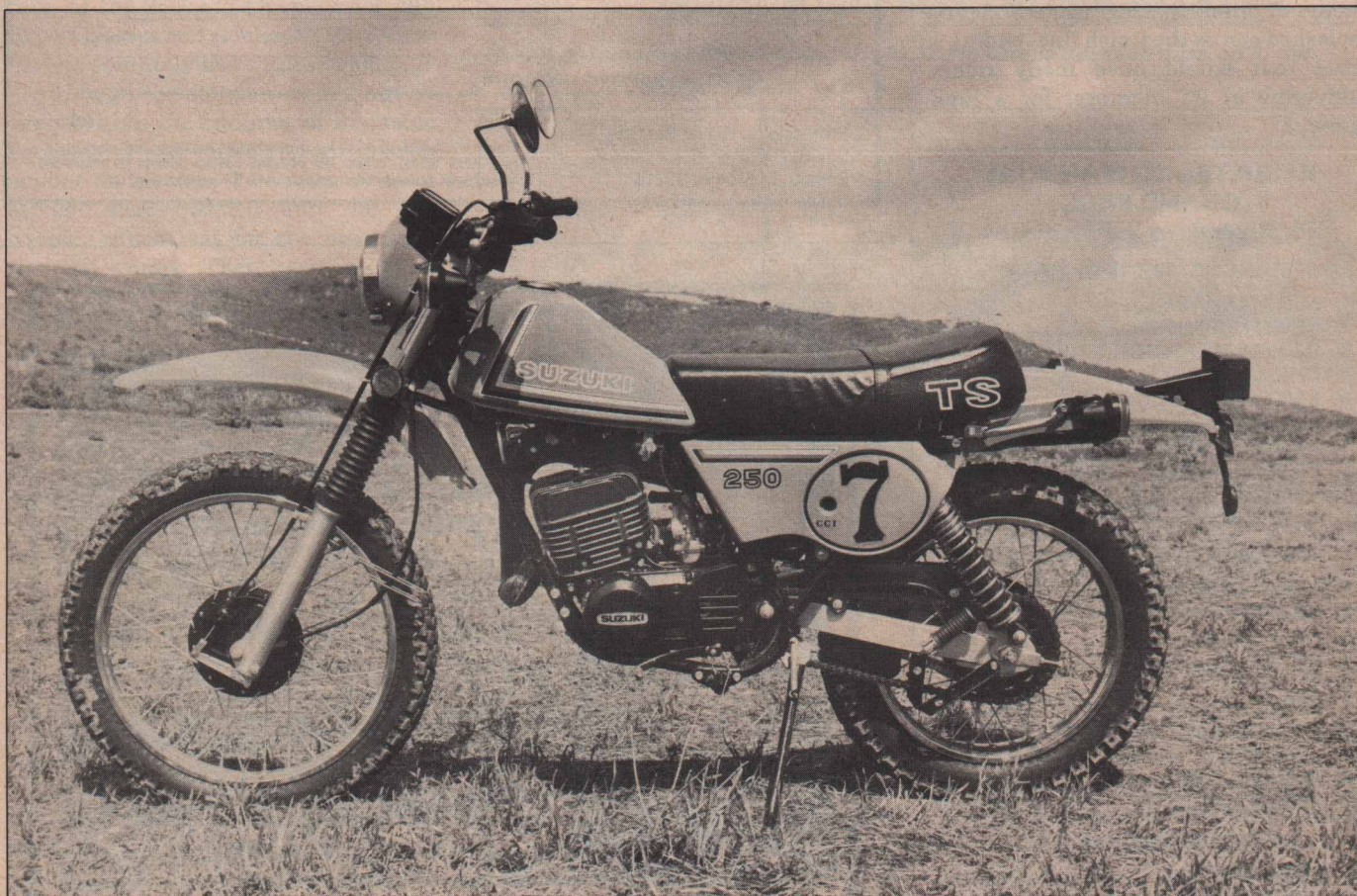


BULK RATING

SUZUKI TS250

Heavy-Duty Dual-er

By the Editors of *Dirt Bike*



Not too long ago, we ran our test of the Suzuki TS125 dual-purpose, street/trail motorcycle. If you'll recall, the bike was pleasant to ride, easy to get along with on both the blacktop and the backroads, and felt fairly light. It added up to a sound one-two-five dual-purpose package that could be ridden back and forth to work, *and* taken out to the local hills for a little recreational ranting and raving.

Now it's time to evaluate and road-test the big daddy of the TS line, the 250. At first glance, it appears very similar to the 125. All of the cosmetics are the same, with the exception of the

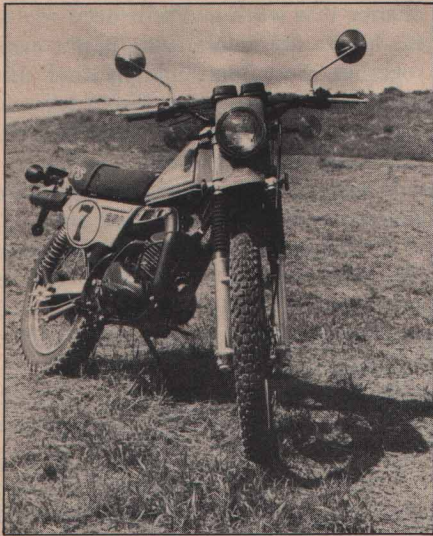
numbers on the side panels, paint, and detail design. The only big difference between the two bikes, as they sit on the dealer's floor, is that the 250 has a tachometer, and the 125 doesn't. They're hard to tell apart at a glance.

