

australasian DIRT BIKE

ISSUE 74

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**GIANT
BONUS ISSUE!
MORE COLOUR
THAN EVER!**

**EASTER FOUR DAY
ENDURO**

**EBENEZER'S
12 HOUR**

HONDA XL600

AN EASIER START IN LIFE

IT200 vs KDX200

**THE FACES REMAIN THE SAME,
ONLY THE TIMES HAVE CHANGED**

HONDA XR250

**VS SUZUKI
TS250**

THE TEST THEY

**SAID
WOULD
NOT
BE
FAIR**

**MAICO
500
ENDURO**



**ADB'S
ISDE SUPPORTER
TOUR
DETAILS INSIDE!**

**MINIRIDER
INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

HONDA XR80

**GYMKHANAS:
A GOOD IDEA?**

TECH TALK

MINIRIDER

**WARREN PASSFIELD
- HONDA'S HIGH FLYER**



**HONDA XR80
- THUMPIN' 'EM**

**GYMKHANAS
- HOW ARE THESE FUN EVENTS RUN?**

**TECH TALK - 10 INSIDE TIPS
EVERY MINIRIDER
SHOULD KNOW**

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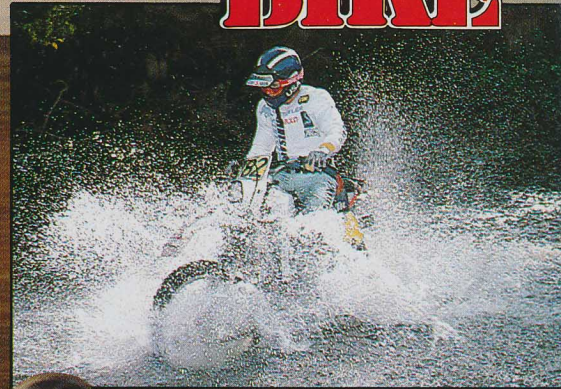
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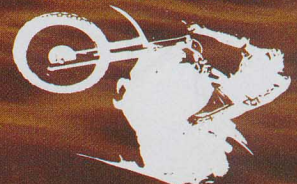


Photography by Vicki Huston

COVER

Victorian Yamaha Team rider Gary Hore is well known in his home state, but interstaters are quickly becoming aware of his abilities. He finished 2nd in the RMMM Four Day 250cc Class and 3rd outright behind Pelle Granquist and Phil Lovett. Our pictorial on the Four Day begins on page 62.

* Recommended and maximum retail price only. Imagine what this price could soar to if we actually had to pay staff. ADB - budget cutters.



MINIRIDER

ISSUE 4
JULY 1985

**WARREN PASSFIELD
- HONDA'S HIGH FLYER**

**HONDA XR80
- THUMPIN' 'EM**

GYMKHANAS

HOW ARE THESE FUN EVENTS RUN?

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SHOULD KNOW**



MINIRIDER TEST:

Our thanks to Warren and Peter Passfield and Bennett Honda for their help with this test.

XR80 HONDA

Times finally caught up with the good old XR80 and forced the factory's hand. They found they needed to give serious consideration to a revamp in order to maintain their sales in a changing marketplace.

Thumping good times.

How long has it been now since Honda first introduced the XR80 (or XR75 as it was then known)? More than ten years! Probably way too long ago for most present day Miniriders to remember, but we can assure you that it was over ten years ago.

Ten years is an incredibly long time for one model to continue in the marketplace with only minor changes in the way of updates, but this fact obviously tells you that Honda struck the right formula first time round with the XR75 (later the XR80). If you're on a good thing, stick to it, right?

Stable handling, a smooth, tractable four-stroke engine and a generally easy-to-get-along-with nature made the smallest of XRs a hit with both novice and more experienced riders alike. And today, those very same traits still ring true in the latest model; the XR80RF.

SINGLE SHOCKING 'EM

1985 sees one of the most major changes in the history of the XR80, with the introduction of the Pro-Link rear suspension to the machine for the first time.

Previous changes from year to year have been limited to a slight (5cc) increase in capacity from 75cc to 80cc, and minor styling updates. Fitting the Pro-Link system is a major step forward for Honda in their efforts to give buyers more performance for their money and to help bring the smallest XR further into line with what the larger capacity range of XRs have to offer.

