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FUTURE SHOCK: KAWASAKI KX 125

APRIL 1980

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DIRT BIKE

HONDA XR 200: SUBTLE STROKER

BEAT THE CLOCK! ENDURO TRICKS

KTM 175: THE MONEY MACHINE



BIZARRE BIKES FROM EUROPE—PAGE 18

SUZUKI RACE READY RM 250T

ISSN 0364-1544



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DIRT BIKE

APRIL 1980

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ON THE COVER: — Jim Weinert gets sideways on the DB KX 125. For a complete test see page 44. (Paul Clipper photo.)

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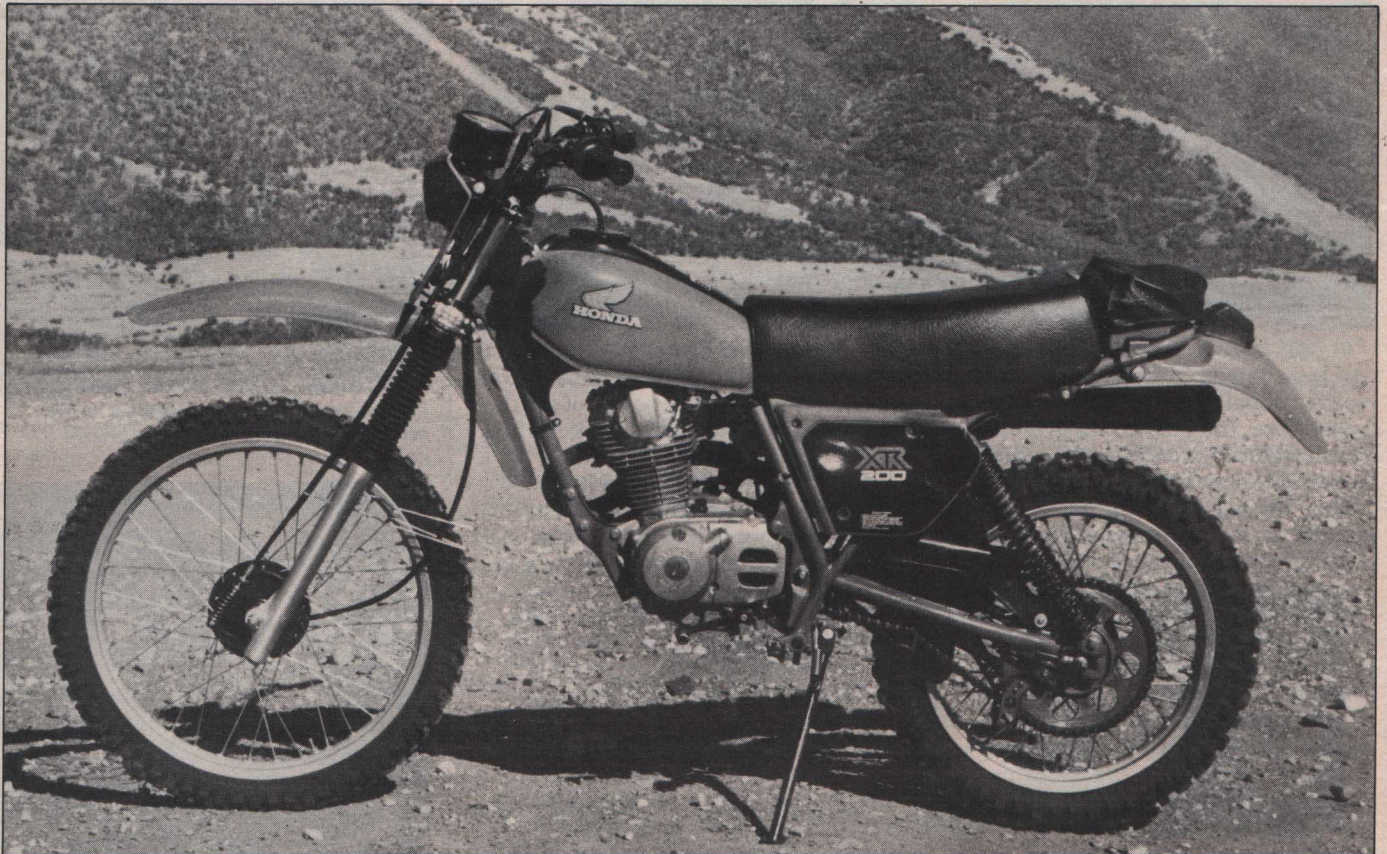
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HONDA XR200

IMPROVING THE BREED

Everything you always wanted to do to an XR has already been done... well, almost everything

By The Dirt Bike Staff



Last year, when we tested the XR185 (April '79), we couldn't help but rave about the basic design. There was no argument that the time was right for a light, good-handling four-stroke enduro bike with respectable power. There were a few small details we carp about, but we liked the concept well enough to devote four or five issues to making the unit better. In the Project XR series, we went the full route with Honda's little thumper, and wound up with what we consider one of the most pleasant four-strokes we've had the opportunity to sling a leg over.

