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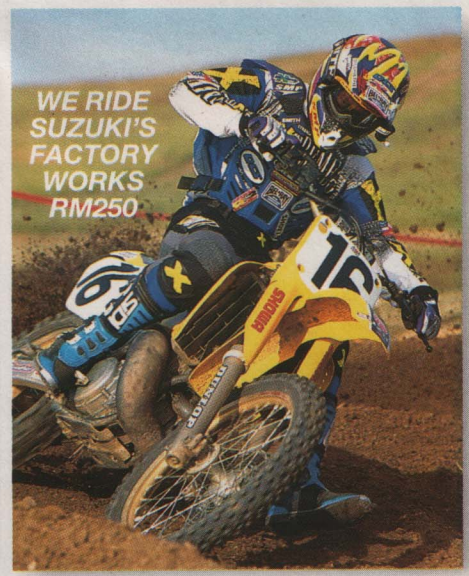
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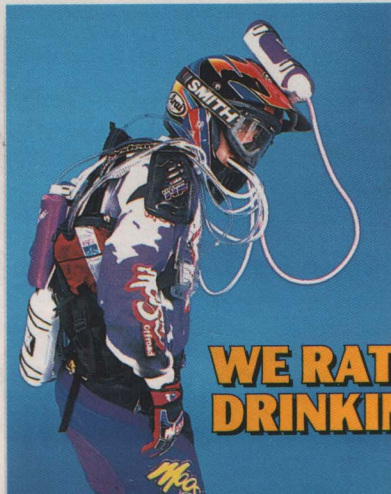
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# GREG ALBERTYN'S WORKS RM250

*Mechanical insight into the 3-time world champ*

*By the hanging-on-at-Hangtown staff of DIRT BIKE*

What would it be like to ride a three-time world motocross champion's bike? Would a few laps on his machine give us insight into the man, his style and what made him successful?

It has in the past. We have ridden Jean-Michel Bayle's championship CR250 and USGP-winning CR500, and these factory sleds gave us good insight into JMB. He's incredibly smooth, sure, but riding his bike showed us that he was harder on his equipment than his style suggested. From watching him ride, you would think his suspension was plusher than an XR600's, but it was the most rigid of any works bike we have experienced since. Where McGrath's, Lamson's and Bradshaw's bikes had a stiffer fork than shock,

Bayle's was better balanced. It's said that, once Bayle found a setting he liked, testing was done—not for the day or the week, but for the whole year. Give him that setup for any track, and he would win on it.

