

DIRT BIKE

**KAWASAKI
KDX175**

**1500
MILES
ON A
HONDA
XL250**

**FIRST
TEST:
YAMAHA
FIVE-
STROKE
TT250**

**SUPERCROSS:
MID-BATTLE**



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DIRT BIKE

JUNE 1980

VOLUME 10, NO. 6



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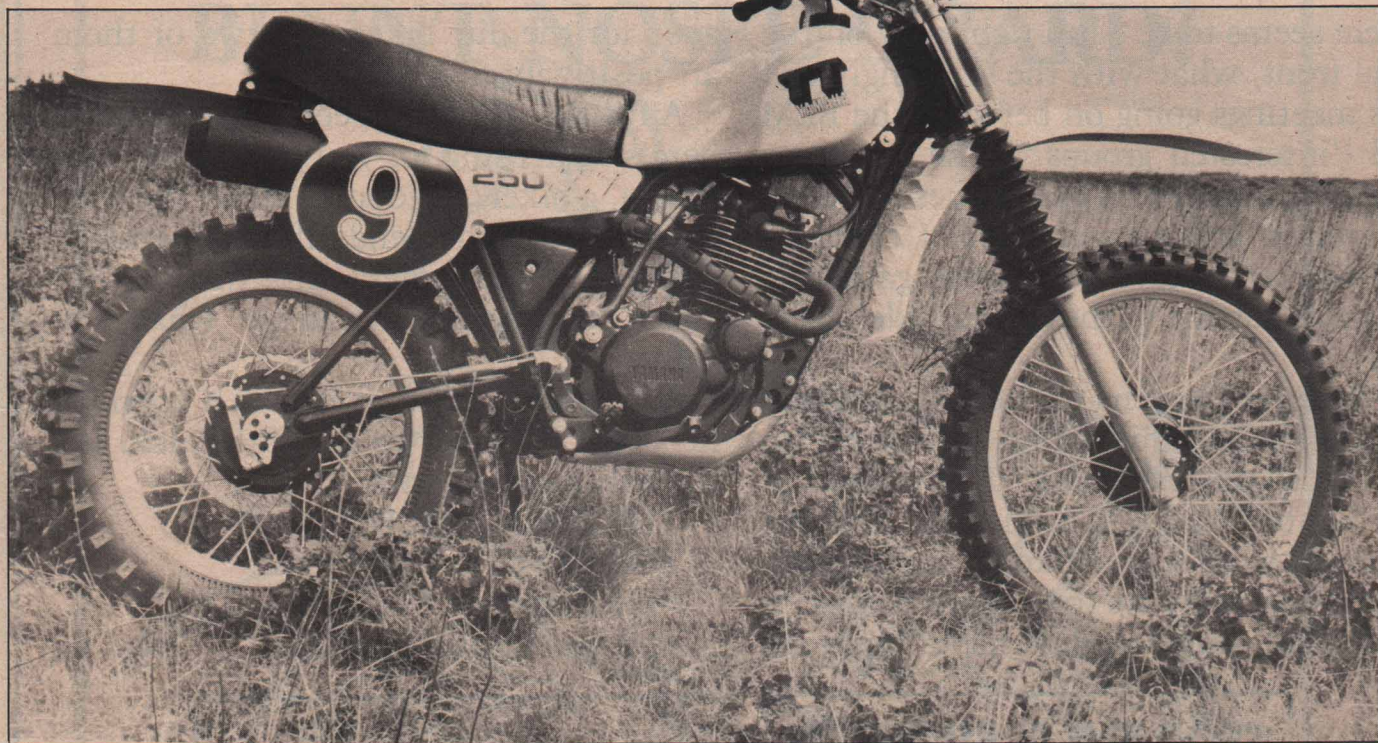
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YAMAHA TT250G

A NEW HAT IN THE RING



The First Monoshock Four-Stroke Makes Its Debut

By the Editors of Dirt Bike

Slowly, but surely, everyone is getting into the four-stroke market. The TT-500 opened the door in the late '70s, and proved that a market indeed did exist. Suzuki followed hard on Yamaha's heels with the DR370, a basic, no-frills piece of off-road transportation which, in the hands of many a backyard mechanic, has been often transformed into a reasonably competitive motorcycle.

