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# australasian **DIRT BIKE**

**BIG BORE  
IT243!  
CRAIG SMITH  
JUMPS  
FOR JOY!**



**MARCH 1987, ISSUE 91 \$3.50 (\$3.75NZ)\***

**WHO'S RIDING WHAT IN '87  
KTM350 ENDURO  
RACE-BRED,  
USER FRIENDLY**



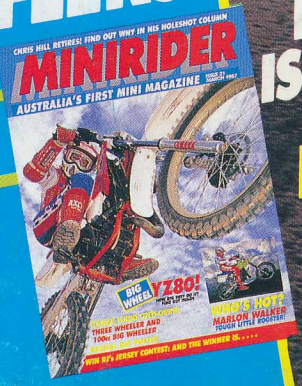
**SHOOTOUT!  
DAKAR vs  
KLR650**

**BURKE AND WILLS DREAM MACHINES**

**ACCESSORY  
MUFFLERS**

**ALSO INSIDE!  
Interview:  
RICHARD NIELSEN**

**ADB's experts:  
GALL  
LOVETT  
HEFFERNAN**



**YAMAHA  
YZ125T  
IS WHITER, RIGHTER?**

**HONDA'S  
XL250RH  
STOPPED IN TIME**





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MARCH, 1987  
ISSUE 91  
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Australasian  
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## PEOPLE

DODDERING OLD MAN: Geoff Eldridge  
YOUNG UPSTART EDITOR: Mister Andrew "RJ" Clubb  
POLITICAL EPICENTRE CARTOONIST: Honest Muz  
GUEST EDITORS: Stephen Gall, Lyndon Heffernan, Chris Hill, Phil Lovett, Brian Meskanen, Terry Shulze  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Clubby, Vicki Huston, Phil Gielis and last but not least Eldridge  
OFFICE BOSSES: Vicki & Jenny  
ARTWORK: Carl Van Der Smissen, Kevin Green, Geoff Eldridge  
TYPESETTING: Bright Eyes

**ADVERTISING MANAGER:** Phil Gielis. For information, phone (02)938 4155, or FAX: (02)939 2235

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### COVER

When it's late at night the day before deadline, what do you do for a cover? Go overboard, that's what. What a smorgasbord of delights! Here we have the Big Bore IT200 with Craig Smith (nearest camera) and brother Brett figuring out if it works (photo: Geoff Eldridge). We also have Pelle Granquist blitzing the ADB photo set on his KTM350 (photo: Andrew Clubb). Finally, Mark Pace trying to work out if the YZ125T has any top-end or not (photo: Clubby).

