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YAMAHA IT175F SUZUKI PE175N



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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1979
VOL. 4, NO. 2

australasian
**DIRT
BIKE**

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COVER: Some like them powerful. Some like them to handle well. Others just like to have whatever is up with the forefront of design. This machine embodies the lot in one beautiful package. The RM400N.

Photograph by Michael Andrews, after ADB's trusty Pentax gave up the ghost on a critical day of shooting. RIP.

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personality MIKE LANDMAN

His lucky number's One

Mike Landman, the only motocross rider to have ever appeared in Vogue magazine, will be the first Australian to go racing in Europe.

Unless something serious gets in the way of the young Victorian's plans, Landman will leave for Europe in March, 1980, for an indefinite racing season he hopes will culminate in GP competition. Australian motorcyclists have proven their worth in many facets of competition, but mixing with the world's best motocrossers is something that has eluded Aussies since Day One — an unfulfilled dream because of the sheer competitiveness of the sport.

Every European pro who has visited Australia has wiped the tables with the best from Down Under in well-publicised "riding exhibitions". Some keen eyes will be on Landman's achievements in the spiritual home of Motocross.

In a recent interview with the 23 year-old star, Mike Landman told Dirt Bike: "My ambition from here is to race in Europe and America and then, on my progress, I'll take it from there. If I do well and I think I've got some sort of future over there, my ambition then will be to race in a GP."

He will race at all the meetings he can on the Continent for at least three months. The first Australian to race in a GP?

"Yeah, maybe, but I don't think of it like that. If that comes, well and good. I wouldn't be so stupid as to say win a world championship because I just don't know."

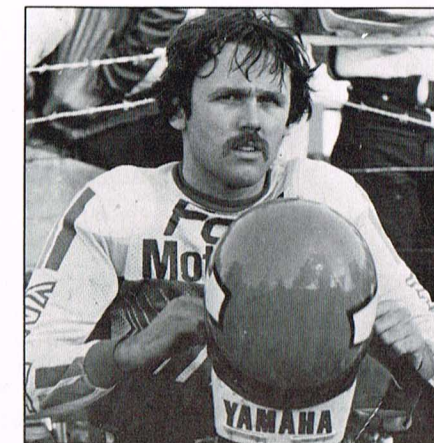
"The thing is, I might go to Europe and not like it, I mightn't be able to handle it over there. I just don't know. The racing's a lot harder, it's a lot more competitive and I'm not sure what I'm in for. But I'm pretty well certain I'll be going next year to race."

"Milledge Yamaha (Victorian distributors) will supply all the bikes and parts and motors and stuff like that. They'll set me up over there and they're trying to get some assistance from Motorcraft with a transport van. So half the battle's really won."

Some might argue that Landman hasn't won the Australian motocross war yet, and he readily concedes it, saying the overseas experience will be invaluable when it comes to his immediate goal of dominating Australian motocross. His current career,

motocross, isn't something he wants to master quickly. His approach is a long term one with all his experiences having a cumulative effect on his ability.

That is not to slight Landman. He is a champion in his own right, with the Australian 125 title currently under his belt and many victories behind him. He is definitely one of Australia's five best motocross riders, but the threat he poses to his professional peers seems to vary from



day to day. On a national competition basis, it's hard to predict on what day Landman is most likely to hose down the opposition.

He is Victoria's best, with the likes of Mark Hill (Suzuki) and Trevor Williams (ex works Kawasaki) following on his Heckel's heels. A quick run-down of the man's credits include a second in the Unlimited Australian Championship last year, all Victorian and South Australian championship titles in 1978 and various other individual wins of significance. He is the only rider in the 26 year history of the Victorian Grand National to have won the event twice ('78 and '79) and fulfilled a long-time ambition by winning the BP Desert Rally outright this year.

To the uninitiated, this race, which would be enough to qualify the serious boys for prime time on The Thrillseekers, is a one day, two-part race held in northern Victoria each year. Landman describes it as a "motocross with enduro obstacles" except there are no 110 mph salt pans in

motocross. His Victorian Junior Championship in 1972 was his first, and naturally most memorable title.

