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DIRT BIKE

DIRT BIKE

OCTOBER 1984

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KTM 125, CR125, KX125

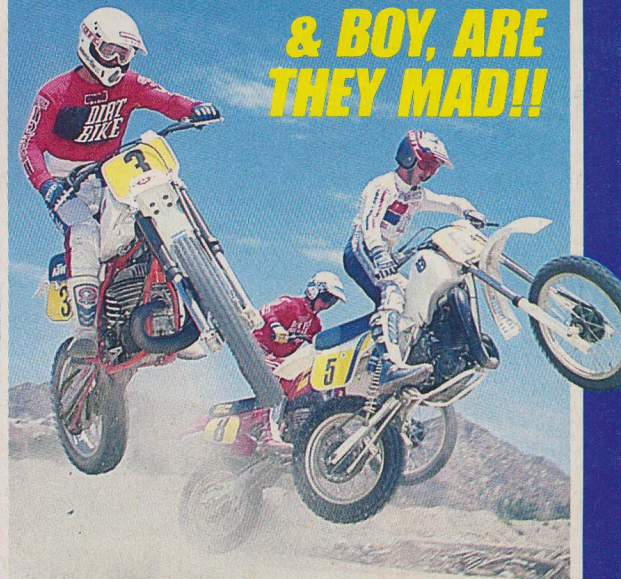


**PRO WOODS
RACING SECRETS:
GO FASTER THAN
YOU EVER THOUGHT
POSSIBLE!**

**HANNAH & MAGOO
ARE BACK
& BOY, ARE
THEY MAD!!**

YZ125,
CAGIVA 125,
RM125

CR500, RM500, YZ490



KTM 495,
HUSKY 500,
M-STAR 500

**HOW TO PASS... IN BLINDING DUST... WITH
MAX TRACTION... AND NOT BE AFRAID!!**

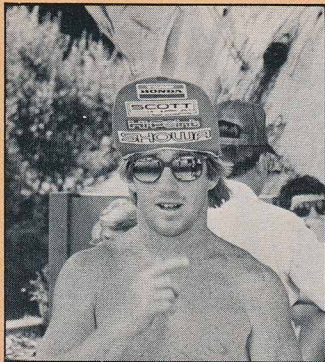


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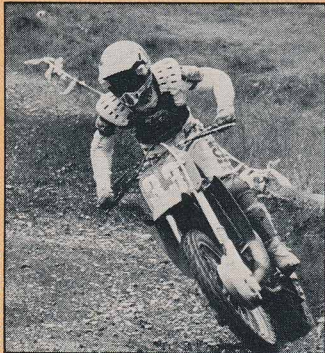
OCTOBER 1984 • VOLUME 14, NO. 10



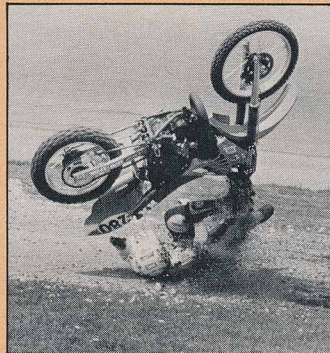
MAGOO



125 SHOOTOUT



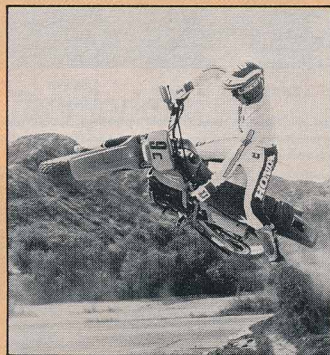
UNADILLA 250 GP



WHEN FEAR IS NEAR



DUST BUSTERS



HONDA XR500

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.

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ON THE COVER:—We've packed the pages with head-to-head shootouts this month. On top are six charged 125s going for the throat, and lower on the page are a half dozen of the fastest motocrossers in the world. Photos by Clipper and Webb; awesome separation by Valley Film.

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Once more, with feeling

NO-HOLD 125 MX SH

Winners, losers

If you choose to race a 125, you'd better get used to the idea of riding like a lunatic, overrevving the motor and abusing the clutch. You don't nit-pick lines; instead, you dive into turns and slingshot the corners, desperately trying to keep the engine screaming its guts out at spooky revs. When you enter a bumpy straight, you catch the next gear and let the bike dance around like a nitro-powered basketball.

