



HONDA CR125R

FLEA FLICKER

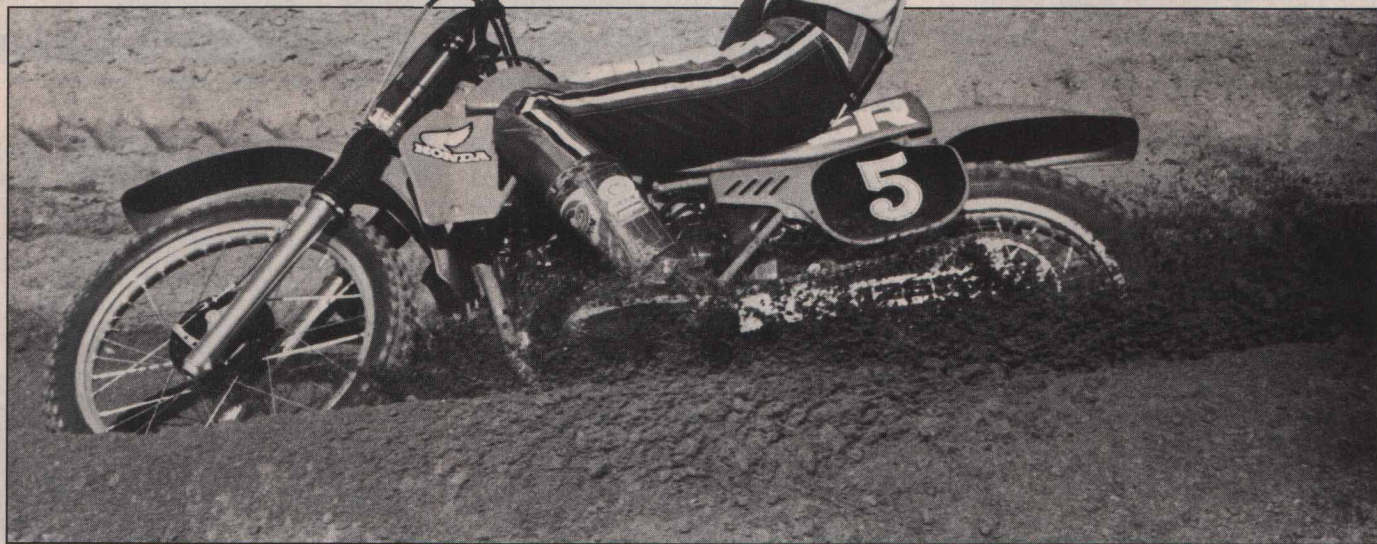
What's lighter than an RM, KX or YZ?

Ever since Honda introduced its first two-stroke motocrosser way back in 1973, its evolution has been a seesaw of highs and lows. At its inception, the CR125 hit the market like a bombshell, re-writing the books on competitive machinery. Then, like a typical biorhythm chart, they went into a stall pattern, settling for no big changes—just a bike to take up space on the showroom floor.

By the Staff
of DIRT BIKE

Sitting on the bike shows that all the saddle/tank/bars ratios are perfectly set, making it a comfy bike too. Most of our testers felt that the handlebars should be of a lower and flatter variety, the stockers proving to be just a little high and awkward.

The new electric-blue safety seat flows perfectly onto the tank; no bizarre rises, wrinkles or folds. Just right for easy body



Although it's not overly explosive, the electric motor feel allows you to maneuver to some quick lap times.

Heading into the '80s, Honda needed a high point. DeCoster provided the fire, the engineers the knowledge, the factory opened their wallets and out popped a whole new generation of racers. Like a Geiger counter placed in a vat of uranium 235, the CR125 has slammed the needle to a full tilt position. A no-holds-barred approach all the way.