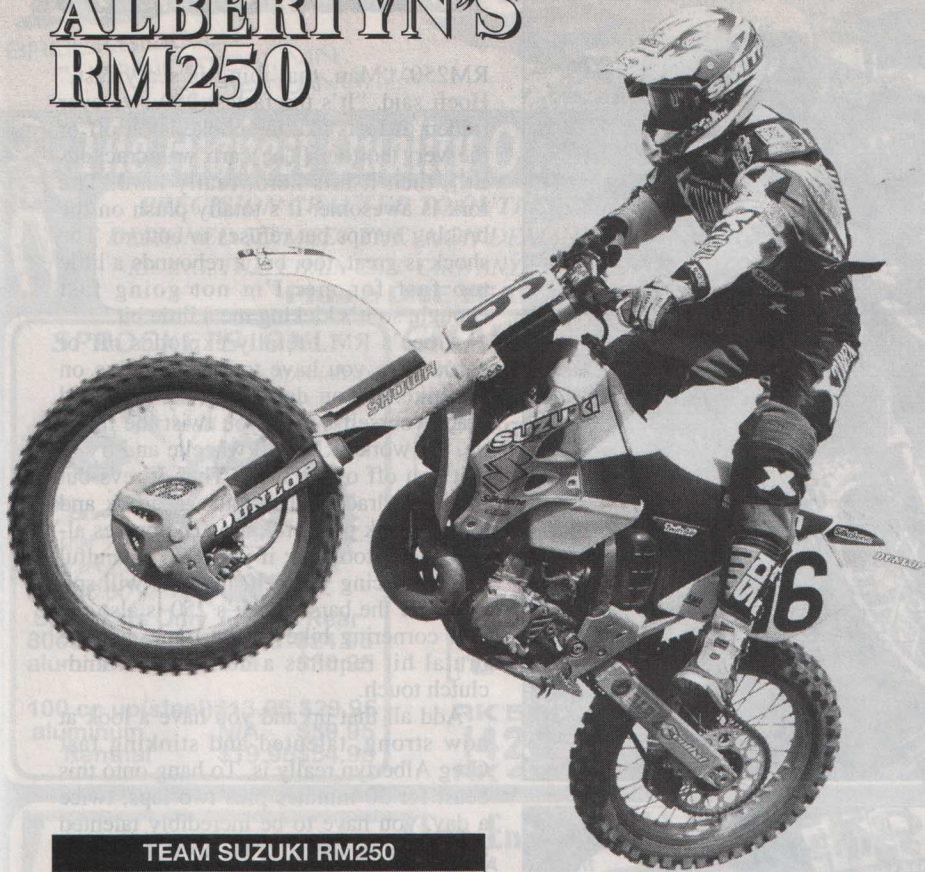
Greg Albertyn is no Jean-Michel Bayle. Where Bayle idolized David Bailey and adopted his style, Albee is more of a Ricky Johnson. The South African clinched the '92 125 and '93-'94 250 world titles by sheer determination and hard work. He developed a reputation as one who took big chances—and got away with them. Greg had talent, sure, but he won because he wanted to win more than everyone else (just like RJ). When he switched from Hondas to the Bieffe Suzu-

ki team, pundits thought he would crash more and win less. Nope. He beat Stefan Everts like a drum at an Iron Butterfly concert and took home title number three. Then he set his sights on America and landed a ride with Roger DeCoster at Team Suzuki.

What he found here was a depth of talent beyond his wildest dreams. Where he would have three or four challengers for the win in Europe, he found more depth and much more aggression in the States. He also had all-new components to develop. "In Europe," said mechanic Ian Harrison, "we'd show up at the track and test gearing. Here, we're testing offsets, linkages, valving, springs, everything. It's so much harder here."



# ALBERTYN'S RM250



## TEAM SUZUKI RM250

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Rider.....            | Greg Albertyn/#16  |
| Mechanic.....         | Ian Harrison   |
| Cylinder.....         | American Suzuki  |
| Head.....             | American Suzuki  |
| Piston.....           | Standard   |
| Reeds.....            | Std.   |
| Pipe/muffler.....     | Suzuki Japan/Answer carbon fiber   |
| Carburetor.....       | 38mm PWK Keihin  |
| Ignition.....         | Kokosan Denki/variable curves  |
| Gearing.....          | 13/50  |
| Spark plug.....       | NGK B8EV   |
| Gas/oil.....          | VP C12/Bel-Ray H1R @ 32:1  |
| Filter/airbox.....    | Twin Air/Std.  |
| Fork.....             | Works conventional Showa   |
| Shock.....            | Works Showa w/hi-lo comp. adj.   |
| Linkage.....          | Suzuki Japan   |
| Triple clamps.....    | Billet, Suzuki Japan   |
| Rims (fr/rf).....     | EXCEL  |
| Hubs/spokes.....      | Mag fr, billet rf/Suzuki Japan   |
| Front tire/tube.....  | Dunlop K490/Dunlop H-D @ 12 psi  |
| Rear tire/tube.....   | Dunlop D701/Dunlop H-D @ 12 psi  |
| Seat.....             | N-Style  |
| Plastic/graphics..... | UFO/N-Style  |
| Footpegs.....         | Suzuki Japan   |
| Handlebars.....       | Pro Taper  |
| Trick parts.....      | Works Suzuki dual-stage power valve, caliper carriers, brake pads, rear axle, Ti fasteners and linkage bolts; Works Connection aluminum glide plate and frame guards; RM125 kickstart lever; FCC clutch plates |

**Nestled within the heavily modified cylinder, two-stage power valves eliminate spikes in the power curve through the transition from closed (low-end) to open (midrange). The power is completely different than Marnique Bervoets' Bieffe Suzuki. ▶**

And that was in '95, Albee's U.S. rookie season. This year the team is on new machinery entirely. Only the fork, wheels and brakes remain the same.

