

JANUARY 1984 85p US \$2.75

bike

HARLEY-DAVIDSON
MOTOR COMPANY INC.

Harley-Davidson
80
c.c. displacement

PROGRESS BMW's Flat Four

EXCESS Six-Bike 125 Trail Iron Test

FINESSE Riding Honda's V4 Racers

COLLAPSE Why No One's Buying
Bikes Any More

SHOCK OF THE OLD

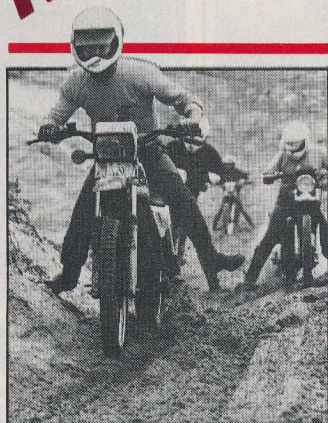
FIRST TEST OF HARLEY'S EVOLUTION ENGINE

COVER STORY

44

INSIDE THE NEW HARLEY EVOLUTION ENGINE WHICH SOMEONE WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR CHRISTENED V²

ROADTESTS



18

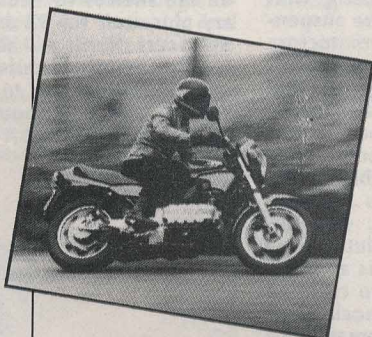
GIANT 125 TRAIL TEST

Six restricted trail bikes — the Honda MTX125, Cagiva SXT125, Kawasaki KE125, Suzuki TS125, Yamaha DT125LC and Yamaha XT125 — fight it out

34

STRANGELY STRANGE BUT ODDLY NORMAL

Just as we thought, the BMW K100 may look outlandish but it's still a BMW. We're going to reserve judgement 'til we've ridden the RS



44

THE NEW AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Another UK scoop as our man rides an Electra Glide powered by Harley Davidson's new generation motor

FEATURES

26

END OF THE BEGINNING

A tale of plummeting registrations behind the glitter and pizzazz of the shows

40

SPIRIT OF SUMMER BIKING

The best stuff from our Canon-sponsored photo competition. The winner's a real gem 'n' all



50

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

With the sound of all sorts of odd engines mounted in weird motorcycles. Yes, it's hill climbing time as fearless Roland Brown heads for the hills of the West Country

54

THE BIKE AWARDS OF 1983

Honouring those who have, by their actions alone, made us laugh, cheer or vomit

58

WIN SOME LOSE SOME

Since it's Honda we're talking about it's usually win. Track testing Spencer's superbike and Wayne Gardner's RS850R. Plus Roger Marshall on the Team Bike CB1000R

OT/TUFF

4

RIDE ON

From the USA to Weston-super-Mare

9

INTAKE

More of the usual

13

STREETLIFE

This'll annoy 'em

15

PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS

How to get sand in it

65

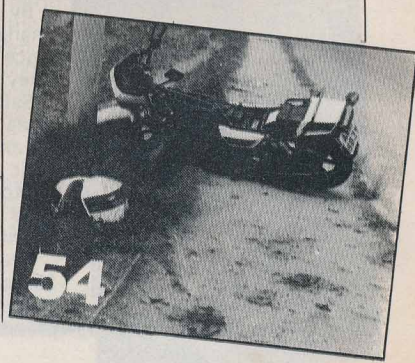
BLOODRUNNERS

The adventures of Hoover

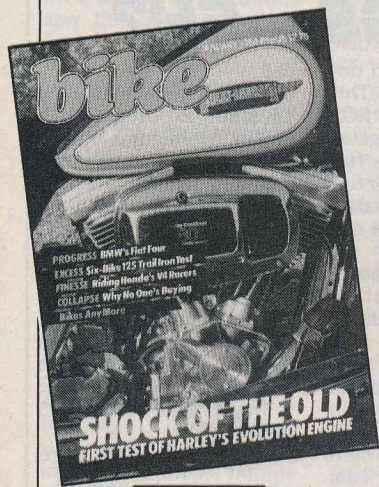
66

THE LAST PAGE

Ring a ding ding



54



ABC

Editor Brecon Quaddy
Assistant Ed Julian Ryder
Staff Writer Roland Brown
Designer Tommy Campbell
Ed Assistant Ione Holmes
Ad Manager Sandy Murdoch
Ad Rep Tom Stewart
Ad Assistant Alison Rose
Ad Executive Peter Floyd
Publisher Peter Strong

