

SUZUKI RS175Z

# **SIMPLE PLEASURE**

*The low-bucks  
alternative  
to the PE*

*It won't be the  
most comfortable  
bike at high speeds,  
but the RS is ready  
for family enduros  
just as delivered.*





**Y**eah, the RS175 looks okay, but what do you *do* with it?" How many times have we heard that question? The PE is an enduro bike, the RM is a motocross bike, the old DS series were playbikes. How do you categorize the RS? Midway between a PE and a DS? Maybe so, but it does use some components of the old RM, and it would be stretching the point to say that the RS is capable of anything the motocross bikes can do.

No, the best we can call the RS is a serious playbike and a semiserious enduro machine. It's a fun little bike for casual trailriding, and it wouldn't be a bad choice as a first enduro bike for a C-rider — just as long as he wasn't too tall.

#### WHAT IT IS

Basically, the RS is a combination of RM and PE parts. The frame and suspension are direct steals from the '79 RM, and the engine and related components are old-style PE parts. How old? Well, the RS was introduced in 1980, and aside from minor detail changes here and there, the bike was changed remarkably little. As a matter of fact, the only changes we were able to pinpoint were different stickers and the addition of an odometer.

We suspect there have also been slight changes in the suspension of the RS, just on the basis that the bike feels better than it did in 1980. All the specifications are the same: The forks are 36mm Kayaba units, giving nine inches of travel, and are non-air adjustable; the rear end uses a pair of gas-charged Kayaba shocks on a silver-painted steel swingarm, with a maximum travel of 8.7 inches. Not what you'd call long travel, but when you keep the intended use of the RS in mind — trailbike/playbike — it is enough.

There's enough power for the job, too. The RS isn't going to be blowing the doors off of any PE rider — assuming that the PE rider isn't a slug — but it will haul a normal rider around at a pretty good clip. We found that even with a 170-pound rider aboard, the RS would tackle most terrain without making the rider work too hard, save for very steep hills. When the ground starts going vertically, the RS starts running out of steam in a hurry. At this point the rider has to resort to an age-old tactic known the world over to 175 riders: Get off and run alongside for the last 20 feet.

#### WHAT IT DOES

Naturally, we didn't change any of our test routines to better fit the RS. Why do that? Run the bike through the paces and see just what it will or won't do! We went out the day after a windstorm and were greeted with trails that had been blown clean of dirt — nothing but baked adobe and rocks, everywhere the eye could see.

This taught us something in the first mile. The RS sticks to the ground. It's natural to expect a budget-priced bike to have a few failings in the handling department, but the RS does not run true to form. The front end never washed out

unless we did something completely stupid, and the overall handling of the bike is surprisingly good. Without any awkward body gyrations on the part of the rider, the RS would go exactly where it was pointed, and that's what you call good handling.

When the going got rough, the shortcomings of the dated suspension started popping up. The RS suspension is good (it handles moderate bumps and jumps without surprises) but the Full Floater suspension of the PE would never have been invented if it wasn't an improvement on something, and this is what it replaced. There is a huge difference between the two. When the dual-shock RS reaches its limit, you know it. The bike will hop out sideways if you attack stutter bumps too

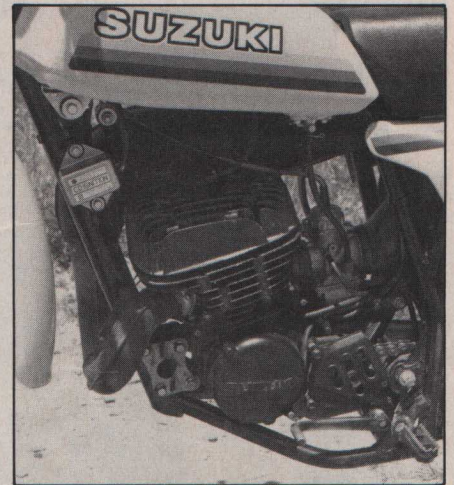
fast, and it will land with a sickening clunk if you hit a jump too hard. The advantage of the Full Floater is one of speed — you can attack all these obstacles much, much faster without getting out of shape.

And that's why it's better. Faster is better, but if you don't ride with the throttle pegged all the time, what the RS has may be enough. It's up to the rider to decide.

