

KTM 125MXC



FEROCIOUS FEATHER

You have to be crazy to ride one

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

This is not a normal test. If you're looking for technical explanations and facts and figures, look at the spec sheet. This test is about raw emotion—nerve endings scraped down to the point of numbness, eyes bulging, ears ringing, thrilling *fear*. We're dealing with the 125 enduro class here, a

class that goes in and out of favor with the passing of the breeze, and there are no normal people to be found in this class.

If winning this class is your life's ambition, you need the fastest 125 enduro bike you can get your hands on. This bike is the KTM 125MXC. We had a suspicion of this

Handling is neutral and very pleasing—you can shoot berms, square off corners, or slide around like a squid all day. Rod Bush demonstrates sliding.

fact before we tested the MXC; now we know for sure. It is fast, it is *not* easy to ride. It is a 125 in the classic sense of the breed.

POWER PLAY

Naturally we went all out and tested the MXC as far away from its element as possible. We entered it in the annual Hi-Mountain enduro, a California run known for its tall hills and tractionless terrain. From this noble experiment we came to the following conclusions:

- The MXC is an absolute thrill to ride. Because of its light weight (200.5 pounds, no gas) and no-compromise power, it fairly leaps from turn to turn in flat terrain. You can throw it around like a minibike, and it begs to be jumped.
- The brakes are far better than they need to be. Double-leading shoe stoppers, front and rear, gave new meaning to the phrase "panic stop." With no traction present, both ends spend much time locked up; but let the tires bite, and the MXC will stop so quickly your ears will pop.
- Steep, tractionless hills are not the KTM's strong point. There just isn't enough low-end power available to allow you to finesse your way up a mountain. Our problem was compounded by a test bike with a smaller-than-normal rear sprocket—48 teeth rather than 52. During the last half of the test we used a 52, and we wish we had one for the race...
- The MXC fits the rider like a pair of \$50 jeans. You could fall out of the sky, land on this bike, and it would feel as if it were made for you. The seat/pegs/bar relationship is close to perfect, standing or sitting. When you slide up on the tank, you move so far forward that it feels like you could look over your shoulder at the numberplate.
- The right tires make a difference. Our bike came fitted with a Metzeler 4.60 × 18 Perfectcross *Soft Terrain* rear tire, and it was more than useless on the baked-dry ground common around here. We fitted a standard 4.50 four-ply after the original wore out, and discovered the meaning of traction. The stock front is a 3.00 × 21 three-ply, and it worked fine.

YOU RIDE IT; IT RIDES YOU

This is how the 125MXC is ridden in an enduro: On flat ground and fire roads, you cruise up to speed and putt along just below the powerband. When a small uphill or similar technical obstacle comes up, you shift down a gear and blast through it. For a tight turn, shift down at least two gears, or you need to abuse the clutch to keep the drive going.

Gnarly uphill demand concentration. You must hit them in as high a gear as possible, in the fat part of the power curve. As soon as the revs start dropping off, downshift and keep the throttle pegged. If the hill isn't too steep, the KTM will howl and slither and spin madly before it hops over the

KTM 125MXC



With a no-gas weight of just over 200 pounds, the 125MXC begs to be jumped. You actually go out of your way just to find things to hop over.

top. If the bike can't make it, it slows down in a hurry, and it's your job to jump off and start running alongside, keeping the throttle open and slipping the clutch. At the top hop back on and gas it.

Sorry, but that's the way it works. If you want to ride a 125, that's the drill you have to be ready for. This bike is not a 200, and there's no way you can grunt it along. Interestingly enough, we did drag race the MXC against our modified KDX200, and through every pass both bikes stayed neck and neck. Our KDX200 is not slow. The MXC is not torquey, but it gives up nothing else to the Kawasaki.

SUSPENSION AND TURNING

Suspension action is stiff overall. If it were possible to poke the 125 around, it would feel too harsh, but at the speed and level of aggression this bike demands to be ridden at, the suspension is just about right. You can slam into huge bumps at speed, and

Double-leading shoe rear brake has no problem locking up the wheel under any conditions. The shop manual tells you how to tune it down a bit.



the MXC merely soaks them up and looks for the next one. We used five-weight oil in the forks, 6½ inches from the top (compressed and springs out), rear shock compression damping at the number one setting, and rebound number six.