Contributors: Dave Calderwood, Alan Cathcart, Simon Ludgate (words); Jack Burnicle, David Dewhurst, Kel Edge, Jim Forrest, Richard Stevens (photos), Anni Axworthy, Mike Clements, Paul Sample, Ian Shaw, Andy Sparrow (graphics)
Editorial and Advertisement offices: 7-11 Lexington Street, London W1R 4BU; telephone 01-437 6217 (both departments). Telex 32157. Postal subscriptions: £14 per year from Bike Subscriptions Dept, Competition House, Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leics. USA Sales Agent: Lee Cowie, Motorsport, 6115 Gravois, St Louis, Missouri 63116. \$33 for 12 issues. Back issues at £1 each from Bike Back Issues, Competition House, Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leics. Published by EMAP National Publications Ltd. Printed by Riverside Press, Whitstable, Kent. © EMAP

CAGIVA **SXT125** v HONDA **MRX125RW** v KAWASAKI **KE125A10** v

SUZUKI **TS125ER** v YAMAHA **DT125LC** v YAMAHA **XT125**





GIANT 125 TRAIL TEST

Half a dozen restricted trail bikes prove that 12 dual-purpose horsepower can be fun. Tests: Roland Brown, Lone Holmes, Brecon Quaddy and Julian Ryder

GIANT 125 TRAIL TEST



CAGIVA SXT125

SO WHO THE HELL WANTS A 125cc TRAILSTER THAT LOOKS LIKE Graham Noyce has just stepped off it, when the minute you cock a leg over the seat all the clever plastic bits disappear up the crack of your bum?

The Cagiva sits firmly on the other side of the fence from those. It's big, basic and cluttered up with none of the pseudo-motocrosser gimmickry of the new wave. And if you're big and basic yourself the SXT125 has a fair bit of appeal. I grew to like it a lot, which perhaps says more about me than the bike.

For a mere 125 the thing is surprisingly large, which is inconvenient if you're not but which helps if you have to go anywhere two-up and makes the Cagiva look less like a toy than some of the others. First riding impressions were not good. The radial-finned motor starts making power at about 5000rpm and vibrates like a jack-hammer between there and seven grand, so nipping up and down the gearbox in town is a real pain.

I was dreading my first trip of any length but thankfully once you get onto the open road where the motor can be kept turning at over 7000rpm vibration is not a problem. The Cagiva's no Aspencade but it's comfortable enough for journeys of an hour or two. The suspension is good 'n' firm, and while the SXT needs lots of effort to haul about on the dirt it does at least go roughly in the direction you point it (generally the largest available tree).

The bike is happier on the road, where it can be flicked through traffic gaps with ease, corners well on its Pirelli trail tyres and stops with ease thanks to the Brembo disc up front. The six-speed gearbox is light, and failing to find the green neutral light at junctions wasn't a problem. There's plenty of gaps between the other gears and when the light came on I was usually in first anyway.

The headlamp is okay but couldn't be angled to avoid dazzling those in front. Switch-gear is familiar ex-Suzuki stuff with lights on/off and dipswitch in dangerous proximity on the left bar, though you do get a bleeper to remind you the indicators are still flashing — if it's not drowned out by the engine noise.

A rack and centre-stand are handy standard-issue bits that you won't find on most of the other bikes. The toolkit is less useful; it's kept in an unlockable compartment below a sidepanel and would be a prime target for tealeaves if only it was worth stealing.

That vibration is annoying but the Cagiva's worth a try for learners who like their motorcycles big and sturdy. It's a bit agricultural but always started easily and generally cruised at 60mph plus without feeling overstressed. And if that's not fast enough it's the easiest of all to de-restrict: if you can't run to £14 for a new reed block you can gain horses for free by taking out the petal stops yourself.

Roland Brown

HONDA MTX125RW

IF MONEY IS NO OBJECT AND YOUR ONLY CRITERION IS owning the trickiest 125 trailer on the block then I guess it's got to be Honda's MTX125, no contest. Big H have obviously been at pains to turn out more of a mini motocrosser than the usual dual-purpose blend of road bike dimensions on off-road wheels, tyres and brakes.