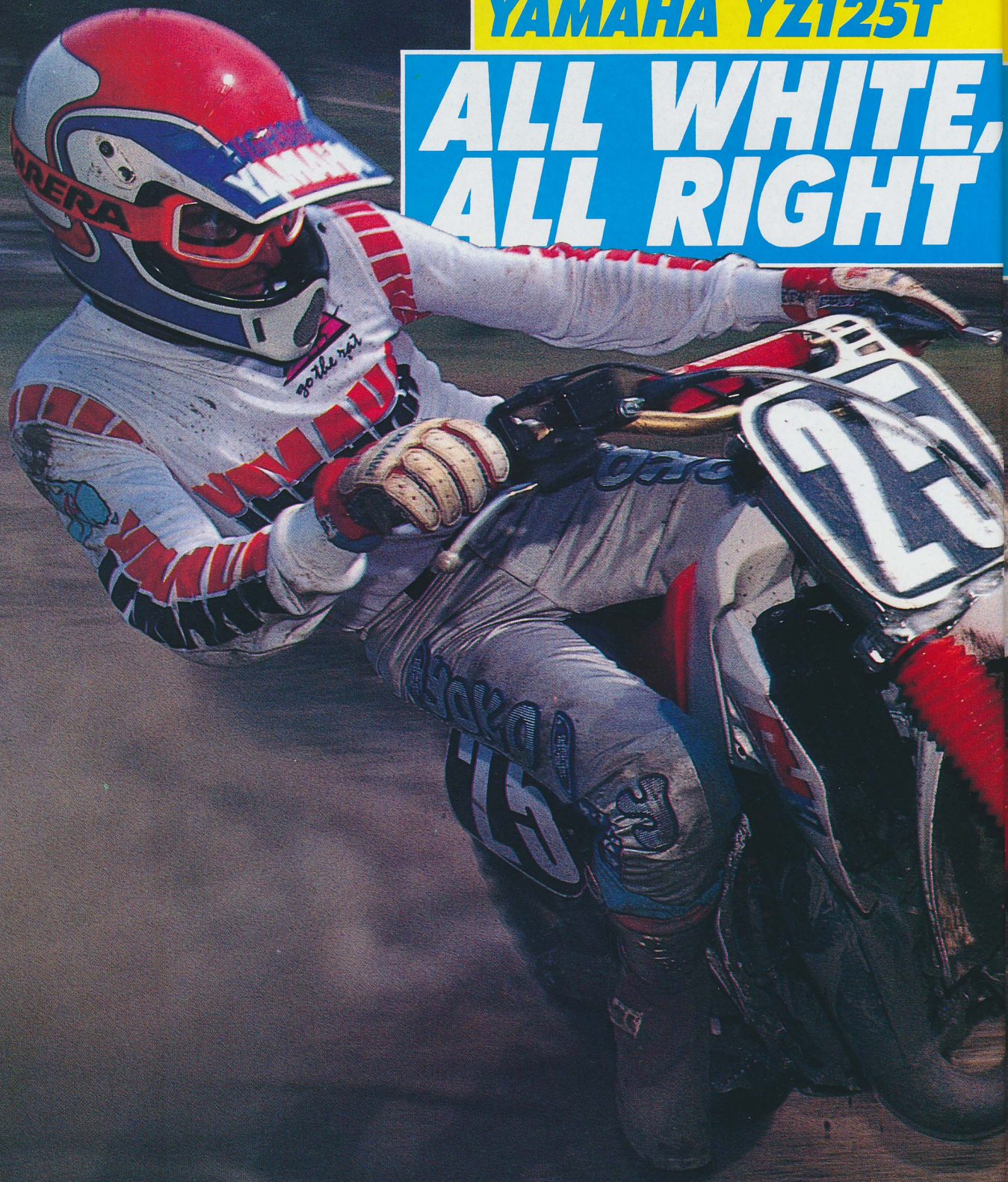
\* Recommended and maximum retail price only. You guys ought to be amazed at this che-e-e-p price. After all, it's printed in Australia now, and everyone knows Aussies are a bunch of overpaid, underworked non-productive bludgers who can't make anything for a decent price even if their lives depend on it.

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**YAMAHA YZ125T**

**ALL WHITE,  
ALL RIGHT**





## Is this all-white white knight righter?

**Yamaha's 1987 YZ125T is one of those bikes that leads you into thinking that the only thing changed from last year's model is the cosmetics.**

**But the new YZ's changes are many, and more than skin deep.**

**Admittedly they help to get the Yamaha closer to the top of the 125 class, but we only wish they'd given the suspension some further fine-tuning.**

**Then Yamaha would have a real front runner for 125 class honours.**

**Y**amaha appears to be playing a rather conservative game with its 1987 range of off-road machines. The TT four-strokes are little changed from last year, same as the XT road-trail bikes.

It's the same with the YZ motocrossers, which, apart from the more apparent cosmetic changes, look quite similar to the '86 models.

Times have certainly changed

from a few short seasons ago when each new year would bring with it a radically new motocross model, extensively updated from the year before. The factories brought that trend on themselves, by convincing the marketplace that they had to have an "all-new" motocrosser every year.

Nowadays, with prices rocketing upwards and the industry moaning about its economic woes, keeping the radical new models to a minimum and refining and updating the existing product is the more common game plan of the factories.