As well as the Pro-Link rear end, the RF offers a redesigned diamond configuration frame with the engine used as a stressed member, a new aircleaner and exhaust system for more efficient breathing (which at the same time helped to save weight), as well as a whole host of subtle styling changes that include new mudguards, numberplates, plastic fuel tank and safety seat.

The engine remains unchanged from previous models and still has a capacity of 79.7cc, with the two-valve head driven by an overhead cam. Carburettor is a nice and simple single 20mm unit which is easily accessible from the right hand side of the machine, as is the spark plug. For home mechanics, the XR is a beauty with everything you might ever need to service good and easy to get at. A fair sized skid plate helps protect the motor while the large muffler keeps noise to a minimum.

Front suspension is via 27mm diameter leading axle forks which offer 140mm of wheel travel. The new Pro-Link rear end offers 110mm of travel but unfortunately has no means of adjustment whatsoever, which normally wouldn't have been too great a worry except for the fact that our test bike had what could only be described as a rock hard rear end and offered no compliance whatsoever except over the biggest of jumps.

Honda assured us our test machine was an early pre-production model and that any such troubles will be cured before production models are released. All the same,

it might pay you to check it out before you plunk your money on the counter, especially if you've been working a milk run for three years to save up for a new bike.

Attention to detail is excellent, as is typical of Honda, with thoughtful touches like a chain guard to keep little feet out of the rear sprocket, side-pull throttle, box section swingarm, folding foot-pegs, nylon chain guide, dust covers on the levers and heat shield over the exhaust.

BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

First things first. Let's sort out who is going to buy one of the new XR80s. Despite its looks, this is no motocross racing bike. No two ways about it.

Compare the specifications of the XR80 with its two-stroke cousin, the CR80RF, and you soon learn that Honda is catering to two totally removed markets.

The CR pumps out 22.5 PS compared with the XR's 8.8 PS. The

CR's front suspension offers 260mm of travel compared with the XR's 140mm. Although Pro-Link systems are now fitted to both machines, the CR's swings through 270mm compared to the XR's 110mm of travel. If you are thinking of going racing, these figures quickly tell you the CR is the only way to go. In other words, don't be fooled by the XR's racy looks.

So where does this leave us? With beginner, novice type riders who don't want an all-out mini-motocrosser. And from what we can gather, there are plenty of such riders around. For these riders, the XR80 may well be the ideal machine.

By no means can the engine be called a high power unit, but the power it does produce is spot on for the riders who are going to buy the bike. Smooth and tractable describes the XR's power perfectly, with the motor willing to just chug along all day if the rider wants. On

In these days of water-cooled, zap, pow, bang, 80cc motocross engines, the XR80's humble little four-stroke mill is very much the odd man out in modern day minibike circles. In its favour though is a nice, easy to get along with temperament that is spot on for less experienced riders. It requires little (more like no) maintenance whatsoever. How many two-stroke 80s can boast that?

The front suspension is basic at best, but who needs all sorts of internal damping and compression tricks on a bike like this? Chances are XR80 riders will be having so much fun on the bike that they won't have time to think about areas that could be improved.

Pro-Link suspension is now fitted to the smallest of Honda's XR range. The short shock is mounted to the frame backbone and connected to the steel box-section swingarm via the usual Pro-Link linkages.

the other hand, if the rider wants to blast across paddocks on Dad's farm, well, the XR will oblige and can take it all in its stride.

The five speed gearbox was a pleasure to use, with no shifts missed and the ratios spread evenly to suit both tight first gear riding as well as more open, faster work.

The front suspension, although fairly dated, does a reasonable job of soaking up most of the roughest ground normal playriding can throw up. Still, it would be good to see at least air caps to allow some adjustment of the forks to suit larger riders.

The Pro-Link rear end is definitely a move in the right direction as far as rear suspension performance goes but like we said before, our test bike's stiff rear end cast a big black shadow over the whole matter. Honda has assured us this problem will be cured on

Continued over

The muffler is excellent and keeps noise down to the very minimum. The axle pull adjusters are easy to use but they could be a little stronger, to save stripping the thread. Chain guard is a good safety idea.

HONDA XR80

Test Bike: Warren Passfield
c/- Bennett Honda, 250 Victoria St,
Wetherill Park, NSW, 2164.