Therefore, it makes sense to value horsepower over almost anything else in the 125 class. With the need to keep the engine working at near peak revs most of the time, passing other 125s in the turns consists of little more than controlled ramming and outright intimidation.

With this in mind, here's the field we have for our comparison test, in alphabetical order:

CAGIVA—A new (for this country) Italian racer, the Cagiva has Marzocchi forks, an Ohlins rear shock and a very conventional engine with no exhaust valves. A tall bike, the Cagiva is blood red, handsome, and trying hard to make a dent on these shores. Carburetion is Dell'orto, ignition is ND, tires are Pirelli sand models, and a single radiator does the cooling.

HONDA—A heavily updated bike from 1983, the CR has an ATAC exhaust add-on, a disc brake up front, brilliant red plastic, and touches of blue here and there. Forks and shocks are by KYB, but built to Honda's specs. Dual radiators cool it down, and carburetion is by Keihin.

KAWASAKI—A single large radiator cools the green rocket. Braking is disc up front, conventional at the rear. Forks are KYB, as is the rear shock. A trick Mikuni carb is partly responsible for making it ultra-fast.

KTM—Introduced late in 1983 in an exclusive *DB* test, the KTM was faster than any 1983 125 around. Double-leading-shoe brakes squeal the wheels at both ends. Zoke forks ride up front, and a White Power shock is Pro-Levered at the rear. The white charger comes stock with a Dell'orto carb and excellent Metzeler tires.

SUZUKI—After a lame year, the Floater is once again Full. This little revver has KYB forks up front and a fully adjustable KYB shock at the rear. A blue frame accentuates the yellow plastic. Dual-leading-shoe brakes can be found up front, with normal stoppers at the other end.

YAMAHA—Looking much like the 1983 effort, the YZ is, in fact, much changed. It too has an exhaust valve. Low saddle height is evident; KYB forks work up front and a single KYB monoshock setup handles the rear. Dual-leading-shoe brakes are on the front while regular brakes are at the rear. Carburetion is conventional Mikuni.

MISSING IN ACTION

Not here are the Can-Am 125 and the Husky 125. Husky bowed out of the shootout. Reason? Its offering is simply too slow

in pure horsepower and is much more at home in the desert and at hare scrambles than on a MX track.

The Can-Am 125 remains a mystery, as we know of no one in the universe who has one, yet we are told they do indeed exist. If they are anything like past Can-Am 125s,

they are slow and heavy, which is not a plus in any bike comparison.

POWER

For pure outrageous horsepower in 1984, we declare the Kawasaki the king. It would pull every other bike in a basic drag race to the first turn and would simply not get pass-



S-BARRED OOTOUT!!

& near misses

ed on the straights. Oddly enough, it also has the most snap down low and at mid-range. Truly an impressive engine!

In most drag races the KTM was right on the tail of the KX, usually about a half length behind in a normal trip through the gears. The KTM, though, did have a slightly

higher top speed with stock gearing. Only a slightly soft response at lower revs kept the KTM from giving the Kawasaki a harder time.

A complete lack of low end and mid-range power was characteristic of the Suzuki. Still, when the rider was able to keep the

sucker screaming, it hauled the mail. Gear selection was more critical because of the hyper nature of the RM engine, but at peak revs it could run with anything.

We rated the Honda and the Cagiva even on power. The Honda had more down low than the Italian bike, but when the Honda signed off, the Cagiva kept howling. It would invariably edge the Honda in a drag race, but would respond too sluggishly off the low end for maximum corner-to-corner effectiveness. Also, we must point out the fact that some of the Honda 125s were not so good, while others were decent. (See April '84 *DB* for details.)

The unfortunate YZ got last place. There's a little bit of a jolt at low revs, a nudge at mid-range, and then a giant black hole as the bike revs out. Most 80s will smoke it in a drag race.

TURNING

Give the Honda the nod for being the sharpest turning of the six bikes. It will snake inside anything else on the track, even with worn-out stock tires.

