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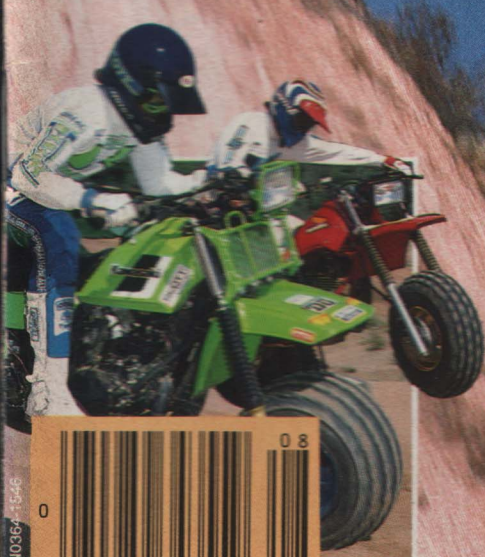
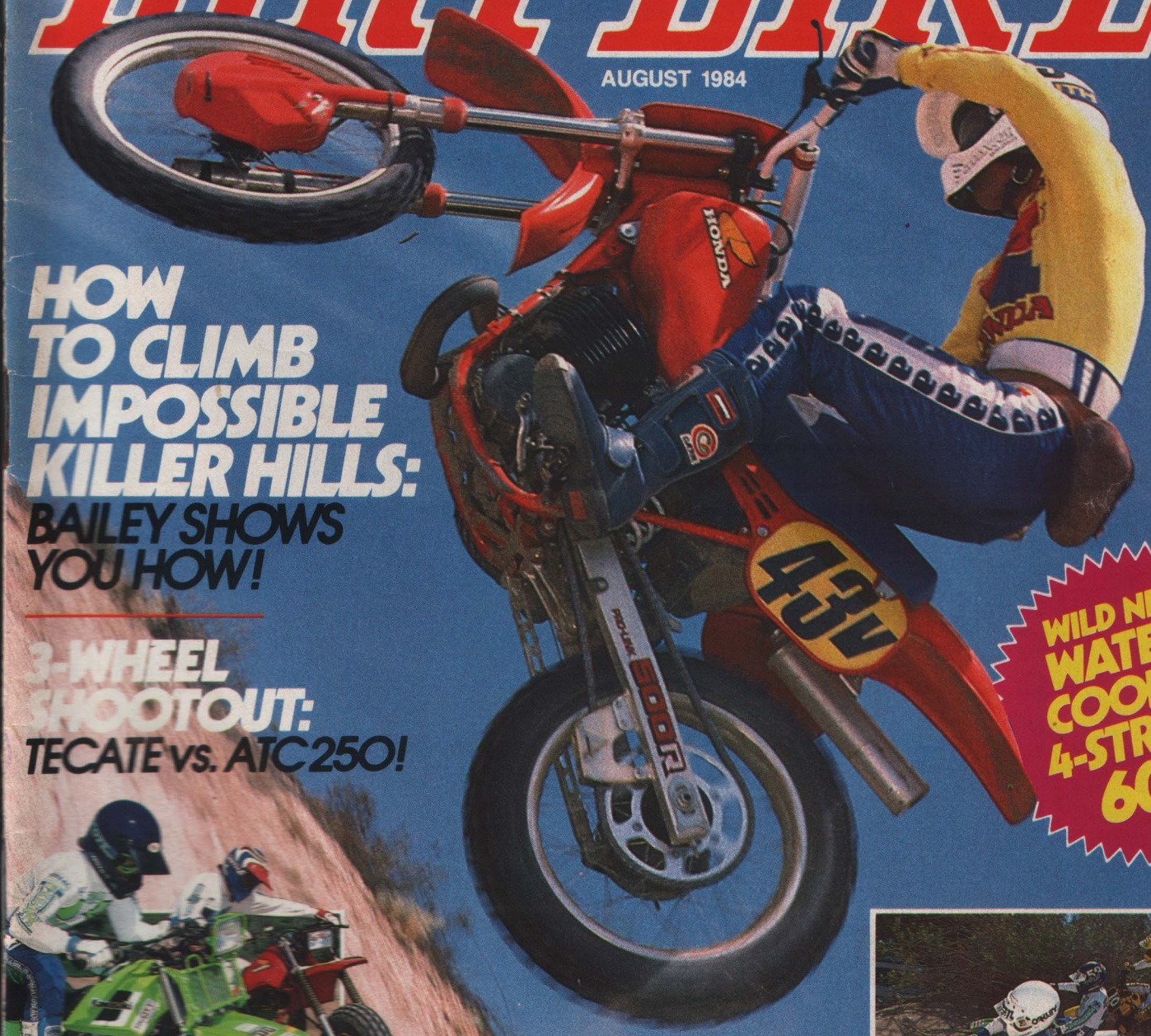
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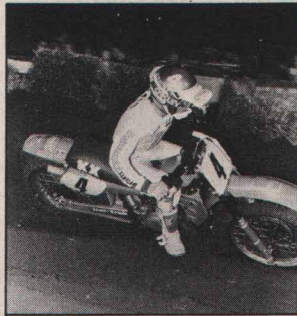
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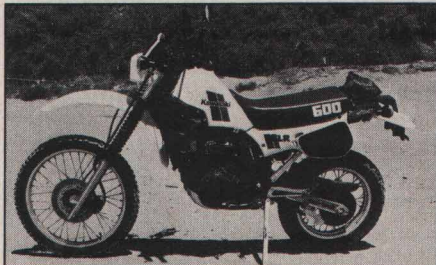
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ROSE BOWL



