

australasian DIRT BIKE

HUSKY XC500 SWEDISH STEEL

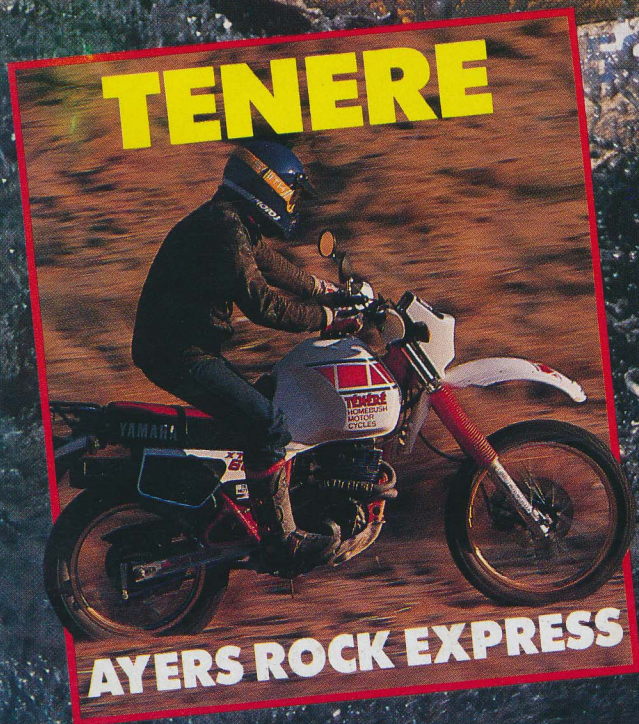
OCTOBER 1983
\$2.20 (\$2.75 NZ)*

**OUTBACK DIRT
BIKE SAFARIS
SEE AUSTRALIA FIRST**

**THE CHANGING FACE
OF ENDUROS**

**JENNY MILLER
VERY FAST, VERY NICE**

**JOHN HAND
OUR BEST
ENDURO RIDER?**

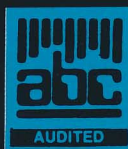


TENERE

AYERS ROCK EXPRESS



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COVER

Husqvarna's XC500 is no pussycat, but there are plenty of people around who demand huge gobs of raw power to terrify themselves with each Sunday, before they head back to work in the bank on Monday morning.

INSET

Yamaha's XT600 is called after an African desert — the Tenere — found in the famous Paris-Dakar rally. How does it fit into Australia? Quite nicely, thank you.

*Recommended and maximum retail price. You're getting off light. You should see what we have to pay Honest Muz to keep away from the office.



JENNY MILLER

LADY RACER

In the cut-throat world of motocross, it blows your mind to see your fiercest competitor remove his helmet and turn out to be . . . a girl!

Story and photography by Rob Luck



Burbling around the pits in full gear, Jenny Miller is not all that impressive a sight . . .

"Who's that guy in the poof gear with the ARGH-EMM" says one competitor.

"Snot a guy, sagirl."

"Oh yeah, really, wouldn't know."

Springing out of the pool at Hungry Creek is another story . . .

"Jeeeeeessus," gasps a mud-packed dirt-warrior, "who's the bird with the boobs?"

"Oh, the sheila you mean? She rides. OK, nothing special. Built for comfort, not speed. Har, har . . ."

Har har. Next day, Jenny Miller, 85-73-84 (34-24-33.6) hops on the RM and blows him 10 feet in the air on the motocross track. He cuts a 1.41, she turns a 1.36. And no big show either.

"How'd ya go Jenn?" says a sympathetic observer.

"Okay, I guess. Could be better. Hope I get another run."

Serious, self-effacing, analytical Jenny Miller. Just 15, going on sweet sixteen, and already a hardened motocrosser. Like every good competitor she lives only in the present and the future . . .

"I want to win the Women's Motocross title, that's all. I know I can do it. I just have to keep the training up,

get the right breaks. The bike has to run right."

"That will make you Mizz Motocross Jenny?"

"Without the zzzs thanks, I don't need all that stuff. Miss Motocross."