CHANGE—MONEY IS NO OBJECT

Starting at the top, everything on the '83 CR125 is changed from the '82 version. A new frame, wheels, tires, motor, frame geometry, seat—you name it, it's different. Honda's aim was to provide riders with a machine that is light, nimble, fast, and most of all, *handles*. Honda succeeded surprisingly well in its goals, but, like all bikes, some parts of it work better than others. Nothing is perfect.

Last year's bike had a razor-sharp rake of 26 degrees; this has been stretched out to a little over 27. The Kayaba forks have less travel than the '82, but have eight-way adjustable compression damping. The rear end has updated linkage that allows for a lighter spring and a better damping curve; travel has been kept at 12.2 inches. Like its brothers, the entire back half of the frame now unbolts and comes off in seconds. Now the chain drives from the left side of

the bike. This shaved some weight off the engine and allowed all of the rear brake hardware to be tucked in better.

With all of these changes, Honda has produced the lightest 125 so far. After a trip to the incredibly accurate *DB* scales (precise to plus or minus .0000067 krebs per drinwalds), the CR tiptoed to an amazing 192.5 pounds. This is with a dry tank, oil in the forks and engine and a full radiator. Consider, the FIM weight limit on 125s is 194 pounds in the same condition.

HANDLING—THE CR'S FORTE

One lap on the Honda provides enough input, even for the haggard and misled—the CR is a toy aimed at making life on a motocross track fun, rather than a task. It takes no getting used to, turns sharply and precisely, and floats easily through, over and around anything that comes in its path. Why? The weight, Holmes, and where it's carried. Very low.

By moving the radiators down 50mm, lightening the whole shock assembly, swingarm, rear wheel and engine, the bike feels more like an overstuffed mini rather than a full-sized racer. Add correct geometry, meaning its ability to carve, pivot and dive through turns, and you begin to get the overall picture—a pilot's package all the way.

transitions both fore and aft. To go along with keeping the weight low, the gas tank carries the fuel closer to the carb—another design carry-over from the works bikes.

WILL SHE DO A WILLY?

We've already said the engine is all new. The question is whether it's faster. Yes, it's quicker than the '82 CR. Not light-years of improved boost, just more snap from the middle of the rpm range on up to the upper Rs. Peak power comes at 11,000 rpm, definitely not a stump puller.

All of the ports have been changed, as has the pipe. These mods point to gains in top-end pop, and that's just where improvements lie. With very little off the bottom and a strong hit from mid-range on, the CR requires constant shifting to keep it at the proper rpm level. Fall off the mid-range and the bike gags. It requires aggression from the rider: the right gear, the right amount of throttle, all at the right time. Average riders can get around all right on the CR, but it's really geared for the skilled 'crosser.

By replacing the stock rear sprocket (51 teeth) with a 53-tooth the entire powerband is tightened up, making it a tad easier to maneuver quickly on the track. Now, by changing the stock 145 main jet to a 140, things get better. Snappier. Happier.