Second ranking goes to the Suzuki. With the forks raised a bit and the right preload on the rear, it turns well enough to get the job done. We rated the KTM third. While not a razor in the turns, it is very predictable, exhibits no headshake and will go where it's pointed.

The tallish Cagiva turns well and feels much like the KTM. No magic, but no bad habits. In fifth, the KX simply wallows and dives too much, and the softish forks give the KX a tendency to knife in and tuck the front end under. With the optional fork springs and a very high oil level, much of this trait diminishes.

Rate the YZ last. For some reason, in spite of its lowness the YZ steers fuzzy and lends no confidence. Hard-packed turns reveal that the front end has a mind of its own.

STRAIGHT-LINE STABILITY

This is how well a bike works at higher speeds over rough tracks. Here, none of the other bikes could track quite like the Cagiva. In fact, Cagivas have been doing extremely well in the desert races lately. No headshake, and bullet-true tracking make the bike a high-speed delight, especially in the whoops.

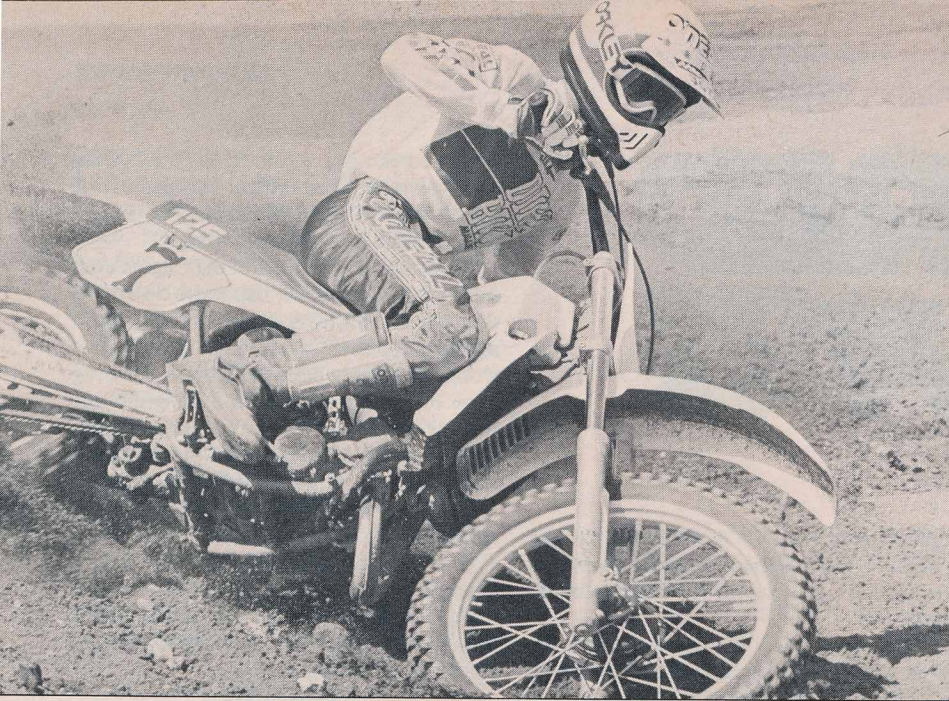
Give the KTM the number two slot here. It tracks much like the Cagiva and has no steering headshake when coming down from the top gears.

A bit busier than the two top-rated machines, the Suzuki nonetheless is comfortable at higher speeds and demonstrates only a slight wiggle when braking hard over bumps.

The Kawasaki worked fairly well here but only with the power on hard. Roll off the throttle, and the bike tends to dive and wander. In fifth, the YZ demonstrated some of the old "Yamahop," a side-to-side dislike for whoops.

In dead last, the sharp-turning Honda





Keith O'Neal was impressed with the power output of the KTM.



This year the Honda has KYB suspension all the way around. ►

pays the price for its great cornering abilities by being the headshakingest 125 around. Chop the throttle at the end of a bumpy top-gear straight, and the bars will waggle like a car antenna with a dead cat tied to it. Even extending the forks doesn't help much.

OVERALL HANDLING

All things considered—turns, straights, sweepers, hairpins, what-have-you—we rate the Suzuki the best all-around handler. It doesn't shine in any one department, but it does nothing bad anywhere, either. Much of the credit must no doubt go to its superior suspension.

