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DIRTBIKE

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THE #1 DIRT BIKE MAG!

**FIRST
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WITH OVER
3 FEET
OF SUSPENSION
TRAVEL!**

MID-AIR COLLISION 250 SHOOTOUT!

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ISSN 0364-1546



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ON THE COVER: The 250s take to the air in a dogfight for total supremacy, at the able hands of Shane Trittler, Mike Larson, Jimmy Lewis, Jeff Barbacovi and Pete Murray, who certainly should have known better. Cover design by Dennis West; color separations by Valley Film.

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. *Dirt Bike* does all of its testing and photography legally on public land, or private land with permission from the owner(s), and we abide by the local laws concerning vehicle registration and muffler/spark arrester requirements. We are not responsible for quality of aftermarket accessories we use.

DIRT BIKE Magazine, ISSN 0364-1546 (April '90) is published monthly by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc., with editorial offices at 10600 Sepulveda Boulevard, Mission Hills, California 91345. Subscriptions \$15.98 for 12 issues (one year). Canada add \$5 per year, and all other foreign add \$6 per year for additional postage. Copyright ©1990 by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted in whole or in part, by mimeograph or any other means, without the express permission of the publisher. Contributors: Photographic submissions must be 5x7 or 8x10 glossy black and white, or 35mm and larger color slides. Please mark each photo with owner's name and address. Manuscripts should be typewritten. Unsolicited contributions, manuscripts, photographs and illustrations must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Unless special arrangements are made in advance, all published material becomes the sole property of Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. The publisher does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material. Second class postage paid at San Fernando, California 91340, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *DIRT BIKE* Magazine, P.O. Box 9502, Mission Hills, California 91395-9502. Printed in USA.

Tired of getting Bark Buster imprints in your back? Does your old machine leave you sucking roost, but you don't have the money to lay down for a new microprocessor-ignited woods scalpel? With the plight of our lesser-heeled readers in mind, we set out to convert a five-year-old butterknife into a *samurai* sword. *Dirt Bike* went looking for a lightweight 200cc enduro/hare scramble-mount that was easy to ride, maintain and afford.

With little effort, we found a new '86 IT200 buried in the back of a local shop, like some monolith out of 2001. It was picked because it was a killer little bike in stock form and it was felt that it could be modified to be competitive with a newer KDX200. Decent used IT200s can be found for around \$800.

DIGGING IN

To update the look and get the bike into the '90s, the frame was stripped and repainted gloss white, like the current YZs. A red seat cover from CEET Racing was added, as was an Acerbis ISDE headlight/number plate.

We wanted as low a center of gravity as possible, so the weight was lowered with the help of a DG pipe and aluminum oval silencer. Combined, they account for a seven-

pound loss of high-placed flab. The pipe also improves overall power and has better ground clearance. An assortment of titanium bolts, left over from previous project bikes, and Acerbis plastic all around further reduced the bike's top weight. A set of Answer aluminum RM bend handlebars rounded out this step.

The power of the bike was improved with careful blueprinting of the ports and the addition of a 34mm Keihin carb. A larger carb

was not used because an overall power gain was intended, not just a top-end gain. The pre-jetted PJ from DG was an exact swap,



Fairly recent air-cooled 200s can be made to run competitively in hare scrambles and enduros. They're perfect for riders who don't need the thrust of a 250 or the nerve-tweaking demands of 125 riding and maintenance.

PROJECT IT200

BUDGET FLIER

A simple alternative to buying a new bike

By Alan R. Wise

fitting the IT's intake manifold and airbox boot perfectly. A cable adapter was included, allowing the stock cable to be used. For improved cooling and appearance the cylinder, head and clutch cover were glass-beaded to remove the black paint. The natural aluminum allows oil leaks to be spotted much easier. Finally, a Uni foam air filter was added to give the IT better breathing and filtration.

