

MAY 1988 £1.20 \$3.00

bike

M A G A Z I N E

BEASTIE BLITZ

Yamaha TDR250

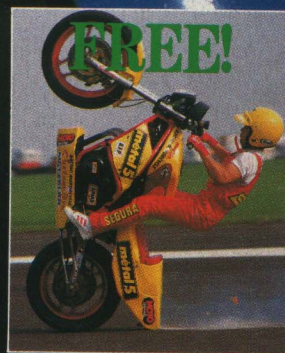
MIDDLEWEIGHT MINEFIELD

GPX v GSX v CBR v FZ 600s

TURBO TORPEDO

1000 horse CBX Honda

RC30/YB5 MISSILES



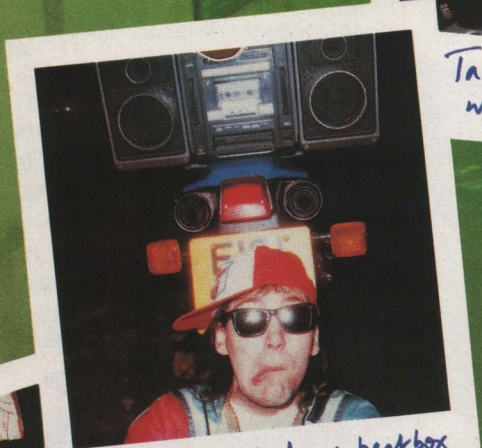
POSTER
PYROTECHNICS

Beastie Boy

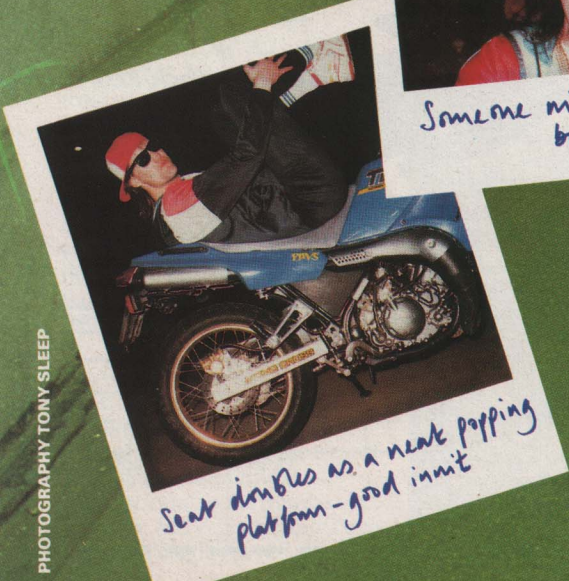
Yamaha's TDR250 viciously shakes the Willis tree



Tacho? I thought it woz a noise meter!