ATC vs. KXT



KLR600



XT250



CAGIVA 125



80 SHOOTOUT



XL350



XR200

DIRT BIKE Magazine, ISSN 0364-1546 (Aug. '84) is published by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc., with editorial offices at 10600 Sepulveda Boulevard, Mission Hills, California 91345. Subscriptions \$14.98 for 12 issues (one year). Canada add \$4 per year and all other foreign add \$5 per year for additional postage. Copyright © 1984 by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted in whole or in part, by mimeograph or any other means, without the express permission of the publisher. Contributors: Photographic submissions must be 5x7 or 8x10 glossy black and white, or 35mm and larger color slides. Please mark each photo with owner's name and address. Manuscripts should be typewritten. Unsolicited contributions, manuscripts, photographs and illustrations must be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Unless special arrangements are made in advance, all published material becomes the sole property of Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. The publisher does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material. Second class postage paid at San Fernando, California 91340, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **DIRT BIKE** Magazine, P.O. Box 9502, Mission Hills, California 91345-9502.

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ON THE COVER:—Jon Miller shows us how to climb a Gorman hill, and how to part the waters on a TT600. The mini gang is hard at work evaluating the Little Four, and the stunt team of Russell and Beckman jump for our ATV shootout. Photos by Rick Sieman and Paul Clipper; color separations by Valley Film.

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.



THE FUN FACTOR

Serious improvements to the king of the play bikes

By the DIRT BIKE Staff



While most felt that the safety seat looks good, the big tongue limits rider mobility, making it tough to get forward in the turns.



It seems as if you can lean the XR over so far that it's turning around its own rear wheel. Too much throttle at low rpm can cause it to bog, however.

Just what is the fun factor? We would say that the fun factor is the one ingredient that makes a bike fun to ride, rather than all the other buzz words—fast, competitive, light. In order for a bike to be fun, it has to have a number of good points. It has to have a torquey engine, because peaky bikes are not fun for long. It has to be reasonably light, because nobody likes to drag around a little brother who weighs 250 pounds. It has to be plush, forgiving, and comfortable. And if it meets all these criteria, people will flock down to the bike shop to buy one, even if the magazines come right out and say it isn't the perfect racing machine.

Such a bike is the Honda XR200R. When the XR185 burst on the scene in 1979, Honda knew they had a winner on their hands, and they also knew why it was winning. It was fun. Fun was what sold bikes for Honda. Motorcycling was fun. And because of all this, Honda, rightfully so, chose to ignore the magazines and their pleas for mods that would turn the XR185/200/200R into the most radical racing four-stroke on the face of the earth. They could do it—make the XR200 into a flame thrower on the race track—but they left that up to the aftermarket people and just continued to sell a fun cruiser to the masses.

They took the same approach to updates, and every year they came out with an XR that was just a little bit better than the previous year. If you wanted to upgrade a skosh,

you could buy a new one; if you were content with what you had, you could hold out for another year and pick up on an even more improved version. The XR would still be around; it is a bike that endures.