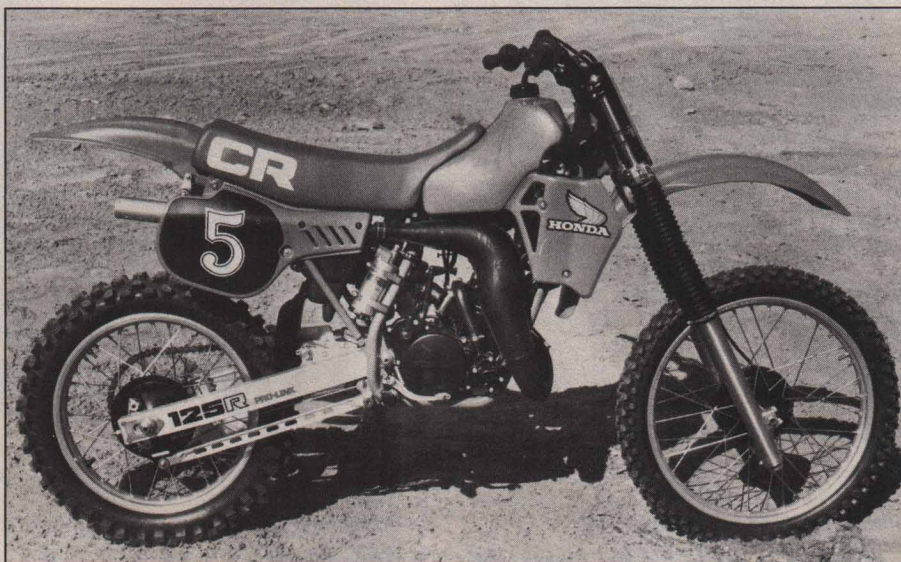
HONDA CR125R



Jon Miller snapped the Honda around, praising its lightness and quick handling.



Quite possibly the CR is the best-handling bike this year. Every tester fell in love with its trackside manners.

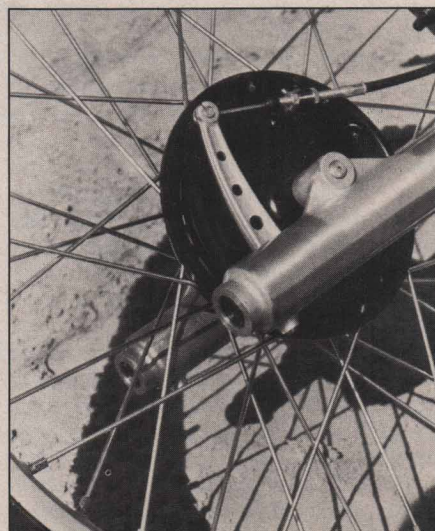


With one of the smallest kickstarters known, which is placed high and odd, starting the CR is perfect if you have a foot no bigger than a cigarette butt.

HONDA CR125R

Engine type	Water-cooled, 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	55.5mm x 50.7mm
Displacement	122cc
Carburetion	34mm Keihin
Factory recommended jetting:	
Main jet	145
Needle jet	N/A
Jet needle	28Q
Pilot jet	68
Slide number	3.5
Recommended gasoline	Premium, 92+ oct.
Fuel tank capacity	6.5 L (1.7 gal.)
Fuel tank material	Plastic
Lubrication	Pre-mix
Recommended oil	Honda oil at 20:1
Oil capacity—trans.	0.6 L (0.63 qts.)
Air filtration	Foam type
Clutch type	Wet, multi-disc
Transmission	6-speed
Gearbox ratios:	
1	2.416:1
2	2.000:1
3	1.555:1
4	1.300:1
5	1.136:1
6	1.000:1
Gearing, front/rear	13/51
Ignition	CDI
Primary kick system?	Yes
Recommended spark plug	NGK BR9EG/ Champion QN-84/ND W27 ESR V
Silencer/spark arrester/ quality	Yes/no/decent

Exhaust system	Up-pipe, right side
Frame, type	Semi-double cradle, removable rear section
Wheelbase	1435mm (56.5 in.)
Ground clearance	345mm (13.6 in.)
Seat height	930mm (36.6 in.)
Steering head angle (rake)	27° 10 min.*
Trail	105mm (4.1 in.)
Weight, dry, w/oil in forks & trans, water in radiators	192.5 lbs.
Rim material	Aluminum alloy
Tire size and type:	
Front	90/80-21 Bridgestone M33
Rear	130/80-18 Bridgestone M32
Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	KYB, adjustable compression damping, 290mm (11.4 in.)
Rear	Pro-Link single shock, 310mm (12.2 in.)
Intended use	Motocross
Country of origin	Japan
Retail price, approx.	\$1738
Distributor:	
American Honda Motor Corp. 100 W. Alondra Blvd. Gardena, CA 90247	
Parts prices, high wear items:	
Piston assembly, complete	\$40.26
Rings only	10.49
Cylinder	157.70
Shift lever	28.16
Brake pedal	40.42
Front sprocket	10.72



A single-leading shoe front brake stops in fine fashion. The rubber plugs under the sliders guard the access to the damping adjusters.