Someone nicked me beatbox bungees



Seat dimbles as a neat popping platform - good innit

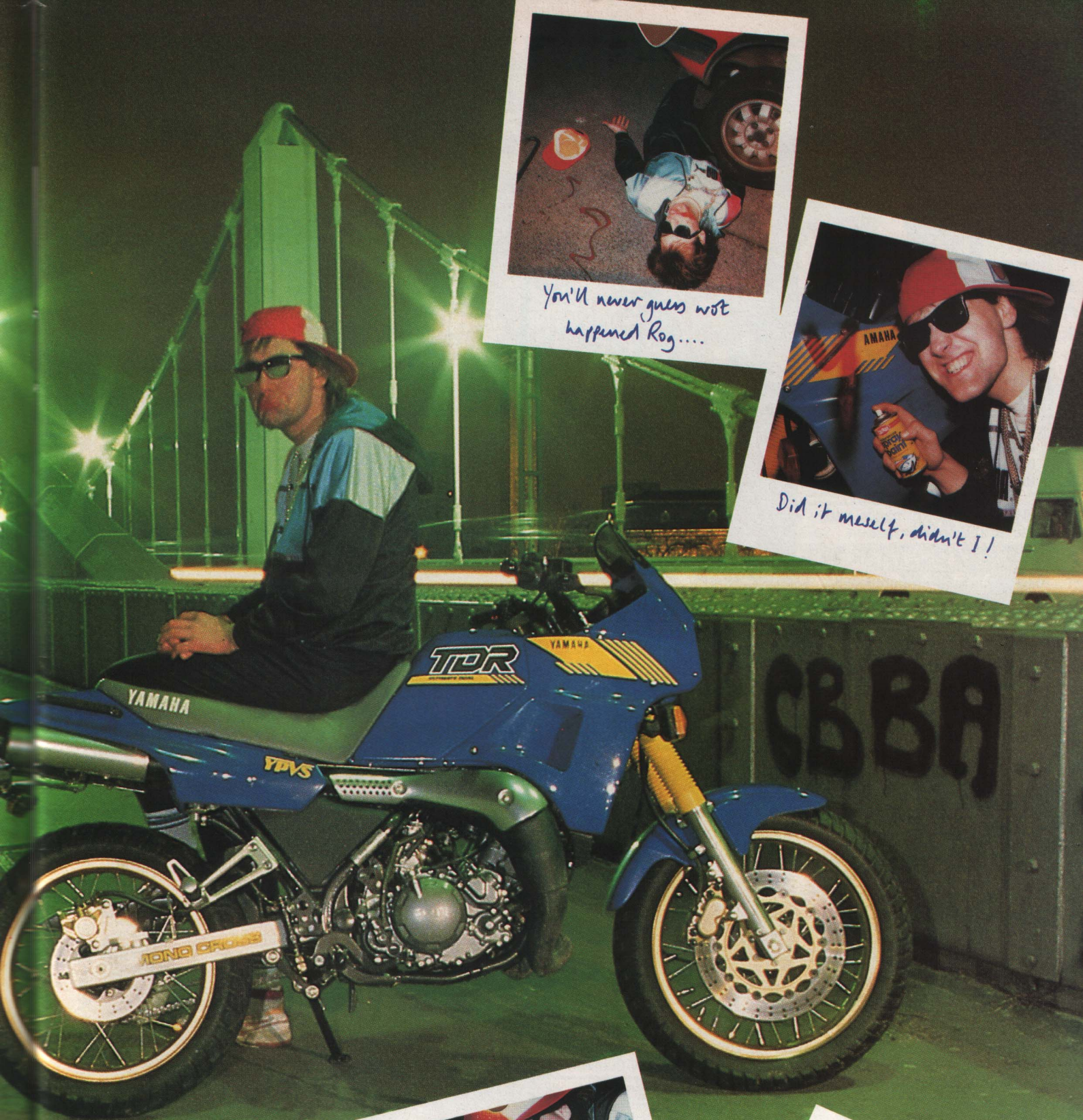
PHOTOGRAPHY TONY SLEEP

I've never met a saint. Perhaps this is because the Coach & Horses doesn't serve holy water, so our paths never cross, or perhaps the breed just doesn't exist. One thing is certain, though, sinners are two a penny. It is, therefore, easier (and more profitable) to fulfil the base desires of the latter category, which is clearly the reasoning behind Yamaha's TDR.

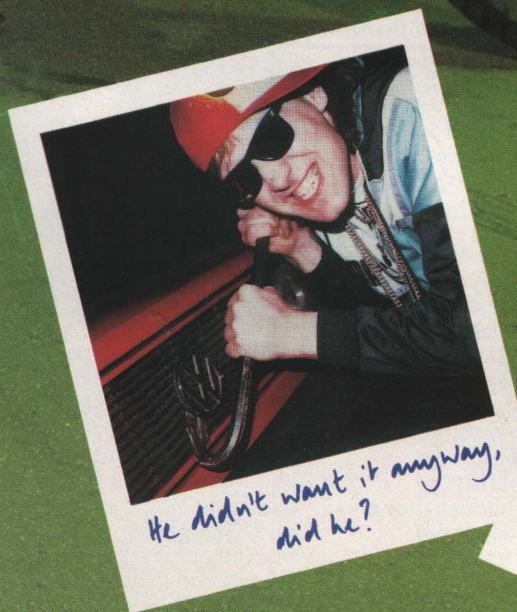
Ostensibly a factory-fresh angle on the fun, fun, fun,

notion of motorcycle marketing, it's secretly intended to ooze gratuitous delinquency from every metallic pore — not that Yamaha would care to admit as much in open court. Misbehaviour is where the money is. As a cocktail for malicious intent, the TDR's recipe couldn't be much more potent, while officially claiming status as *merely* the ultimate dual-purpose weapon.

