

The first KTM 495 we ever tested set a dirt bike speed record of 123.75 miles per hour on El Mirage Dry Lake. Other big bikes have tried to beat that record. To date, all have failed. The bike was a brute, pure and simple.

It still is.

However, it's a friendlier brute. Rather than opt for the four-speed MX version, we chose to test the 495MXC, which is billed as a cross-country bike. We know from personal experience that motocrossing a 495 can turn a strong, healthy man into a whimpering puppy. It makes more sense to

George Lazenby launches the big 495 over a fifth-gear jump.

KONAN THE BARBARIAN

Kross-kountry killer

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

use the KTM boomer where you have room to let the animal stretch out and lope along at eye-watering speeds.

FOUR-SPEED VERSUS FIVE-SPEED

An MXC is an MX with subtle but important differences. They share the same frame, suspension and engine. The MX bike is a four-speeder, and the MXC has a five-speed, wide-ratio box. The gas tank is also larger on the MXC for the longer distances encountered in off-road/cross-country racing. Lighting capabilities make up the last detail difference between the two bikes.

MORE MELLOW

Compression has been reduced in the huge engine to make it easier to live with. One side benefit is much easier starting. We could even bang the thing over in our tennis. Power still borders on the insane, but in the 1984 bike there's more mid-range and low end, with less top-end power than before. This means the bike can be short-shifted comfortably and will chug up the nastiest sand hills with utter contempt. One has the feeling that the engine flattens out too early, but when you learn to ride the bike correctly, you'll see that it's to the rider's advantage to make the engine work at the lower rev ranges.

As the engine is made to rev in the lower gears, there's a whole bunch of vibration that tires the rider. In the upper gears it's not as noticeable. By the way, revving out the bike in the upper gears takes you to never-never land speeds.

THROUGH THE GEARS

First, with stock gearing it is almost unusable for anything. Second gear is almost too low for anything but creepy-crawly speeds. Third will pull you out of a hairpin turn on a MX track with the merest tickle of the clutch. Fourth will make the landscape start to quiver as you rush by. Fifth will suck the air out of your lungs and force you back on the typically rock-hard KTM saddle until your arms are straight.

We ran two more teeth (from 14 to 16) on the countershaft and dropped four on the rear for the famed Viewfinders Grand Prix. The beast accelerated just about as hard as with stock gearing, and low gear was still too low for anything. Truly awesome. Bill Saltzman, a local Husky/KTM dealer, says he runs a 44-tooth rear sprocket on his 495, with a 16 up front. Bill also says the bike would comfortably pull more gearing, if it were available.

HAPPY NEW YEAR:

MORE TORQUE, LESS PORK

With no gas in the tank and the kickstand removed, the 495 Katoom tweaks the DB scales at 239 pounds, with no tail wind and the barometer holding steady. This represents a very solid weight reduction over previous 495s that tipped the scales over the 250-pound mark. With the Honda CR500 weighing in at over 230, this puts the KTM slightly heavier than it should be, but not alarmingly so.

Much of the weight loss is in important



Unique White Power/KTM forks took the medium and big bumps well, but were not sensitive enough over the small stuff.

areas that make the bike feel lighter. Those nifty White Power upside-down forks hit the scales at exactly the same weight as a pair of 38mm Suzuki RM250 forks that we happened to have handy.

And the KTM new-generation wheels have found their way to the biggest Katoom. A slimmer and stronger swingarm finalizes the weight loss. Everything else is the usual hefty and ultra-strong KTM hardware: a

nearly unbreakable frame, beefy engine, good wheels and slightly overbuilt detailing.

HANDLING/SUSPENSION/TURNING

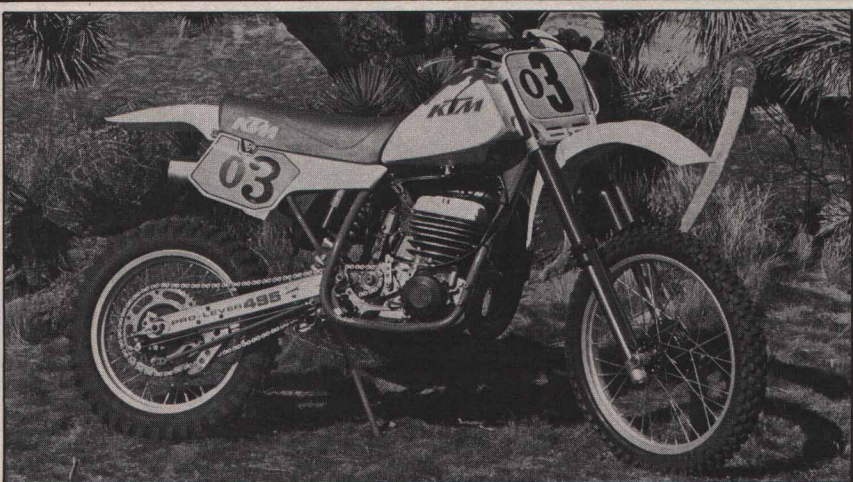
No doubt about it, the KTM is a big bike. You're not going to flick it around *any* track like a 125. Still, there's no washing or push-out at the front end, and the thing tracks dead-on straight through the whoops at higher speeds.

It's just that the bike is slightly ponderous, and it is big and tall. You *know* you're on a big bike. Get the 495 on a tight, twisty track and you'll hate it. Get it in its element and it's happy.

Those upside-down forks handled the big and medium bumps better than any other stock fork we've ridden with to date but were slightly insensitive on the small, chattery bumps. There are optional springs available, and sadly, we did not have the time to play with the forks more. They are rigid, confidence-inspiring units overall.

At the rear, the White Power shock is confused, as delivered. This is a shame, as WP makes one of the highest-quality shocks available. Stock, it's too soft on the spring and requires too much preload to make the

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KTM 495MXC

Engine type	2-stroke, air-cooled, single
Bore and stroke	92.25mm x 74.0mm
Displacement	495cc
Carburetion	40mm Type 55 mag. Bing
Factory jetting:	
Main jet	195
Needle jet	284
Jet needle	6L6
Pilot jet	65
Slide number	160
Fuel tank capacity	13 L (3.1 gals.)
Lubrication	Pre-mix, Dura Lube

Gearbox ratios:	
1	14:35
2	15:24
3	18:21
4	20:19
5	27:21
Gearing, front/rear	14/52
Ignition	Motoplatt
Recommended spark plug	Bosch 340 S2S
Silencer/spark arrester	Silencer (aluminum) only
Wheelbase	1500mm (58.3 in.)
Ground clearance	355mm (13.6 in.)
Seat height	960mm (38.5 in.)
Rake/trail	28°/4.8 in.
Wet weight, no fuel	239 lbs.

Tire size and type:	
Front	3.00 x 21 Metzeler
Rear	4.50 x 18 Metzeler

Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	White Power upside-down forks, 300mm (11.1 in.)
Rear	White Power single shock, adj. comp. and rebound, 330mm (13.0 in.)
Intended use	Cross-country, hare scrambles, enduro, GP

Country of origin	Austria
Retail price, approx.	\$2895

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 Good
 Power Excellent
 Cost Good
 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.

