Pro	Mike Larson Pro	Jeff Barbacovi Pro	Jimmy Lewis Pro	Tim Tolleson Vet Int.	Joe Kosch Nov.	Shane Trittler	Mike Larson	Jeff Barbacovi	Tim Tolleson	Rick Grant Vet Exp.	Steve Casper Nov.	Pete Murray	Shane Trittler	Mike Larson	Jimmy Lewis			Scott Forward Vet Int.
CR	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	3	2	29	1
KX	5	2	2	3	3	3	5	3	3	4	3	2	2	4	1	2	4	1	53	3
KTM	4	5	4	3	2	5	3	2	4	5	4	5	3	3	3	5	1	5	67	5
RM	1	4	3	2	1	1	4	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	3	4	4	43	2
YZ	3	3	5	1	2	4	2	5	5	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	2	3	65	4

*Numbers indicate first choice (1), etc., and ties are possible. Low score wins.

OFF-ROAD RAVINGS & RATINGS

A different set of priorities come into play when the pack heads for the trails. Initial suspension compliance, motor tractability, comfort, ease of riding and overall gearing become more important as the trails get slicker and steeper than loan shark interest rates. To test the play ride fun quotient, we spent a day in the sticks on the bikes, then got our test crew to rate the rides. It should be noted that riders who ride off-road exclusively would be better off with an ATK, KTM EX/C or DX/C, YZWR or RMX.

Yamaha gets excellent ratings for tractability with a smooth power surge and lots of flywheel. It also draws favorable comments for stability and ease of riding, but it gets downgraded for a low, cramped seating position and harshness over roots and rocks. Voting put it close to the KTM but last.

KTM also has excellent tractability with a super-smooth midrange, but it doesn't have the low-end of the Honda. Suspension action is subtle over rocks and is great for general off-road riding, and comfort gets another excellent rating. However, gearing is tall, with a jump between second and third, and our testers feel more at home on the Japanese bikes on the trail. It gets fourth.

The RM has good tractability but has very little flywheel effect, so it stalls easily and tends to slew on slick surfaces. Suspension compliance is the best of the group and ease of riding is awesome, with the clutch and throttle pulls being extremely light. Comfort is very good, although taller riders snivel about the seat being too low, resulting in a cramped riding position. For trail use, the RM takes third, stock.

Surprisingly, the KX rates second, despite the obscenely abrupt motor, which is very flat on the bottom. It'll plonk along but won't snap onto the pipe cleanly; then it



Our ace test riders test the balance of the 250s and front number plate strength. Though all bikes have excellent low-boy layouts, the Honda got top comfort ratings.

lights up the rear tire as it climbs into the explosive midrange. Compliance over roots and ruts is on a par with the Yamaha, and the KX gets good comfort points, despite a tall seat height and a girthy midsection. Handling is quick and predictable on tight trails, but the pipey motor requires a delicate touch.

The Honda hammers you mercilessly on the trail, but the rough ride isn't enough to overshadow the awesome motor. It'll plonk like a trials bike, then climb instantly into the

midrange when needed. Perfect ergonomics, brakes, controls (aside from a stiff clutch), and handling make the CR comfortable on the trail, though the ride could be smoother. The CR squeaks out another win at the off-road polls.

PERFECTING THE MACHINES

- All of the 250s could use more flywheel for off-road use. The KTM, RM and YZ have off-road counterparts, and the off-road ignitions will bolt right on the MXers. Kawasaki owners can retrofit an earlier-model