As far as trickiness is concerned, the MTX has the lot. Pro-Link suspension down back is matched by air assisted leading axle forks up front, offering 8in and 9in travel respectively. The watercooled mill breathes through a small plastic reed valve, with CDI-provided sparks and cooling courtesy of a well-protected rad hanging off the right of the nine litre fuel tank. Twin mirrors, halogen headlamp and 12V electrics complete a picture of well-equipped metal for well-heeled learners.

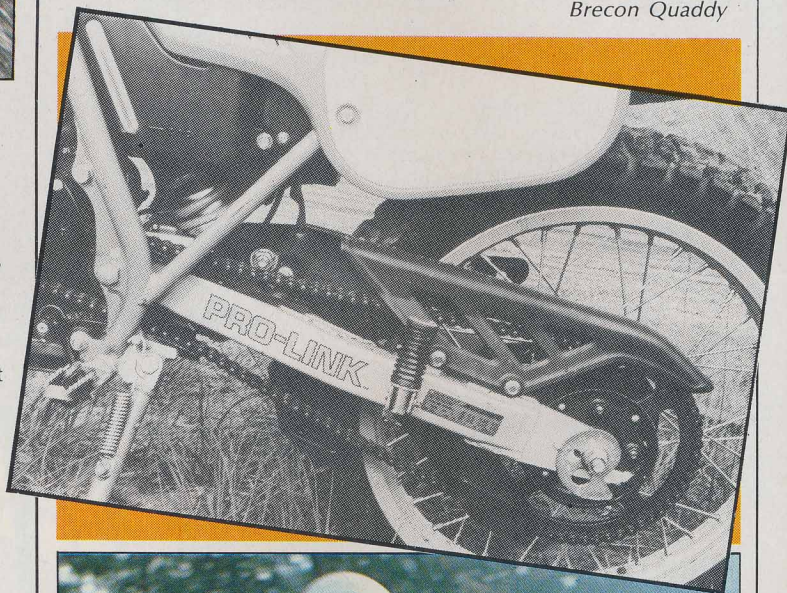
Economic miracles being rather out of fashion these days, it's not surprising that your friendly local dealer's going to want the best part of £950 out of your hot 'n' stickies before he'll hand you an MTX. So it'd better be good, right?

Well, no quibbles about the MTX's finish and performance. Although the motor likes to be kept spinning above six grand for happy motoring, it'll pull cleanly from way down the rev range and run on past peak power to nearly 70mph at the drop of a tailwind or gradient. My 30-mile each way trip to work and back meant the Honda was thrashed mercilessly for mile after mile of dual carriageway but it never complained once.

Above 60mph, though, the handling became very lively, with the high (33in) seat adding to the insecure feeling beneath my 12 stone bulk. On the dirt the motor's unwillingness to slog and the front wheel's tendency to declare UDI at crucial moments suggested that the MTX would be more suited to riders with better off-road capabilities than I.

If you're looking for any old 125 trail iron to get past parts one and two then the MTX's £939 price tag's going to be hard to swallow. Even if you're after something a cut above average the Yamaha DT comes £110 cheaper — enough to buy a fair bit of classy riding gear. But if you're after The Biz so far as looks and spec go, then the Honda certainly won't disappoint. Honda hope you are.

Brecon Quaddy





KAWASAKI KE125 A10

KAWASAKI INTRODUCED THE KE125 WAY BACK IN 1973, AND despite numerous, mainly cosmetic, changes since then, this year's KE felt dated alongside its more modern rivals. Compared to the others it's boring to look and initially rather disappointing to ride. But on the road it was good fun and it wasn't until I attempted an off-road circuit that its main faults showed up.

Around town it's ideal — it starts easily first kick, warms up quickly with little choke and is very light and easy to move around. It has a well padded, comfortable seat, good front and adequate rear drum brake, grippy Yokohama tyres and a powerful headlamp. Once the revs are up it's easily fast enough to compete with traffic but manages to be pretty economical at the same time. The tank is good for a range of about 130 miles but for some incomprehensible reason the trip meter only goes up to 99 miles so isn't much use.

Instruments are clear and simple, so simple that there's no oil warning light. There's only a small sight glass in the side panel, which worried me because even when I took off the panel I couldn't tell exactly how much oil I had left in the black container. A transparent oil tank would make life easier.

