

● ALL LARGE COMPANIES OFFER SERIES OF bikes under classifications such as "street," "motocross" and "enduro." Each series, in turn, offers a variety of engine displacements. However, displacement *per se* is not the only differentiating factor; very often the largest bikes offer the most and the newest features, which makes them not only bigger, but better. Conversely, the smallest displacement bike in a certain series often inherits the least high-tech trickle-down and offers less than meets the eye.

Such is the case with the IT125. It's the baby of Yamaha's true-enduro IT series, and it suffers from a bad case of the Hand-Me-Downs. In all fairness, the IT125's larger siblings hold a definite advantage—most American enduro competition includes open, 250cc and 175cc classes, but no 125cc class. And Yamaha's marketing scheme designates the 125 as a "semi-serious" off-road machine for smaller persons (read women and children) who want a smaller, fairly docile mount. Still, International Trials has a 125 class, the 125 is billed as an IT and its appearance is in keeping with IT-group styling. The 125 wears "sky blue" plastic body work complete with headlight/number plate, fender-integrated taillight and new FIM-legal number plates. The smallest IT also appears to have all the functional enduro-type pieces: chrome-moly frame, leading-axle fork, skid plate, monoshock rear suspension, folding shift and rear brake pedals, readily accessible strapped-on multi-use tools, easy-to-read speedometer with a resettable tripmeter that's adjustable forward and backward by tenths, and quick-change rear wheel accoutrements. But appearances can be deceiving—some of the technotrickle dried out before getting to the 125.

Yamaha designed a new frame specifically for the IT, and chassis measurements put it on the quick-steering side of the already cat-quick IT175. Rake and trail figures of 28.5 degrees and 120mm (4.7 inches) are reduced from the 175's 29.5 degrees and 127mm (5.0 inches); likewise the 125's 1365mm (53.7-inch) wheelbase is a reduction from the 175's 1375mm (54.1-inch) wheelbase. Riding impressions confirmed spec-chart indications: the 125 steers very quickly, and precisely, on tight trails. The little IT's light 99 kg (218-lb) curb weight proves to be an asset as well; being about 20 pounds lighter than the 175 con-

Yamaha's newest and smallest IT may find the going rough out in the enduro world in spite of its success-laden family tree.