That's the way Yamaha has gone with their YZs this year; nothing too

radical, but just enough changes to keep their bikes up there with the rest.

### THE CHANGES

Right off the bat, everyone can plainly see that the radiator shrouds of the new YZ125T are now white, not red, and the frame is white also, not red. And there are new red fork boots fitted as standard equipment, where the S model had no fork boots.

But as well as these obvious external changes, the YZ125T boasts plenty of internal refinements. Beginning with the motor, they are:

High rpm power hasn't been a problem with recent YZ125s, so this year the Yamaha engineers gunned for better low and mid-range power.

Porting and port timing specifications have changed in this pursuit of a wider spread of power. The Yamaha Power Valve System has been updated also, while the intake passage into the crankcase induction engine has been reshaped slightly for better intake efficiency.

The new expansion chamber has a greater volume and is longer than last year's to match to the engine's new porting and power-valve specifications. The exhaust pipe now has an O-ring seal where it

mounts to the centre exhaust port motor, while a new aluminium muffler is mounted at the rear. The muffler end cap is now held on by screws, not rivets, allowing for easier repacking.

Engine reliability is improved thanks to additional oil grooves at the main bearing and a rebalanced crank that reduces vibration.

The YZ's six-speed transmission features slightly wider ratios than before, to match the engine's new power spread. Clutch action is improved by the fitting of a two-piece push rod that gives a lighter pull at the lever.

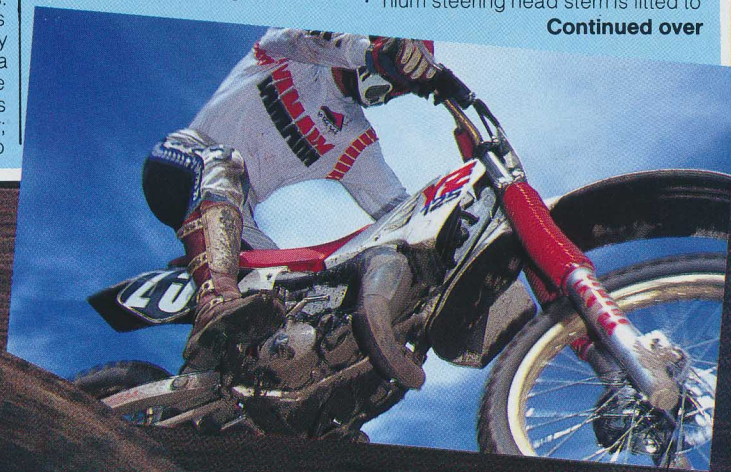
Last year's enclosed magneto CDI ignition has been replaced by a flywheel type with an outer-rotor magneto, which is designed to give smoother power delivery.

The Mikuni 34mm flat-side carburettor is the same as used last year, but with reshaped floats and an added baffle plate which will hopefully cure the '86 model's occasional flat spot problems. The carb breathes through a new, larger airbox and filter, which is now the same set-up as used on the YZ250 and 490.

Turning to the chassis and suspension, the frame has been beefed up in a couple of areas for greater strength, while an aluminium steering head stem is fitted to