Landman is that rarest of things in the grubby, stigmatised world of motocross — a marketable item. Handsome, well spoken and personable with the hackneyed and well publicised title of 'professional', he has the sort of public image sought out by the generally ignorant yobs of the mass-media. He's in no way flamboyant, but he paints a respectable picture on the six o'clock news and in Yamaha newspaper adverts.

Primarily, Landman sees the big trip to Europe as the sensible way to improve his riding, and generally feels that the European's more Protestant approach to success in motocross is the most sensible way to achieve in the sport and the best way to set himself straight.

"Pelle Granquist knows what it's about over there, and I think I read in an interview with him that he plans to race in GPs by about 1982."

"It indicates there's plenty of time and the riders over there don't really reach their peaks until their late 20's. Mikkola, De Coster and others are in their 30's."

America and Europe represent two different ways of tackling motocross success. The Americans are all starting young with plenty of money and plenty of sponsorship, but the Europeans don't really start racing until they can leave school and earn some money. Which does Landman think is the best way?

"Oh, Europe for sure. In America, and Australia too I think, the climax of progress in your riding is like that on a graph," and he indicates with his hands a power curve that rises rapidly in the low rev range and falls off just as quickly.

"In Europe, you just hear of riders who get a mention now and then, probably because it's so competitive, and they just slowly progress and I think you learn a lot more that way."

"I think that's the trouble with Mark Hill too. His ability has developed too quickly for his experience. They don't match, but I'm not holding that against him. I think I was a bit the same too. I didn't skyrocket up through the ranks (he did go from C to A grade in one year) as fast as Mark Hill did and I'm glad I didn't. I'm happy with the way

by John Lethlean

Photography by Michael Andrews.

MIKE LANDMAN

it's turned out.

"Maybe you get everything too easy in Australia and America to make you work. You go up and get everything and probably sub-consciously think 'I've made it here, what else is there?' I'm not saying you think like that, but sub-consciously you might. You probably tend to drop off a bit, whereas in Europe you're trying all the time.

"The stairs are taller in Europe. With any sport in Australia really, you have got to go overseas to do any good. I'm still young by European standards — I'd still be doing my apprenticeship in motocross there."

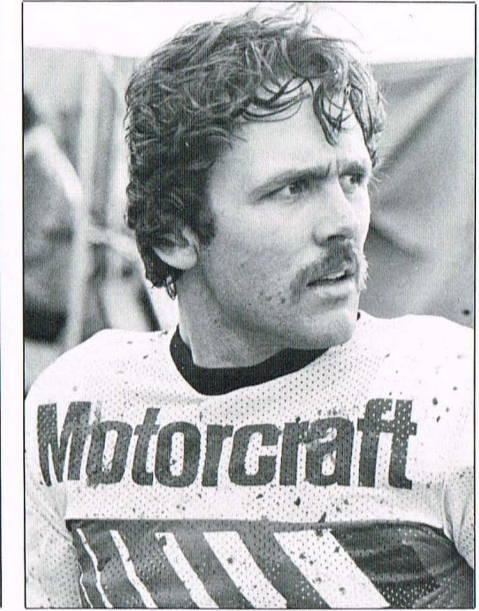
His motorcycling "apprenticeship" in Australia started very ordinarily: "I was probably about 13 when I started. I originally wanted an old paddock bomb to thrash around. It was just the stage I was going through. That's what I wanted because a few of my mates had them and I didn't really think much about motorbikes at that stage. Anyway, I pestered my father for it and he said he wouldn't let me get one because, he said 'You'll drive it round for about two days and it will blow up or something.'

"He said 'What about getting a mini-bike.'" That was the start of it all. Mike thrashed his red-framed Tas around for a few months and decided he needed something bigger. At that stage, Mike was a keen horse rider involved in dressage events and the like, which he thinks could have helped mould his characteristic straight-backed style. He sold the nag to buy a Honda 100 and joined the Frankston Junior Motorcycle Club.

He campaigned the little Japanese thumper for about 18 months at club days with little success. "And then finally I had one competitive ride on it," Mike remembers. "I was a junior and I rode it in the Trail Bike class at a meeting in Bendigo. I got second to an Ossa Pioneer rider who's road-racing now. I was 16 at that stage. My birthday was on Christmas Day so I paid a whole year's ACUV licence subscription — the race was on Boxing Day — to get my licence. Then the next week in January I had to renew it, but I didn't mind 'cos I was keen as mustard. I'd still do it now."