KTM gets credit for second in overall handling, with super-high-speed stability and no real vices. Third is the Honda, in spite of its looseness at higher speeds. On a typically tight MX track it's hard to beat its cornering excellence.

Fourth and fifth spots are held by the Kawasaki and Cagiva, respectively, and last is held by the YZ.

FORKS

Suzuki is far and away better in fork action than any other 125 around. Second is Honda, with a slightly harsh set of legs, and third rated is the mushy Kawasaki fork. Fourth is the lackluster YZ/KYB fork, and Cagiva and KTM share last with outdated Marzocchi units.

SHOCKS

Again, the Suzuki shines with its legendary Floater. Second slot is shared by KTM and Cagiva. Both have excellent units (White Power and Ohlins) that can be dialed in to near perfection by a savvy shop.

Next is the Kawasaki, which has a shock that is very good but not as long lasting as either the White Power or the Ohlins. Honda and Yamaha bring up the rear with very adjustable units that seem harsh no matter what the settings.





HITTING THE SCALES

Light is good in MX. Here's how they stack up on the deadly accurate and highly abused DB scales: All bikes were weighed with no gas in the tanks but with oil in forks and gearboxes, and with filled radiators. We took off the kickstands, too, as you should not race with a kickstand.

The lightest bike of the group is the KTM.

1. KTM 193.75
2. YZ 195.0
3. KX and CR (tie) 197.5
5. RM 198.0
6. Cagiva 212.0

COST REARS ITS UGLY HEAD

The big price spread between the European bikes and the Big Four bikes has all but disappeared. Here are the suggested retail prices on the machines, bearing in mind that as the year grinds down, bargains can be had.

◀ *As long as the Cagiva was kept singing, it pulled well. Let it drop off the revs, and it was bog-o-matic time.*

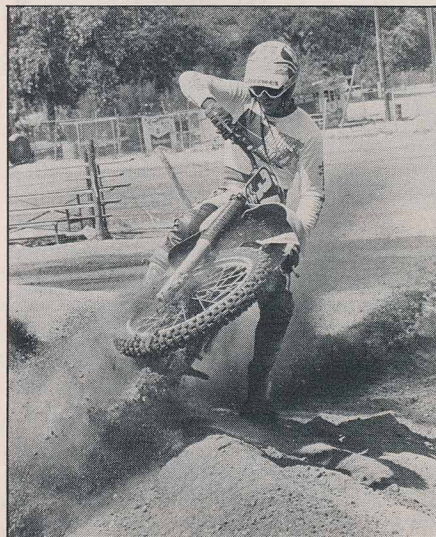
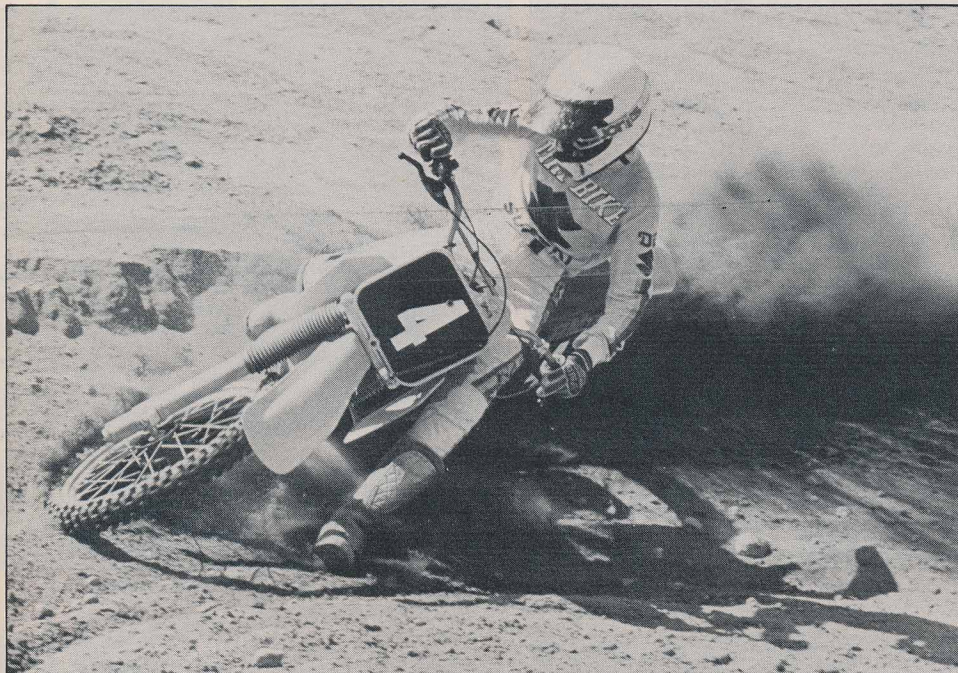
125 MX