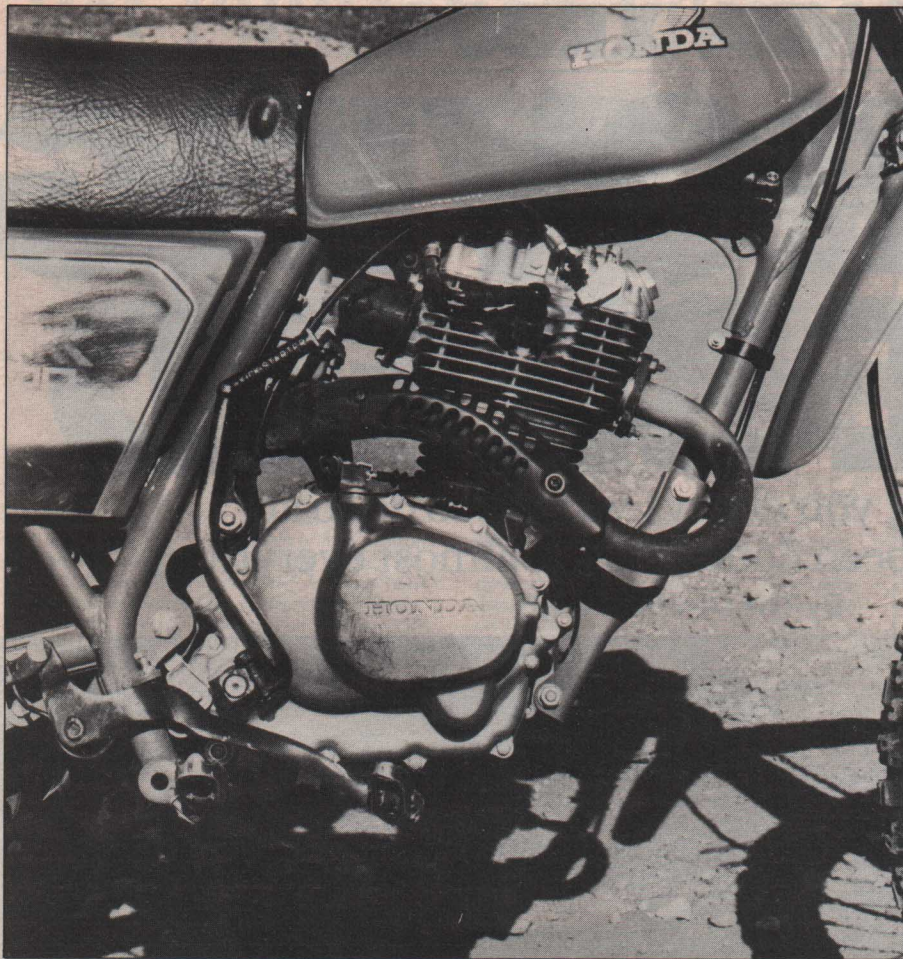
If you're looking to modify an XR to suit your own designs, this year you'll have less work to do, right from the start. The big improvement for 1980 is an increase in displacement from 180.2cc to a full 195, which is essentially the inclusion of a factory big-bore kit, with the exception of the pipe and air box. The addition of the 15cc is felt throughout the entire powerband, and has made the XR an even snappier bike to ride.

The rest of the changes are detail improvements, and include a 520 drive chain to replace last year's 428; a re-

designed rear wheel assembly which makes the chain easier to adjust, and the wheel easier to remove; new reverse ball dog-leg-style handlebar levers; and an all-in-one tool rather than a conventional tool kit. There are a few more minor changes, and we'll get into them in a few more paragraphs.

Sprung matter

The suspension is largely unchanged from last year, with the exception of different spring rates in the front forks. Travel is still 8.5 inches in the front, and 7.5 inches in the rear, provided by



For 1980, the XR features 195cc of displacement, up from 180.2 last year.

the gas-charged CR-type shocks and conventional forks. Much like last year's bike, the suspension is most comfortable at moderate trail riding speeds; at higher speeds and spirited riding, the overall performance suffers due to the basic softness of the travel. Most of the people we've talked to in the past year have improved the condition by bumping up the preload on the shocks and adding a spacer to the front forks (above the spring), but the best thing for the bike, is the addition of good accessory shocks and a fork kit, as we did with Project XR. Once the suspension is sorted out, the XR turns into a completely different bike, with much more positive handling and greatly improved stability at high speeds.