UNDER THE SKIN

Once again, the XR200 appears unchanged, but never let the looks deceive you when you're looking at a Honda. This 200R is perhaps the most radical one ever to roll off the Honda assembly line. In no obvious order, here are but a few of the '84 improvements:

- More horsepower. More than just a claim, this year Honda took a big step in the hp wars. The engine grew from 195cc to 199cc through the use of a shorter stroke and a larger bore. The XR also sports the Honda four-valve head and dual 20mm carbs. The '83 200 put out 17.75 bhp at 8500 rpm with 12.2 foot-pounds of torque at 7000 rpm; the '84 has been boosted up to 23 bhp at 9000 rpm and 14.5 foot-pounds of torque at 7500 rpm. These figures were taken on the Honda dyno, of course, but they should at least be relative to each other.

- The frame is brand new. It is the same frame they are using on the XR250 this year and is slightly bigger than last year's frame overall, resulting in a 10mm increase in wheelbase. The most significant change out of this is the rake and trail—the '83 featured a rake of 28 degrees, 40 minutes and a trail of 125mm, and the new bike numbers are

26 degrees and 105mm. If you were one of the astute people who complained that the XR200 steered like a '79 Husky, be assured that the new bike *can't* do it with numbers like this.

- Better suspension. The travel has been increased a slight two tenths of an inch, but the rear linkage has been reworked to provide a better rate, and the shock is new, featuring adjustable compression and rebound damping, in much the same manner as the Honda CRs. For the record, the damper and linkage are the same as that on the XR250, although the 250 spring is stiffer. So now you know the first place to find a stiffer spring for your '84 200. The new forks use 36mm tubes rather than the 35mm tubes found on the '83. The forks and shock are made by Kayaba.

There are innumerable minor improvements to the rest of the bike, but we'll mention the most significant of them as they pop up. Before we go any further here, let's ride it and see how all this works.

SOIL TESTING

You still have to use the XR drill to start the 200 effectively—choke on, no throttle, full kick—but it does start rather easily because of its small size. The tail pipe emits a good four-stroke bark, and we were happy to learn that it is a little quieter than past 200s. Even so, Honda saw fit to include a silencing kit with each bike that will make the exhaust practically noiseless.

Dave Mungenast's

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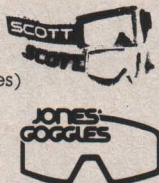
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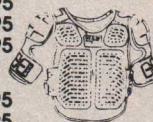
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HONDA XR200R

The power delivery is excellent. This 200 is practically as fast as the XR250. There's more than enough low-end grunt to get you moving with no fancy clutch work, and when the revs hit the fat part of the torque curve, the XR practically leaps forward. It will rev out from there, but you really don't gain very much above 8000 rpm. This is the perfect type of power for trailriding. You can grunt along with your butt planted firmly in the seat all day long, but if you get the urge, you can downshift and ride it like a two-stroke.

We noticed only one fault in the system. If we intentionally let the engine speed drop way down and then tried to accelerate in too high a gear, the carbs would gasp, make a groaning noise, and nothing would happen. On a two-stroke, this is a sign of overcarburation, and with two 20mm carb bores wide

The new XR just loves to knife through tight vegetation. A 26-degree rake has cured the old "XR plow."



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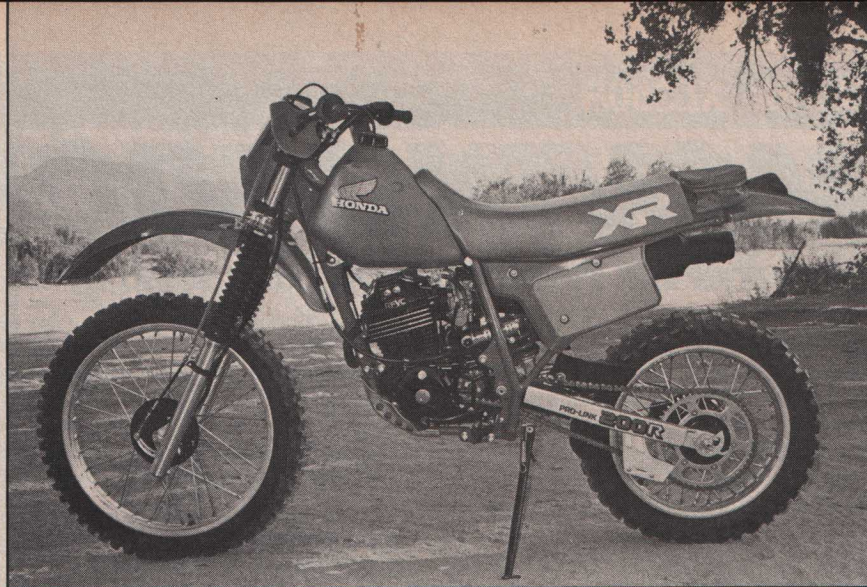
The 36mm Kayaba forks are skinny compared with the tubes found on the XR's two-stroke competition, but they work fine for trailriding.