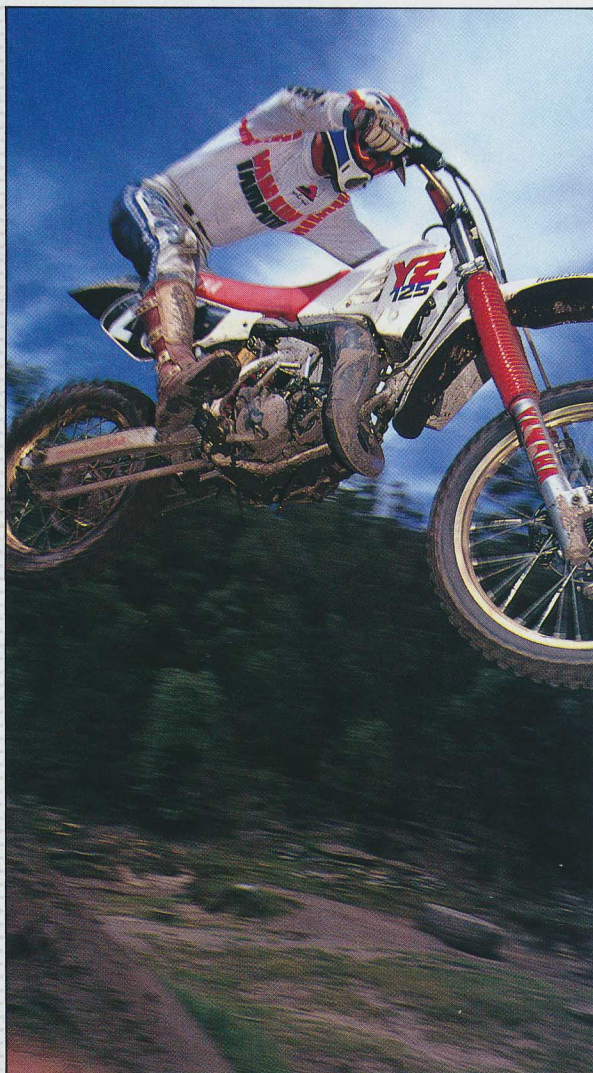
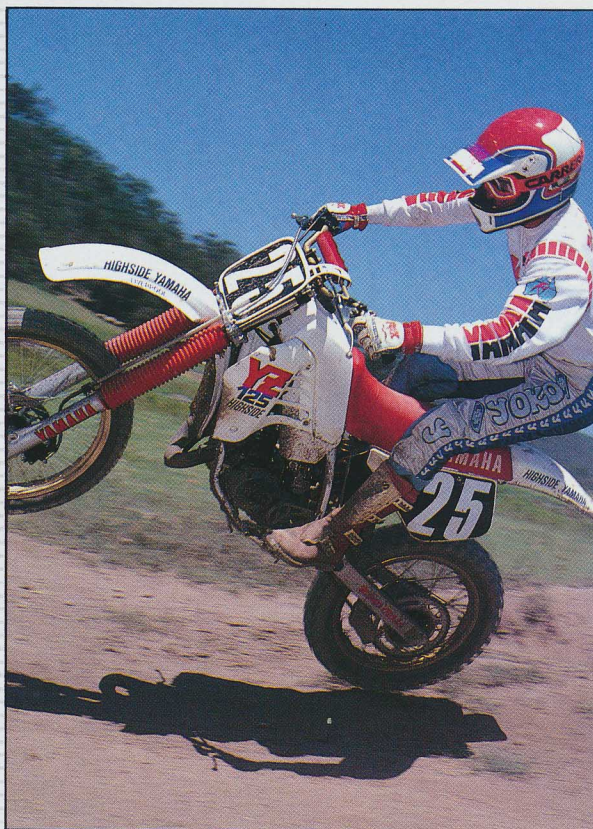
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HIGHSIDE YAMAHA  
LIVERPOOL



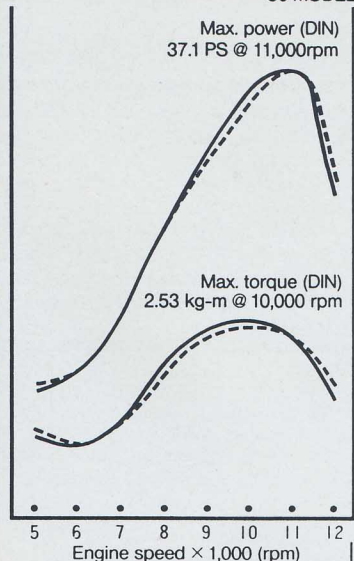


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YZ125

— '87 MODEL  
 - - - - '86 MODEL



*Power and torque curves of the '87 and '86 model YZ125s are very close. From the seat of the pants, low and mid-range power is noticeably improved.*

## YAMAHA YZ125T Continued

reduce weight. The steering head now turns on reduced-friction roller bearings.