Retail Price: \$1030.

SPECIFICATIONS

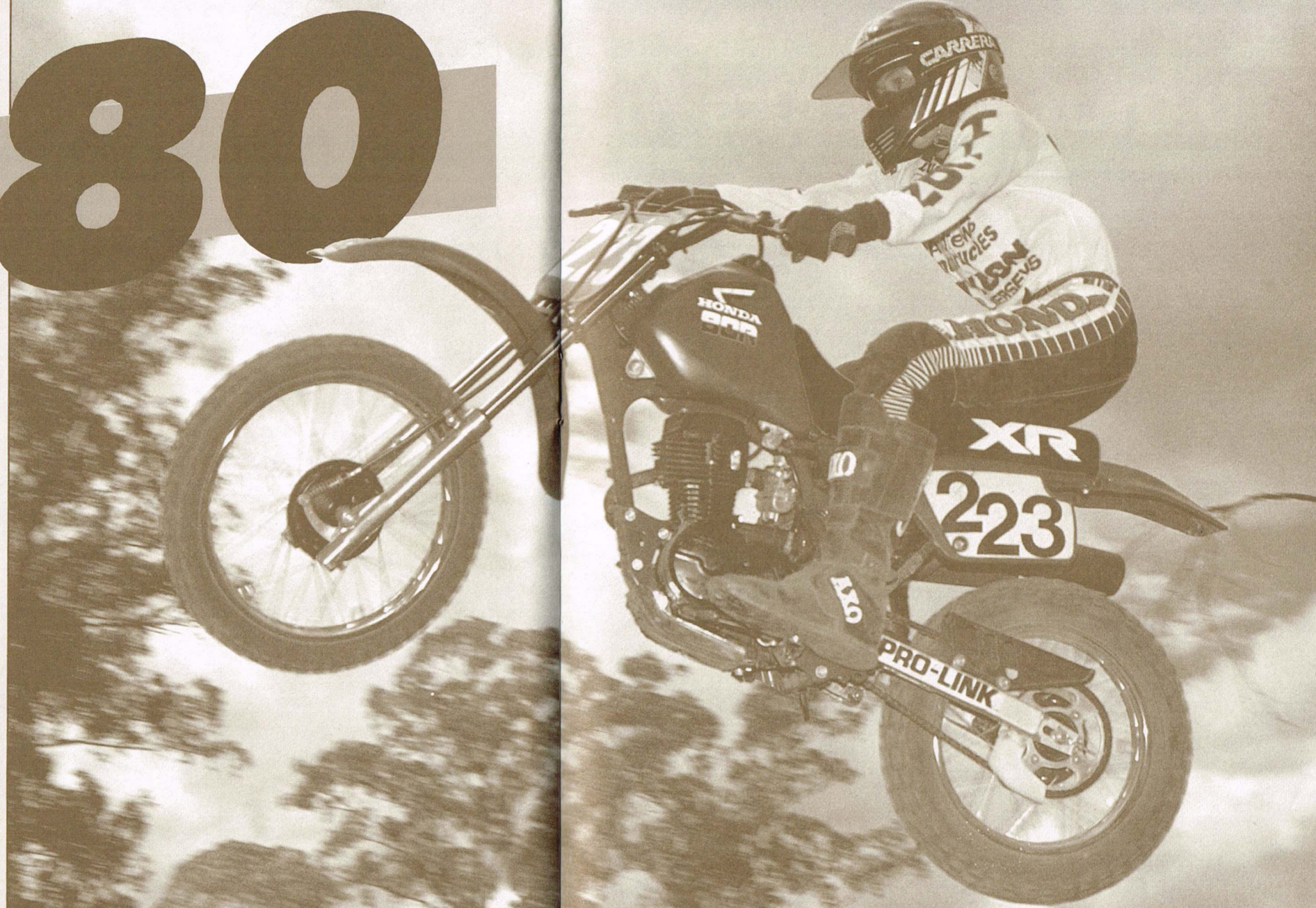
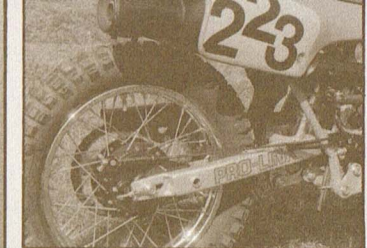
Engine Single cylinder, OHC,
air-cooled four-stroke
Bore/stroke 47.5 x 45mm
Capacity 79.7cc
Compression ratio 9.7 : 1
Ignition Flywheel magneto
Carburettor 20mm Keihin
Claimed power 8.8PS/
10500rpm
Starter Primary kick
Transmission 5 speed