The XR200 is a natural jumper. The bike is quite neutral, even though its all-up weight is 228 pounds, no gas. If the suspension had been stiffer, we'd never have been able to get our testers back on the ground.

open, it is probably the case here. The only time you'll have this problem is when you are in far too high a gear, and the engine wouldn't pull it even if the carbs could respond. Take it as a signal to downshift, and don't worry about it.

The suspension improvements weren't for naught, either. At medium speeds both ends



HONDA XR200R

Engine type	..... Air-cooled 4-stroke
Bore and stroke	..... 67.0mm x 56.5mm
Displacement	..... 199cc
Carburetion	..... (2) 20mm Keihin
Factory jetting: Pri/Sec	
Main jet	..... 98/95
Needle jet	..... No optional parts
Jet needle	..... E23510-4/E2353D-3
Pilot jet	..... 42/NA
Slide number	..... No optional parts
Fuel tank capacity	..... 9.0 L (2.4 gals.)
Lubrication	..... Wet sump
Gearbox ratios:	
1	..... 2.769:1
2	..... 1.941:1
3	..... 1.450:1
4	..... 1.174:1
5	..... 0.960:1
6	..... 0.815:1
Gearing, front/rear	..... 13/50
Ignition	..... CDI
Recommended spark plug	..... NGK DPR9Z
Silencer/spark arrester	..... Yes/yes
Wheelbase	..... 1365mm (53.7 in.)
Ground clearance	..... 315mm (12.4 in.)
Seat height	..... 905mm (35.6 in.)
Rake/trail	..... 26°/105mm

*Wet weight, no fuel 228 lbs.

Tire size and type:

Front 3.00 x 21 IRC
Rear 110/90-17 IRC

Suspension, type and travel:

Front Kayaba 36mm forks, 254mm (10.0 in.)
Rear Pro-Link, adj. comp/reb., 246mm (9.7 in.)

Intended use Off-road, enduro

Country of origin Japan

Retail price, approx. \$1625

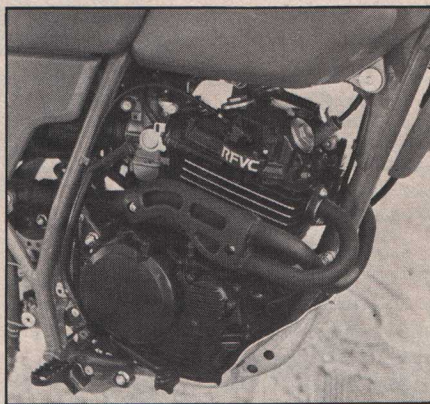
Distributor/Manufacturer:

American Honda Motor Corp.
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Gardena, CA 90247

Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use in mind:

Handling Very good
Front suspension Very good
Rear suspension Very good
Power Excellent
Cost Very 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.



Nearly five more horsepower really makes a difference in the XR200's manner this year. The actual horsepower peak is higher in the rpm scale, but there's so much more all over that the bike doesn't feel peaky.

will soak up typical gnarliness with few complaints. Small square-edged holes and chop-piness are absorbed and left behind. If we had to find one complaint, it would be that the forks seemed to bounce back too fast, but this is only a sign of a too light oil, which is easily corrected by an oil change.

At high speeds the inherent softness be-

comes evident, and the XR will start bottoming and moving around. We never had it completely out of control, but it did demand attention. For serious competition events and aggressive trailriding, we would recommend heavier springs at both ends.

While all this bump soaking is going on, the XR knives around just like a snake in the mud. It will cut in and out of trees with wild abandon, thanks to the short wheelbase and the steep rake, but during high-speed blasts, it is a little busy. Once again, firming up the suspension is the answer.