YAMAHA IT125G



PHOTOGRAPHY: DON PHILLIPSON (COLOR), DWE HAWKINS, ROBIN FIGGS

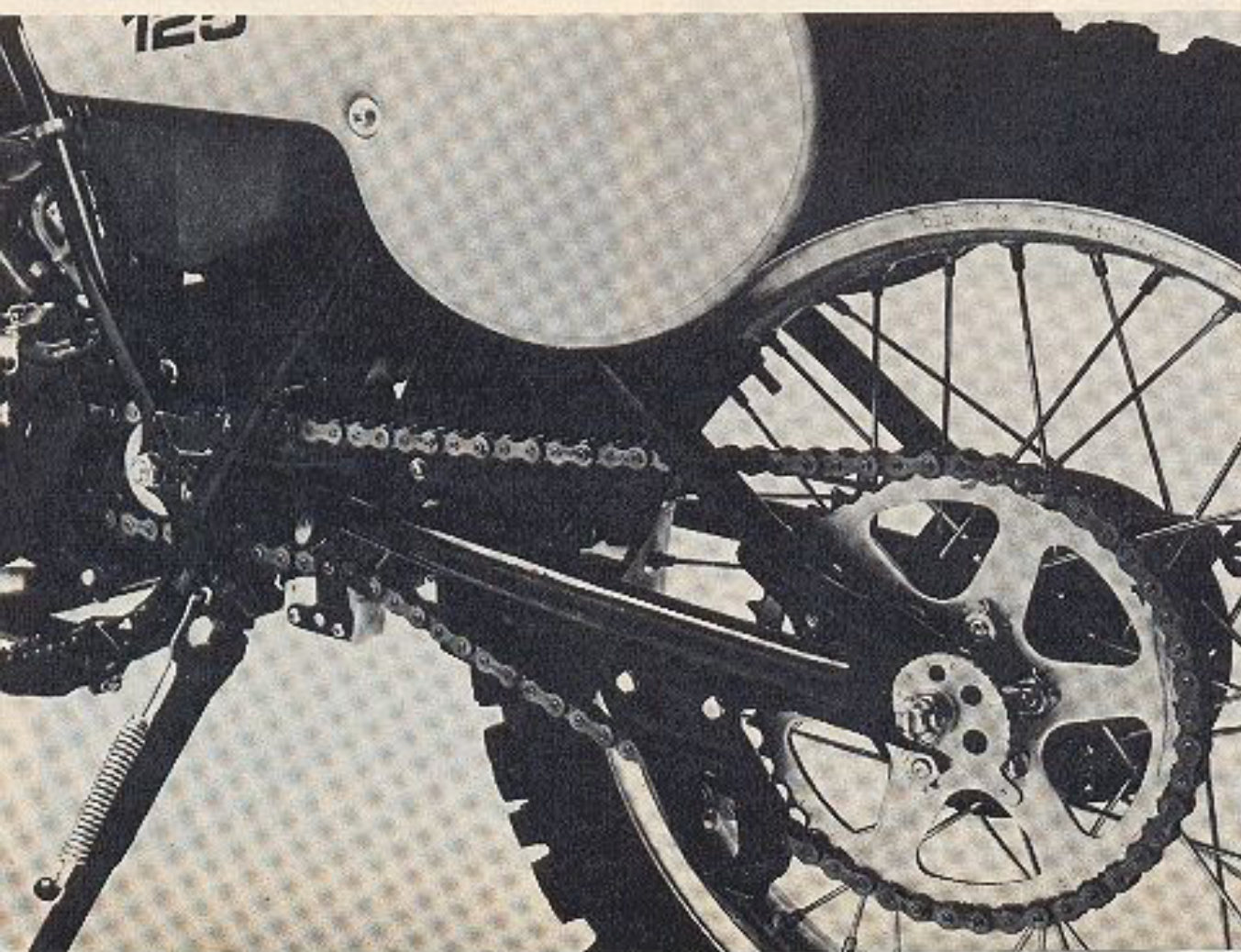
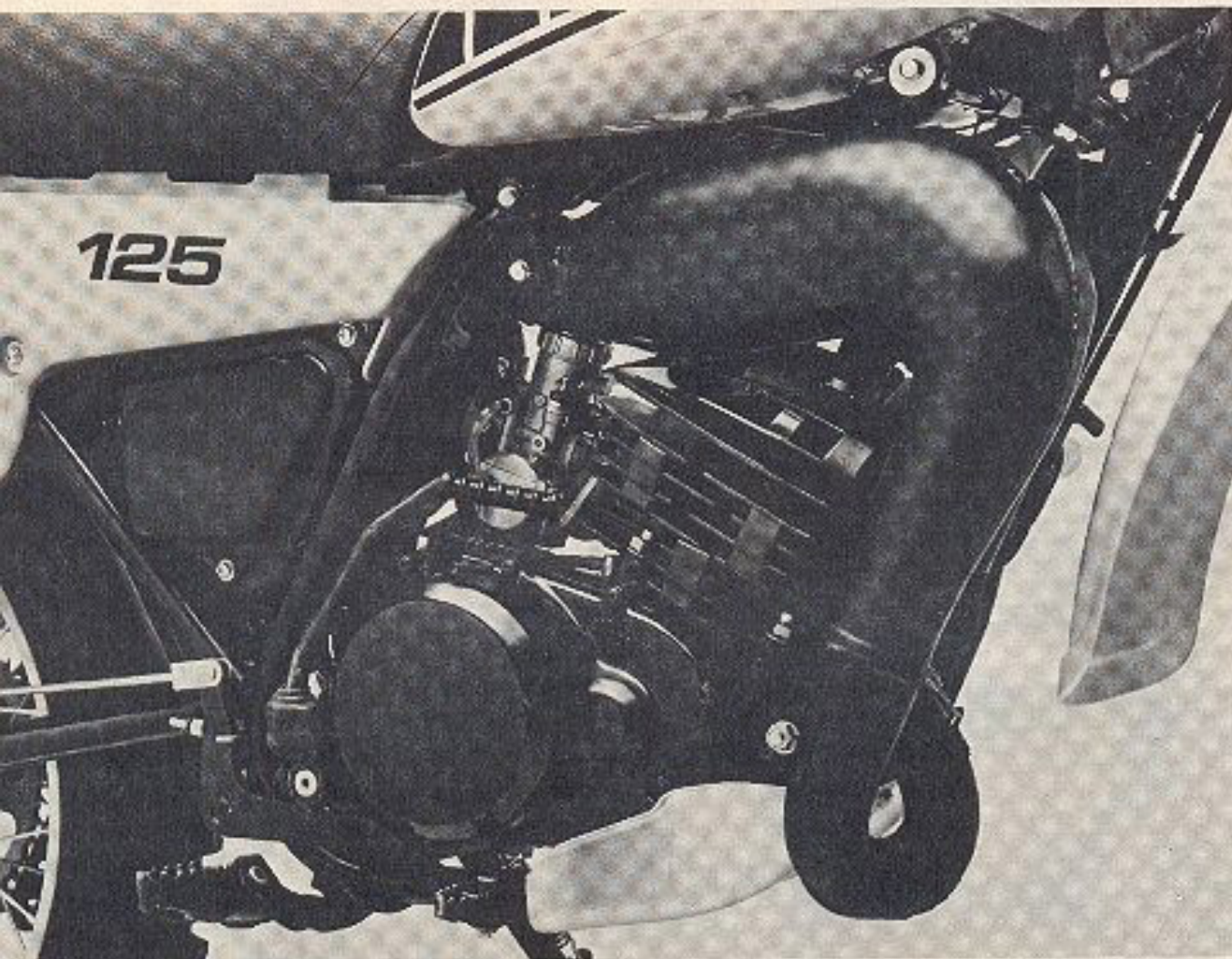
tributes to the 125's pleasant slow-riding manners.