### INSIDE ALBEE'S WORKS RM250

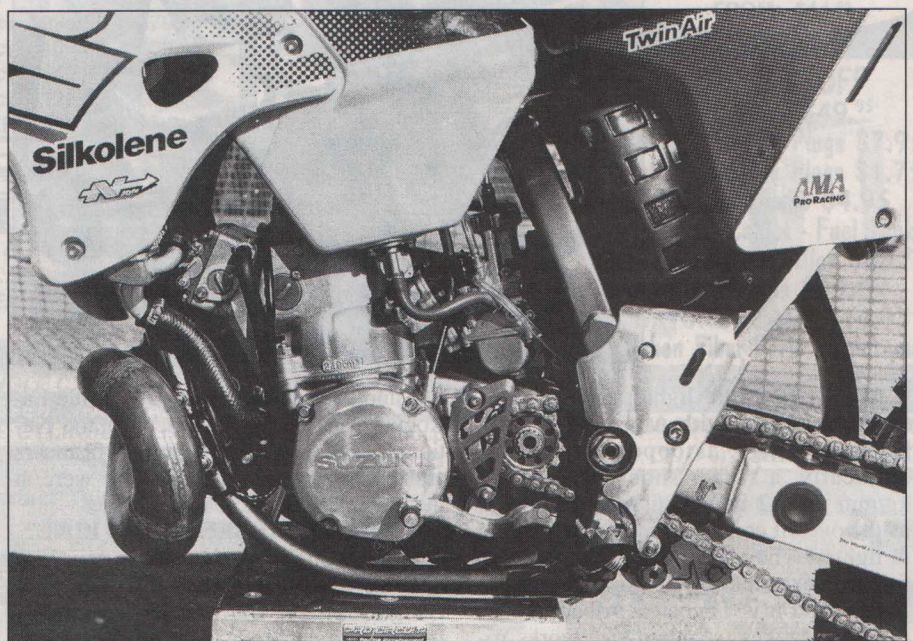
Suzuki modifies a standard RM250 cylinder and incorporates a trick dual-stage power valve into the race motor. Porting isn't all that different from stadium set-

tings—the exhaust port is raised 0.5mm, and a 0.5mm-thicker base gasket is used for Nationals. These mods trade some low-end power for top-end runout, and are mated to a rev pipe and richer jetting. Albee uses a works carbon fiber silencer, while LaRocco uses a shortened stock RM muffler. LaRocco likes to hear his engine on the gate, hence the louder muffler. The rest of the factory mill is surprisingly standard, except for the works ignition, which offers a variety of stock-like curves. It isn't radically different from stock, but you can fine-tune the hit to match the two-stage power valves. Even gearing is close to standard (13/50 vs. production's 13/49).