But, that's just looks. There's another way the bikes differ greatly. That difference is in how well each works on and off the road. The 125 was not bad at all out along the trails, but didn't have what it took to be a really good street bike as well. At the other end of the tube, the TS250 is an excellent street machine, but cannot take the abuse of dirt riding. You would tend to

think that, if anything, the 250 would be the better trailer because of its engine, but there's another thing you have to consider: the bike's weight.

When we rode the 125, it did everything it was asked to do, without much fight. But, when you tried to coax the 250 into twisting around trees, or changing directions quickly in the dirt, it balked badly.

When a person is considering buying an on/off-road bike, he must first make the decision as to what its main purpose in life will be: to get him back and forth to work every day, and occasionally hit the dirt, or just spend a little



Although it looks sleek and dirt-oriented, the TS250 is more at home on pavement or a smooth fireroad.

SUZUKI TS250T Specifications

RETAIL PRICE\$1449
 ENGINE TYPE Single-cylinder, two-stroke
 BORE AND STROKE 70mm x 64mm
 DISPLACEMENT 246cc
 HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY) N/A
 CARBURETION Mikuni 29mm
 FUEL TANK CAPACITY 2.6 gallons
 GAS/OIL RATIO Oil injection
 TRANSMISSION Five-speed, constant mesh
 GEARING, FRONT/REAR 15/40
 IGNITION Suzuki PEI
 WHEELBASE 1410mm (55.5 inches)
 GROUND CLEARANCE 270mm (10.6 inches)
 STEERING HEAD ANGLE 29 degrees
 WEIGHT (CLAIMED) 267 pounds dry
 INTENDED USE, MFR. Street/trail
 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Japan
 DISTRIBUTOR:
 U. S. Suzuki
 13767 Freeway Drive
 Santa Fe Springs, California

time on the pavement and do a lot of trailing out in the wilderness. If he wants the first, mostly street use, then the TS250 will suit him just fine. But if he wants a good trailbike, he had better look elsewhere.

Let's break this down and see just what the TS250 will do in each situation.

On the road, the TS250 is one of the finest dualers around. The claw-type tires run smoothly along blacktop and freeway rain grooves, and the whole motorcycle feels stable. As for the engine, it'll pull the legal 55 miles per hour speed limit comfortably and still get more than 50 miles to a gallon of gas. If you have any distance to travel to work, that's a big load off of your wallet. And to even better that, we slapped on a taller counter sprocket, a 17-tooth, rather than the stock 16 unit. This gave the bike a five mile per hour advantage over the stocker at the same

[Continued on page 63]

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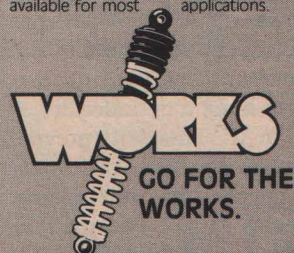


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[Continued from page 61]

rpm range, from 55 mph at 5000 rpm, to 60 mph at 5000 r's.

The saddle is easy to get along with during street use; no numb buns here. The oil injection system eliminates pre-mixing, and the five-speed gearbox was good enough to do the job without feeling that you needed another gear on top.

That is the good side of the TS250. Now, about the dirt. If you take in the



A lot of muscle comes out of the powerplant, but it takes even more body strength to keep it going in the right direction.

mild, easy-rolling fireroads and trails, then the bike will give you no hassles. The motor has good, smooth power all along the curve, with no abrupt blasts anywhere. It will climb hills effortlessly, as long as you have a bit of a run at them.

But, once you take the TS off the main fireroad and out into twisty or rough terrain, it feels as if you've just switched to a totally different bike. In comes the weight factor, immediately! The suspension rapidly becomes totally unforgiving. If you lean the bike over at slow speeds, it will keep on going, right to the ground. And if you crank the throttle to bring it back around, the rear end will spin out and whip the bike to the turf even quicker. If you see any mud, turn around and take the bike back in the other direction. Once the TS is planted into the muck, it just sinks. With its weight, it'll take more than just you yourself to pull it out.

Looking at the suspension, there is very little to talk about. The forks are marginal, but the shocks are horrible. They don't work at all. If you hit a rain rut, the back end will go out of its way to get in it and stay in it. If you get into any whoops, try to slow down and get out of them as soon as possible.

Little features that upgrade the TS are the folding blinkers, plastic fenders

and side panels, and the little bash plate under the double-downtube, split-cradle frame. The flexible turn signals were really put through the paces, as they were bent in every direction imaginable, at various speeds, on differing surfaces. And not one of the four even cracked.

As with the 125 TS, the 250 called for a 600-mile break-in maintenance check. This was again done using only the tools furnished with the tool kit, which sits underneath the seat. The engine bolts were all in need of a little tightening, as were the cylinder and head bolts.

End of The Road

It is hard to say that the TS250 is a good bike, but it's also tough to say that it is a bad bike. It all depends upon where you ride it. If you need street transportation, a bike that will handle the roads at cruising speeds, then the TS250 will be rated as good. But, if you need a real dirt-oriented motorcycle, one that will go in tight, rough terrain and handle the nastiest mother nature has to offer, then the TS will get a marginal rating.

The power is there in either case, but the ground makes all the difference in the world. □



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