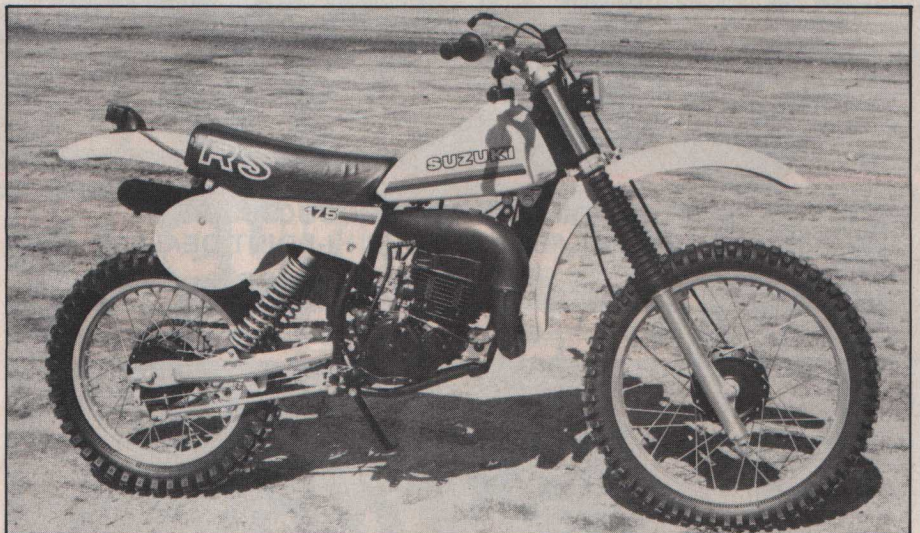
Powerwise, the RS can best be described as easy to get along with. With a medium-sized adult aboard, there's plenty of power for normal riding. First gear is low enough without being too low, and top gear is easy to pull on level ground. There's good low end inside that engine, too. We could ride up most medium-sized



*Front forks deliver just over nine inches of travel, and are surprisingly plush for a budget bike.*



*The RS engine doesn't have the horsepower of the PE175, but the average trail rider will never miss it.*



### SUZUKI RS175

ENGINE TYPE ..... Air-cooled, two-stroke  
 BORE AND STROKE ..... 62mm x 57mm  
 DISPLACEMENT ..... 172cc  
 HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED) ..... N/A  
 CARBURETION ..... 30mm Mikuni  
 IGNITION ..... Suzuki PEI  
 TRANSMISSION ..... Six-speed  
 FUEL TANK CAPACITY ..... 6.0 liters (1.6 gallons)  
 WHEELBASE ..... 1420mm (55.9 inches)  
 GROUND CLEARANCE ..... 300mm (11.8 inches)  
 SEAT HEIGHT ..... 863mm (34 inches)  
 WEIGHT (CLAIMED) ..... 216 pounds dry

SUSPENSION FRONT ..... Telescopic forks,  
 9.0 inches travel  
 REAR ..... Dual gas shocks,  
 8.7 inches travel  
 TIRES FRONT ..... 3.00 x 21 Bridgestone  
 REAR ..... 4.10 x 18 Bridgestone  
 INTENDED USE ..... Off-road, playbike  
 APPROX RETAIL PRICE ..... \$1299  
 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ..... Japan  
 DISTRIBUTOR ..... U.S. Suzuki Motor Corporation  
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**SUZUKI RS175Z**



*Low seat height and plenty of torque  
make the RS fun to throw around.*

hills in second gear, and wheelies were a snap in first through third gears. For the chassis it's in, this is an excellent powerplant. It's not real fast — compared with a 175 racer — but it has just the right spread of power to make the bike easily rideable.

**BITS AND PIECES**

As we said earlier, one of the improvements of the RS is the new odometer, and this is a big improvement. With it, the owner can enter enduros without adding one, which used to be a lot of trouble and expense. Also, it's good to know that this particular odometer is one of the best for enduro work.

The brakes are good, although nothing to get overly excited about. The rear brake pedal sits a little low, and the brake chatters some on rough ground, but it doesn't lock up unexpectedly.

Seat height is low on the RS, which is good for maneuvering on the side of hills, but overall the chassis is low and taller riders will spend a lot of time worrying about snagging their feet on rocks and stumps.

Even though the fuel tank only holds 1.6 gallons, we estimate the range to be right around 50 miles; good enough for a good bit of trailriding, or even the average enduro loop.

Neither the shift lever nor brake pedal has folding ends, but what can you expect for a budget bike? It took years to get folders on the PE...

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

All in all, it's a very likable bike. Priced 200+ dollars less than the PE, it is a viable alternative for the rider who's just beginning, or who feels he doesn't need the total competition features of the Pure Enduro bike. For all it can do, and the easy manner in which it does it, the RS is a pretty good buy. □

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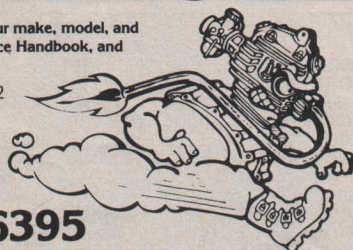


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