Hardly the stuff to win over the femlib movement, yet this girl is more feminist in practice than most of the ardent little fist-thumpers around town. She runs her own race and makes her own pace. She has her sights set on a career ("hairdressing, perhaps mixed with a bit of modelling, if I don't scratch my legs up"). She goes for it in work, play, sport and hobbies. She loves to race the guys and thinks she can ultimately beat them. And she wants to be Miss Motocross.

At Pt Augusta she gets her chance. The lights come up on the Australian Junior Motocross Championship in SA and Jenny gets her ACU licence to enter. Now she's in with the experts. For the first time. She qualifies for the championship rounds. Under the regs, she has to race the girls (Ladies 15 and over 80cc). She's disappointed at that — she wants to run outright against the guys. But she still has some stiff competition. The top women motocrossers in Australia should be here.

The flag drops and she kicks out. Almost instantly she is second. She pushes for first. It's no go. Francine Peterson shuts the gate. The checker comes down and the numbers go up. She is second.

Round Two falls the same way. So she makes a vow. Round Three will be different. All eyes zoom in on the battle for the lead, fierce and fast as the two combatants lap the field. She hits the front, callously disrespectful of the age (21) and experience (10 years) of her fully sponsored opponent. She is in the groove. Steady. Neat and tidy. But she is new to the business of push and shove and in the clash of machinery she is taken out in a tight turn.

It happens again in round four, again while she has a clear track ahead. And again in the fifth. This time she hangs in, her wily match goes down. And out for the count. Broken leg.

Jenny Miller wins the round, but loses narrowly on points.

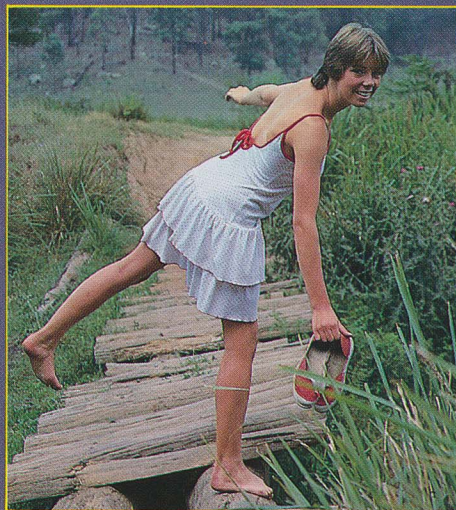
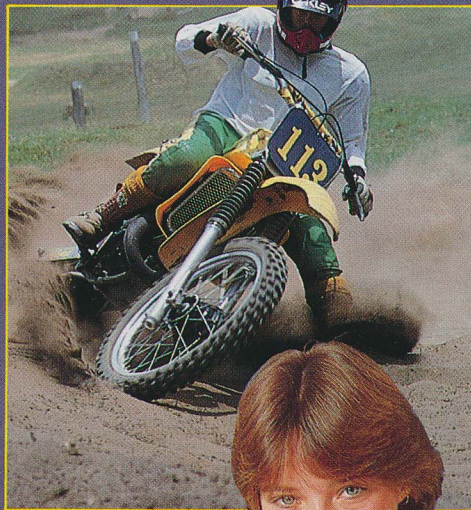
At her first attempt she is runner-up in the Australian Motocross Championships.

She is not disappointed. Life wasn't meant to be easy. She is planning her next confrontation.

This one may be easier. Suddenly she has some help — sponsors who believe in her potential. Race and Rally is the very first in the door, stitching her up with Racing Mate racewear. Suzuki is quick to act, and Ron Kivovitch uncrates a brand new RM125 and presents it with a great fanfare. Jenny momentarily dissolves, collects herself and moves on to Frank Matich where she collects Pirelli racing rubber and MDS helmets. Then to Champion where spark plugs are to be screwed in — enough for a year's competition.

She is away. A sponsored rider. Every girl's dream. Every rider's

Continued over



JENNY MILLER

dream for that matter.

She takes it seriously. Hours after collecting her bike she is at Jilliby, steadily working the course with her new bike under her father's direction (Chris Miller), running the beast in according to the book.

Next day she is at Hungry Creek fronting for a photography session. In between are a studio shot and sponsor meets. Afterwards, there are letters to write, thank-yous to make.