Honda blew everyone's socks off in 1979, with not one, but *three* excellent four-stroke designs, one in each major weight class, and as the year wore on more and more of the snappy red machines were popping up on starting

lines. Honda further shook the market by offering a full factory hop-up kit for each bike, and horsepower could be adjusted to suit anyone's needs.

Late in '79, vague rumblings were heard at Kawasaki, and before long the KLX250 appeared, based on the bone-slow KL250 motor—guaranteed to provoke yawns at even the most excitable bench racing sessions—but wonder of wonders, the bike featured a suspension and chassis taken directly from a KX250 motocrosser. Little Green won the suspender race hands-down, although they kicked up very little dust doing so.

Throughout all this hubbub, Yamaha

muddled right along, updating the TT-500 from time to time, a little chassis tuning here, a couple of motor improvements there; but it remained basically the same bike: a brute-fast 500 single, with questionable handling manners on anything other than a fireroad.

It started looking like Yamaha was dragging their corporate feet.

What were they going to do, if anything? Would the next year show some radical changes on the TT? Would they be concentrating all the brains and bucks on the development of the IT series (which has been improving steadily for the last few years)? Or maybe they'd try to blow their arch rival,



Honda, right out of the water with a whole line of thumpers, in a bid to take over the whole market? After all, we've been told for years that someday....

Well, last November we found out. In 1980 Yamaha would release a TT250, a brand-new motor in an all-new monoshock frame. We managed to procure some photographs and tentative specifications for the new bike to whet our appetite on, and if you have a January copy of DB lying around you might want to drag it out and compare notes—just to see what we were wrong about, of course. We've been testing the real thing for quite some time now (the first one in the country), and this is what we found out:

Riding Impression

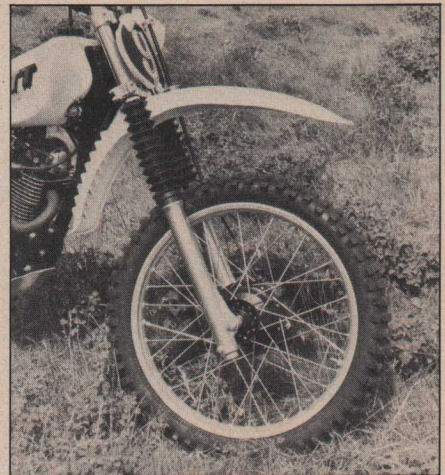
After being teased for a few months with specifications, photos and broad hints, the first thing we wanted to do with the TT was ride it. Practically as soon as it was delivered, we had it in the back of one of the semi-yellow DIRT BIKE trucks and were smoking on out to anyplace at all with a reasonable amount of dirt.

While various members of the staff and testing crew fumbled with an assortment of riding gear, the TT contentedly idled as it warmed up. It is an easy starter; choke full-on, a couple of easy kicks and it pops right to life from dead cold. The kickstarter is a long, curved affair which folds well out of the way of the normal boot-snagging protuberances, and the light kick necessary to start is primarily due to a kickstarter-actuated compression release, much like the system on the Honda XRs. As we were admiring these features and the unbelievably quiet exhaust, the first-dressed tester quickly hopped aboard and took off for the hills. For the rest of the day it was a constant trade-off session, as everyone fought over the chance to have another ride. And these are *grown men*.

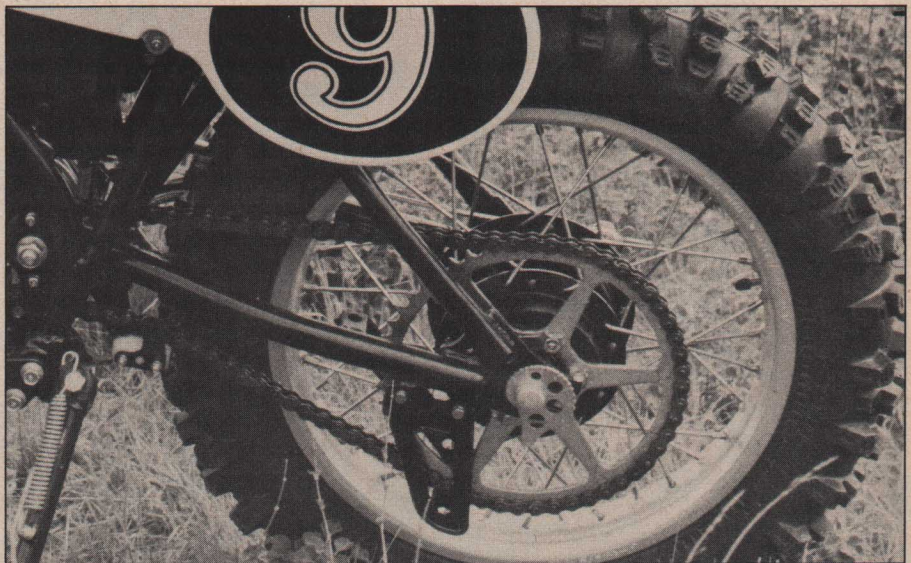
First off, it's obvious that the TT's strong point is torque. It will jump right off from idle with zero application of throttle, and then proceed to climb straight up the nearest near-vertical surface. A real stump-puller. On another day, the TT snorted up two of the nastiest hills we normally use in our testing program (a lot of test bikes *never* make it up these hills), and after the top was gained, with a maximum use of body English and throttle trickery, it was discovered that the choke was never properly shut off, and the Yamaha accomplished the feat with the choke half-on. Amazing! Most other bikes would load