1. KX \$1799
2. RM 1859
3. CR 1898
4. YZ 1899
5. Cagiva 1960
6. KTM 1989

GLITCHES

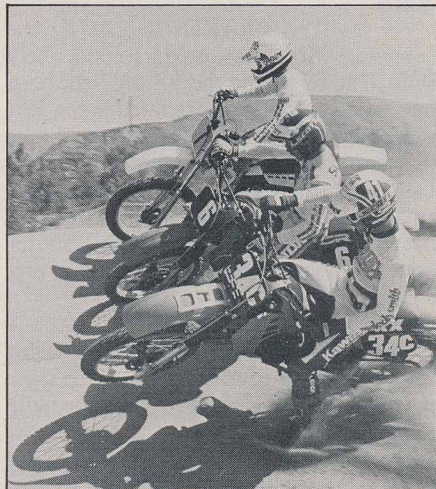
These are the things that bothered us about the bikes. The fewer glitches and bugs, the higher the rating. Top rated here is the Suzuki, a very complete package. Second rated is the Kawasaki with a marginal clutch, some frame cracks reported, and spotty detailing.

We called it a tie for third, with the Honda, KTM and YZ about even. The ATAC on the Honda seems to do little more than



Randy Johnson rips the top off a berm on the KX125.

◀ *Lowest saddle height of all the 125s can be found on the Suzuki. Ricky Sieman plows the RM through a Dunes turn.*



The snappy KX125 seemed least affected in the sandy turns, pulling almost as hard as a 250 at mid-revs.

◀ *Hampered by below-average power, the YZ demanded extra concentration in soft-terrain turning.*

125 MX

complicate a top-end job, and barrels and timing have been off on a percentage of the CRs sold. KTM comes with confused forks, a suspect head gasket, a fragile kickstarter and a rear brake arm that breaks when bugs land on it. The YZ seems to be a chronic spoke-breaker and wheel-bender, shifts poorly, and has the loudest exhaust this side of a 747.

Last rated, the Cagiva suffers from a death-wish ignition, weak wheels, too much pork, and a rear brake that appears to have been designed by a poodle.

LAYOUT AND FEEL

A very personal thing, we still got very uniform feedback from the riders over the year. Most of them liked the way the Honda felt. It was slim and trim, and everything was where it should be. Good design overall.

Second rated was the Suzuki, a fairly low bike with everything nicely tucked in. Taller riders like the roomy KTM, which still comes with a hard saddle and a brake pedal that takes getting used to.

In fourth we have the Kawasaki with a good overall feel. Complaints were limited to a too-high-in-the-front saddle, a pipe that burned some legs, and the radiator shroud irritating long-legged riders.

Fifth rated, the Cagiva is simply too tall for the average 125 rider, and the saddle soon mashes out. Last place is held by the YZ, a low bike that sits funny, with the bars too high in relationship to the pegs and the saddle.

SHIFTING

Very simply, the RM and the Cagiva are the best shifters of the group. Kawasaki gets the next spot, with the Honda a bit on the notchy side. The KTM is only awkward from first to second, with all the other gears working well. Last placed, the YZ gearbox will improve with time and oil changes but it is terribly notchy when compared with the others.

BRAKES

Honda, first. Kawasaki, second. Very close. The KTM and the YZ are tied; both have good stoppers. Next rated is the RM with an average front brake and a rear brake that wears faster than any other setup tested. Last rated, the Cagiva front brake is marginal when dry and hopeless when wet, and the rear brake pedal hits on the kickstarter halfway down, nullifying any chance at predictable stopping. Poor.