He left school at 16 and started a motorcycle mechanic's apprenticeship with well-known ex dirt rider Geoff Taylor, in Dandenong. Those were the days when Trevor Flood rode a CZ, as did hotshoes Carl Morlang and Gary Adams. "I worked there for about 2½ years. Geoff helped me out with discount parts and things probably because I worked there, but he said to me that when I could beat him, he'd sponsor me. So that became my goal — to beat my boss. He was going quite well then — perhaps he was just starting to taper off a bit. Anyway I finally made it to that sponsorship. Some funny things used to happen racing with Geoff.

"Once we went to a meeting at Wallan. I was a C grader then and Geoff was riding a 250 Yamaha and so was I. Anyway, he always used to say to me 'Tuck in behind me in practice and I'll show you the good lines.' This was before my sponsorship and at that stage I could never keep up with him so I never knew whether he was taking those lines in the races or not.



ABOVE: Fitness and dedication are the two attributes prized by Landman, and he sees them as vital if a motocrosser is to reach the peak of his sport, even if he already has more natural ability than most other riders. Working on his fitness is as important to him as working on his bike.

Although Mike has never strung together a list of outright victories as long as your arm, he remains one of Australia's forces in motocross. He has been with Yamaha for as long as his serious racing career has been going, and in 1978 added Motorcraft to his list of sponsorships.

"Anyway it came to the race and this time I was right behind Geoff in one race and he was taking completely different lines to what he showed me. But that's Geoff, you know. I'm not saying that he did the wrong thing by me." Mike is, obviously, still perplexed by this dubious tuition.

"But Geoff really did help me a lot. Another chap who helped me a lot, too, was George Bailey who used to be one of Australia's top riders. He won countless Australian championships when he was riding AJ's and Matchies. He helped me with the Honda a lot."

When Mike started racing, Japanese dirt bikes were just starting their subversive infiltration. "I think at that meeting at Bendigo when I was 16 I saw the very first Yamaha 250 motocross machine in Victoria, and everyone went ape over it. But it was very interesting to see because I had one ordered at that stage."

Mike parted company with Geoff when he was 18. "I didn't actually finish my apprenticeship for various reasons," he says, finding the academic side of the course a bit pointless. Car differentials, as far as Mike Landman was concerned, had little to do with motorcycle racing. "I couldn't relate what I was learning to my work situation and I couldn't see how it would help me in the future, because at that time I had plans of doing what I still plan to do now, which is open a business."

"In a way, maybe I should have finished, because it's good to have a trade behind you; but I don't think it's all that important these days. I'm just sort of playing it by ear at this stage, anyway."

After he left Geoff's, Mike did various part and full-time jobs with motorcycle shops and worked for various sponsors, racing more and more. The part time work suited him well. "I got to the stage where I just couldn't work on motorcycles all day long and then come home and have to work on my own bikes. I just felt like I was going round the twist. I love motorcycles, but you can have too much. I just had no time to relax or go out or anything and the whole thing was motorcycles 24 hours a day. It got too much."

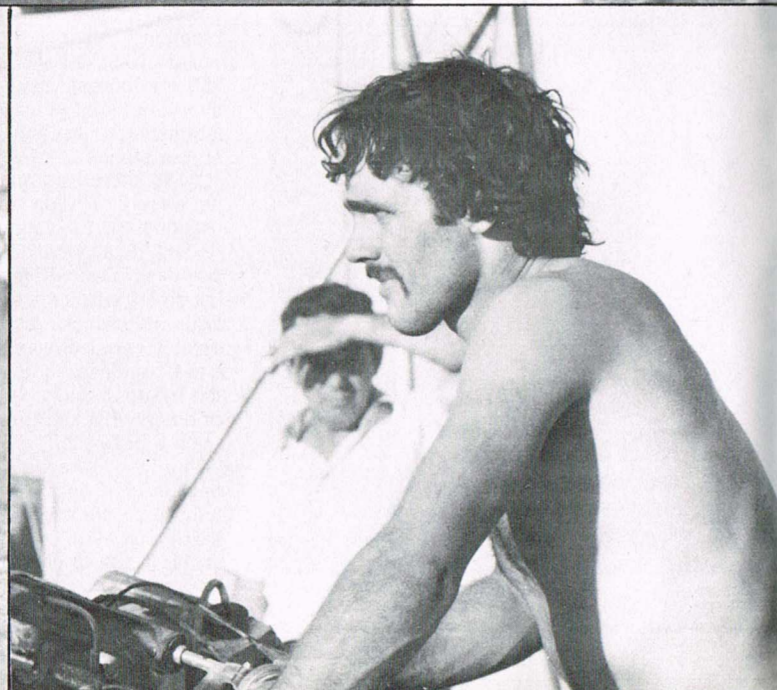
Mike had made it to A Grade in 1972 ("I was pretty wrapt about that, you know, but my mother wasn't really impressed.") and was campaigning 125 and 250 Yamahas.