When was the last time you saw a number plate you could drink out of?



We found the forks a little too soft for quick running. Damping is good, however.



Rear wheel/swingarm assembly is clean and uncluttered. Monoshock could use a little more spring.

up and die in the same situation.

On level ground, the 250 revs out much farther than we would expect, but it's better to short-shift and keep the revs down—it'll get there just as quickly. The gears are spaced reasonably well, with first being low enough to climb up anything it would be reasonable to climb. Fifth gear, however, is a rather tall jump, and because of the mild state of tune, the overall power characteristics or wind resistance, don't expect to pull top gear on anything but level ground, or downhill.

Carburetion seems to be spot-on for most riding, although it would be interesting to try to improve airflow and check the results. The TT's air box is a rather crude design, with a pad-type filter, and the air intake appears to be slightly restrictive. It wouldn't surprise us in the least if the TT showed a power increase after the air box was opened up a little—or if a different air

filter system entirely was installed. Accessory manufacturers take note.

The suspension can best be described as being on the softer side of "plush." The forks have a good amount of travel for an enduro bike—about nine inches—but could use stiffer springs. When an average (160 pounds or so) tester sat on our bike, we lost about three inches of travel. This can be cured in a number of ways: by installing preload spacers in the fork tubes, or possibly air caps, or just stiffer fork springs. Of the three, preload spacers are the cheapest. To use an old enduro rider's trick, just saw an inch or so off each end of the bars, file down the burrs on the cut-off pieces, and then drop them into the fork tubes above the springs—instant preload.

Aside from the too-light springs, the forks worked quite well. The damping action was good, showing no nasty habits of hydraulic lock or pogging.

Our only problems came when we ran out of travel over rough ground, and then the forks would bottom solidly.

The rear suspension is quite soft also, and before too long in the test, we had stiffened up the preload on the mono to the max. Our next step, and the one we would suggest to any aggressive rider, will be to install the heavier accessory spring available from Yamaha. As it is, the rear end will deliver an extremely smooth ride at a moderate speed, but the bike becomes more difficult to control as the pace is quickened.