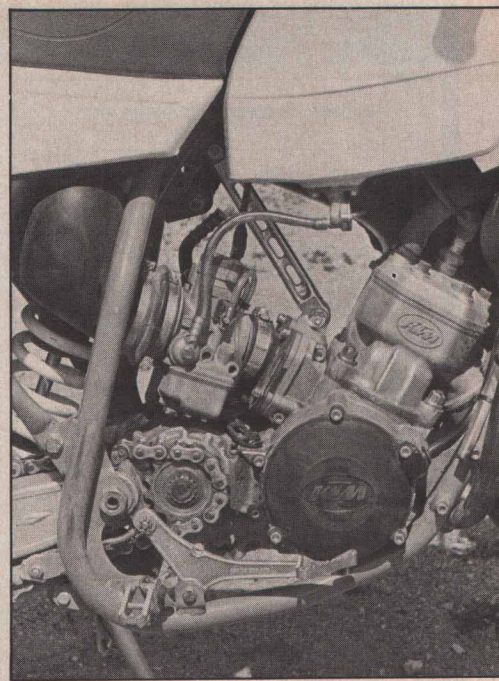
The MXC is a tall bike, but the height doesn't adversely affect the handling. We set up the forks with 10mm of tube above the triple clamps, and the bike would knife around a slippery turn with unflinching accuracy. In tight going you can turn the bars and maneuver in an upright position, and if the speed and terrain opens up, you can throw it into a berm like a motocrosser.

Part of these good habits can be attributed to the light weight. The KTM is a feather—even if you completely overcook a turn, you can just get a grip on it and yank it back into line. It's so light that it feels spooky at times. But it's also a whole lot of fun.

BITS AND PIECES

The rear brake pedal sits too high for our tastes, considering how touchy the brakes are. To fix the problem we used a regular 6mm locknut on the brake rod, rather than the stock adjuster nut, and we managed to move the pedal down to the correct height.

Two radiators are very effective on the
(continued on page 72)



Case-reed induction is the only trick part of the 34-pound KTM engine. It is probably possible to do a ring job on the KTM in less than ten minutes. Sounds like an exciting way to spend a reset, huh?



KTM 125MXC

Engine type	.....	Liquid-cooled 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	.....	54mm x 54mm
Displacement	.....	123.6cc
Carburetion	.....	36mm Dell'orto
	.....	Factory jetting Our jetting
Main jet	.....	215 215
Needle jet	.....	272 272
Jet needle	.....	U3-3 U3-2
Pilot jet	.....	50 50
Slide number	.....	40
Fuel tank capacity	.....	9.3 L (2.4 gals.)
Lubrication	.....	Pre-mix/Dura Lube
Gearbox ratios:		
1	.....	2.83:1
2	.....	2.06:1
3	.....	1.64:1
4	.....	1.36:1
5	.....	1.19:1
6	.....	1.00:1
Gearing, front/rear	.....	13/52
Ignition	.....	Motoplatt CDI
Recommended spark plug	.....	Bosch 370 S2S
Silencer/spark arrester	.....	Yes/optional
Wheelbase	.....	1460mm (57.4 in.)
Ground clearance	.....	380mm (14.9 in.)
Seat height	.....	950mm (37.4 in.)
Rake/trail	.....	28°/N/A

Wet weight, no fuel 200.5 lbs. (with optional enduro gear)

Tire size and type:
Front 3.00 x 21 Metzeler
Rear 4.60 x 18 Metzeler

Suspension, type and travel:
Front 40mm Marzocchi forks, 300mm (11.8 in.)
Rear Pro Lever/White Power, 320mm (12.5 in.)

Intended use Hare scrambles/enduro
Country of origin Austria
Retail price, approx: \$1989 (w/o lights, S/A, speedo)
Distributor:

KTM America, Inc.
1906 Broadway
Lorain, OH 44052

Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use in mind:
Handling Very good
Front suspension Very good
Rear suspension Very good
Power Very good
Cost Excellent
Attention to detail Very good
Effectiveness, stone stock Very good

This rating system is included to aid in comparison of bikes in the same displacement and intended-use categories. Comparing the ratings of two dissimilar machines is a meaningless exercise in futility.

STICKERS

STICKERS

STICKERS

STICKERS

50¢
Each

CRASHING
SUCKS

SIMPSON



TURN THE
GAS ON
DUMMY

Four Strokes Truck
Two Strokes SUCK!

Have You Hugged Your
Three Wheeler Today?



when in doubt
GAS IT!