BOUNCING AROUND

While the 43mm Kayaba forks (with 10.6 inches of travel) are rigid enough, the spring rate and damping leave much to be desired. The rear linkage didn't set the world on fire in '86, so massive help was in order, although the stock spring is acceptable.

To correct these drawbacks without going broke, the suspension was sent off to

White Bros.. Bill at White Bros. replaced the fork springs with Progressive Suspension's PS1142 MX units and modified the damper rods for improved action. Spectro 160/150 synthetic blend fork oil completed the job. The shock was re-valved for a more progressive, smoother action while retaining the stock spring. Acerbis front fork protectors were installed to keep the lower fork legs and disc brake safe from dings, or worse, and Acerbis fork boots protect the tubes while adding some color.

In case the workhorse ever got stuck, a grab handle was welded on the rear frame loop and a much more durable Malcolm Smith fender-mounted toolbag replaced the stocker. A Tsubaki O-ring chain was installed on standard-sized sprockets. A Dunlop K990 3.00x21 was mounted on the front and a Dunlop K695 100/100x18 was used for the rear. This choice provides traction over a wide range of conditions, especially those found in the East.

DOCTOR, IT LIVES!

When the bike was completed it only slightly resembled a stocker. A quick ride for fine-tuning was taken and then the testing began. Our "new" IT had a greatly improved powerband, especially the mid- and low-end power. Super-wide and tractable

power, combined with the superlight weight, allows the bike to torque up the gnarliest hills and dance through mud as well as any 200 ever built. After head-to-head testing against the new KDX 200, we found that the IT only gives up a little to the new KDX in top-end power and low-end torque but makes up for this with its lighter weight.

The stock gearing and transmission ratios are ideally suited to the improved power, as are the Dunlop tires. Slippery off-camber, rocky creekbeds, sand and even fire roads are tackled with the precision of a laser-guided rocket.

The light weight, again, played a major role in the handling department. The 28-degree steering angle and 56.7-inch wheelbase make for a very nimble handler in the tight stuff. Steering is precise and predictable. Straight-line stability, while not great for the desert, is more than acceptable for the woods thanks to White Bros. suspension mods. This is the greatest area of improvement over the stock Yamaha.

While not on a par with the newer cartridge models, the forks work extremely well at absorbing the bumps and keeping the front end in contact with the ground. The Progressive springs are the ideal rate for eastern enduro terrain, offering plushness and yet still able to absorb the unexpected blow so common in enduros. While the rear still suffers from an outdated linkage system, it too is very much improved. As with the front, the rear has the right amount of plushness with a reserve for the surprises. No fading was encountered during testing.

WERE WE SURPRISED?

Yes, and we were impressed. The IT is a blast to ride, very competitive for enduros and hare scrambles. It starts first kick, has good brakes and a comfortable seating position. Simplicity and claw-hammer reliability are the IT's domain—kind of like a bargain-basement ATK. It's remarkable how little we missed the additional travel of current machines. More than a few jaws dropped into front spokes as the Blue Bullet blew by on tight trails. Project IT200 proves that a bike doesn't have to cost \$3000+ to be competitive. These mods will work on '84-'87 IT200s and any other early '80s dirt bike. □



YAMAHA IT200 MODIFICATION PRICE LIST

DG Pipe	\$ 94.95
DG Aluminum Silencer	54.95
DG 34mm PJ Carb	134.95
White Bros. Fork Modification	80.00
Progressive Suspension 1142	
Fork Springs	55.95
WB Shock Modification	115.00
Acerbis Front Fender	16.95
Acerbis Enduro Rear Fender	37.95
Acerbis Elba ISDE Headlight	39.95
Acerbis Front Disk Guard	18.95
Malcolm Smith Fender Tool Bag	42.89
CEET Seat Cover	39.90
Dunlop K-990 300 x 21	69.95
Dunlop K-695 100/100 x 18	69.95
Answer Alumilite Handlebars	58.98
Tsubaki Omega O-Ring Chain	63.00
Uni Air Filter	19.88