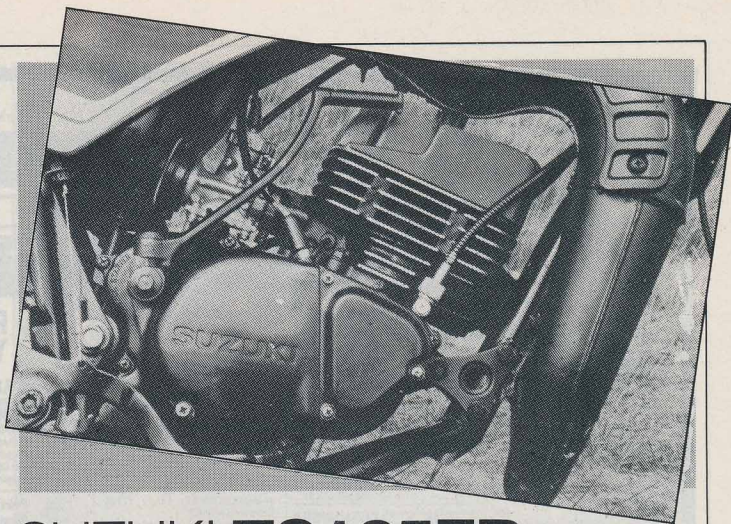
Away from traffic jams the Kawa buzzes along happily at 65mph although some vibes get through to the bars and foot pegs at full throttle. The first time I rode it I thought the chain was about to fall off, it clattered so much, but stopping to check showed it to be perfectly adjusted. Despite its spindly looking forks it handled confidently and felt much safer through bends than I'd imagined a small trailster would.

The main problem on or off road (though mainly off) is its disc valve motor, which doesn't produce enough power at low revs for smooth traffic-jam creeping or slogging through soft sand or soil. On top end, though, it ran out the fastest of the test bikes at MIRA with a best one-way not far short of its watercooled (and considerably more expensive) AR125 roadster stablemate.

As my off-road skills leave much to be desired, the others decided to show me how real men go about trail riding but after the KE had stalled, fallen over, and twisted its front end on them a few times, they wimpishly drifted back to more dirt-able stuff like the Yamaha and Suzuki. Another minor irritation on tarmac which became worse on dirt was the Kawa's short and badly placed sidestand which allowed it to fall over every time I turned my back for a minute.

Although it's easy to find faults, the Kawasaki has a lot going for it for a learner. Most restricted 125 trail bikes aren't going to see much dirt and hopefully won't be kept for long. So the fact that at £699 the KE is the cheapest of all the test bikes by £60 and cost a staggering £240 less than the Honda makes it look good value. When your average impecunious teenager finds that it leaves all the others behind on top speed he might not think state-of-the-art suspension quite so necessary after all.

Ione Holmes



SUZUKI TS125ER

AS A DIRT BIKE, THE TS125ER IS A REALLY ACE LITTLE ROAD BIKE. That's not meant as an insult 'cos I was really sorry to part with the thing. For commuting to work and trips under 100 miles it was great. The tyres and brakes both worked far better than you have any right to expect from motocross-lookalike small drums and pseudo knobbles, while handling was very much in the roadbike mould. No twitching, no tendency to take off in an unplanned direction on hitting a bump and no skittishness at top wack in a straight line. A clean bill of health for the cycle parts, then, with the exception of the newly-added Full-Floater back end, which I found somewhat insensitive and the pre-compressed seat padding.

But the real praise has to go to the motor. It pulls smoothly from as low down as 3000rpm and gives steady power for the next 5000 revs. Even on our photo session in the rough stuff the motor showed an amazing ability to slog up gradients without slipping the clutch, a feat that others, notably the buzzy Kawa, couldn't manage.

For a motorcycle that's been around in one form or another since the middle '70s the TS has kept up very well. It's as fast in real terms as the rest, less peaky, has 12V electrics, mirrors that work and basic, adequate instrumentation. Why no bash plate though?