However, on moderately fast, soft fire-roads or sandy washes the 125's front end wobbles enough to demand constant attention and repeated steering corrections. And while the suspension soaks up smaller bumps and dips reasonably well, it is definitely not up to the demands of harsher terrain. Fork and shock springing is soft enough for 160-pound riders to bottom the suspension easily; heavier riders must endure absolutely bone-jarring thumps. Fast riding over whoops or rocky sections reveals inadequate rebound damping as well, and the monoshock suffers very noticeable fade after about 10 minutes of hard work. The shock stays hot for quite a while, forcing the rider to stop or at least slow drastically in order to maintain a semblance of control.

These results aren't particularly surprising considering Yamaha's choice of suspension components for the IT125. Although Yamaha developed the shock and fork specifi-



IT engine is basically a YZ125F. Tensioner, guide and close countershaft to swing-arm pivot keep chain happy.



YAMAHA IT125G TEST

ically for the 125, the focus, again, was definitely on play riding and light riders. The DT-based monoshock offers 99mm (3.9 inches) of travel and has no provision for damping adjustment. The dual-spring shock can be altered for spring preload only, which is not enough adjustability to significantly improve the quality of the 200mm (7.9 inches) of rear wheel travel. Yamaha offers a higher-rate spring which heavier riders will need, but nothing can be done to increase rebound damping since the shock is sealed. The 175's adjustable-damping monoshock unit would be a welcome addition to the 125.

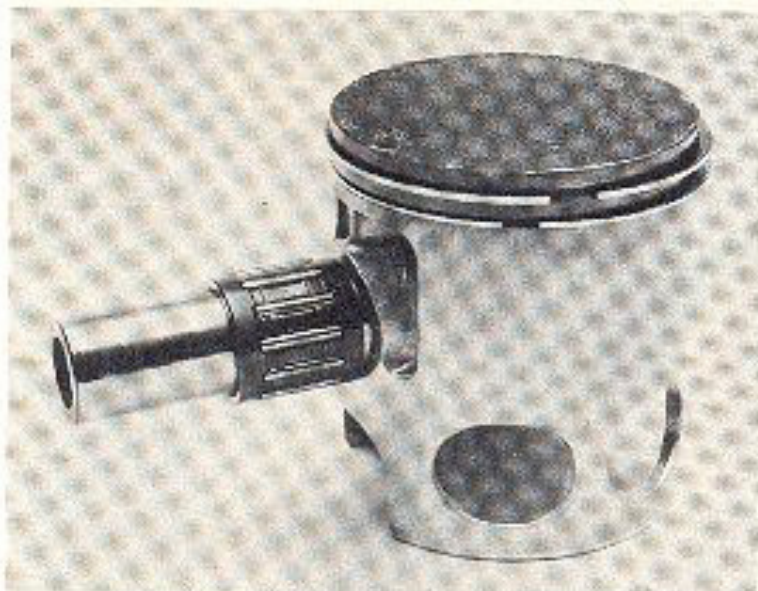
The leading-axle coil-spring fork provides 180mm (7.1 inches) of travel and offers better stock performance than the monoshock. While the fork's stiction level is acceptably low, its rebound damping could be strengthened and spring rates definitely need to be raised. Yamaha uses 163cc (5.5 ounces) of 15-weight oil in each leg, and 588mm (23.1-inch) springs are used inside the 32mm-diameter fork tubes. In contrast to the little IT, the 175 uses 36mm tubes to



