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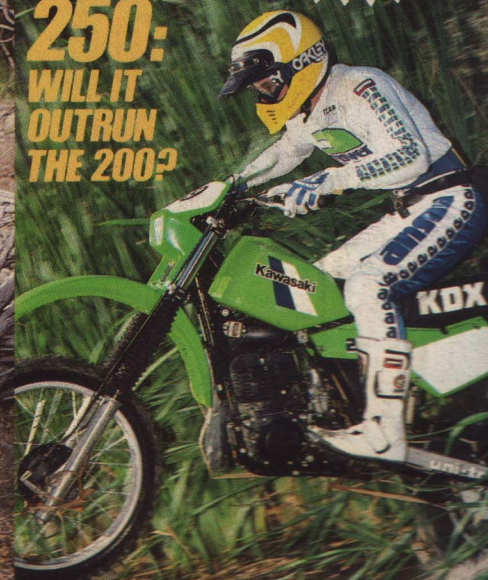
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CAGIVA 200



KTM 495



HUSKY 400WR



XT600



M-STAR 250



CR60



ATC250



KDX250



YZ125



ATLANTA SX

ON THE COVER:—The scope of our coverage this month is reflected in the diversity of our cover subjects. Clockwise, from top left: Bailey and Barnett dragging feet in Atlanta; Jim Holley aviates the YZ125 at Indian Dunes; Clipper on the KDX250 in the Great Valencia Swamp; Webb digging holes in Gorman on the Husky WR400; and Ron Haase logging solo time at Pismo. Photos by Phil Beckman, Paul Clipper, and Tom Webb; color separation by Valley Film.

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Another fine mess we're in

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.

NO REST FOR THE WICKED

Armed for battle

By the Staff of DB

Honda set the battle lines in 1981. Its ATC250R was a nuclear weapon in a world armed with nothing more than sharp sticks. In recent years newcomers have battled to get in the arms race. The war has escalated at a frenzied pace, yet the 250R still pulls the strings.

Armed with technology and a head start, Honda took the toy out of ATVs. They buried the farm-implement phase with the rogue of three-wheelers—a serious, specialized machine developed to dominate the market.

POWER IS THE KEY

Honda didn't adapt one of its motorcycle engines to the 250R; it designed a motor specially for three-wheeler use. Starting is done with a forward kick lever. An easy stroke raps life out of the beast with little effort.

Vibration is kept to a minimum with unique counterbalancers, and the jetting is right in the ballpark. Throttle response is nothing short of alarming. A simple stab at the thumb throttle abruptly sends the bike into orbit. Riders with plenty of ATV experience find the acceleration thrilling; first-timers should proceed with caution. It's brutal.