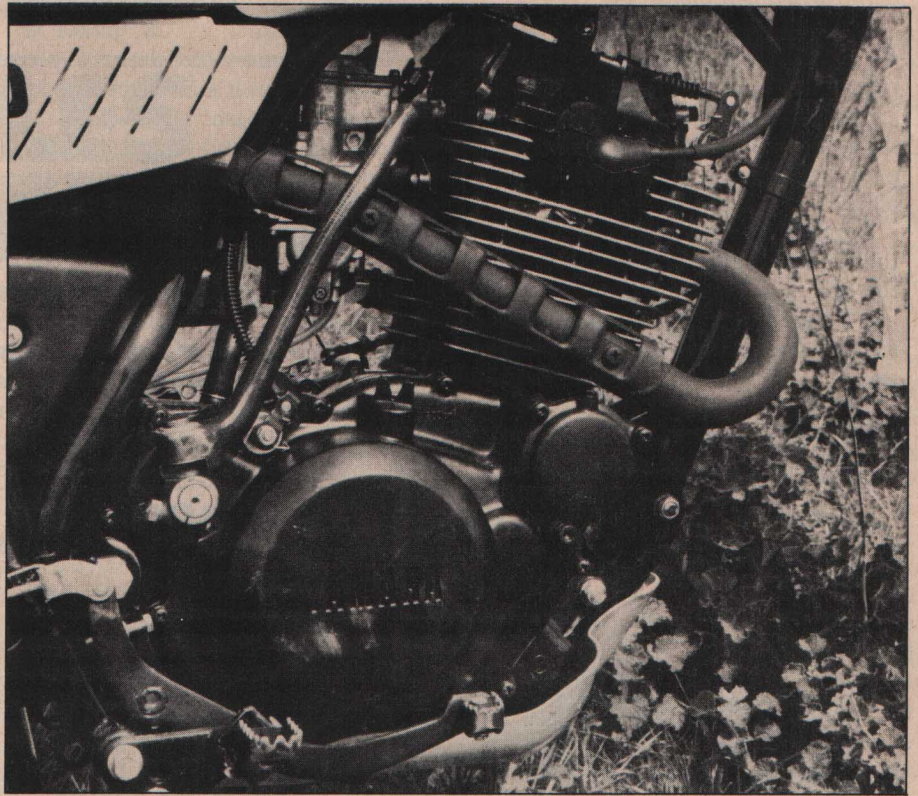
As in the front end, the mono seems to be up to the job, but it's difficult to evaluate the whole package as a potential racer with the softer springs. It seems Yamaha has decided to go the soft route for the convenience of the casual trail rider, which is just as well, because the TT is an extremely pleasant bike to pilot at trail riding speeds. All of us would-be ISDT stars are going to have a little work ahead of us, though, and a little spring buying.

The handling was a surprise. Even though both ends were soft, the TT tracked well, and neither end showed any tendency to want to wash out in a turn. The softness did affect its performance over rain ruts and the like. Whenever we encountered a grooved surface as such, the TT wanted to drop in and follow the irregularity, although the problem wasn't as severe as it was with a few other bikes we've tested. Overall, we'd have to rate the handling as good, with the reservation that if only the suspension was a little more aggressive, the handling would be that much better.

Details

The frame is a new design, and it's obvious that much thought went into the idea of keeping all the weight down low. Aside from the frame itself, and half of the motor, the only heavy pieces above the centerline are the pipe and the monoshock. The seat base is plastic, as is the tank. The side panels weigh little at all, and the air box is made of plastic, too. The entire bike, with all necessary oils and a gallon of gas in the tank, tips the scales at right around 247 pounds. If that seems like a lot, just keep in mind that the Honda XR250 claims a *dry weight* of 251. This doesn't make the Yamaha a featherweight by any means, but certainly makes it a lot easier to ride over the long haul.

The pipe we just mentioned above is quite heavy and a bulky unit at that, which is a shame. There will be a num-



Motor is a simple two-valve four-stroke with a lot of grunt. Kickstarter-actuated compression release makes for easy starting.

ber of TT250s out there with accessory pipes on them because of the weight factor, and there's no way around the fact that they're going to be much louder than the stocker, which is whisper-quiet. It's really refreshing to ride around on a bike which is so quiet that wind noise through the helmet is noticeable.

Both wheels are the usual Yamaha numbers—good, light hubs laced up to DID rims, with a Bridgestone wrapped around the outside. We could say that the brakes are typical, too, but it wouldn't be true. The front is nice and progressive, but it takes a strong two fingers to hold the TT back on a long downhill. The rear is much the same, with one good point: It takes a real club foot to lock it up. Everything lines up fine—the brake pivot pulls right across the centerline of the swingarm pivot, etc.—and with the help of the four-stroke engine braking, it's no trouble at all to make the rear end behave. No chattering, no hopping, just good, strong braking. Excellent!

The chain is guided on its path with the help of a rubbing block-type tensioner, and the rear sprocket is protected by a not-too-sturdy looking rock guard. Adjustment at the rear wheel is by snail adjusters, the whole assembly being very clean and simple. One interesting note: The countershaft sprock-

et cover is one piece with the mag cover, and the whole unit is made out of plastic. A very light and durable set-up, yes, but you have to pull off the whole thing to get at the sprocket. Hacksaws cut plastic as well as metal, though.