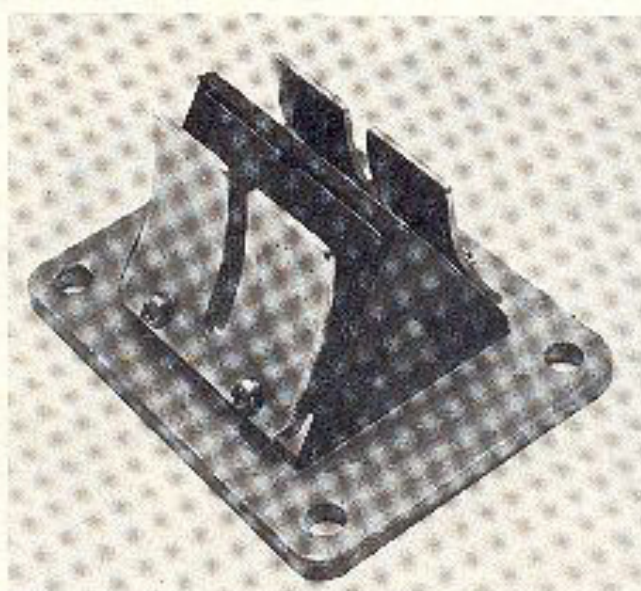
The leading-axle IT fork functions well during slow going, but larger riders and/or high speeds will bottom fork.

CYCLE

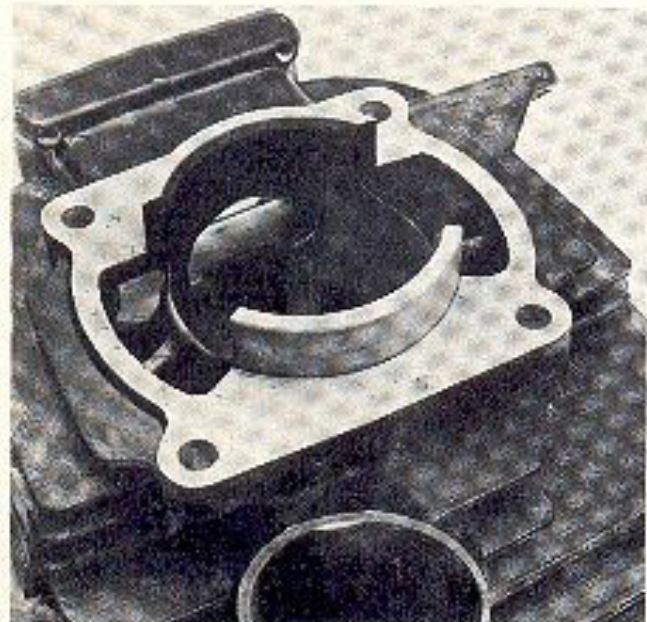




Windowed piston allows boost charge to pass from reeds to crankcase without sacrificing skirt strength.



IT reed cage is identical to the YZ item, but petal thickness was increased to 2.0mm for greater durability.



Port changes give the IT a relatively broad powerband. The tunnels' smooth, paint-like coating aids charge flow.



A plastic filler plate wedges the filter against the airbox for a leak-proof fit. Both remove quickly for servicing.

YAMAHA IT125G TEST

produce 195mm (7.7 inches) of refined travel, coming out ahead once again.