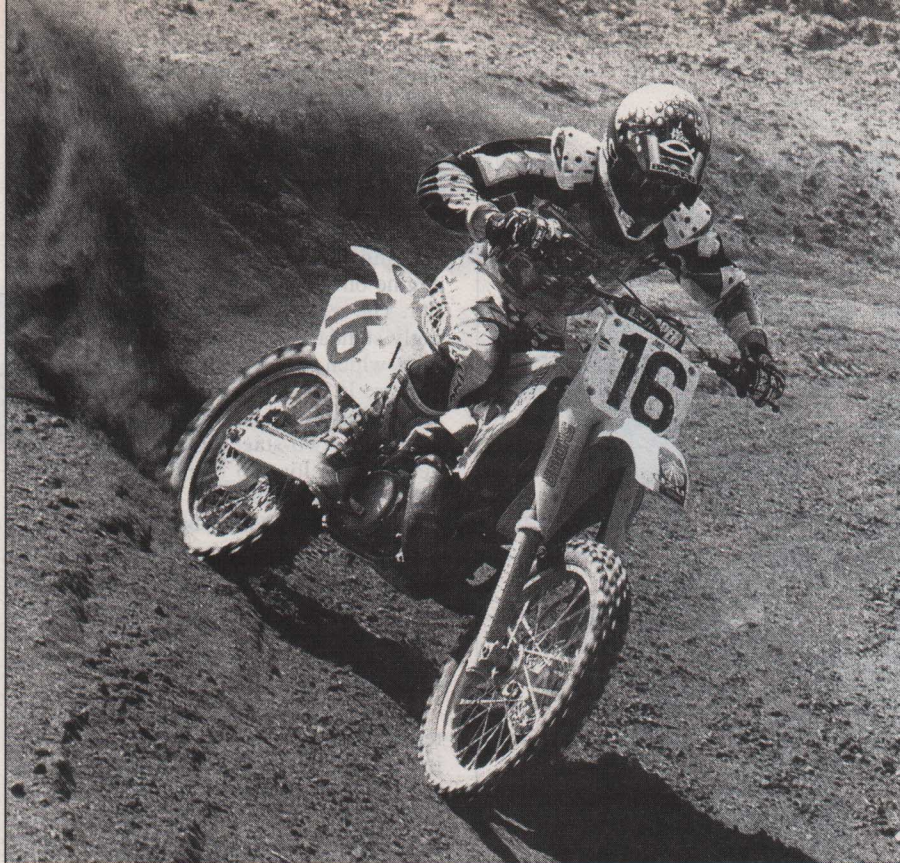
Albertyn wears knee braces, which limit flexibility, so he uses an RM125 kickstart lever, which is much lower than the 250 piece. It takes a harder kick to start the 250, especially since compression has been bumped a bit from stock, but Greg likes the shorter lever.

At the start of the stadium season, the team bikes were having trouble negotiating the long whoop sections, and it was thought to be a rigidity problem with the new frame and year-old conventional fork. Suzuki machined a four-piece triple clamp that literally formed a box around the upper tubes and experimented with frame gusseting in search of rigidity. Albee stayed with the three-bolt clamps, while LaRocco went stiffer and stiffer. LaRocco was strong enough to deal with the rigidity, but eventually came full circle, returning to the conventional, three-pinch-bolt triple clamps. LaRocco uses a different linkage for the Nationals than stadium events, but Albertyn stays with the same link—a '97 production unit.

◀ **Darrin Hoeft usually rides Suzukis, but he's never ridden one that's this fast, or this stiffly suspended. Albee's RM is such a launchmeister that it will kick if you don't hit things pinned.**