RELIABILITY

Other than wimpy wheels, the YZ seems very reliable. Of course, if it made the same power as the other bikes, it might be quite a bit more stressed.

We called the RM, KX and KTM about even, with the Honda next, and the Cagiva last.

RATING THE 125s— HOW THEY STACK UP

In first place we have the Kawasaki, earning its coveted slot mostly through sheer horsepower. While flawed in the forks,



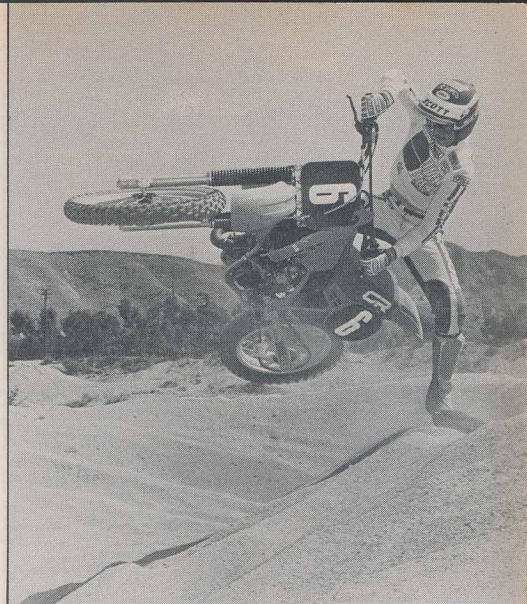
The RM had the best "legs" of the group, with super forks up front and the legendary Floater at the rear.



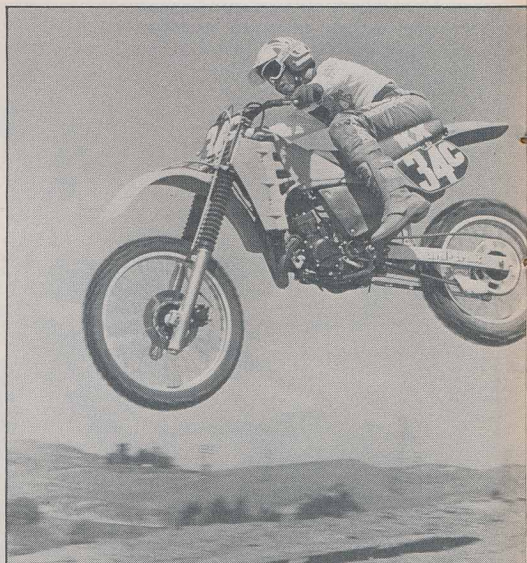
Duane Summers, number one lightweight in the desert, was the pilot of our Cagiva.



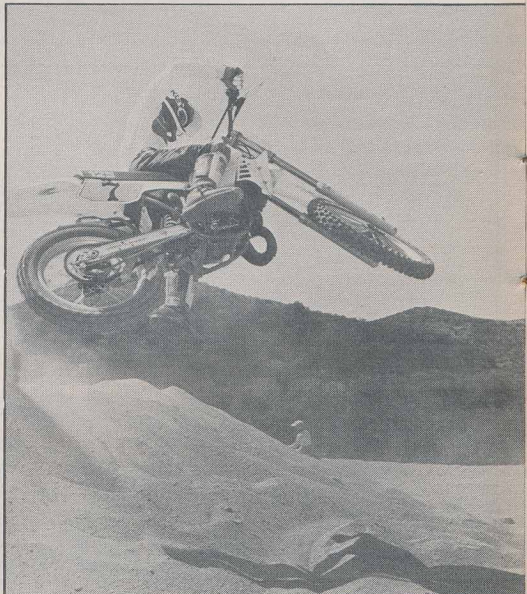
Tod Sciacqua does his best Ricky Johnson imitation on the Yamaha.



Steve Schmitz flicked the Honda around like a toy. Overall, the CR has the most "Pro" layout and feel.



Slightly confused forks and a killer motor mark the Kawasaki.



Lightest of all the 125s, the KTM still feels big when airborne.

other 125s will still have to get around the blazing-fast KX, which is not an easy task when you're dealing with less pure horsepower.

We rate the Suzuki second overall because of its brilliant suspension and in spite of an almost total lack of low end and mid-range power. If you can keep the RM buzzing and the track is rough, it's hard to beat. But it'll still have to get around the KXs.