PUNCHBOARD GRINDS... ABSORBING THE EARTH

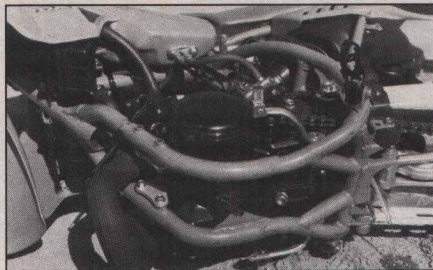
You can already tell that the CR125 is a handler, no doubt about it. Because it's *sooo* light, you can toy with the course, gliding in or around the obstacles. As with any bike, suspension is a major influence in the handling department. The Honda, although not fitted with perfect absorbers, soaks up better than previous CRs.

Up front the KYB forks are smooth, taking the small and intermediate jars in fine fashion. Killer hits are transferred to the rider more so than they should be.

Here's where the weightlessness comes in. Being a mere feather, the CR does not become a handful in these situations. The forks just don't feel that bad; you brace for the hit and keep moving. No big deal. Had the bike been ten or 15 pounds heavier, we'd have some real snivels.

They worked best with ten-weight oil, 160mm from the top of the tubes, no air. Set the compression adjuster (located under the slider) at three turns out from the stiffest setting. Stock, they come set up with lighter oil, 170mm from the top of the tubes. With the above changes, their action is greatly improved.

The back half fits in the same category as the front: good, but not great. Again, the light weight plays a big part in how well the bike works. Setup is critical on the Pro-Link. It should sag 100mm when you sit on it. Measure from the seat bolt to the axle with it unladen, then with



Extensive use of aluminum keeps the weight down below the FIM limit. The swingarm, linkage, brake pedal, torque arm and shifter are all very "worksish."

your bod atop—100mm, no more. The compression damping and the rebound should be set at full soft, or at just one click out.

BITS AND PIECES

Besides being driven on the left side of the engine (last year it was on the right) there were other changes done to the CR's motor. All of the clutch plates have been improved by firing more asbestos into them. Too, they are bigger this year.

Other diet areas on the CR are the swingarm (made of thinner material), aluminum steering stem and lots of aluminum used as spacers, tabs, etc. The shifter is an aluminum folder.

Up front, the brake is a single-leading shoe model. This is lighter than a double unit and for the little CR, it's plenty strong. The rear brake pedal is tucked in super tight, so it resists the normal bends and

tugs of a motocross course.

The coolant circulates around the head better this year. More flow from both radiators, entering separately, keep things cooler.

The seat height has been lowered two inches. For some of the taller riders it felt too low, more like a mini.

There's a rectifier (that's what Honda calls it) in the reed cage. It's actually a wedge that helps direct the flow of gases into the cylinder.

All of the transmission gears have been beefed up considerably. The water pump drive gear is now plastic rather than aluminum.

An all-new pipe tucks in nicely, and has one of the smallest silencers ever. It too is aluminum.

MENTAL HOPSCOTCH

Apparently the time has come again for Honda's 125. Ten years after the fact, it bristles with high technology. The latest and the trickiest abound on the CR. A suspension package that's balanced, weight that's kept low—what there is of it. Over-all handling that is unmatched in today's marketplace. An electric-type motor that buzzes strong enough to keep it right with the first-turn leaders. Altogether it's a complete package that is going to be tough to beat. Is it the best 125 of the year? That will come soon enough in our annual 125 shootout, but so far we can tell you that you can't go too far wrong if you buy one. It's a winner. □

WINNERS USE WISECO!

It's no coincidence that Honda Factory Team Riders Danny "Magoo" Chandler and Steve Wise chose Wiseco forged pistons to take 1st and 2nd in the 1982 Superbikers Race at Carlsbad, CA!!

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