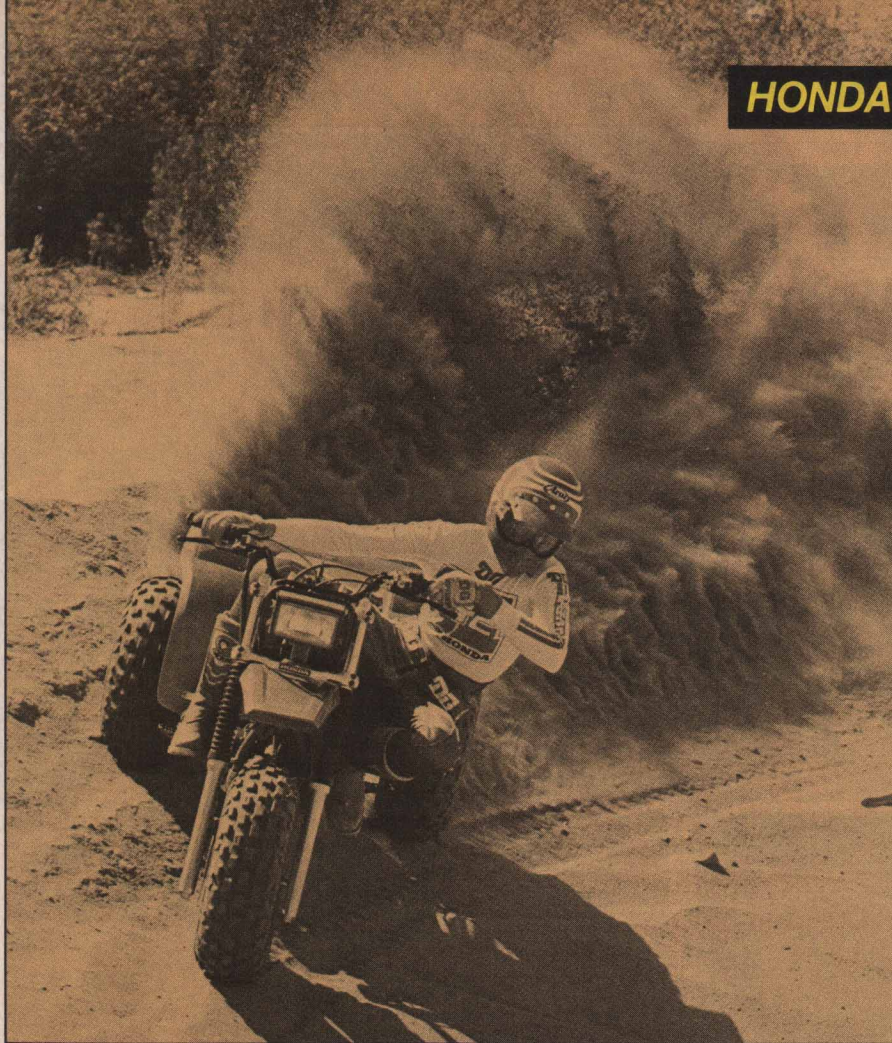
Off the bottom there's just enough punch to get things moving. Remember, it's a two-stroke, and cow trailing is not in the 250R's vocabulary. A hostile mid-range hit spins the rear meats, throwing roost and pinning your eyes back to your neck. On top it revs out smoothly, and in top gear you'll be traveling somewhere around 60 mph.

Since the 250R's inception, little has been changed in the motor department. A revised head for more compression, and revamped port tunnels give it more horsepower than older models. Also, there are a jillion companies selling bolt-on therapy guaranteed to make your teeth hurt if more power is your bag.

CHASSIS ETIQUETTE

Last year Honda further improved the 250's strength with the addition of a rising-rate progressive rear suspension. They've taken that one step beyond with a new linkage ratio and a longer shock stroke. It's more supple, yet still takes the crushers with only a little clanking. Racers will demand stiffer damping and more spring.

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Power is the key to the 250R. It'll bolt out of sandy corners like a rocket and shower the hillside with roost. Comrade Beckman demonstrates the correct way to corner the monster.



HONDA ATC250R

Engine type Single-cylinder, air-cooled, 2-stroke
 Bore and stroke 70.0mm x 64.4mm
 Displacement 247cc
 Carburetor 30mm Keihin
 Ignition CDI
 Starter Manual kick
 Transmission 5-speed
 Clutch Manual
 Fuel tank capacity 2.8 gals.
 Wheelbase 1275mm (50.2 in.)

Ground clearance 9.5 in.
 Seat height 740mm (29.1 in.)
 Claimed weight 293.3 lbs.
 Brakes Disc, front and rear
 Retail price, approx. \$2148

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ATLANTA SUPERCROSS

(continued from page 43)

Ricky Johnson's front tire.

Coming up on the last lap, O'Mara was comfortably out front. Ward, Barnett, Johnson and Bailey looked as though they were safety-wired together. Two turns from the checkered flag Barnett snuck under Ward. Flying over the finish jump, Mark was jubilant. Ward was heard screaming unprintables as he got the flag. Johnson barely edged a wild David Bailey.

Johnny O wore a smile that nearly cracked his head open. His new-found Supercross prowess has turned the O'Show from unwanted to the hottest rider of the season. Yes, he's marketable, and Honda got him cheap. □