This year's swingarm has been changed slightly for easier maintenance, with stronger chain-adjusting bolts and a quick-release rear brake stay arm. The unit is reasonably strong—we detected no flexing at moderate speeds, but there are accessory swingarms available which are much stronger, lighter, and offer a longer wheelbase. Best suited for racing and high-speed enduros, aftermarket swingarms shouldn't be necessary for the average rider.

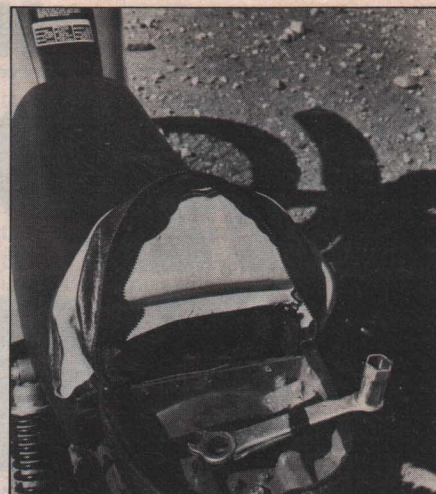
The rims are DID alloy, laced to a pair of strong, light hubs. When break-

ing in a new XR, one of the most important things to stay on top of are the spokes—they should be checked often in the first 200 miles or so, and tightened if necessary. And it will be necessary. On this year's and last year's bike, we had to go over the spokes after every 20 miles or so, and there were always a few that needed snugging up. Do *not* ride with them loose! The front and rear rims on the XR are among the lightest available, and none too strong when the spokes loosen up.

The tires are Bridgestone Claw-Action—acceptable performance in a straight line, a little bit squirrely in a fast turn, and apt to get chewed up pretty badly if you ride in a lot of rocks. Once they wear out, replace them with your favorite knobbies and the XR will turn a lot better.

Reciprocating masses

As stated earlier, the XR200 motor's main feature is a 15cc increase over last year's model, and aside from that, it is the same lovable powerplant. The overall gearing has been raised slightly with the addition of the 528 sprockets, a 13/50 combination as opposed to last year's 15/58. The gears are well-spaced for woods riding, with the possible exception of sixth, which is a very tall gear. Don't expect to use it on any-



The new tool bag hides a new all-in-one tool and a lot of extra space.



Levers are of a dog-leg design, with reversed ball ends to lessen brush-snagging.



Front forks are basically the same as last year, except for minor changes in springing rates.

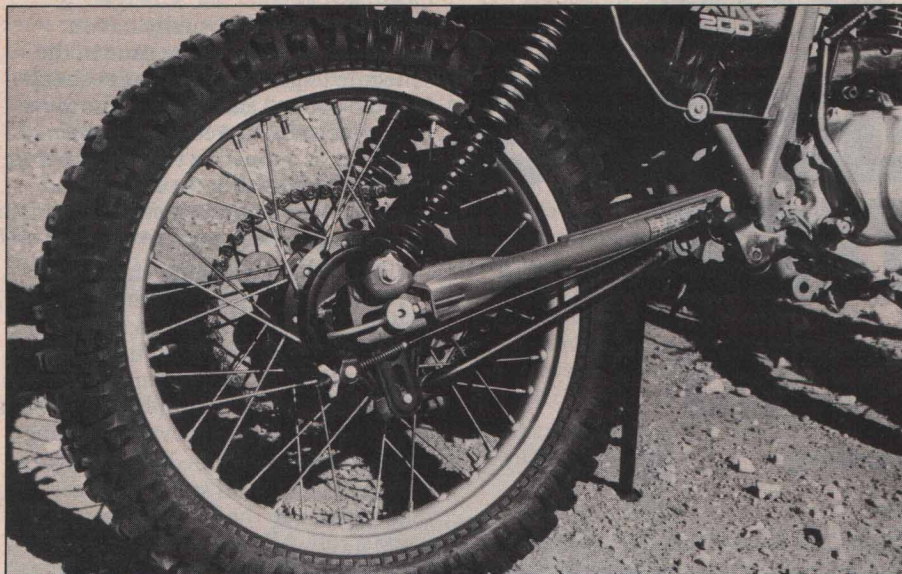
thing but the firmest of surfaces, and it should top out at about 70 mph.

