

**MONSTER TEST ISSUE • YZ125 • CR80 • TT350 • M-STAR 250 vs. HUSKY 250 • XL600 • YZ490 vs. VENTURE 1200?!**

**FREE RACE ACTION POSTER INSIDE!!**

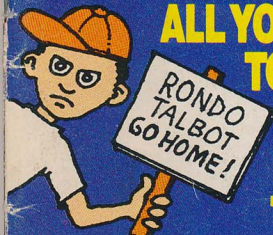
**DIRT BIKE**

WPS 34355

# DIRT BIKE

APRIL 1986

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**← CRAZY MX PILOT COMPLETELY FLIPS OUT: WHY HE DID IT! PAGE 24**



ISSN 10384-1546

# DIRT BIKE

APRIL 1986 • VOLUME 16, NO. 4



DIRT vs. STREET



HONDA CR80



YAMAHA YZ125



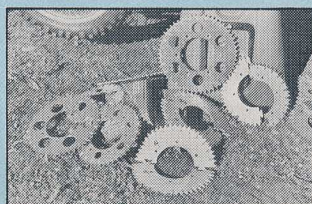
ANAHEIM SX



HONDA XL600



YAMAHA TT350



125 SPEED SECRETS

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**ON THE COVER:**—*Dirt Bike* test rider Steve Schmitz gets absolutely nuts aboard the rejuvenated Yamaha YZ125. Steve completed a 180-degree aerial maneuver for the *DB* cameras. Tom Webb took the photo, and Flash Kuhn snapped the awesome "whip" shot. DeWest artfully designed the cover, and Valley Film performed the color separations.

**WARNING:** Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.



Thankfully, most of the weight is carried very high on the Venture, as opposed to the old-world thinking evident on the YZ. Flight maneuvers on the V-four are handled in much the same way as on a Boeing 747. The good news is the handy saddlebags: You can pack your clothes, shaving kit and a TV set for those long motos.



Talk about starting prowess! The feeble YZ jerks and stands straight up off the line, while the well-bred manners of the Venture let it take off smoothly and straight. The YZ needs some work here.



Test rider Steve Schmitz looks back at a shocked Ricky Johnson and David Bailey during the Main Event. Rumor has it that both Johnson and Bailey will be switching to better-handling, turbo-charged Gold Wings next year.

## NO-HOLDS-BARRED SHOOTOUT!

# DIRT vs. STREET

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

**A startling controversy!**

The mail was staggering. It arrived in giant, piano-sized bags at the plush *Dirt Bike* office. In less than a week we had had several accidents, including one receptionist who nearly suffocated when 789 pounds of mail had her trapped for over three hours. Where had all the mail come from? In the October issue we actually shot out a street bike against a dirt machine. It was executed very clinically at L.A. Country Raceway on a dragstrip, with lights, timers and E.T.'s clocked to the hundredth of a second. The dirt bike literally chewed the freeway cruiser

into little, itty-bitty pieces. Enough said? Not quite.

People wrote in clamoring that our riders were too unskilled to control the horsepower, handling characteristics and low-slung ergonomics of the road machines. Most of them felt that the shootout gave the dirt bike too much of an edge. Here are a number of random quotes from the missives:

"...The fact that you pitted the machines together on an asphalt drag strip shows how little you know about these motorcycles..."

"...Everyone knows the heavier bike would lose on a dragstrip, why not test them where the real handling traits will surface?..."