An Impartial Comparison

The TT's closest competition is the Honda XR250, and as far as speed goes, we'd have to rate the TT and the '79 XR as being virtually dead even, with the TT being a little more willing to rev out. The '80 XR has undergone a few engine improvements, and although we have only had one introductory ride on the 250, it seems a fraction faster than the TT. Both bikes are softly suspended, although the Honda is a little stiffer. The TT has to win the damping prize, though, as both ends are quite a bit smoother in action. And last but not least, the dry weight on the XR is 251.4 pounds, and the TT's dry weight is 236 pounds.

Bits and Pieces

The TT has a couple of unusual details, one of which is the white plastic handguards, just the ticket to protect your dainty paws from mud, roost, or soft bushes (nothing will save you from the hard kind). Also, the front number plate doubles as a one-quart water jug, just in case you may want a drink.

[Continued on page 54]

[Continued from page 53]

The diamond-type frame, which uses the engine cases as the lower frame member, helps out the ground clearance significantly, but we still pounded the ground occasionally. Keep that skid plate tight, or you'll wind up bouncing off the rocks with bare cases.

Because of the monoshock design, the TT has a good, narrow shape, but the seat was just a little too wide for our tastes. A couple of our testers were looking for buddy pegs after the first ride.

The shifting was on the stiff side while we were breaking the TT in. The throttle had to be completely closed in

order to change up a gear. Downshifting was no problem.

The black and white design is a real head-turner, but it's also a bear to keep clean. At least it isn't yellow.

Both the shift and brake pedal are of the folding design, and although there is a place to carry water, there is no provision for carrying tools.

Conclusion

Even though the TT250 is a very exciting concept, as a whole, it isn't an overly exciting bike. Which is probably just what Yamaha had in mind. If you want excitement, go out and buy their TT500. But if you want an easy-to-handle four-stroke trailbike, you're in

the right ballpark.

We liked it. The whole bike has a good feel about it, and even though the suspension kept us from going as fast as we'd have liked to, the potential for improvement is there. You've got two ways to go: Stock, the TT is a pleasant, torquey trailbike with the ability to get out of just about any situation you might get it into. With a little suspension modification, it will be able to do all that much more, at a higher rate of speed. Either way, the TT250 is clearly the first new wave of future trailbikes. □

YAMAHA TT250G Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Yamaha TT250G
ENGINE TYPE	Four-stroke single, OHC
BORE AND STROKE	75 x 56.5mm
DISPLACEMENT	249cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY)	N/A
CARBURETION	Mikuni VM30SS
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	155
NEEDLE JET	?
JET NEEDLE	?
PILOT JET	17.5
SLIDE NUMBER	?
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	Yamalube
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.8 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Wet sump
OIL CAPACITY	1.7 quarts
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed, constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.642
2	1.684
3	1.260
4	1.000
5	0.821
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	15/51
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	ND W22EP
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	Yes/yes/very quiet
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Up-pipe, right side
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube, diamond-type
WHEELBASE	55.1 inches (140cm)
GROUND CLEARANCE	11.0 inches (28 cm)
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	34 inches
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	28.5 degrees
TRAIL	120mm (4.7 inches)
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	241 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	3.00x21 Bridgestone
REAR	5.10x17 Bridgestone
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Telescopic forks, 9.1 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Monoshock, 8.5 inches
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Off-road
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$1459
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	N/A
RINGS ONLY	N/A
CYLINDER	N/A
SHIFT LEVER	N/A
BRAKE PEDAL	N/A
FRONT SPROCKET	N/A

NOTE:— At press time parts prices were not yet available.

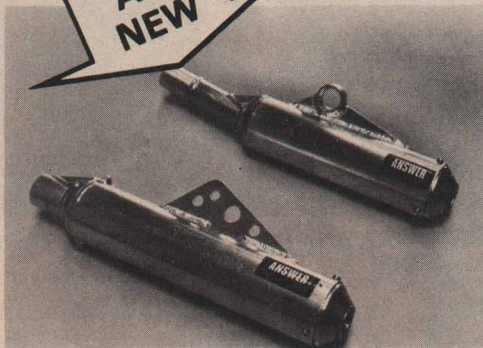
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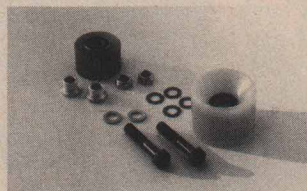


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	YZ250 E, F
	YZ250 G
	YZ400 E, F
	YZ465 G
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400/440 Magnum	CR250 R
250 Magnum 1980	
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YZ100 E, F	Tail Magnum/1980 Magnum
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