

OFF-ROAD SPECIAL TEST

EXTREME MEASURES



Crossing an XR500 with a GSXR1100!

By the DIRT BIKE Staff

Extrêmes. Last month we looked at one extreme of slipping a KX80 motor into a KX125 frame for Larry Roeseler's ISDE effort. Now let's look at the other extreme—wedging a 165mph street bike motor into a Honda XR500R for no sane reason whatsoever! The wildmen at Extreme Performance tackled this bizarre project not with the Bonneville Salt Flats, Baja or Paris-Dakar in mind; they just wanted the ultimate dual-sport, knobby-burning monster for broad-sliding around the streets of Los Angeles! Being hard-core power freaks ourselves, we couldn't pass up the chance to ride one of the world's largest dirt bikes!

HOW IT WENT TOGETHER

Lex Webb blew up his '83 XR500R motor in a desert race, so the bike sat forgotten in the corner of the Extreme Performance machine shop. Then a friend brought in a wasted '87 Suzuki GSXR1100 street bike. Lex figured he could use that awesome motor for something, so he snatched it up for \$100. Before long, he and Extreme partner Barry Walton hit upon the crazed idea of mating the four-cylinder street bike and the XR into one pavement-peeling dual-purpose monster. On their frame jig, they took the head, shock mount, swingarm pivot measurements of the XR frame, spread the jig a bit, then slipped the GSXR motor into place. A chromoly frame was then built

around the road-racing motor, using the stock XR500R shock, swingarm and linkages. The new frame has the same dimensions of the XR, except it's two inches longer and has the head angle kicked out a half-degree (to 27) for stability.

Circle Industries made a 50-tooth sprocket to mate the XR wheel to the 532 heavy-duty chain, and Extreme hand-formed a four-into-two-into-one header system, mated to an Ontario aluminum silencer. The four 34mm Mikuni carbs got clamp-on K&N filters instead of an airbox and were re-jetted for the new breathing characteristics. Mounts were fabricated for the XR plastic, along with a rear brake pedal, shortened shifter, aluminum skidplate/battery holder and fork-mounted oil cooler. After 150 hours of labor (less than two weeks in the laboratory), the monster breathed its first breath of fire. It's been licensed (as a GSXR, naturally) and now sees daily use on the streets of the San Fernando Valley, with the occasional fire road thrown in here and there.

RIDING THE WORLD'S FASTEST DIRT BIKE

This bike makes the fastest 500s seem like sewing machines! It'll putt along happily in second gear at a snail's pace, thanks to four-cylinder smoothness, then absolutely light up the rear knobby with a crack of the right wrist! Huge roostertails spew forth and the bike builds momentum at a sickening rate,

all the way to the 10,500-rpm redline. Even in the desert, we never worked up the nerve to get it singing in fifth gear! We're talking 150mph+ on a dry lake, if you've got the hair. This thing mauls knobs in the dirt and slings cooked rubber everywhere on the street. Power? Don't ask! Traction is the only limiting factor in what this beast will climb, and chains stretch quicker than the elastic on Liz Taylor's girdle.

Though it has John Deere torque, this bike does not like tight trails one bit. It's only happy on wide-open, relatively smooth terrain. Try a bermshot and it fights back big-time, but crank it into a high-speed sweeper and you'll feel like Scott Parker, or maybe Kenny Roberts winning the Indy Mile on a TZ750. Weighing in a good 100 pounds heavier than the average four-stroke, the XR1100 overrides its brakes and is obscenely soft in the whoops (they plan on stiffer springs at both ends). It bottoms harshly on even the smallest jump. The wide motor forces the rider into a bowlegged riding style. But wait! It gets weirder—the shifting is reversed (up for low)!

Is there any sane reason to own a dirt bike that's this powerful? No, but wheelies or full-lock, feet-up slides are only a twist of the wrist away! Electric starting sure makes getting to the smoke bomb first a snap. It may not be for everyone, but this bike sure fulfills a taste for the extreme. □



Going to extremes: Lex Webb didn't find his XR500R fast enough for the desert, so he built this one-off GSXR1100 dirt bike!

Engine type Four-cylinder, DOHC, 16-valve, air- and oil-cooled four-stroke
Displacement 1052cc
Bore and stroke 76mm×58mm

Carburetion (4) 34mm Mikuni constant-velocity
Fuel tank capacity 3.2 gals. (12L)
Lighting coil Yes
Spark arrester Yes
Green sticker legal in stock trim Yes
Actual running weight w/no fuel 344 lbs.

Wheelbase 58.2 in. (1476mm)
Ground clearance 13 in. (330mm)
Seat height 37.4 in. (950mm)

Tire size and type:
Front 3.25×21 Grand Sport
Rear 5.30×17 Cheng Shin C755

Suspension:
Front 43mm Showas, 11 in. (280 mm) travel
Rear Pro-Link, remote res. Showa, adj. comp./reb., 11 in. (280mm) travel

Country of origin Japan
Suggested retail price \$10,000

Distributor/Manufacturer:
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