The decreased suspension travel puts the seat height at 33.3 inches, more than an inch lower than the 175. While this benefits riders of smaller stature, it also lowers the peg height to 12 inches, which benefits no one at all. We'd gladly tip-toe more often in exchange for some toe-saving ground clearance, having stubbed our steel-clad toes several times while they rested in apparent safety on the folding pegs. Otherwise, the seating position worked fairly well, although some larger testers felt a bit cramped.

Other chassis details include strong DID rims which sport Bridgestone tires, the rear a 4.10 x 18 Motocross M20 with the welcomed rimsaver design. On our first ride, a 100-mile enduro, the spokes loosened up considerably while seating—best to keep an eye on them and bed them in with a series of short runs. The rear brake unit, lifted from the YZ125, works well despite being non-floating, and the rod-actuated unit returned to service quickly after stream dunkings. The front brake provided excellent feel and braking power and also recovered quickly from water-induced fade. It originates from the DT-series bikes, complete with speedometer drive. The countershaft sprocket is centered only 2.75 inches away from the swing arm, and so creates little variation in chain free-play as the rear wheel travels through its



full arc. A spring-loaded chain tensioner also helps keep the 520 DID chain in line and should be trouble-free since the more powerful 175 incorporates the same combination.

The 125cc engine proved to be the strong point of the IT125 package. Although it's based on the YZ125F engine, the IT's port timing, carb size and pipe shape have been altered to produce a wider, less abrupt powerband. The head features a centrally located combustion chamber sealed with a copper head gasket. The iron-sleeved aluminum cylinder provides a 56mm bore for the piston's 50mm stroke, with one 1.2mm-thick keystone ring and one 1.0mm-thick plain ring sealing things up. The YZ-F uses two thinner (0.6mm) but more expensive plain rings. For enduro purposes, the keystone type seals better, and the thicker rings will wear longer than the thin racing type. The IT also uses windowed pistons, rather than the YZ variety which have an arch cut away on the intake side to strengthen the piston and reduce piston noise. Needle bearings are used on both ends of the connecting rod, per standard Yamaha practice.

Induction is through Yamaha's usual four-petal reed valve. The IT's reeds are thicker than the YZ's, 0.20mm versus 0.15mm, to improve durability. A 30mm Mikuni carburetors crisply, and the stock jetting is correct up to about 4000 feet. Air filtration is accomplished by means of an oiled fuzzy-foam element, and a new filler-plate system is used to form a better seal while keeping the filter readily accessible for quick maintenance. The filler plate compresses the foam element slightly to insure a snug, complete seal against the airbox. Since no other fasteners are used, removing the plate takes just a moment; seconds later the filter is in hand ready for servicing.

The 125's power curve mimics the IT175's, although the 125 trails the 175 throughout the range by three to four horsepower as would be expected. The 125 topped out with 17.36 horsepower at 8500 rpm, 3.36 shy of the 175's peak and 4.23 down on the 1978 YZ125's. Although the IT125 has a peaky engine, the bike doesn't require the skills of a top-flight motocrosser to be ridden. Thanks to clean, responsive carburetion and little flywheel effect, the engine revs quickly, climbing into the powerband rather than bogging. Also, the power falls off slowly beyond the peak so the rider isn't penalized for over-revving the engine, which is not the case with the MXer. On the lower end of the scale, the IT was more than content to plunk around through rocky sections and creek beds without loading up. Enough power was on hand to take on all the hills we tried save one, where a combination of high altitude, a heavyweight rider and an engine struggling on a long, steep, rocky climb proved to be too much. Heavy clutch abuse got the 400-pounds-plus going once more, and the little IT was never headed again. Riding over a variety of terrain, we averaged 28 mpg, which allows a range of 62 miles with the 2.2-gallon tank.

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3.227:1 transmit power to the six-speed gearbox through a five-friction-plate clutch. Although the 125's final drive ratio is lower (46/12 sprockets, 3.833:1 versus 41/12, 3.417:1), the six transmission ratios are identical to those in the 175. However, since the 175cc engine characteristics are more flexible than the smaller IT's, riders must be sure either to keep the rpm level up or to keep stirring the gearbox; no gaping holes exist, but a modicum of attention is necessary. The folding shift lever fits a size 10 boot very comfortably, shifting action is precise and only a short throw is required to switch cogs. A flick of the clutch lever or a quick twitch of the throttle facilitates shifting, and false neutrals are not to be found.