Changes to the front suspension are nothing too radical, because the forks are the same 43mm Kayabas with Yamaha's Variable Damper (YVD) system as last year. YVD contains a sensing spring that detects the main fork spring load, regulating the fork's oil orifice to increase compression damping as the forks compress. Fork gaitors are reintroduced with this model just to prove that the factory likes fooling around with things for no apparent reason. Fork boots this year, none next year, boots again the year after. You work it out.

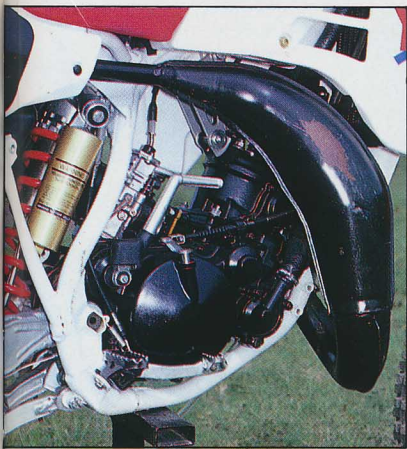
At the rear end, the Monocross suspension has gained new linkages for a more progressive ratio and improved stability at high speeds. An Ohlins-type shock is used, like last year, and it has a steel body which Yamaha claim is more durable than competitors' aluminium bodied shocks. The Brake Actuated Suspension System (BASS) is still fitted.

While the swingarm is the same works-style design as introduced on the '86 YZs, it now pivots on four needle bearings. Rear wheel travel is 315mm.

The front disc brake is unchanged from the '86 model, except for a new master cylinder on which the brake hose connects at the front, rather than to the underside. No longer does the hex head nut of the brake hose dig into the rider's leg in right hand turns.

Rear brake shoe width has been increased by 26mm to 28mm for more stopping power. The rear hub is unchanged, although the front hub is new and is both lighter and stronger than last year's. Yamaha's Z spokes are fitted to both wheels.





Porting and timing modifications, a new airfilter and expansion chamber, revised carburetion and new gear ratios combine to give the new YZ125T a better spread of power than before. Low and mid range power is noticeably improved.

### LET'S HIT THE DIRT!

The most impressive part of the YZ125T is its engine. No two ways about it. It has plenty of ponies up top, just like it did last year, but there is now also more bottom-end and mid-range.

## YAMAHA YZ125T

**Test Bike:** Barry Cogle, Highside Yamaha, 4 Hoxton Park Rd, Liverpool, NSW, 2170.  
Ph: (02) 600-6788.  
**Retail Price:** \$3599 (NSW).

### ENGINE

Type ..... Single cylinder liquid-cooled crankcase reed-valve induction two-stroke with YPVS  
Bore x stroke ..... 56mm x 50mm  
Capacity ..... 123cc  
Compression ratio ..... 8.4:1  
Claimed maximum power ..... 37.1PS at 11000rpm  
Claimed maximum torque ..... 2.53-kg/m at 10000rpm  
Ignition ..... CDI  
Carburettor ..... Mikuni TM34SS  
Air filter ..... Oiled foam  
Clutch ..... Wet multi-plate  
Gearbox ..... Six speed  
Final drive ..... 520 chain

### FRAME & SUSPENSION

Frame ..... Single downtube, split double-cradle, chrome-moly steel  
Rake ..... 27 degrees  
Trail ..... 115mm  
Front suspension ... 43mm diameter Kayaba Variable Damper forks with 305mm travel  
Rear suspension ... Yamaha Mono Cross with 315mm travel  
Brakes ..... Disc front, drum rear

### DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase ..... 1450mm  
Seat height ..... 935mm  
Ground clearance ..... 350mm  
Fuel capacity ..... 7.5 litres  
Claimed dry weight ..... 87kg



Front brake performance is super strong, like it is with any Yamaha dirt bike. The rear drum brake is a strong and consistent stopper also.