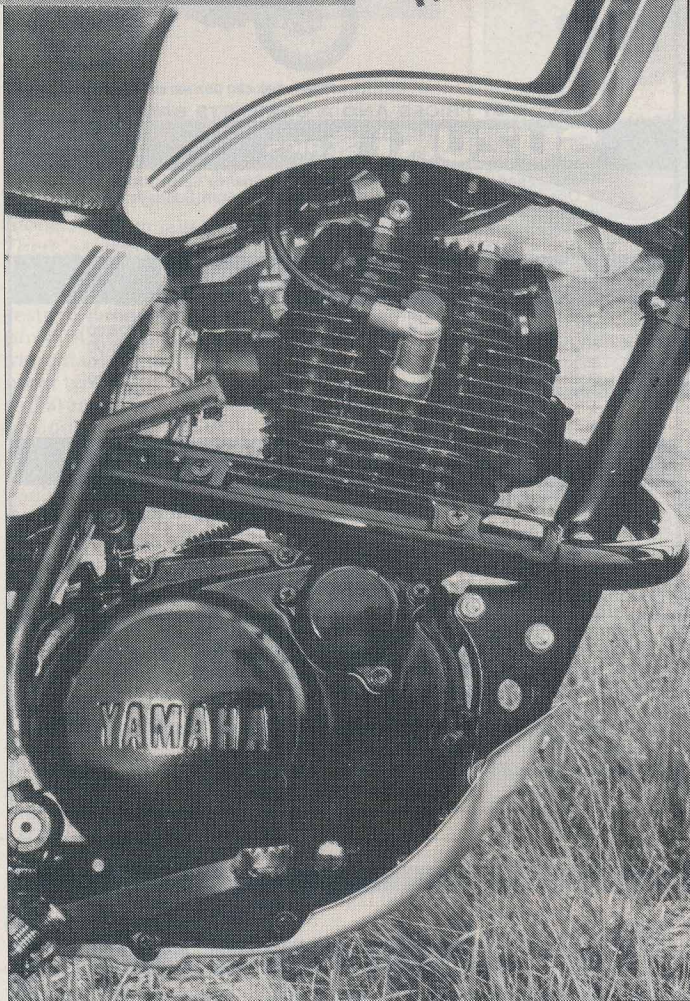
At £759 it is the second cheapest of our six test bikes, and for that money your average learner gets a bike that is easy to ride and suffers none of the disadvantages that used to be inherent in dual purpose machinery. The only problem the bike suffers is its slightly staid styling, especially when compared to the racer lookalike Honda and Yamaha water pumpers. Suzuki have sussed this, of course, and will be importing a suitably uprated model this year with obligatory watercooling and the humpy tank and deep seat of the works motocrossers. No doubt it'll be up at the expensive end of the price range alongside the Honda. The good news is that the air-cooled TS will be around for a bit longer and I, for one, am glad that such an excellent little all-round motorcycle will be available to first-time riders at a reasonable price.

Julian Ryder



GIANT 125 TRAIL TEST

XT
YAMAHA



YAMAHA XT125

IT WILL NOT HAVE ESCAPED YOUR NOTICE THAT THE XT IS THE only four-stroke in this test. This is not because we're prejudiced but because the Honda XL and Suzuki DR were unavailable. So the XT, which didn't exactly get a rapturous reception, when it was first announced, was left to fight it out with the two-strokes.

Sadly for the XT, 12bhp via a couple of poppet valves just doesn't seem the same as 12bhp from reeds and ports. Although the XT's motor is civilised, balancer-shafted and equipped with a family resemblance to the big XT and TT singles, the 125 just fails to stir the emotions. And that's a shame, because again it's a very nice road bike, especially in town. What's missing is that little extra edge to the power delivery that manages to make even a humble restricted two-stroke a lot of fun to ride in the right conditions.

It flunked out in the dirt as well, despite the regulation Yamaha dirt bike Monocross rear suspension. Top speed ain't that impressive either — even for a restricted 125. Really, it's difficult not to feel sorry for the XT125. In the showrooms it has to stand next to the DT125LC and in the traffic light GP I got well and truly stuffed by an RD80LC. This is not the stuff of which 17-year olds' dreams are made no matter how good the bike's pedigree.

Taken in isolation though, the XT is far from a bad bike, especially away from main roads. It stops and handles as well as the rest and only one nasty piece of cost cutting is evident — the lack of a tacho, just like its flash stable mate the DTLC. At £770 it is slap bang in the middle of this test's prices. However, a lot of people may feel that that is a little too near the DT's £829 and a long way from the Kawasaki's £699. As some smart arse pointed out in *Intake* recently, the fact that the XT will sip fuel at a very frugal 80mpg will take a long time to make up that sort of price differential, never mind the performance differential.

Again, I must say I feel a bit sorry for a bike like this, but when the powers that be decreed it would be only 12 horses, they guaranteed that the bike that extracted most from those ponies would also extract cash from the punters.