Mike joined the Milledge-Motorcraft Team in 1974 and hasn't looked back (except for one poor year — more of that later). And he's always identified as a Yamaha man. "I'm pleased with the bikes and the sponsors and that's all you could ask for."

Discussing quick success brings us back to Mark Hill, the 17 year old Victorian who blew a few minds at Tivoli this year, when he won one of the Mr. Motocross races. "Yeah, I think he's got a big future ahead of him. The thing is, providing he keeps his head right, he'll go a long way. He's got the ability and the talent; it's just whether he can keep applying himself.

"He's just starting to go through that age. He'll be getting his license soon. I think there's a stage everybody goes through — well, guys anyway — when you start driving and you get a girlfriend and all those things. I think he'll be right, but it's coming.

"He's shown that he's got the ability. He



MIKE LANDMAN

deserves to be an A Grader and he's worthy of it by a mile. Mark's father is good for the sport but he tends to get carried away with things. He does get a bit pushy with Mark, I think. Some people, have a crook impression of Mark, but I don't think it's him, I think it's his father. He's probably too overwhelmed with Mark's progress.

"Lindsay Urquhart (secretary of the ACUV's grading committee) was telling me Mark's father had told him Mark can have Landman's number one plate before long, you know, Landman's not worthy of having it and all that sort of shit. I don't know. I try not to get caught up in that type of thing. I just try to do my own thing.

"I don't like talking like that and I don't like others talking like that."

Mike Landman simply exudes professionalism. Neatly dressed and well groomed, sitting at Alex Milledge's desk for our interview, it's hard not to be impressed by, and a little jealous of, his lifestyle. It's well known round the traps that Mike puts a pretty fair effort into the sport. "It is professional. It's how I make my living now." And will he continue to race even when he's going downhill? "I don't know, it's hard to say. It depends how I feel at the time when it comes. I don't like to make predictions like that — I'm probably a bit funny about it.

"I'd probably say that I would stop if I was going downhill." Mike either has mixed ideas or hasn't really gazed into the crystal ball that far.

Back to the dedicated rider of today. How

much time does he put into training, practice and preparation?

"Well, I don't work now, the whole week, and I'm still flat out by Friday. I try to run two-three nights a week — Mondays, Wednesdays and a light run on Fridays and I run in the sand on the beach. It's the first time I've done it, this year, and I think it's the greatest help I've ever had.

"Last year I did a lot of gym work but I felt I was getting too stiff on the bike, I couldn't move with it much. And now with the running three times a week, I probably run about four miles each time. Then, on the Tuesdays and Thursdays, I just do exercises and ride — either one of the two. Either I'll got out for a ride and I won't do any exercises that night. I try to ride at least one day a week, two if possible.

"When I go out and practice, I try to ride as hard as I can. this year I decided to try the exercises at home and I just do a lot of pushups and situps and things like that. But I think running and riding are the two biggest things because you've got to be able to breath. I don't believe you can race properly and not train.

"Some people can psyche themselves up to a state where they can get away with not being fit for a couple of races. I can't do that myself. I've got to be fit and I've got to know everything's right. I can't get myself in such a state that I can go like hell. I think Trevor Flood can do it. I think he's fairly good at that sort of thing."

Application, Mike says, is his only secret.

"There are times when you get completely and utterly pissed off, you know, and you feel like going out and having a fight with someone, or getting full. I think everybody gets to that stage in any job."

Being able to overcome frustration is what has kept Mike progressing. "I've been able to keep coming back after these sorts of things. Otherwise you get in a slump and it's hard to get out of it. You think 'I can't do this' or 'what's the point, the bike's going to break anyway.'