Make and model Yamaha IT125G
 Price, suggested retail (as of 12/18/79) \$1169

ENGINE

Type Two-stroke, single cylinder, reed-valve inducted
 Bore and stroke 56 x 50mm (2.20 x 1.97 in.)
 Piston displacement 123cc (7.51 cu. in.)
 Compression ratio 8.1:1
 Carburetion (1) Mikuni 30mm
 Exhaust system Upswept with silencer /USFS-approved spark arrestor
 Ignition External-rotor magneto; CDI
 Air filtration Oiled foam
 Transmission oil capacity 650cc (0.69 qt.)
 Bhp @ rpm 17.36 @ 8500
 Torque @ rpm 10.73 @ 8500

TRANSMISSION

Type Six-speed, constant mesh with wet, five drive-plate clutch
 Primary drive Helical-cut gear; 71/22; 3.227:1
 Final drive #520 DID chain; 46/12 sprockets; 3.833:1
 Gear ratios (at transmission) (1) 3.090:1 (2) 2.066:1 (3) 1.500:1 (4) 1.190:1 (5) 1.000:1 (6) 0.840:1

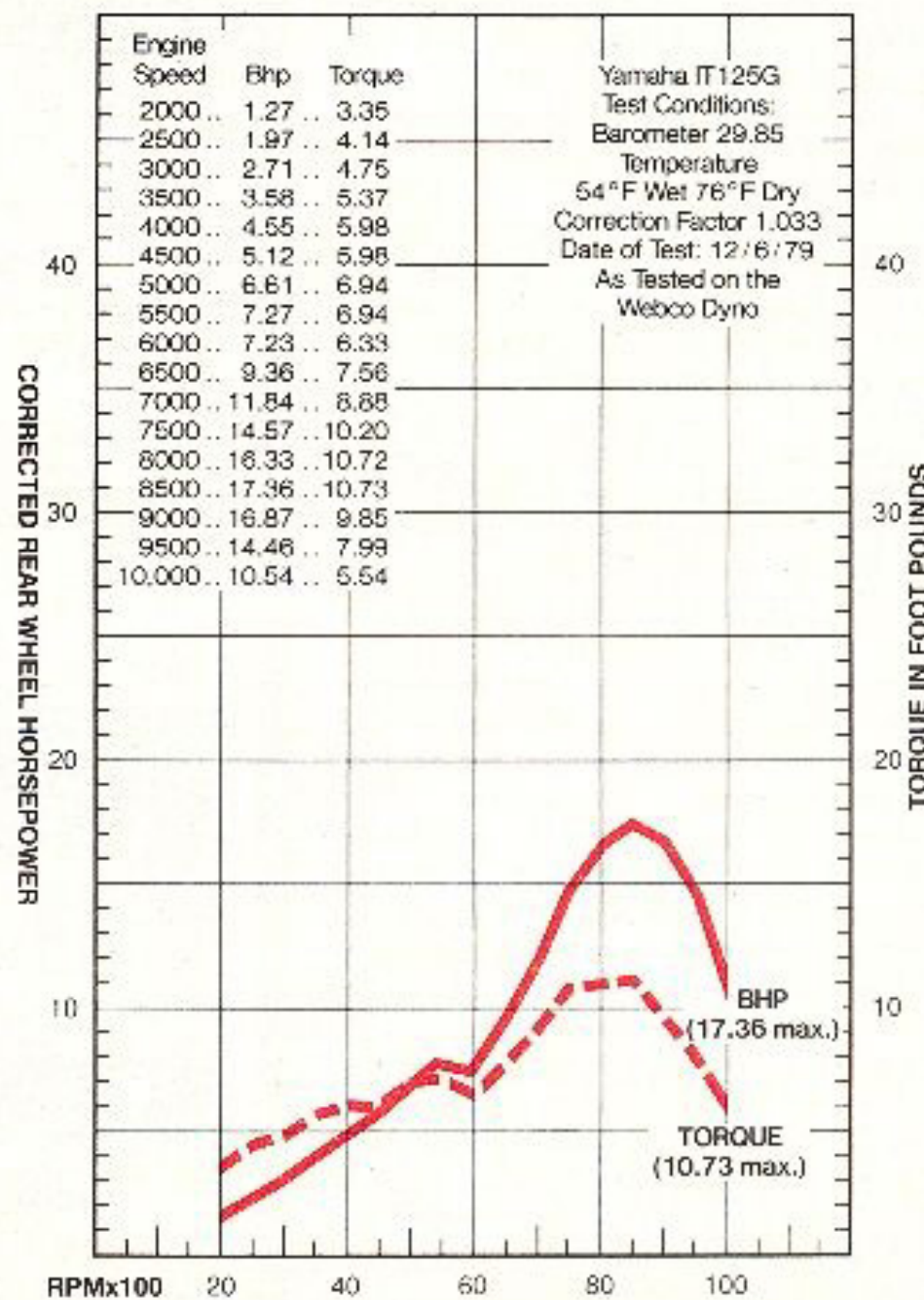
CHASSIS

Type Single-downtube, full-cradle chrome-moly frame; tubular section chrome-moly swing arm
 Suspension, front Coil-spring 180mm-travel fork with forward-mounted axle
 rear DeCarbon-type, nitrogen-charged monoshock; 99mm of absorber travel allowing 200mm of rear-wheel travel
 Wheelbase 1365mm (53.7 in.)
 Rake/trail 28.5° / 120mm (4.72 in.)
 Brake, front Drum with 110 x 25mm (4.33 x 1.0 in.) shoes
 rear Drum with 130 x 28mm (5.12 x 1.1 in.) shoes
 Wheel, front DID 1.60 x 21 rim with one rim lock
 rear DID 1.85 x 18 rim with two rim locks
 Tire, front 3.00 x 21 Bridgestone Motocross M21
 rear 4.10 x 18 Bridgestone Motocross M20
 Seat height 846mm (33.3 in.)

Ground clearance 284mm (11.2 in.)
 Fuel capacity 8.5 liters (2.2 gal.)
 Curb weight, full tank 99.0 kg (218 lbs)
 Test weight 171.0 kg (378 lbs)