The best part of this new engine is its responsiveness. It gets up and goes as soon as you crack the throttle on. It's a fast revver and really shows its best when blasting out of corners with a heavy dose of clutch-work. The rear wheel hooks up and drives, with none of the carburetion hiccup of the '86 bike.

Right through its powerband the Yamaha is very snappy. Mid-range grunt is very strong and the motor is in no hurry to sign off when you hit the top-end.

In short, we like the YZ's motor a bunch. It's very flexible, to suit a wide range of rider abilities, and the main proof of this is that it's always ready to give the rider the power he wants when he wants it. It's a pleasure to ride.

The wider transmission ratios match the engine's wider spread of power well and we hardly ever found ourselves in the wrong gear. The gearbox shifts well, but prefers the clutch to be used. A couple of times shifts were missed while trying to flat-change.

### BUMP AND GRIND

In the handling stakes, the YZ performs admirably, but not remarkably. The blame for this should be directed at the front and rear suspension.

Suspension hasn't been a real strong point of recent YZ125s and unfortunately this model carries on that tradition.

The problem is that from stock, both the fork and the Monocross rear end are harsh in their action. They'll absorb small bumps smoothly and easily enough, but on harder, higher speed impacts, the harshness can be felt.

Of the two YZs we rode, the brand new stocker was the worse. With the standard factory settings on the rear shock, the back end would step out sideways over any decent sized obstacle. Increasing the rebound damping and backing off the compression damping helped to overcome the harshness and give us a smoother and more stable ride.

The story was much the same with the Kayaba forks. They'd soak up the smaller bumps and jolts without any drama, but they'd give a similar harsh feeling over larger jumps and when hitting sharp-edged bumps. Decreasing the compression damping from standard helps the forks considerably, but we certainly wouldn't rate their action as highly as the '87 Honda and Kawasakis 125s we've ridden. Out of the crate, the CR and KX have better performing front suspenders than the YZ.

With the compression and rebound damping adjustments dialled in, we managed to get a much better performing front and rear suspension package. But we're still surprised at how far off mark the standard suspension settings were.

There's no option but for riders to get both the fork and shock oils changed, we figure. Take the shock to an expert, but don't assume that simply fiddling with different fork oil weights and levels is going to cure the harshness. We suspect that smart suspension people will be altering the fork oil valving hole sizes to improve the YZ fork action.

In the steering stakes, the YZ cuts a mean line through the turns, but is most at home with a berm or rut to help it keep on line. Cutting a tight line takes some extra work compared to the quick turning CR. Conversely, high speed stability is a YZ strong point.

Jumping and moving around on the bike in the air and through the turns poses no problems. The radiators, pipe and sidecovers are tucked out of the way and the levers

and pegs are comfortably positioned. The bars, though, are quite wide from the factory, and could do with a couple of centimetres lopped from each side.

In typical Yamaha tradition, the front disc brake is super strong with heaps of feel (just what is Yamaha's secret to having such strong disc brakes?). The rear drum brake is a very consistent performer and doesn't seem lacking compared to the rear disc brakes of the Honda and Kawasaki.

At least riders won't need to spend time getting used to it, as they often do with rear discs. Rear discs are better on enduro bikes than motocrossers, in our opinion.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

The bottom line with Yamaha's YZ125T is that we were a little disappointed with the bike's harsh suspension, compared to the better stock suspensions of the Honda and Kawasaki 125s we tested a couple of issues ago.

In the engine department, the Yamaha matches the other two, and it's only the suspenders that let it down. Although the Yamaha's fork and shock can be better dialled-in from standard, without a rider going for aftermarket service work, the other brands still have an advantage.

It's a shame Yamaha hasn't given the YZ a better suspension package, because this new engine, with its wider spread of power, is a motor we really like.

We know you'll like the motor too, and if you don't mind a little fiddling with the fork and shock, you'll love the whole YZ.

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