A 26mm Keihin carb supplies the fuel efficiently and economically; even with the 1.8-gallon tank, the XR will deliver over 60 miles to the tankful.

Also, the same carb on our project bike

(Continued on page 54)





Rear wheel/swingarm shows several changes; improved chain-adjusting method, quick-release brake arm.



(Continued from page 50)

kept right up with a change in cam, bore and pipe; so if you're into modifying an XR, the stock carb should work fine, although a larger carb will provide greater top-end response.

The XR200 is a willing and able hill-climber, with great gobs of low-end power. It is hard to resist the challenge of any surface that tends toward vertical, and if there aren't any hills around, wheelies are just as easy. On tight trails, the bike is a quick turner, mostly due to the short suspension and wheelbase; combine these features with the light weight, and you have a good, fun trailbike with a lot of potential for seriousness.

Bits and pieces

In case you've noticed that the photos show a bike without a skid

plate, relax. The XR200 does come stock with one, just like last year. We just happened to misplace ours, that's all...

The seat has been slightly reshaped this year, resulting in a more comfortable and slightly lower bun platform.

Don't expect the new all-in-one tool to function perfectly during a major teardown of the motor. It works great for quick jobs like chain-adjusting, but we're afraid you'll need a few more wrenches if you decide to get ambitious on the trail. There's still plenty of room in the tool bag.

Those new dog-leg levers also have the nice feature of allowing you to remove the lever post without pulling off the grips. A nice touch.

Just when we finally got used to an on/off switch for the ignition, Honda has decided to replace it with a standard kill button. On the left side, no less! Who said this wasn't the age of miracles?

The footpegs are welded solidly to the frame this year, as opposed to the vibration-proof mount of models past. Should be quite a bit stronger, although we never had any problem with the old ones.

Even though the brake pedal is a folding design, one of our more club-footed editors managed to wrap it around the footpeg once or twice. We are happy to report that it is possible to bend it back.

And speaking of the brakes, those tiny little hubs really get the job done, only fading slightly when soaking wet.

Parting shots

Last year, we said about the 185: "If we had such a thing, the XR would be the bike of the year," or words to that effect. What about the XR200? That's a pretty tough question. At this point

Honda is getting dangerously close to their two-stroke competition. A direct comparison between it and the PE, IT and KDX 175s would probably leave it in the dust, but such a comparison would be invalid—even though we may wind up doing it in the future. In stock form, three of the bikes are tooth-grinding, bone-crushing enduro bikes; and the fourth is a nice, mild-mannered trailbike which needs just a little work before it snorts fire.

And if you don't have any desire to snort fire, you can't beat it. □

HONDA XR200 Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	..... Honda XR200
ENGINE TYPE	..... O.H.C. four-stroke
BORE AND STROKE	..... 65.5mm x 57.8mm
DISPLACEMENT	..... 195cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY)	..... N/A
CARBURETION	..... .26mm Keihin
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	..... 115
NEEDLE JET	..... N/A
JET NEEDLE	..... N/A
PILOT JET	..... 35
SLIDE NUMBER	..... 3.5
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	..... Premium, 91 RON min.
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	..... 7.0 liters (1.8 gallons)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	..... Steel
LUBRICATION	..... Wet sump
OIL CAPACITY	..... 1.1 liters (1.2 quarts)
AIR FILTRATION	..... Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	..... Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	..... Six-speed, constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	..... 2.769
2	..... 1.941
3	..... 1.450
4	..... 1.130
5	..... 0.923
6	..... 0.785
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	..... 13/50
IGNITION	..... CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	..... Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	..... NGK D8EA, ND X24ES-U

SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	..... Yes/reasonably quiet
FRAME, TYPE	..... Diamond
WHEELBASE	..... 1325mm (52.2 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	..... 285mm (11.2 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	..... 860mm (33.9 inches)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	..... 28.5 degrees
TRAIL	..... 122mm (4.8 inches)
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	..... 222 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	..... Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	..... 2.75x21 Claw-Action
REAR	..... 4.10x18 Claw-Action

SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	..... Telescopic fork, 8.5 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	..... Gas-charged shocks, 7.5 inches

INTENDED USE, MFR Trail riding, enduros
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Japan
PRICE, APPROX \$1298

PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
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RINGS ONLY \$14.20
CYLINDER \$68.90
SHIFT LEVER \$17.00
BRAKE PEDAL \$24.90
FRONT SPROCKET \$7.80

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Gardena, California	

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HANDLING 88
SUSPENSION 85
POWER 93
COST 91
ATTENTION TO DETAIL 95
EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK 92