Third spot is held by the KTM. It has a superb motor, odd forks and is the lightest bike of the group. Sharper turning and a more dialed-in suspension would have placed it at the very top. It's also the most versatile bike of the 125s and can be used in the woods, desert and hare scrambles with the

generous stock gas tank.

The Honda is rated fourth, in spite of being the best-turning bike of all. Serious steering headshake and spotty quality control on the barrels downgraded it. Even the "good" one could use more power at higher revs.

In fifth place we have the Cagiva. It's a great handler but is far too heavy, has fuzzy-working forks, and an ignition that will puke its spark at the first hint of moisture. For sheer acceleration the Cagiva is competitive with the top bike, but the response is sluggish at lower revs.

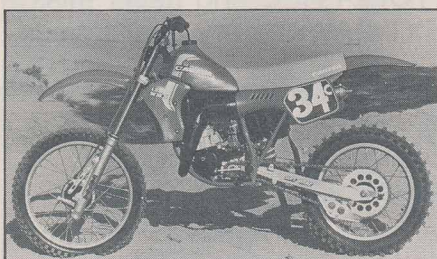
In last we see the Yamaha, hampered by the slowest motor ever to sport the YZ label. It requires major work to get it to run with the average machines in the 125 class and

does not distinguish itself with any fantastic handling or turning traits.

In order:

1. Kawasaki
2. Suzuki
3. KTM
4. Honda
5. Cagiva
6. Yamaha

As you can see from our report, none of the bikes are perfect, yet some of them are simply amazing in specific departments. The perfect 125? Well, how about a Kawasaki engine in a KTM chassis, Honda turning traits, with Suzuki suspension components? Top it off with Cagiva plastic and a Yamaha number one plate. □