The engine is undeniably a



bestial racing stoker lump, the like of which thousands of borrowed-time Elsie fanatics have been desperately trying to emulate for years with their massed twirling of riffler files. Yamaha have dragged this motor screaming and kicking from the TZR race-rep's alloy carcase and tucked it up inside what masquerades as a fully-faired trail bike chassis. No detuning or civilisation of the lunatic track-orientated power curve was considered necessary. After all, ▶



He didn't want it anyway, did he?



Fast food for a fast guy, nah watta mean?

Beastie Boy

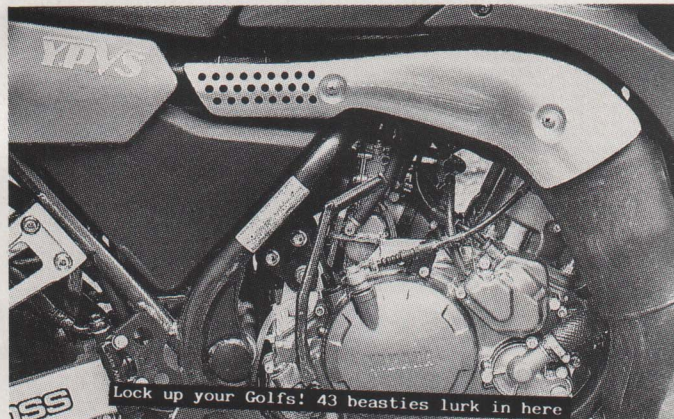
engineering sensitivity would be wasted on hooligans. The only differences are a slightly lower first cog, to ensure that even the terminally limp-wristed amongst its prospective audience of maladjusted miscreants can't avoid wheelies off the line, and necessarily different high-rise expansion chambers that marginally clip the top-end.

The result is Jekyll-and-Hyde street performance, with the terrible transformation from good to evil occurring at about seven grand on the curiously tank-mounted tacho. Below this figure, it is possible to fart and burble through Wimpville without frightening old ladies, thanks to the activities of YPVS, although I'm sure the typical run of customers won't give a toss for the power valve's donation of a bit of midrange. But if you cross the devil's private calibration, fast thinking Warp Factor clichés will dominate your life — while it lasts.

Crack the throttle in the first two gears with ill-considered haste and you'll be looking at the sky from a relaxing position on your back. The mattress will be tarmac and you'll be wearing the TDR as jim-jams. Rolling vandalism in the traffic flow is best accomplished by using the power band like a machinegun — firing it in short, well-aimed bursts, with alert fingers caressing clutch and foot poised warily over the back brake pedal, to fend off unwanted front wheel aviation.

I was surprised, and not a little shocked, at how much single-minded concentration and careful practice was needed to ride the bike fast and accurately in town without imminent risk of a Hallelujah Chorus orchestrating my ascent to heaven. Repeated wallowing in the TDR's thrill quotient while hacking through London daily dodgems is not an activity that makes contributing to a pension scheme particularly worthwhile.

The only freely-given safety feature comes from its twin cross-over spannies, which exit through cans under the back of the seat. God knows at what



point in the rev range Yamaha managed to smuggle the TDR through the noise test, but I'd bet it certainly wasn't with the motor running on song. Approaching the red line makes shoes jealous, broadcasting hurts from hertz aplenty to warn respectable citizens that trouble's coming their way.

My first few days of urban aggro on the bike weren't ecstatically happy as I increasingly suspected it of throwback tendencies. Ten years ago, the Japs (and particularly Yamaha) used to make a host of crude, fast, peaky two-stroke street bikes which attracted an understandable list of complaints, although they also had a large following of machismo-besotted supporters.



as they adopted new-fangled ideas of flexibility, handling, roadholding, safety and public acceptability.

But finally, it appears, they've understood that the game's up anyway so they might as well satiate our primeval pinhead throttle-craziness and keep the tills jingling right up to the final curtain. Back at square one, only with about twice as much power on tap, unrideability is obviously a strong selling point. Maybe it's supposed to spell fun.

This axiom could well have been applied to the TDR250's chassis design, too, but luckily Yamaha now seems incapable of building a ropey frame however corrupted or corrupting the basic concept is. The TZR has a beautifully crafted and fine-handling alloy example of the factory's art, that immediately proved itself in proddie racing and is a joy to use on the open road. This structure was precisely conceived to complement and practicalise its engine's fierce but limited sports nature. Anything as sophisticated would obviously compromise the TDR's 'fun' aspect and thuggish demeanour so, instead, a weird mutation of the old steel YPVS Elsie's tubes blending into the patent falsehood of a dirt profile has been concocted.