"I've been through it. About three years ago I had a disastrous year, really, it was terrible. Just nothing went right. And that was the year I had the factory bike. At that stage I couldn't stand pressure and there was a lot of pressure on me from Yamaha as to why I didn't win, why I didn't do this and that. I thought I'd be able to cope with it but I couldn't and probably I was a bit too young for a bike like that.

"The pressure just got on top of me in the end and I couldn't do anything right. With myself or the bike or anything. And I don't think I did justice to the motorcycle."

The bike in question was the 1977 Yamaha OW26 400, Mike's second works bike after the '76 OW26 400 he inherited from Per Klitland. In the January/February of ADB, Mike told Kel Wearne about the OW: "It was a similar design, looked the same in some ways, but it was nine kilograms (20 pounds) lighter, had six horsepower more (4.5 kW) in a fierce powerband. In fact, nothing from the YZ D was interchangeable.

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MIKE LANDMAN

BELOW: Mike won the 1979 BP Desert Rally outright this year, a feat accomplished by very few Australian riders. It was suited to both his fitness and his ability to apply his concentration for longer periods than many other riders.



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"In some ways, the OW was too light. It was hard to ride on some tracks, on hard, loose shale it was skitterish and tricky. On European type tracks with soft loam dirt where it was grippy, then the OW was just fantastic."

In retrospect, Mike says now he could really use the OW. "I think it would be a different story now, but at that time I couldn't handle the pressure. I knew that Stephen Gall wanted the bike, and Graeme Smythe and Trevor Flood also wanted the bike, and I wanted to do the right thing by Yamaha and try to win. But the harder I tried, the worse I rode. At the end of the season, I just wrote it down to a disastrous year, and said I'd try to make it a better following year. It worked out that way."

He's got a reputation as one of the most dedicated and one of the fittest riders around. Does he deserve that?

"Yeah, yeah. I suppose the results are there to prove it. I believe I deserve it because I've worked for it. I train a lot and I make a lot of sacrifices for motorcycling."

"Maybe there's a lot of people who say 'he's had it easy' — he's had sponsored bikes' but when I first started riding, I did it like everyone else. I was just fortunate enough to become a good rider."

"I remember when I started racing, I was getting \$20 a week as a first year apprentice and I'd buy a plug, some oil and a chain and I'd owe the boss half the next week's wages. I just had nothing, so I worked towards that goal of sponsorship when I could beat Geoff."

Mike Landman's riding style is a characteristic one. He can usually be recognised by his straight back and rarely airborne backside that stays fixed right at the front of the seat. "That's just the way I've learned to ride. I haven't tried to copy anybody. A lot of people comment that I've always got a straight back. I know I used to have, but over the last two years or so I've tried to alter the style a bit. I tend to try not to be as straight on the bike."

"I might have got it from riding horses, 'cos I used to do a bit of show work. When we used to trot round in circles we had to sit straight backed and watch what we were doing. You can't lounge around like an old turkey or something."

A definite "plus" of the Landman style is its consistency. "I honestly can't remember the last time I fell off in a race," he says. "I've had my share of falls but I can't remember the last time that I lost a race 'cos I fell off."

Mike's career took a reasonable step forward after a trip to race in New Zealand from November 1976 to March 1977. He lost weight and generally sharpened up his

talents riding the New Zealand tracks he quickly grew to love. "I went over there for about four months racing with Geoff Ballard from Sydney and a friend from down my way, David Etheridge. We went over there, got a flat together and left a lot about life in general, as well as racing."

"They ride on completely different tracks to ours, more like European tracks, and I loved them. Everything was natural terrain, nothing man made. You'd get such a thrill out of riding. I couldn't wait for every meeting. I learned a lot from Ivan Miller, chasing him around — I think I beat him twice while I was there."

Having that experience under his belt has helped Mike gain a clearer perspective of the Australian scene and where it's going. "At this stage I think it can only go forward and improve. It's a tremendous benefit for Australian riders to have people like Pelle and Rahier and guys like that come out here."

"Pelle would be the biggest help Australian riders have had. When he first came out here he absolutely annihilated everybody, but the top Australian riders can hold their own with him now."