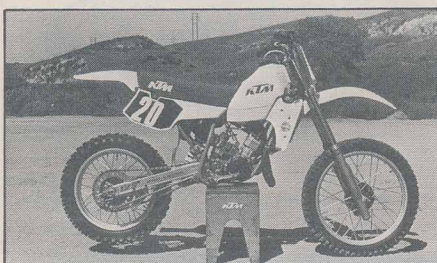
Cagiva WMX125



Honda CR125



Kawasaki KX125



KTM 125MX



Suzuki RM125



Yamaha YZ125

	CAGIVA WMX125	HONDA CR125R	KAWASAKI KX125C1	KTM 125MX	SUZUKI RM125E	YAMAHA YZ125L
Engine type	Water-cooled, 2-stroke single	Water-cooled, 2-stroke single	Water-cooled, 2-stroke single	Water-cooled, 2-stroke single	Water-cooled, 2-stroke single	Water-cooled, 2-stroke single
Bore and stroke	56mm x 50.6mm	55.5mm x 50.7mm	56mm x 50.6mm	54mm x 54mm	54mm x 54mm	56mm x 50mm
Displacement	124.63cc	122.7cc	124cc	123cc	123cc	123cc
Carburetion	36mm Dell'orto	36/34 oval bore Keihin	34mm Mikuni	36mm Dell'orto	32mm flat-slide Mikuni	36mm Mikuni
Factory recommended jetting:						
Main jet	180	142	280	210	270	360
Needle jet	268 CF	Fixed	Q-8	CF-272	R-2	P-8
Jet needle	U7	28L	6FL52-3	U-3	6EPOS	6F15-2
Pilot jet	60	68	40	70	45	50
Slide number	30	3.5	3.0	40	4.0	2.0
Fuel tank capacity	8.2 L (2.2 gals.)	7.0 L (1.8 gals.)	8.0 L (2.1 gals.)	9.08 L (2.4 gals.)	7 L (1.5 gals.)	7.5 L (1.98 gals.)
Lubrication	Pre-mix	Pre-mix	Pre-mix	Pre-mix	Pre-mix	Pre-mix
Transmission	6-speed	6-speed	6-speed	6-speed	6-speed	6-speed
Gearbox ratios:						
1	2.273:1	2.333:1	2.307:1	2.750:1	2.066:1	2.462:1
2	1.786:1	1.875:1	1.750:1	2.086:1	1.705:1	1.857:1
3	1.466:1	1.555:1	1.400:1	1.647:1	1.411:1	1.500:1
4	1.250:1	1.300:1	1.181:1	1.368:1	1.190:1	1.250:1
5	1.105:1	1.136:1	1.041:1	1.190:1	1.045:1	1.105:1
6	1.000:1	1.000:1	0.954:1	1.050:1	0.956:1	1.000:1
Gearing, front/rear	13/49	13/51	12/50	16/60	12/51	12/48
Ignition	ND CDI	CDI	CDI	Motoplant	PEI	CDI
Recommended spark plug	Champion N82G	NGK BR9EG/ Champion QN-84	NGK B10EV	Bosch 340S2S	NGK B9EG/VND W27ES-GU	N-84-N84-G, N59G/ Champion B9EG
Silencer/spark arrester	Silencer only, aluminum	Silencer only, aluminum	Silencer only, aluminum	Silencer only, aluminum	Silencer only, aluminum	Silencer only, aluminum
Wheelbase	1470mm (58.0 in.)	1430mm (56.3 in.)	1450mm (57.09 in.)	1460mm (57.5 in.)	1475mm (58.1 in.)	1450mm (57.08 in.)
Ground clearance	375mm (13.75 in.)	345mm (13.6 in.)	390mm (15.35 in.)	375mm (13.75 in.)	320mm (12.6 in.)	350mm (13.78 in.)
Seat height	990mm (38.2 in.)	930mm (36.6 in.)	955mm (37.6 in.)	948mm (37.75 in.)	940mm (37.0 in.)	930mm (36.6 in.)
Rake/trail	28°/122mm (4.6 in.)	26.5°/109mm (4.3 in.)	27.5°/116mm (4.57 in.)	28.5°/122mm (4.8 in.)	28.5°/123mm (4.84 in.)	27.76°/116mm (4.57 in.)
Wet weight, no fuel	212.0 lbs.	197.5 lbs.	197.5 lbs.	193.75 lbs.	198.0 lbs.	195.0 lbs.
Tire size and type:						
Front	3.00 x 21 Pirelli	3.00 x 21 Bridgestone M37	3.00 x 21 Bridgestone 790	3.00 x 21 Metzeler 3E	90/80 x 21 4PR Bridgestone	90/90 x 21 Bridgestone M38
Rear	4.25 x 18 Pirelli	120/90 Bridgestone M38	4.00 x 18 Bridgestone 790	4.60 x 18 Metzeler Perfect Cross	120/80 x 18 4PR Bridgestone	120/80 x 18 Bridgestone M37
Suspension type and travel:						
Front	40mm Marzocchi, 300mm (11.8 in.)	43mm KYB, 290mm (11.4 in.), adj. comp. damping	43mm KYB, 300mm (11.8 in.), adj. comp. damping	40mm Marzocchi, 300mm (11.8 in.)	43mm KYB, adj. comp. damping, 300mm (11.8 in.)	43mm KYB, adj. comp. damping, 300mm (11.8 in.)
Rear	Cagiva Soft-Damp, 325mm (12.8 in.), adj. rebound damping	Pro-Link, 310mm (12.2 in.), adj. comp. and rebound	Uni-Trak, 310mm (12.2 in.), adj. comp. and rebound	Pro-Lever, adj. comp and rebound damping, 320mm (12.6 in.)	Full Floater, adj. comp and rebound damping, 320mm (12.6 in.)	Monocross, adj. comp. and rebound damping, 310mm (12.2 in.)
Intended use	Motocross	Motocross	Motocross	Motocross	Motocross	Motocross
Country of origin	Italy	Japan	Japan	Austria	Japan	Japan
Retail price, approx.	\$1960	\$1898	\$1799	\$1990	\$1859	\$1699
Distributor:	Cagiva North America 463 N. Oak St. Inglewood, CA 90302	American Honda Motor 100 W. Alondra Blvd. Gardena, CA 90247	Kawasaki Motor Corp. 2009 E. Edinger Santa Ana, CA 92705	KTM America 1905 Broadway Lorain, OH 44052	U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp. 3251 E. Imperial Hwy. Brea, CA 92621	Yamaha Motor Corp. 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630