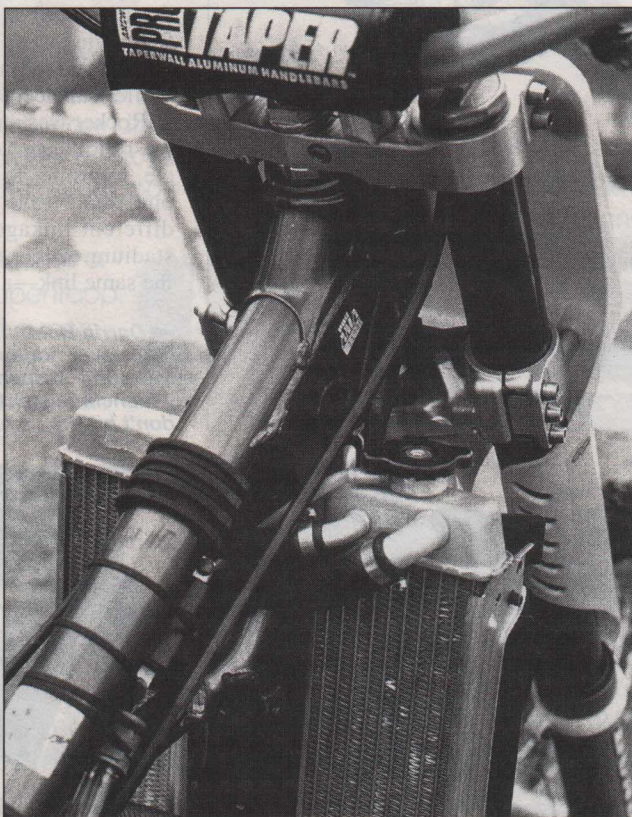


## ALBERTYN'S RM250



▲ Besides Jeremy McGrath, Greg Albertyn has been the fastest guy in the 250 Nationals, but he's also had the worst luck. Lappers, a broken clutch and trackside banners have kept him from putting together two motos on any Sunday.

Check out the trick billet clamps, programmable ignition black box, works Twin-Chamber Showas and polished mag engine cases. ►



Fork settings are lighter for the high-speed Nationals, with Albee using 0.41-kg/mm springs, as opposed to 0.42s. Ironically, a stiffer shock spring (5.3 kg/mm vs. 5.2 kg/mm) is used outdoors, as the overall compression damping curve is lighter. The works Showa shock also features external HSCD and LSCD adjusters, and it is Ti-coated. Albertyn uses the same brakes (standard-size works ro-

tors and pads), indoors and out, while La-Rocket uses oversized discs for the Nationals. There are also more Ti fasteners and trick mag pieces than there were at the beginning of the season.

### SO WHAT'S ALBEE'S BIKE LIKE?

After a photo session and a few laps around the ultra-rough Dirt Diggers Hangtown track, Darrin Hoelt was totally impressed with Albertyn's factory

RM250. "Man, that thing is scary fast," Hoelt said. "It's the fastest 250 I've ever ridden. It feels like the choke is on off of the very bottom [The carb was cracked-Ed], then it hits hard, really hard. The fork is awesome. It's totally plush on the braking bumps but refuses to bottom. The shock is great, too, but it rebounds a little too fast for me. I'm not going fast enough, so it's kicking me a little bit."

Albee's RM literally explodes off of corners, so you have to be pro-active on the bike. If you don't lean forward and brace yourself before you twist the throttle, the works RM will wheelie and try to spit you off of the back. Then it revs out like a roadracer. The clutch, gearbox and brakes work perfectly, too. The brakes almost work too well; if you grab a handful before bracing yourself, the bike will spit you over the bars. Albee's 250 is also the best cornering bike on the track, but the brutal hit requires a deft throttle-and-clutch touch.

Add all that up and you have a look at how strong, talented and stinking fast Greg Albertyn really is. To hang onto this beast for 30 minutes plus two laps, twice a day, you have to be incredibly talented and unbelievably fit. To do it and hang with Jeremy McGrath and Jeff Emig, you have to be a Greg Albertyn or a Mike La-Rocco. These guys are two of the hardest-training athletes in the sport, and they use that strength and stamina to muscle the factory RM250s into submission. They are the Bomb Squad of National motocross, controlling explosions and leaving shrapnel in their wake.

Albertyn is completely comfortable with his wild ride, as it less abrupt than his '94 Bieffe Suzuki and '95 National RM250. "This bike is totally different and a big improvement over my '94 and '95 RMs," Albee said. "Even though it's not full factory like my '94 championship bike, the '96 is far better suited for racing. It's got more usable power—Suzukis have always had great motors with explosive power, but this is a bit more smooth. There's not quite as much top end as my Bieffe bike, but the tracks here aren't as wide-open as in Europe, so I don't miss it. We're working on getting a bit more top out of it, though.

"The chassis is a big improvement over the '94-'95 frame, and that made a big improvement in the way the suspension works. The '96 is way better than any of them to date, and there has been some improvement in fork underhang. There's less, so it doesn't hang up in ruts. We go testing with Showa a few times a month, so we're steadily developing the bike."

If Albee doesn't consider this bike abrupt, then he's every bit as super-human as SuperMac. So why hasn't Greg won in the USA? We think it's because he's too nice. □