Let's get it over with and bludgeon our way through the off-road illusions first. Being that way inclined, I couldn't resist the chance of a muckraking sortie. It took only about 30 miles of trail-bashing along the relatively easy Ridgeway to definitely underline that the TDR is pure road bike and suggesting anything else is pure folly, not to mention a blatant infringement of the Trades Descriptions Act.

Just about everything is wrong with it. The frame has an ▶



The factories eventually listened to what they perceived as the voice of sweet reason and common sense (and were also undoubtedly nervous about what trigger-happy legislators would make of their more anti-social products), inserting broader development criteria into their model ranges

Beastie Boy

abysmal lack of ground clearance, aided and abetted by exceptionally low-slung footpegs. If you so much as look at riding a rut, fast or slow, your feet get knocked off the pegs and the lower frame rails and fragile expansion chambers rejoice in playing at ploughmen.

Weight disposition may be further back than the TZR's but the bike is still depressingly nose-heavy and, as the difference in rolling circumference between the 18-inch front wheel and 17-inch



This is the model with the optional moron. Basic 2½ grand is for the bare TDR250

SPEX YAMAHA TDR250

Price.....	£2449
Importer	Mitsui Machinery Sales, Oakcroft Rd, Chessington, Surrey
Warranty	12 months/unlimited mileage
Engine	Watercooled, two-stroke parallel twin
Bore x stroke	56.4 x 50mm
Capacity	249cc
Compratio	5.9:1
Carburation.....	2 x 28mm flat-slide Mikunis
Gearbox	6-speed
Electrics.....	12V, 4Ah battery; 60/55W headlamp

CYCLE PARTS

Tyres.....	Metzeler Sahara
Front.....	100/90 x 18
Rear	120/80 x 17
Brakes, front.....	320mm disc/four-piston caliper
Rear	210mm disc/opposed piston caliper
Suspension, front	Telescopic fork, preload adjust
Rear	Monocross rising-rate

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	1385mm
Weight (inc 1 gal fuel)	152.7kg (336lb)
Fuel capacity	14 litres (3.1 gal)

PERFORMANCE

Top speed in	
½ mile, prone	108.95mph
Best one-way	112.5mph
Standing ¼ mile mean	14.99sec/88.27mph
(one way).....	14.47sec/93.5mph
¼ mile roll-on from 50mph (mean)	15.36sec/59.1mph (worra sloth)
One way	15.4sec/59.2mph
Top gear	14.7mph/1000rpm
Fuel consumption, overall	31mpg
Worst figure	22mpg (ferkin' hell)
Speedo accuracy	
At ind 30mph	27.2mph
At ind 50mph	47.9mph
At ind 70mph	64.1mph

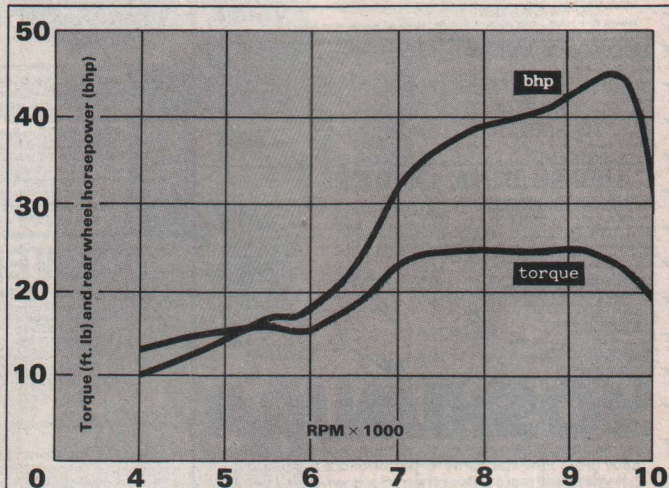
rear ain't worth spit (in fact the front's probably smaller with its skinnier tyre), the thing dives wilfully and irresistibly into every potential grave. Hitting whoops at speed hammers the wrists unmercifully as soft, short-travel suspension surrenders with a predictably regular bottoming-out clang.