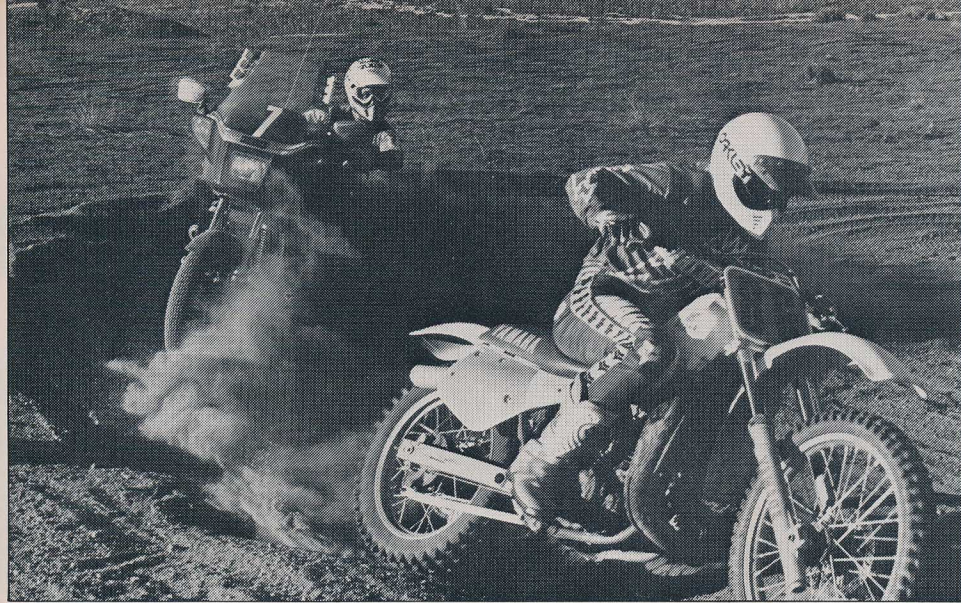
"...If you guys had a grain of savvy, you'd know that the V-twin four-cylinder four-stroke doesn't cater to tarmac revving, but instead craves double jumps..."

"...I've got a 750 Honda, and I've won my last 14 races at the Friday night motocross. It's got torque throughout the range..."

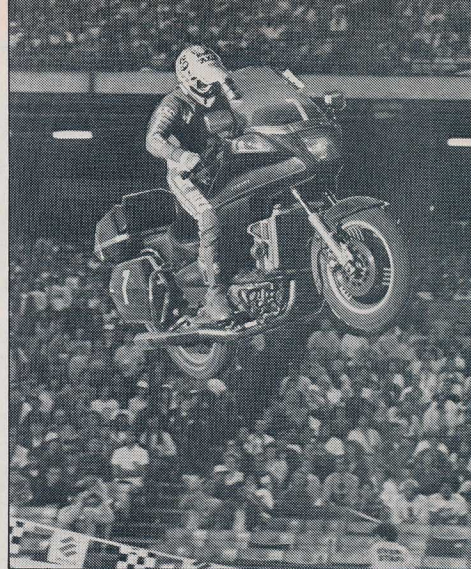
"...Give us a chance, please. Our big V-fours have advantages those stupid, spindly two-strokes only dream about. In fact, I can outjump, outcorner and outmaneuver them while listening to my favorite radio station. Let's see a real shootout! In the DIRT!"

### THE FACE-OFF

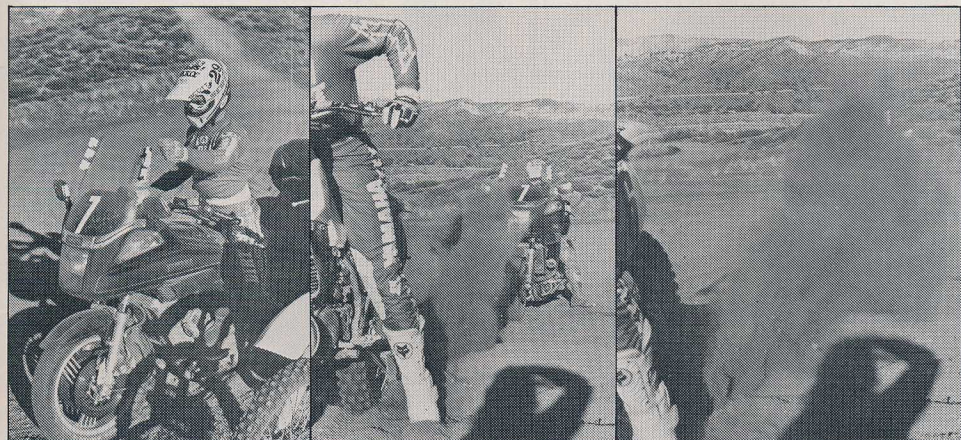
We'd heard rumors over the last few years that the technology in the bigger four-stroke multis was staggering. People were taking