	HONDA CR250RL*	KAWASAKI KX250-H1*	KTM 250 MX/C*	SUZUKI RM250L*	YAMAHA YZ250A*
Engine type	Reed- and power-valved 2-stroke	Case reed- and power-valved 2-stroke	Case reed- and power-valved 2-stroke	Case reed- and power-valved 2-stroke	Reed- and power-valved 2-stroke
Bore & stroke	66.4mm x 72mm	67.4mm x 70mm	67.5mm x 69.5mm	67mm x 70.8mm	68mm x 68mm
Carburetion	38mm PJ Keihin	38mm PWK Keihin	37mm PJ Keihin	38mm TMX Mikuni	38mm TMX Mikuni
Fuel tank capacity	2 gals.	2.2 gals.	2.6 gals.	2.2 gals.	2.25 gals.
Running weight w/no fuel	223.5 lbs.	225.5 lbs.	223.5 lbs.	223 lbs.	223.5 lbs.
Sound output (20" MIC)	98 dB	94 dB	97 dB	95 dB	96 dB
Wheelbase	58.8 in.	58.3 in.	58.4 in.	57.9 in.	58.9 in.
Rake/trail	28-degree/4.9 in.	26.5-degree/4.5 in.	27.7-degree/4.8 in.	27-degree/4.4 in.	27.5-degree/4.8 in.
Seat height	38.2 in.	37.6 in.	37.2 in.	37 in.	38.2 in.
Peg-to-seat distance	20.7 in.	21 in.	20.5 in.	20 in.	20.5 in.
Tire size and type:					
Front	80/100x21 Dunlop K490	80/100x21 Dunlop K490	80/100x21 Dunlop D752	80/100x21 Bridgst. M23	80/100x21 Bridgst. M23
Rear	110X100x18 Dunlop K695	110/90x19 Dunlop K695	110/100x19 Dunlop D752	110/90x19 Bridgst. M22	110/90x19 Bridgst. M22
Suspension:					
Front	45mm inverted Showa cartridge, adj. comp., 12 in. travel	41mm inverted KYB cartridge, adj. comp./reb., 12.2 in. travel	40mm inverted WP cartridge, adj. comp./reb., 11.8 in. travel	41mm inverted KYB cartridge, adj. comp./reb., 12.2 in. travel	41mm inverted KYB cartridge, adj. comp./reb./preload, 11.8 in. travel
Rear	Pro-Link, aluminum piggyback Showa, adj./reb., 13 in. travel	Uni-Trak, aluminum piggyback KYB, adj. comp./reb., 13 in. travel	Pro-Lever, aluminum piggyback WP, adj. comp./reb., 11.8 in. trav.	Full Floater, aluminum piggyback KYB, adj. comp./reb., 12.8 in. trav.	Monocross, alum. piggyback KYB, adj. comp./reb., 12.4 in. travel
Suggested retail price	\$3998	\$3899	\$3899	\$3899	\$3899
Replacement parts cost:					
Piston	\$37.13	\$53.98	\$107.97	\$37.95	\$68.00
Ring(s)	\$22.07	\$20.16	\$29.81	\$10.85	\$19.80
Clutch plate (f)	\$5.70 (8)	\$9.72 (8)	\$13.46 (8)	\$8.13 (8)	\$10.40 (7)
Clutch plate (m)	\$6.18 (7)	\$6.88 (7)	\$6.69 (7)	\$3.25 (7)	\$6.60 (6)
Front brake pads	\$19.12	\$32.98	\$35.07	\$32.03	\$35.10
Rear brake pads	\$22.52	\$32.90	\$35.07	\$23.58	\$32.10
Countershaft sprocket	\$11.90	\$17.12	\$20.61	\$10.28	\$11.90
Rear sprocket	\$54.80	\$54.50	\$52.50	67.31	\$41.70
Distrib./mfr.	Honda Motor Corp. 100 W. Alondra Blvd. Gardena, CA 90247	Kawasaki Motor Corp. 9950 Jeronimo Rd. Irvine, CA 92718	KTM East 1906 Broadway Lorain, OH 44052 435-B W. Bradley El Cajon, CA 92020	Suzuki Motor Corp. 3251 E. Imperial Hwy. Brea, CA 92621	Yamaha Motor Corp. 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630

*Bold entries indicate that bike has the most desirable component or trait for that category.

lighting kit to their KX or they can get a Klemm Research ([714] 272-8480) KX Torque-weight, available in 12-, 15- or 20-ounce sizes, for \$74.95. This requires a \$37.50 spacer kit. Moose Racing ([800] MOOSE-IT) offers a 12-ounce flywheel weight for the CR250R for \$89.95 and steel clutch plates for \$44.95.

• CR off-roaders should invest \$8.95 in Moose's Wonder Spring, which plugs into the power-valve governor inspection cover in a matter of seconds and causes the power valve to kick in later, further smoothing power. Moose also has a wide-ratio fifth-gear kit, which raises fifth by eight percent, for \$135. This allows a change from 14/51 gearing to 14/53 for a lower first while still raising top speed.

• Our Honda cold-fouled several plugs. Moose modifies (leans) the choke circuit, to alleviate the fouling, for \$15.

• CR riders over 160 pounds should go to 22.5-pound fork springs. The forks should be revalved for more rebound with this switch. Both the forks and shock benefit from revalving to lower high-speed compression damping. This will alleviate the harshness.

• KX riders who want a smoother mid-range can have their cylinder head machined at DMC ([714] 777-4084) for \$70. DMC also sells a low-to-midrange pipe for \$157.

• FMF ([213] 539-6884) sells a RAM reed-valve kit for \$199 which gives RM250s more power everywhere. They also have a mid-to-top-end pipe for \$159.

• Pete Murray's RM250 flies with a Pro Circuit ([714] 993-5401) pipe (\$149.95), silencer (\$64) and porting/head mod (\$225). It has more power everywhere, especially on top, and Pro Circuit specializes in all Japanese bikes, as well as Showa and KYB suspension.

• Downers Grove Yamaha ([708] 971-2602) reports that the YZ250 has way too much compression, which chokes top-end. They'll redo your head for \$46.75. Standard port and polishing (\$129.95) boosts low-to-mid, while their Pro Port I (\$199.95) mod enhances mid-to-top. Steve Lamson uses the Pro Port II mod (\$299.95), which gives it killer top-end power. DGY also eliminates the YZ harshness (lowers HSCD) for the forks (\$85 plus parts) and shock (\$129.95). □