The engine's instantly-available blitzkrieg of power is probably the single most frustrating factor, though. I disagree with conventional wisdom that's been trotted out to slag its characteristics for off-road use and found it not unlike a peaky silly-boy 250cc motocrosser helped along by an extra 20 useful ponies. The problem is that, harboured in a cripplingly useless chassis for the purpose under discussion, the motor's banzai potential is impossible to exploit or enjoy.

Except on perfectly dry and firm going, the rear Metzeler pretend trail boot is incapable of finding grip when the tacho says gung-ho. Attempts to either wheelie over the holes that the bike naturally would prefer to dive into or simply stack on some velocity invariably result in nothing but fish-tailing indecision as the

rear wheel spins wildly. Stuff the motor into redundant YZ wearing a healthy dose of Lagunacross rubber, however, and it'd take a crowbar to get me off it. Of course, there is

still 'fun' to be had out of this half of the TDR's 'Ultimate Dual' equation. Watching somebody you really didn't like having the inevitable bad accident on it would be quite a

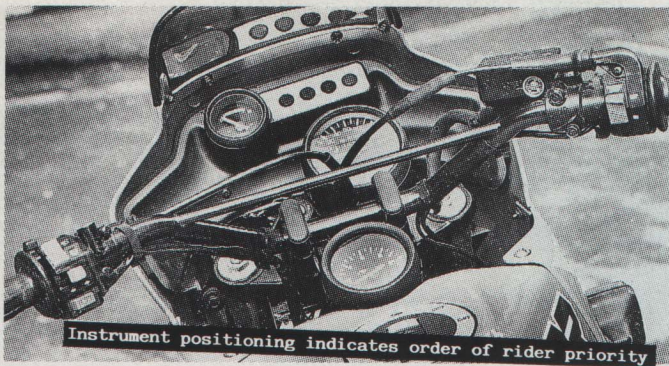


Maximum horsepower: 43.8bhp @ 9400rpm.
Maximum torque: 25.3ft.lb @ 8000rpm.

Tested on Bosch LPS 002 dynamometer at Motad Ltd., Unit 2, Maverton Road, London E3

You don't need to look at the specs to see this is a stroker! TDR motor labours through what it laughingly calls its midrange then shrieks into resonance at 7000rpm. Although the engine is nominally identical to the TZR250's, different exhaust system boosts power from 6500 to around 8000rpm but loses out by 4.4bhp on top end; TZR hangs on longer, too.

Mac McDiarmid



Instrument positioning indicates order of rider priority

laugh for starters. . . .
 Accusing Yamaha of a total mix-and-mismatch operation is possibly a little extreme. If riding it on the dirt serves to show that the TDR doesn't belong and riding the bike in town is a thoroughly fraught business, then riding it on tight backroads elicits an upstanding streak of virtue, even if these are the only circumstances in which the bike lives up to any comprehensible promise of unbridled and unwholesome fun this side of a night out with the nihilists.

Underneath the fraudulent 'street scrambling' fancy dress is an excellent lightweight road tool with quick steering and handling sharp enough to cope with the engine's point-squirt-pray manners. Its one positive inheritance from dirt-posing drag is the riding position, perched up on the bike with wide bars to wrestle rather than the TZR's wholly committed and restrictive bum-up/head-down racing stance. Although this conspires to make it a tiring and neck-stretching nuisance on A-roads and motorway, the advantage shines out when howling and hussling down country lanes, where the TDR functions as a complete and exciting motorcycle, albeit one that brings out what Mr Bottomley would undoubtedly view as the worst in human nature.

Ego-boosting comes easy by leaving the braking late enough into a turn to make standing it on the front end obligatory, followed by cranking blissfully over towards the edge of the tyres and then powering out with all 40-odd horses champing and whinnying at the bit — preferably just beyond the rear Metz's ability to cope so that a satisfactory degree of drift can be generated. Every facet of the machine, from brakes to suspension to steering geometry to chassis rigidity to its very ability to promote rider confidence, is harnessed and honed ready for participation in these private rehearsals for Armageddon. There's your fun. And, unless Old Farmer Giles has parked his tractor on the blind side, it

isn't especially dangerous.