"When Rahier first came out here it was a procession but it wouldn't be as bad if he came back now. Bikes, too, have improved so much. Production bikes are getting very close to what the GP bikes are. In those days, we were riding outdated bikes compared to Rahier."

Of a promotion like Mr. Motocross, Mike says "the crowds love it." But he doesn't. "Well... I prefer longer types of racing, but that's the way it goes. You've got to ride them all. Everybody's in the same boat. I wouldn't like to ride in that type of competition all the time because it's just too cut-throat."


"I wouldn't say it's too dangerous, because it's only really as dangerous as you make it. But there is more possibility of getting hurt in Mr. Motocross than there is in any other races." He doesn't mind the billing of "star rider" and the subsequent pressure to perform. "Every time I get on a track I do my best. I don't mind a commentator or someone like that building me up to do something because I think I can probably do it. I still consider myself as having a chance in Mr. Motocross — I haven't thrown in the sponge yet."

"The biggest thing motocross in this country needs is top class promoters to get the sport into the general public's eye, not just the motorcycling public's eye. It needs to be pushed all the time. I don't think people will go to something they don't know anything about. If it's promoted in the media, the following gets better each year."

General organisation, he says, is still too slack. "I know a few people who have been to see a meeting for the first time, after I've talked them into going, and if they've been to a really dusty meeting they say 'Oh, that was good', but you can tell they thought it was a bit of a bummer."

So how confident is Mike about his future? "Pretty confident."

Does he think he can go to the top of MX in Australia? "Yeah, I think so. I'm not saying when, but I think I can."

Why not? His lucky number's One. 

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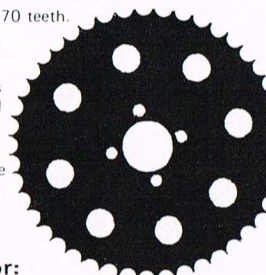
Alloy Sprockets prolong chain life and reduce unsprung weight. Ideal for Motocross, Trail, Circuit or Touring machines.

BLACKLOY Hardened Alloy Rear Sprockets. 27-70 teeth.

EKONO Alloy Rear Sprockets. Range 27-70 teeth.

All CT Rear Sprockets are made from 2024 or 7075 aero-space quality aluminium. 'BLACKLOY' sprockets have been put through a special hardening process, and under test by Kawasaki U.S.A., proved to have two or three times the life of other alloy sprockets.

CT - Hardened Steel Countershaft Sprockets, are made from top grade steel, case hardened and heat treated for extra life. Range 11 to 17 teeth.



CT sprockets are available for:

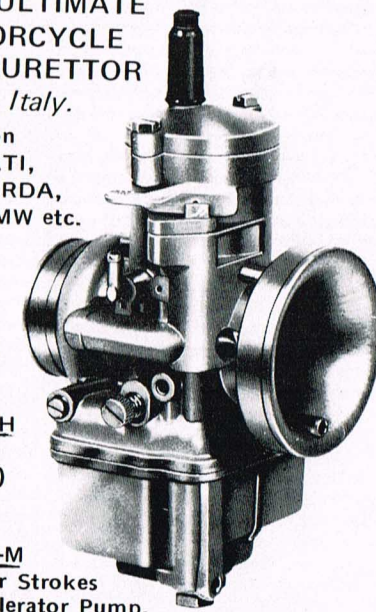
BSA*, Bultaco, CZ*, CanAm*, Carabella*, Hodaka, Honda, Husqvarna, Kawasaki, Maico, Montesa*, Ossa, Penton*, Suzuki, Triumph*, Yamaha

*Rear sprockets only available.

DELLORTO

THE ULTIMATE MOTORCYCLE CARBURETTOR From Italy.

O.E. on DUCATI, LAVERDA, BMW etc.



21 - 25mm PHBL

Suitable for 80 to 200cc Two Strokes. Will fit original intake and accept stock filter. On most competition engines.

32 - 41mm PHBE, PHM-H

To suit 175 to 500cc Two Strokes. (Illustrated) Fits stock intake & filter. On most competition engines.

'Pumper' 30 - 40mm PHF-M

To suit 125 to 500cc Four Strokes Incorporates unique Accelerator Pump.

TRANSAM ALLOY MOTOCROSS and TRIALS HANDLEBARS