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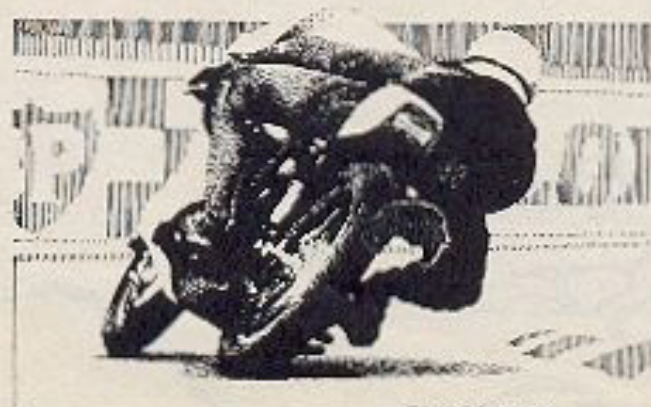


The electrical system uses a flywheel magneto to generate current. The six-volt headlight won't cut through the night at Baja race speeds, but it does provide enough illumination to allow you to pick your way home after dark. The CDI system performed faultlessly and provided easy starting. We never fouled a plug even though the stock Champion N-2G was too cold for our 2000-to-5000-foot application.

In total, the IT125 appears to be a serious enduro bike—but really isn't. A nice power-plant wrapped in second-string running gear seems to be a throwback to the old concept of "enduro." It can be argued that the IT125 was, after all, designed for use by smaller people, but poor high-speed handling will leave improving beginners wishing for more and better suspension travel. Or perhaps the



little IT was meant to serve double duty, helping fill the gap between 100cc and 175cc models in Yamaha's foot-bike MX series and was stretched too thin in the process. Kids and donk-type riders might choose the 125, but its somewhat peaky power characteristics make it more suitable for experienced riders. Lower cost, at least, is a valid argument for it since the 125 lists at \$1169—a tidy \$230 savings over the IT175. Value, however, is something else again. The potential buyer needs to carefully consider whether or not the price gap between the IT125 and the IT175 or KDX175 is too far to span. If you're a serious rider, paying the difference for a more complete 175 could be cheaper in the long run. ●



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