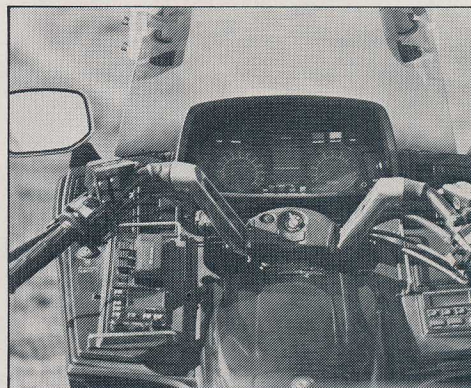
*With tons of low-end torque, the Venture sticks like glue in the corners. Here the Venture rider has already caught the bewildered YZ pilot, even though he started nearly a week later.*



*Seventy-thousand-plus fans were shocked at the Venture's ability to take the monstrous triple jumps at the Supercross. This is where the 1200cc motor really helps.*



*Mute testimony that the windshield/fairing/Roll Offs actually work! A full roost job would normally blind the rider and leave his goggles full of dirt. With the highly advanced rider protection device found on the Venture, you simply hide behind the well-built bulky gadget.*



*The Venture dashboard is proof positive that by comparison, today's motocrossers are about as technologically advanced as a dirt clod. Here you can see the radio, cruise control, horn, speedo and tach assembly. All state of the art—good stuff.*

these machines that looked like scaled-down Buick Roadmasters and tearing up every sandlot and hillclimb they could find. Since 1984, a giant upswing in the sales of the monster street bikes has left the manufacturers confused, since none were being registered for street use. The pilots wanted only a green sticker: for off-road use.

We placed a call to Yamaha's Willie Amaradio, and he confirmed it. To quote Willie: "YZ sales have suffered monumental setbacks since we introduced the Venture 1200. Oddly enough, dirt riders seem to adapt easily to the slightly higher weight. They feel the Venture will turn under any motocrosser, and the huge V-four engine gives a sense of security when airborne."

So, in keeping with *Dirt Bike* tradition, we decided that a follow-up shootout was not only necessary, but critical in maintaining our reputation as leader in our field. We secured a slightly used Yamaha Venture 1200 and put it head to head with Yamaha's own supposed "king of the dirt world," the YZ490. By the time we completed the moto-

cross shootout, we fully understood why so many people had written in.

#### THE MACHINES

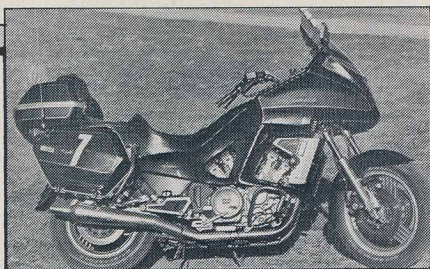
While the Yamaha Venture 1200 tips the scales at just over 731 pounds dry, the majority of the weight is carried very high in the chassis. The advantages of this are twofold: First, the huge gas tank holds enough fuel for a 128-day moto, and secondly, lots of unsprung weight mounted above the engine keeps the handling characteristics on the vague side. Positive engineering also points toward the technologically advanced suspension hardware found on the Venture. Rather than fiddle with gadgets, links and remote-reservoir shocks, the 1200 uses a simple yet effective single shock mounted directly to the swingarm. Also carried in the sturdy rear fork is a shaft drive that virtually eliminates chain adjusting! Up front, a beautiful pair of forks offer nearly six inches of travel. Yamaha doesn't use ugly fork boots, and both suspension ends are integrated into the CLASS system (Computer Leveling Air Suspension System).