Julian Ryder



YAMAHA DT125LC

IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE WHY YAMAHA'S SWEET LITTLE DT125LC has pulled out an almost unassailable lead in the restricted trail iron sales stakes. It looks and feels big and solid — much more so than roadster two-strokes like Yamaha's RD125LC and Kawasaki's AR125 — and only Honda's recently-arrived MTX can compete for high tech trickiness.

Until we found ourselves, slightly disbelievingly, looking at six test bikes lined up outside the office, we'd never tried the restricted DT. A launch in Morocco and a spell with the unrestricted version gave ample opportunity to try out its 16 horses, and very impressive they were too. Surprisingly, the 12bhp DT feels as if it's giving little away on the road.

You don't need a tacho to tell you the watercooled mill pulls well from fairly low down (which is good because Yamaha don't give you a tacho ...) but giving it a good fistful of throttle away from the light brings up the front wheel in short order. In between the two extremes there's a nice spread of poke, making for minimal use of the six-speed gearbox once cruising at 50-plus.

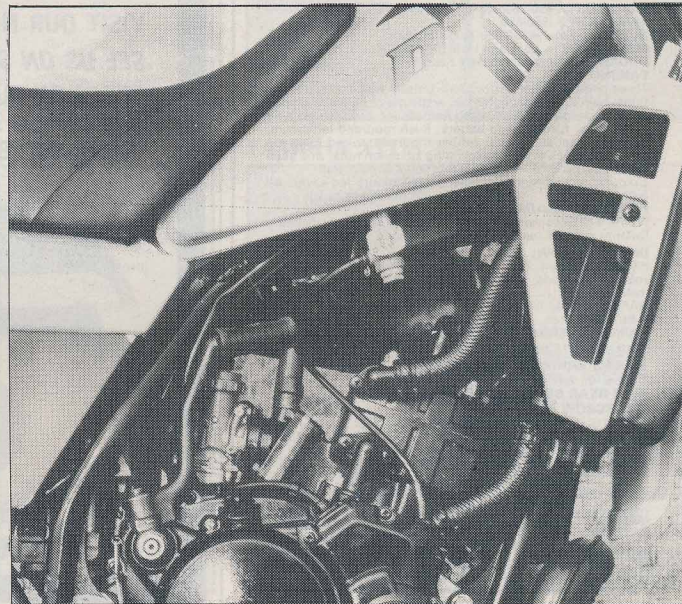
Excellent handling and brakes add to its appeal on tarmac. The performance of the sls front stopper far outshines its weedy looks while the firmly-sprung forks and de Carbon nitrogenoil rear shock keep the plot stable at any speed.

As someone whose off-roading capabilities are at around the same level as the acting prowess of *Crossroads'* cast, I quickly found the DT more survivable than some of the other 125s. Unlike the Honda, its closest rival in most respects, the DT tends to go more or less where its rear wheel's aimed, especially in sand where the MTX's front end gets deflected too easily.

Although the DT's rear end isn't state of the art rising rate and its electrics are only 6V stuff, it's a good dual purpose iron. It's the heaviest of this bunch, which may help to explain its being down on performance compared to the other Japanese two-strokes, but extra kgs definitely add to its big, solid feel.

If you're looking for good looks and excitement (and a bike to match ...) then the question isn't really is the DT worth more than the cheaper 125s but is the Honda worth another £110?

Brecon Quaddy



GIANT 125 TRAIL TEST

The first point to make about all the bikes in this test is that they can be fun to ride. Okay, motorway bashing would be a complete pain but for most other purposes they'll do nicely. Trail bikes have always been a bundle of fun in town traffic and all six restricted 12bhp models managed to keep up that reputation. There's something about a small capacity trail bike that gets around the normal envy and embarrassment associated with riding restricted roadsters. The trail bikes are physically bigger and are much more easily identifiable with their larger brothers than other types. The Yamaha XT125's resemblance to 550 and 600cc thumpers is more than obvious.

And that's the only really good thing it's possible to say about the XT, which suffers badly in comparison with the two strokes. Leaving aside the Cagiva, we have four very evenly matched models from the big four. The Honda and Yamaha waterpumpers win on looks, equipment, and all round appeal. Unfortunately, you have to pay a lot for that appeal; in the case of the Honda you pay through the nose. The Suzuki and Kawasaki, which have been with us for several years, have kept up very well. The Kawasaki surprised everybody by being the fastest of the bunch as well as the cheapest. The Cagiva is on its own but, like the Suzuki, will soon have a high-tech stablemate bought in to join it. For once, the Italian option isn't the most expensive choice, though this particular one is a real, old-fashioned Italian bike with more than a few rough edges. Go the Italian way and you won't necessarily get the best bike but you will get exclusivity.