Not that it is new. Jenny Miller has been at it for two years. Ever since she decided to race. Almost immediately she sat down and wrote dozens of letters. To business houses, to big companies, to biking interests. Around 40 letters. Only two replied. In the negative. No matter. She did a door-to-door. Something won out . . . that engaging smile, the nose-to-nose confrontation . . . G. E. Sault, local roofing contractor in native Toronto (Newcastle) threw in a crash helmet. It was a start.

Jenny took her bike, her t-shirt and her iron-on G. E. Sault transfer to the local paper and put up her hand for some publicity. Not surprisingly, local jaded newsmen were impressed. A wisp of a girl with all the front of a Mack truck. They gave her a run. More followed. Radio interviews. ATV guest spot. When Superbowl came to Kurri Kurri, Jenny was on the promo sheet — billed as a star of the show. She didn't let them down. It was her first-ever Superbowl, but she turned a 10th outright (against the men) in Round One, and cut that back to seventh in the Second.

With some solid sponsorship support, Jenny aims to go full on into her racing. The Miller family is standing squarely behind her solid training program. The Old Man (Chris, who isn't so old — he wants to tackle a Motocross Camp himself), is team spanner and pit manager. These days he's finding it easier bolting nice squeaky clean new bits and pieces on and off the racebike instead of scrounging the garage floor for bits to rebuild. When the new Suzuki arrived, Chris took the opportunity to upgrade the old RM125 as a practice bike.

Mother Jan is personal manager and team psychologist. She takes on the job of mentally steeling Jenny for each encounter with the dirt bowls and flats of motocross and short circuit racing. It runs right through the family. Brother Joshua (8) is a mean little mother on two wheels and got up to fifth for his age group in the last Australian Junior motocross titles. He runs interference for Jenny, although she says he mostly just gets in the way.

It's not all gunning for the glamor. Jenny needs bulk practice and she knows it. That's why she checks in for each Hungry Creek Motocross Camp, runs every race weekend available for competition experience and works out every other weekend.



But all that has to be balanced against school and career, which she is determined not to abandon. For Jenny, now in Year 11 at Toronto High, school is the passport to a career that might help to pay for her racing in the future.

School means other commitments — like a position in the school representative basketball team. All part of the sport-toughening process that helps to make a fit, active motocross competitor. And it's about the toughest field a girl can contest. Some big highs, but some pretty big lows.

One of them came at Rutherford Park 18 months ago. Jenny hit the Big Double, missed a gear, got big air, and did a tailbone landing.

"Dad, I can't feel my legs," was Chris Miller's greeting when he got to where she lay. Jenny went sick deep in the pit of her stomach. "I think the next few minutes were the worst part of my life." Then the feeling started to creep back. Some time later she was up at it again, attacking the jumps with a new vengeance. "If I have a bad crash I

get right on and ride really hard. I don't wait around to have my confidence shaken."

The mark of a champion. But it doesn't always go that way. Just 3½ years into her short motocross life, this 40kg powerpack has taken some hard knocks to get close to the top. The worst was a bad touch-down at Blackbutt Gully, that left both her arms in slings. She was out for six weeks.

But she was back again, fired with the determination of a winner. Stephen Gall studied her form at a recent Hungry Creek Camp and was pretty impressed.

"About the best thing about her riding is she looks very relaxed," remarks Steve. "She has a good stance, knows how to place her weight, and she really gets into the berms. Over the jumps she has a good style. She doesn't look like she's afraid of anything."

Perhaps the ultimate mark of a winner is how slowly and easily he or she can win. Jenny has that cool touch which makes it look like the clock is telling fibs. She cuts the

course rather unspectacularly compared with some aggro riders, but the watch stops on some amazingly quick marks. At Hungry Creek, competing in the topnotch Experts Class, she finished in the top handful of competitors in the final time trials. That group included some of the hottest Junior Motocross properties on the circuit.

Off the circuit, she is just a shy, charming teenager with a winning smile, and a way to get what she wants. Streamlined for action (she swims competitively, waterskis as well), she sports short hair, disdains makeup, and carries no excess baggage. She mixes the confident stance of the archetype newstyle woman with the natural femininity of a young girl. And those looks can be deceptive. Because as a competitor she intends to ask or give no quarter.

From here, she is aimed straight at the top.

"I want to win," she says. "I aim to pay all those sponsors back for their faith in me."

Go for it, Jenny.