Other race-bred goodies include mag wheels, which make spoke tightening a thing of the past. A fairing, complete with windshield, is an important, sensible safety feature. The rider doesn't need to wear bogus goggles, or even a visor. In fact, we fit Roll Offs directly to the windshield and had great results! The fairing/windshield combo also means that you won't have to purchase an expensive chest protector. Just hug in behind the fairing and let it deflect the roost. Little things, like the accessory radio, standard saddlebags and comfy seat, make slamming through a gnarly set of stadium whoops just that much easier. Many riders commented that the saddlebags worked best when they were full of heavy items, such as bricks. More ballast equals better handling. Makes sense to us.

The Yamaha YZ490 sits tall, is very skinny, and has over a foot of suspension travel. Same old stuff.

#### SHOWDOWN AT 2:38 a.m.

Without going into the shocking details, here are the results of the motocross shoot-



## DIRT vs. STREET

impact but shrank an amazing 7.5 inches in total body height. The YZ proved to be unspectacular and far too predictable, and the light weight scared many of our testers. Some work needs to be done here.

• Big, ugly stadium whoops were attacked in one of two ways aboard the high-tech Venture: You could plow directly through the middle, carving a 2.5-foot swath that resembled a corn furrow, or use the more common method of swap and destroy. . . everyone else in your class. This exciting tactic was a real crowd arouser, although many of the contestants complained when the Venture landed on their machines and made them look like crushed soup cans. Again, the YZ was uncontrollable and rather frightening through the whoops. It would respond by hitting the face of the whoop, then leaping up and clearing four or five in a row! No one liked this quirk at all.

### TO SUM IT UP

We want to thank everyone who wrote in and opened our eyes concerning these so-called "street" bikes. Doing a shootout of the super-lightweight, megasuspended and power-packed YZ against the superior handling, torquey and accessory-packed Venture showed us just how grim and ill-handling today's dirt bikes are. Next stop: six steps in trials techniques for Gold Wing owners. We can't wait! □

	YAMAHA VENTURE MX	YAMAHA YZ 490S
Engine type	Liquid-cooled, DOHC, 4-valve, V-four, 4-stroke	Air-cooled, single-cylinder, 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	79mm x 66mm	87mm x 82mm
Displacement	1198cc	487cc
Carburetion	(4) Mikuni BDS35	Mikuni VM 40SS
Lubrication	Wet sump	Pre-mix
Fuel tank capacity	20.1 L (5.3 gals.)	10 L (2.6 gals.)
Transmission	5-speed	5-speed, constant mesh
Gearing, front/rear	Shaft driven/no gearing available	14/48
Ignition	Transistor controlled	CDI
Suspension:		
Front	Air-adj. telescopic fork, 5.4 in.	43mm telescopic, 12.0 in.
Rear	Swingarm with Monocross, 5.3 in.	B.A.S.S. Monocross, 12.6 in.
Wheelbase	1770mm (63.4 in.)	1475mm (58.1 in.)
Ground clearance	120mm (5.7 in.)	335mm (13.2 in.)
Seat height	785mm (39.9 in.)	950mm (37.4 in.)
Weight claimed, dry	732 lbs.	224 lbs.
Retail price	\$8299	\$2649
Country of origin	Japan	Japan
Distributor/Manufacturer	Yamaha Motor Corp. 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630	Yamaha Motor Corp. 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630

out between the two Yamahas.

• The Venture boasted superior MX gearing. First gear was the only cog we ever used on a stadium track. We did ride one Grand Prix and eventually used second gear. Top speed in fifth was an amazing 129 mph. The YZ had to be shifted constantly, and during the Grand Prix topped out at a measly 91 mph!

• Jumping proved to be a real thrill aboard the 700-pound Venture. The fans loved the pancakes off the finish-line jump, as well as the burgers we carried in the saddlebags for after-moto refreshment. Unfortunately, we went through 67 test riders during the race evaluation of the Venture: Sixty-five were crushed upon landing after aeronautical maneuvers, and two survived the

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