FRAME AND SUSPENSION

Frame Steel, diamond
configuration with engine
as stressed member
Front suspension 27mm
leading axle forks with
140mm travel
Rear suspension Honda Pro-
Link with 110mm travel
Brakes Single leading shoe
drums front and rear

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase 1195mm
Seat height 725mm
Ground clearance 210mm
Fuel capacity 6.5 litres
Dry Weight 64kg



Photography by Andrew Clubb

HONDA XR80

production model XRs, so the rear suspension should at least be able to match that of the front.

Single leading shoe drum brakes front and rear are more than up to the task and easily bring the bike down from speed. The standard Bridgestone knobby tyres are a worthy compromise offering both good wear and grip characteristics. The handlebar/seat/pegs layout received no criticism and the safety seat is sure to be popular with young impressionable XR80 riders. The new plastic fuel tank and new numberplates and mudguards have done much to clean up the XR's lines and further increase sales appeal.

As far as areas go which we can criticise – there are a couple, but that's all. Firstly, be conscious of the low ground clearance. At only 210mm, and despite the stiff rear suspension, we found during the photo session for this test that the bike would easily get hung up on rocks with the skid plate being the only saving grace in this area. Even then, it doesn't offer much protection for the sides of the motor, which could prove costly if a rock does happen to hit the motor in this area.

The gear and brake pedals don't have folding tips, making them also vulnerable to rocks. We managed to bend the gearlever right back round on itself, so there's no reason you won't do the same.

Other than the low ground clearance and the lack of folding tips, we can't really complain about anything else on the XR80.

SO, IN SUMMARY

There's no doubt the XR80 fills a definite gap in the market place. Although the Japanese factories have turned most of their attention to the mini-motocrossers, machines like the XR80, and last month's test bike, the DS80, are still continuing to give riders a choice other than an all-out racing machine.

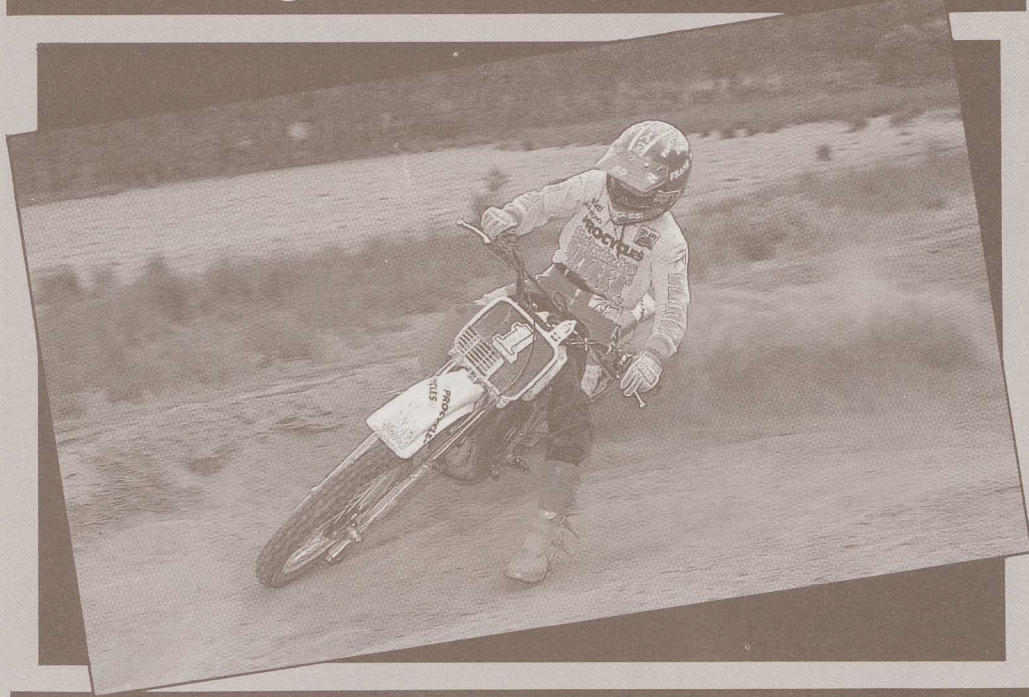
And that's important we feel. Too many times we have seen young, inexperienced riders mounted on the latest whiz-bang 80cc motocrosser when they are nowhere near capable of realising the bike's full potential. More often than not they would be much better off on a machine like the XR80 on which they can develop their riding skills before moving up to faster, larger machines.