BITS AND PIECES

As with any good bike, you need to be forward in the seat to really slice up the turns. The XR is quite comfortable, but the forward torque of the seat can be a little uncomfortable to the males of the species. We've noticed this on some other bikes, but we really noticed it a couple of times on the Honda. Safety seats sure are pretty, but manufacturers should spend a little more time designing them to fit the human body better.

Everything fits on the XR. The bars feel good, the tank/seat junction feels very slim, it's easy to move around on the bike, and

(continued on page 72)



Jim Bowman

Donnie Hansen

HOLESHOT HANSEN MOTOCROSS SCHOOLS

Donnie Hansen is setting off on a cross-country trek, conducting motocross schools and full-on motocross camps throughout the States. The MX schools will feature both private and group lessons, with daily classes and weekend seminars at various locations. Also, a full four-day motocross camp will concentrate on riding skills, Pro racing techniques, diet and training. For all class dates call and ask for Lisa at (805)252-2445.

□

HONDA XR200R (continued from page 47)

the controls drew nothing but raves. It's hard to imagine someone not liking the layout of the XR.

We spent a lot of time cruising a local river during our test and can report that the XR is as tolerant of water as a walleyed pike. We did the stupidest things in the drink and never managed to drown it out. The brakes got wet and faded; the rear seemed more affected than the front; but they both dried out after a little bit of dragging.

LET'S GO RIDING

A good rider on an XR200 will have little trouble staying with the two-strokes in an enduro, but if it comes down to a contest of brute acceleration, the IT200 and KDX200 will easily leave it behind. We would be foolish to say that the XR isn't competitive—there are more winning XRs in the eastern half of the country than decent restaurants—but if you want the easiest route to an overall win, you should stick to a two-stroke.

The XR200's forte is fun trailriding, and it is amazing how enjoyable it is to ride. One day spent riding this bike on some nice woods trails could convince you that this is the best bike in the world, that riding motorcycles heads the list of pleasures of the flesh, and that it wouldn't be a bad idea to quit your job and spend seven days a week in the saddle. Honda struck the perfect chord when they built the XR200...and they know it. □

ATV SHOOTOUT (continued from page 64)

BITS AND PIECES

The front and rear disc brakes on the ATC are superb—just the right amount of feel, and they seem to be completely unaffected by water. The KXT uses a front drum brake that is mushy and prone to water fade. It could be much better. We had no complaints with the KXT rear brake.

Both bikes use kickstarters, the Honda being a forward kick and the Kawasaki being a backward (standard motorcycle) kick style. They are equally easy to start, although on the KXT you have to aim your foot through a tunnel molded in the rear fender. Odd. We occasionally hit the KXT's brake cylinder with our foot; it could probably be better thought out.

Speaking of bodywork, the KXT is a more comfortable machine for a bigger rider. Everything is spaced out perfectly, leaving you a lot of room to move around. The ATC is slightly more cramped, which would not be a drawback to a rider under five-foot-five.

The Honda uses a thumb-type throttle; the Kawasaki uses a twist throttle, and that alone is enough for us to award it the best controls category. Somewhere there must be a good reason for the existence of the thumb throttle, but we don't want to hear about it—give us a twist throttle any day.

The KXT is water-cooled; that's good, but the radiator is mounted up on the triple clamps, and that's not so good. We all know about swing weight and turning resistance of rubber hose and all that, so we respectfully ask Kawasaki to put the '85 radiator in a more sensible position. The ATC, of course, has little excess baggage in front of the bars, but then they also use an air-cooled cylinder...still?

WHAT COLOR ARE THE EMPEROR'S CLOTHES?

Honda has had more than a few good years to work out the bugs on the ATC, and that time really shows in the quality of the suspension, the attention to detail, and the overall finish of the machine. It is a good...no, make that a *great* three-wheeler, and one that just about any tripod-inclined rider would enjoy immensely.

But then there's the Kawasaki KXT. Its finish is a little rougher, and it needs to have a few wrinkles ironed out, but it is faster than that red machine on the other side of the ring. It also handles a little better, and sitting on it gives you the feeling that it means business.

Remember too that this is the first production year for the KXT, and as long as development continues in the years ahead, the KXT is liable to be one big burr in the side of Team Red for years to come. We're amazed at how well it turned out in its first year of manufacture, and with that fact in mind, as well as the superior speed and handling, we declare the KXT the overall winner of this shootout—not by a wide margin, mind you, but then it only takes a little bit extra to win a fight...or a race! □

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