WARNING
IF YOU VALUE YOUR OWN LIFE
AS MUCH AS I
VALUE MY BIKE
DON'T MESS WITH IT!



for
competition
use only

OKLEY
FACTORY PILOT



THIS BIKE
PROTECTED BY
SMITH
WESSON

NGK
SPARK
PLUGS

SCOTT



BEL-RAY
TOTAL
PERFORMANCE
LUBRICANTS



ONEAL
USA

RUB-ON STICKERS .75¢ EA.

OKLEY BELRAY
M-X FOX DG
TEAM SUZUKI SHOWA
OURY DUNLOP
PJ1 FOX
FOX JTRacing USA
TEAM YAMAHA TEAM HONDA

BUMPER STICKERS \$1.00 ea.

10 FATHER BI
MOTO-CROSSING
I ♥ MY
MOTO-CROSS
DO IT IN THE
DIRT

List & Price each Item.....
Send List and Total Amount to:

stickem
UP

1642 Holmes St.
Livermore, CA 94550
Dept. A

KTM 125MXC (continued from page 59)

MXC—in cool weather it's advisable to block off some of the airflow with duct tape. The radiator cap is hard to get a grip on; KTM should look at some of the Japanese bikes for improvement here.

A new, small filter cage makes the air filter easy to get in and out, and the carb is out in the open for any jetting changes you need to make. Our MXC started on the first kick every time.

Speaking of the carb, the KTM engine uses case induction, which means the carb is not connected to the cylinder barrel. To pull the top end in a hurry, you only need to move the pipe out of the way, pinch off the coolant hoses, and remove the four base bolts. A quick ring job may take only five minutes on this bike.

CALL US CRAZY, BUT...

You do have to be some sort of a nut to want to ride a 125 in enduros, but with the MXC, craziness may be infectious. Our Hi-Mountain guinea pig claimed that he'd never worked so hard in his life getting up hills, but he didn't want to quit or even get off the bike at the finish, because riding it was so much fun.

It comes down to his: Extremely light weight, good handling, good suspension, and even if the power is not very torquey, there's plenty there to keep you awake. All in all, if you must ride the 125 class, you'd be insane not to ride a KTM. □

MISTER KNOW-IT-ALL (continued from page 14)

take it to a dealer, or is it something my father could do? He is a car mechanic.

Tim Maier
Wellston, MI

Your problem is simple. The shift shaft is moving on the shifting pawl. Replacement will be required, or perhaps the part could be brazed or welded in place.

The fact that your dad is a car mechanic is of little importance and of less interest.

KYB SWAP?

Dear Mr. Know-It-All,

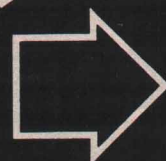
I had the terrible misfortune of bending beyond repair the outer fork tubes (that the triple clamps hold) on a 1984 KX250. I was wondering, would the tubes on any late-model bike with 43mm KYBs fit?

Brad Bendett
San Diego, CA

Many KYB tubes are indeed identical from brand to brand. Normally, Suzuki, Yamaha and Kawasaki run Kayaba forks, with most Hondas using Showa forks, but some of them using KYB units.

A very close visual inspection, with special attention paid to the matching circlip slots, is important. Check closely with the mechanic. □

UNCENSORED RACING BLOOPERS



OUTTAKES & TAKE-OUTS THAT DICK CLARK REFUSED TO SHOW ON TV!

Watch famous personalities like Bob Hannah flub their lines. Join in the laughter as motocross stars play practical jokes on one another. Be amazed as we reveal for the first time candid shots of greats, near-greats and ingrates doing things too dirty for television. No one was left out (no matter how hard they tried to bribe us not to show these photos). Everyone was included: mad motocrossers, battered BMXers, awesome ATV riders, flakey flattrackers, hilarious hill-climbers, and elusive enduro riders.



Preserve the memories forever. Reach out and touch someone. When you care enough to send the very best... CRASH & BURN. Order your copy today!

This is for me! Send me _____ copies of CRASH & BURN • June '84

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Make your check or money order payable to CRASH & BURN, June '84, Box 9502, Mission Hills, CA 91345-9502. Please enclose \$2.50 plus 75 cents postage and handling for each copy ordered. Canada add \$1.50 and all other foreign add \$2.50 postage and handling for each copy ordered. All items will be shipped surface mail. U.S. funds, please. Thank you. DB7-4