Unfortunately, almost every other application, apart from parking it up, is. The curse of the TDR is a conception flawed by impossibly wide-ranging and generally contradictory 'fun' fantasies. All-round motorcycles are, by definition, boring beasts of burden. The rest are, to a greater or lesser extent, specialist tools. The TDR certainly isn't boring but it is far more of a no-choice marginally-guided missile, demanding commitment in excess of most of its aspirant owners' capabilities, than the manufacturer would have you believe. ■

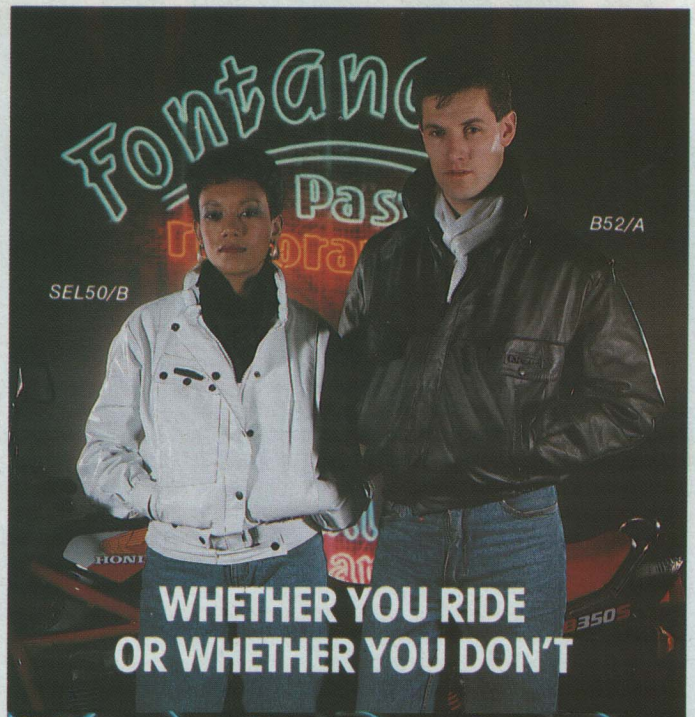
SECOND OPINION

I beg to differ. The TDR is a rolling frenzy of vivid imagery that made every journey an event to remember. It's true that it does require a fair degree of concentration to extract its best performance, but you're more than amply rewarded for doing so.

Its performance on the road is nothing short of breathtaking. Any 250, let alone a trail bike, that can stay with a pair of well ridden 600 road bikes on all but the longest of straights, and actually gain ground in corners, gets my vote. The fact that it did so with such apparent ease leaves me speechless.

The lack of fulfilment of the Ultimate Dual tag may come as a bit of a disappointment if you were planning to do the Paris-Dakar on one, but if you regard the fitment of semi trail tyres as nothing more than a safeguard against unplanned trips onto the verge when you've overcooked a corner, I doubt whether you'll find much to complain about.

The moral of this story is that it's better to have loved and have lost, than to have spent your whole life wishing; so you'd better go and buy yourself a TDR before you're too old to appreciate it. Hadn't you? **Patrick Devereux**



SEL50/B

B52/A

WHETHER YOU RIDE
OR WHETHER YOU DON'T



PADDOCK JACKET

A lightweight summer jacket with the emphasis on style. Hand-made in supple hide, and fully lined, the Paddock Jacket is designed with the stylish rider in mind.

Colours: Black, White, Grey, Mid Blue, Slate Blue
 Sizes: Mens 36-46, Ladies 10-16

The SEL50 Paddock Jacket

Looking good at a good-looking price only **£129.95** + £2 p&p.



SEL50/A



The Choice is Yours.

B52 PILOT

A new standard from Frank Thomas, the B52 is the heavyweight alternative. Supple hide and full thermal lining ensure rider comfort whatever the weather.



B52/J

B52/K

The B52 Pilot Jacket.

Sky-high on style at a down to earth price only **£139.95** + £2 p&p.

SEL50 Paddock Jacket and B52 Pilot are trademarks of Frank Thomas Ltd.

Colours: Black, Grey, Slate Blue
 Sizes: Mens 36-46, Ladies 10-16

Access/Barclaycard phone orders 0933 652044

To: Frank Thomas Ltd., Atlanta Works, Victoria Street, Irthlingborough, Northants, NN9 5RG.

Please send me B52 Pilot/Paddock jackets indicated. Enclosed is Cheque/P.O. for £..... made payable to Frank Thomas Ltd.

Code	Mens Size	Ladies	Price	p&p

Name Order colour by product code.

Address

B5