

# MEET THE NEW 1981 KTMs

## Water-cooling and earth shaking

By the ever-inquisitive staff of Dirt Bike

Among the interesting facts in the dirt bike universe that are accepted by all is the undeniable one: KTM knows how to make horsepower. After all, didn't their 350 run right alongside the Open bikes for a few years? And the 420 has won more than its share of desert and cross-country events.

Therefore, it must come as sort of a shock to the competition when KTM chooses to go the cubic-inch route. Think about it: 495 cubic centimeters of unadulterated horsepower. It's as if someone gave the company a clean sheet and said, "Go ahead and slit their throats."

The last word we got from the KTM engineering people was this: "We are tired of this horsepower race with the Yamaha 465 and the Maico 450 and so forth. We feel that we have the capability of producing 50 horsepower at the rear wheel. This is all that anyone should really want. Anyone rational, that is."

Hmmmm. Rational? Do we need a 495? Do we need a 490? Hell's fire, do we even need a 465?

Well, between you and us, rational behavior never sold a single motorcycle in the history of mankind. So, without much further ado, we hereby present the 1981 line of KTM, which, for all practical purposes, shall herein be known as the Austrian Overkills.

### 495 MOTOCROSS

Leading the parade of new bikes from KTM is the monster 495cc motocrosser. A massive 92+ millimeter piston rides inside the big-finned engine. A glance at the spec sheet shows that the newest Open bike is getting very close to 13 inches of travel at the rear wheel.

No reports of actual real wheel dyno power are available yet, but our own Vic Krause (Mr. Know-It-All) rode a 495 at the dealer preview in Ohio and said: "It's the most frightening bike I've ever ridden. There's horsepower everywhere!"

As with all of the new KTMs, red and blue trim accents the clean white plastic.

For those who demand a little less power, this same basic bike is available as a 420cc bike, with the bore being the only major difference. Both bikes, by

the way, have primary kickstart.

Engine: KTM 495cc with magnesium crankcases  
Horsepower: 53 DIN at 7,000 rpm  
Bore/Stroke: 92.25mm/74mm  
Transmission: 5-speed with primary kickstart  
Induction: piston port with 40mm Bing with power jet  
Frame/Swingarm: chromemoly/  
heat treated aluminum extrusion  
Suspension, front: 38mm Marzocchi with  
300mm (12 inches) travel  
Suspension, rear: Ohlins shocks with  
320mm (12.8 inches) travel  
Wheels: Metzeler tires with Sun rims  
Weight: 104 kg (228 pounds)

### 390WR

This machine has been around for a long time, with small changes updating it yearly. This year, the new Fox shocks at the rear are noteworthy, as is the primary kickstart. Weight is still heavy, with 252 pounds dry being the number. A 40 Bing carburetes this near bullet-proof engine. Cases are based on the 420 bike.

Engine: new magnesium crankcases  
Horsepower: 44 DIN at 7,500 rpm  
Bore/Stroke: 82mm/74mm  
Transmission: 5-speed wide ratio with primary kickstart  
Induction: piston port with 40mm Bing  
Frame/Swingarm: chromemoly/  
heat treated aluminum extrusion  
Suspension, front: Marzocchi 38mm with  
300mm (12 inches) travel  
Suspension, rear: MX Fox Shox with  
284mm (11.4 inches) travel  
Weight: 115 kg (252 pounds)

### 250 MOTOCROSS AND 250WR

While the 250 motocrosser and the enduro bike are basically the same package, enough differences are there to call them two different bikes. The MXer has a five-speed, close ratio gearbox and the enduro bike features a wide ratio, six-speeder. The power plants are the same, all the way down to identical 38mm Bing carbs. Seven pounds difference is all the penalty you have to pay to have lights and legalities. Travel is, naturally, slightly less on the enduro bike, but it sports Fox shocks as standard items. Lots of quality hardware.

Engine: new KTM 246cc with magnesium crankcases  
Horsepower: 42 DIN at 7,500 rpm  
Bore/Stroke: 71mm/62mm  
Transmission: 5-speed close ratio with primary kick  
6-speed wide ratio with primary kick  
Induction: piston port with 38mm Bing  
Frame/swingarm: chromemoly/  
heat treated aluminum extrusion

**250 mx** Suspension, front: 38mm Marzocchi with  
300mm (12 inches) travel  
Suspension, rear: Ohlins shocks with  
310mm (12.4 inches) travel  
Wheels: Metzeler tires with Sun rims  
Weight: 99 kg (217 pounds)

**250wr** Suspension, front: Marzocchi 38mm with  
300mm (12 inches) travel  
Suspension, rear: Fox Shox with  
284mm (11.4 inches) travel  
Wheels: Metzeler tires with Sun rims  
Weight: 102 kg (224 pounds)

### 125WR AND 125RV MOTOCROSS

With the 125 Enduro class starting to regain popularity once more, the 125WR makes the most serious effort we've seen to date. It's a traditional 125 all across the board and is basically a 125 MXer with a wide-ratio gearbox and slightly less travel. Fox shocks do the job at the rear (!) and the dry weight is listed at just slightly over 200 pounds, lights and all. Handsome unit.

KTM is loaded with 125s for 1981. The RV shown here is the air-cooled version; a more-or-less traditional design, except for the case reed. Mr. K also rode this bike and noted that it was extremely fast. The air-cooled version weighs in about 5 pounds less than the waterpumper. Ohlins shocks and buckets of travel at both ends complete the package.

Engine: KTM 124cc with magnesium crankcases,  
air-cooled  
Horsepower: 28.5 DIN at 9,800 rpm  
Bore/Stroke: 54mm/54mm  
Transmission: 6-speed wide ratio with primary kickstart  
Induction: crankcase reed valve with piston port with 32mm Bing  
Frame/Swingarm: chromemoly/  
heat treated aluminum extrusion  
Suspension front: 35mm Marzocchi with  
270mm (18.8 inches) travel  
Suspension, rear: Fox Shox with  
284mm (11.4 inches) travel  
Wheels: Metzeler tires with Sun rims  
Weight: 93 kg (204 pounds)

### 125LC MOTOCROSS

Here's the baby that had everyone buzzing at the dealer show: the 125LC! It's a water-cooled machine with the radiator cleverly mounted underneath the gas tank. The shape of the tank itself forces the cooling air down on the radiator. This eliminates the problem of hose routing and carrying extra weight up on the forks. Over 12 inches of travel abounds. Look for a test on this bike very soon.

Engine: KTM 124cc with magnesium crankcases with liquid (or water-) cooled cylinder and cylinder head  
Horsepower: 28.5 DIN at 9,800 rpm  
Bore/Stroke: 54mm/54mm  
Transmission: 6-speed close ratio with primary kickstart  
Induction: case reed valve with piston port with 32mm Bing  
Frame/Swingarm: chromemoly/  
heat treated aluminum extrusion  
Suspension, front: 38mm Marzocchi with  
300mm (12 inches) travel  
Suspension, rear: Ohlins shocks with  
300mm (12 inches) travel  
Wheels: Metzeler tires with Sun rims  
Weight:  
Air-cooled: 89 kg (195 pounds)  
Water-cooled: 91 kg (200 pounds)



495 MC



390 WR



250 MC



125 WR



125 RV



125 LC