

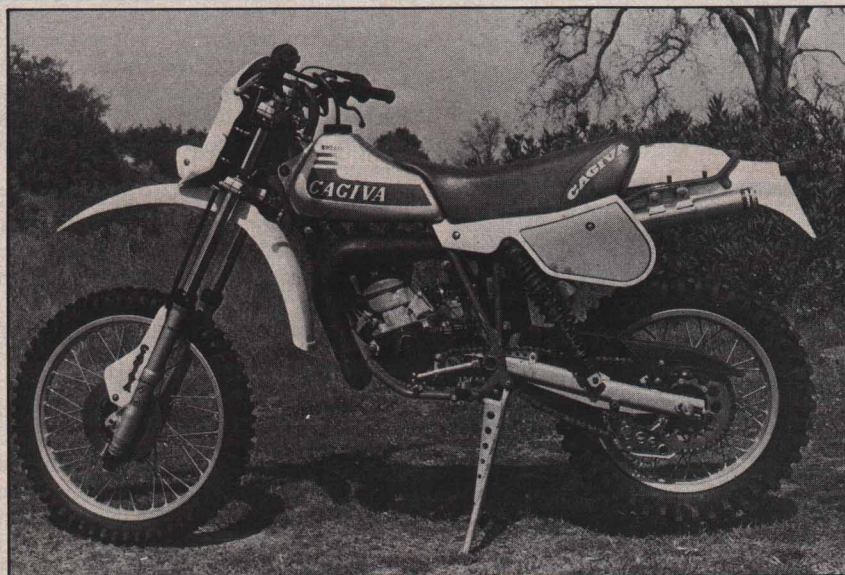
THE ITALIAN STALLION

Is it a fast 200 or a peaky 250?

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE



Both ends of the Cagiva felt stiff to a 165-pound rider, but perfect for the heavyweights. Not enough rebound damping in the rear shocks causes the back end to kick up over bumps.



CAGIVA WRX250

Engine type	Liquid-cooled, 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	67mm x 54mm
Displacement	190.38cc
Carburetion	38mm Dell'orto
Factory jetting:	
Main jet	185
Needle jet	N/A
Jet needle	K-9
Pilot jet	58
Slide number	50
Fuel tank capacity	8.5 L (2.2 gals.)
Lubrication	Pre-mix
Gearbox ratios	N/A
Gearing, front/rear	13/48
Ignition	Nippondenso CDI
Recommended spark plug	Champion N-4G
Silencer/spark plug	Yes/optional
Wheelbase	1475mm (58.0 in.)
Ground clearance	355mm (13.9 in.)
Seat height	960mm (37.8 in.)
Rake/trail	28.5°/N/A
Weight, wet, no fuel	235 lbs.
Tire size and type:	
Front	3.00 x 21 Pirelli
Rear	4.00 x 18 Pirelli

Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	38mm Ceriani, 280mm (11.0 in.)
Rear	Dual Ohlins, 320mm (12.5 in.)
Intended use	Off-road/enduro
Country of origin	Italy
Retail price, approx.	\$1932

Distributor:
Cagiva N. America
469 North Oak St.
Inglewood, CA 90302

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

If the conversation ever turns to exotic European bikes, one name that should certainly turn up is Cagiva. The Cagiva WRX250—a 190cc enduro bike—is a rare machine in the States, due to a limited amount of dealers, but it is definitely not a cheap toy brought into the country on a whim.

The first clue to quality can be found in the engine, as the cylinder uses a nikasil bore rather than an iron liner. Nikasil is comparable to the Electro-Fusion bore used in Kawasakis, although reputed to be much tougher. The piston is a forged Mahle, one of the best and most expensive pistons available.

Obviously, this engine was set up with the good stuff for a reason, and the first time we rode the bike, that reason was obvious. The WRX250 is one fast bike! Because of the bore diameter, we decided to evaluate the Cagiva as a 200cc enduro bike, so here goes: It is faster than the KDX200 or IT200. The power delivery consists of very little

low-end torque coupled to a super-strong mid-range and an awesome top end.

Because of the lack of grunt, the WRX is rather difficult to ride in very tight sections, unless the pilot is committed to very aggressive clutch abuse. But, once out on open ground, the WRX will reel in terrain like a cruise missile. In a sand wash or on a fire road, or even an open trail, there is nothing in this class that will stay with the Cagiva, and the only thing that seems to slow it down is the rider's fear factor.

SUSPENSION AND HANDLING

The WRX comes fitted with a pair of excellent Ceriani 38mm forks, a name we haven't seen since the early days of KTM. The forks work well in whoops and large bumps but are slightly bouncy over washboard. A change to a slightly heavier than stock fork oil would be recommended.

Ohlins shocks hold up the rear, and although Ohlins are known far and wide as some of the best shocks you can buy, the Cagiva's are just not set up properly. We felt a need for about 20 percent more rebound damping—the back end would soak up the small bumps okay, but at high speeds in heavy whoops, the rear wheel wanted to come back too fast and kick out of line.

The handling was slightly odd, partly due to the suspension imbalance and partly to the weight of the radiator on the forks. The front end hunted around and never really stuck to the intended line—not a severe condition, but one that demands a little more attention from the rider. The front end will stick a lot better if the forks are raised 10mm or so in the triple clamps, but it will still feel heavy with all that plumbing up there.

BITS AND PIECES

The WRX is equipped with a centerstand—a good idea, but it bounced around enough for us to use a fat rubber band to hold it up. It hangs quite low, too—we mashed it on a rock and broke both springs off the bottom.

Kickstarter, brake pedal, shifter, and Magura Six Day levers are all top-drawer items. Even though the Cagiva is sold as an enduro bike, no odometer is supplied, stock. One can be purchased as an option.

The rear brake was slightly grabby and lost much of its effectiveness when wet, but the front Brembo disc is a good unit, very progressive and strong.

At 235 pounds with no gas, the WRX is a little heavy compared with the rest of the class.

THE FINAL WORD

The WRX would not be an easy bike to ride in a tight Eastern enduro, but for wide-open hare scrambles this bike would have a definite advantage on the 200 class. If you're looking for a fast little bike and happen to have a Cagiva dealer right around the corner, go on down there and introduce yourself. With a little bit of suspension tuning, the Italian Stallion just might be a winner. □

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