So there you go, ask yourself if you really need, or if you are really ready, for one of the 80cc mini-motocrossers. If you have any doubts, then give the XR80RF some serious consideration. It's an easy to live with machine that requires little in the way of parts and maintenance and will serve you well from the day you buy it to the day you out-grow it.

Thumping good times? That's what you'll get with the XR80.

Tech-Talk:

10 Quick Checks



Keep your machine in good condition by taking time to run over these 10 quick maintenance checks.

• Fuel Filter.

Fitted in the fuel tap on your petrol tank is a small wire screen to keep dirt and grit from passing through the fuel lines. Blockages in the filter will starve the engine of fuel. When the tank is empty, remove the tap from the tank and check the filter for any signs of dirt or sludge. Clean them out and flush the tank with petrol in case any other dirt is laying in the bottom of the tank. Never pour anything but petrol into the tank and always be sure to use a clean funnel, preferably one with a mesh screen in it.

• Spokes.

It is especially important to check the spokes when the bike is new as the spokes bed in. Check them after each ride when new by dragging the spoke spanner around the wheel and listening for any spokes that sound out of key compared to the others. Experience and practice makes this easier. When tensioning spokes, start at the valve and tighten each third spoke until all spokes have been done.

• Chain Tension.

We have been over this subject in a previous issue. Key points to remember are keeping the chain tensioned so as to have half an inch of up and down movement above the swingarm when the countershaft sprocket, swingarm

pivot and rear sprocket are in the one line (this means the chain is stretched to the max). Check the chain and sprockets for wear and make sure all guides and rollers are not bent or worn. Lubricate the chain after each ride with a reputable brand chain lube, but always spray it first with a WD-dewatering fluid after you've washed the bike. Better yet, take the chain off the bike before you wash it.

• Tyre Pressures.

Keep tyre pressures within the range of 12-16 PSI depending on riding conditions. In rocky conditions, keep pressures higher to avoid the risk of puncture.

• Carb Clean.

Periodically remove the float bowl from the bottom of the carburettor. Check inside for signs of dirt or grit. Clean out with petrol and then check the fuel tank and tap for where dirt may be coming in.

• Engine Oil.

Periodically check engine oil. Change regularly, more often when racing regularly. Use only good quality oils of the correct viscosity – see your owner's manual – and keep it filled to the correct level.

• Lube cables.

Most motorcycle shops sell small cable lubing devices that make oiling your clutch, brake and throttle cables that much easier. If you

can't get one, try putting a couple of drops of oil on the cables while tensioning and then releasing them so as the oil gets sucked down inside the outer casing. While we are on the subject of lubing, smear some grease over all pivot points and bearing surfaces.

• Spark Plug.

Check periodically and clean your plug with a stiff wire brush. Ensure the gap is set correctly. The plug should be neither very white nor very black – you should be aiming for a medium tan colour. If it is white the jetting is too lean, if it is black the jetting is too rich. Timing could also be suspect and further checking by a mechanic may be in order.

• Adjust Brake/Clutch Cables.

Using the cable adjusters on the clutch and brake levers, adjust so as there is 5-8mm of freeplay in the levers. Keep clutch and brake mounts slightly loose so as the levers twist on the bars in falls rather than breaking.

• Aircleaner.

This was detailed in a previous issue but remember to check it at regular intervals. Clean the filter in petrol, then warm, soapy water. Leave to dry then recover in airfilter oil before fitting to bike once again. It usually pays to smear the lip that rests against the airbox housing with a good waterproof grease to get a certain seal. Ensure all seals around the airbox are sitting correctly and that water can't enter the airbox easily.