The only definite conclusion we came to was that if we were restricted to 12bhp and were in the market for a trail bike, then it'd probably be Japanese and definitely be a two-stroke. After that you're paying mainly for cosmetics.

Julian Ryder



CHECKOUT

CAGIVA SXL125

Price (inc taxes).....	£770
Engine.....	Single cyl reed valve
Bore x stroke.....	56 x 50.6mm
Capacity.....	124cc
Gearbox.....	6-speed
DIMENSIONS	
Seat height.....	(34in)
Weight.....	105kg (235lb)
Fuel capacity.....	9.5 litres (2.1gal)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed.....	60
Best one way.....	60.7
Standing ¼-mile.....	19.74/60.7
Speedo. accuracy.....	
At ind. 30mph.....	28
At ind. 60mph.....	55
Equipment.....	Rack, indicator, bleepers, mirror, centre stand

SUZUKI TS125ER

Price (inc taxes).....	£759
Engine.....	Single cyl reed valve
Bore x stroke.....	56 x 50mm
Capacity.....	123cc
Gearbox.....	6-speed
DIMENSIONS	
Seat height.....	820mm (32mm)
Weight.....	87kg (214lb)
Fuel capacity.....	9.5 litres (2.1gal)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed.....	62.9
Best one way.....	68.2
Standing ¼-mile.....	19.6/62.6
Speedo. accuracy.....	
At ind. 30mph.....	55
At ind. 60mph.....	28
Equipment.....	Fork gaiters, mirror

HONDA MTX125RWD

Price (inc taxes).....	£939
Engine.....	Water cooled single cyl, reed valve
Bore x stroke.....	56 x 50.6mm
Capacity.....	124cc
Gearbox.....	6-speed
DIMENSIONS	
Seat height.....	845mm (33.5in)
Weight.....	103kg (226lb)
Fuel capacity.....	9 litres (1.9gal)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed.....	63.5
Best one way.....	67.8
Standing ¼-mile.....	19.23/63.5
Speedo. accuracy.....	
At ind. 30mph.....	56
At ind. 60mph.....	28
Equipment.....	Air forks, rack mirrors, fork gaiters, halogen headlight

YAMAHA DT125LC

Price (inc taxes).....	£829
Engine.....	Water cooled single cyl, reed valve
Bore x stroke.....	56 x 50mm
Capacity.....	123cc
Gearbox.....	6-speed
DIMENSIONS	
Seat height.....	840mm (33in)
Weight.....	106kg (232lb)
Fuel capacity.....	9 litres (1.9gal)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed.....	61.2
Best one way.....	65.2
Standing ¼-mile.....	20.1/60.1
Speedo. accuracy.....	
At ind. 30mph.....	63
At ind. 60mph.....	32
Equipment.....	Fork gaiters, mirrors

KAWASAKI KE125K10

Price (inc taxes).....	£699
Engine.....	Single cyl disc valve
Bore x stroke.....	56 x 50.6mm
Capacity.....	124cc
Gearbox.....	6-speed
DIMENSIONS	
Seat height.....	830mm (32.5in)
Weight.....	99kg (218lb)
Fuel capacity.....	9.5 litres (2.1gal)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed.....	63.6
Best one way.....	69.2
Standing ¼-mile.....	19.3/62.2
Speedo. accuracy.....	
At ind. 30mph.....	60
At ind. 60mph.....	29
Equipment.....	Fork gaiters, mirror

YAMAHA XT125

Price (inc taxes).....	£770
Engine.....	Single cyl sohc
Bore x stroke.....	57 x 48.8mm
Capacity.....	124cc
Gearbox.....	5-speed
DIMENSIONS	
Seat height.....	835mm (33in)
Weight.....	96kg (212lb)
Fuel capacity.....	7.6 litres (1.7gal)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed.....	n/a
Best one way.....	63.7
Standing ¼-mile.....	20.1/59.1
Speedo. accuracy.....	
At ind. 30mph.....	58
At ind. 60mph.....	29
Equipment.....	Mirrors