RESULTS: MILLER HIGH LIFE ATLANTA SUPERCROSS

1. Johnny O'Mara, Simi Valley, CA	Hon
2. Mark Barnett, Bridgeview, IL	Suz
3. Jeff Ward, Mission Viejo, CA	Kaw
4. Ricky Johnson, El Cajon, CA	Yam
5. David Bailey, Axton, VA	Hon
6. Ron Lechien, El Cajon, CA	Yam
7. Bob Hannah, Carson City, NV	Hon
8. Billy Liles, Fairburn, GA	Kaw
9. Alan King, Troy, MI	Hon
10. Scott Burnworth, Jamul, CA	Suz
11. Broc Glover, El Cajon, CA	Yam
12. Rick Ryan, San Jose, CA	Suz
13. John Whelchel, Newhall, CA	Hon
14. Ross Pederson, Alberta, Canada	Suz
15. Clint Hardick, Spring Valley, CA	Suz
16. Kenny Kowlen, Brooksville, FL	Yam
17. Keith Bowen, Pontiac, MI	Yam
18. Jim Holley, Northridge, CA	Yam
19. A. J. Whiting, Sherman Oaks, CA	Hon
20. Goat Breker, Riverside, CA	Kaw

M-STAR 250

(continued from page 49)

our bike is the first one in the States and that production-line changes will knock off a few pounds. The first container of 250s will arrive just about the time you read this.

We had no problem with spokes, as they are a new tapered shoulder design. Brakes are the same stuff you've been seeing on Maicos for years. They work okay, but that's all.

DIALING IT IN

We spent considerable time trying to improve the power with Rocky of R.G. Cycles in Van Nuys. By installing a 2303 slide in place of the stock slide, he brought the low end in better, but sacrificed some top end. We simply ran out of time to work further with the bike.

The clutch is the same abysmal aluminum unit of last year. It will not live under any abuse. Rocky noted that a Husky 250 clutch will slip right in and is a permanent cure for any 1983 Maico or 1984 M-Star.

THE BOTTOM LINE

While fast, the power is flawed. All the right things are there to work with... the bike just needs more time in sorting out the details. Hercules Distributing has Jim Weinert and Bob Ballentine doing development work on the M-Stars. If they can improve the throttle response and get the factory to carve off ten pounds, they'll have a thoroughly competitive bike. Right now it's painfully average. □

KTM 495MXC

(continued from page 47)

bike sit properly, creating a harshness at mid-stroke that isn't much fun. We had Rocky (RG Cycles West) dial the shock in (\$35) and were much happier. It's sad that White Power cannot get its act together on shocks delivered on production bikes. But, when dialed in, they are superb. Just another pain in the butt for the customer.

BITS AND PIECES

Good airbox. Smooth, easy clutch with the cable in the top hole of the actuating arm. Occasional missed shifts unless the prod is deliberate. Good brakes. Excellent layout and feel. Brick-hard saddle that you somehow grow used to. Lots of vibration.

Type 55 magnesium Bing carb is stock. Jetting is okay as delivered. New, softer Magura grips are not too bad. Owner's manual is horribly out of date, but functional to a point. The fork protectors are brittle and intensely ugly. The stock Regina chain is superb.

EXPECTED SUMMATION

This is not a toy and not intended for the faint of heart, but is a strong-running, good-handling monster bike that most any 125 rider could start. The suspension will need tuning to make you happy, and the 495 works best when you're working it at a full head of steam.

But, if you've always wanted a bike that has the top end of a 500 Husky and the acceleration of a 500 Honda, then this is the brute for you. □

HONDA ATC250R

(continued from page 52)

An amazing 8.1 inches of rear wheel travel sponges up bleak terrain in an unheard of fashion. You can attack sections that used to mean a trip to the hospital. Some of the credit goes to the 8.7-inch-travel forks. Wimpy 35mm tubes are barely enough to keep the 300-pound beast stable.

Getting through the corners is best done with the throttle and by power-sliding the rear end around. Jumping is semi-bikelike, with all that travel soaking up the landings. In the air the bike is controllable and produces a flight that's not too scary for a three-wheeler.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Once you've ridden the 250R, you can relate to the effort Honda has put into the machine. Details like perfectly mated suspension, engine location, footpeg placement and the seating position go hand in hand with the performance.

Little things like the progressive dual discs, an ocean-designed airbox and aluminum wheels with the latest all-terrain tires simply pin stripe the package.

Now that Honda has some competition gunning for them, it will be interesting to see what develops. We're willing to bet that the fight for king of the ATVs will get intense. Honda will exercise a heavy hand to stomp the militant uprising and remain the supreme ruler. We'll see... □