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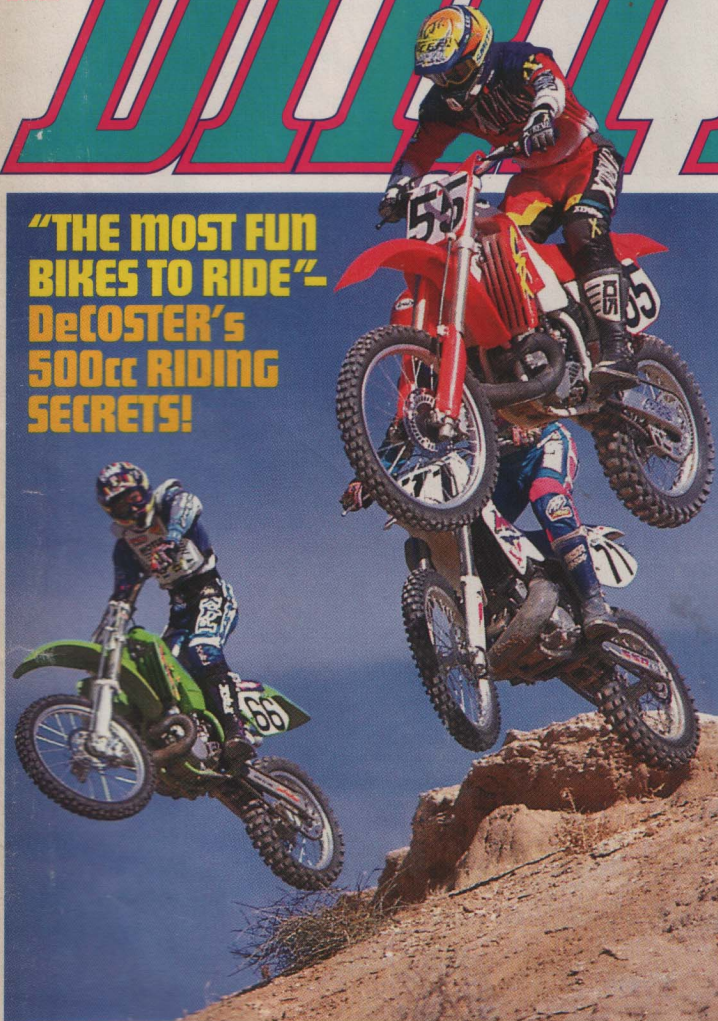
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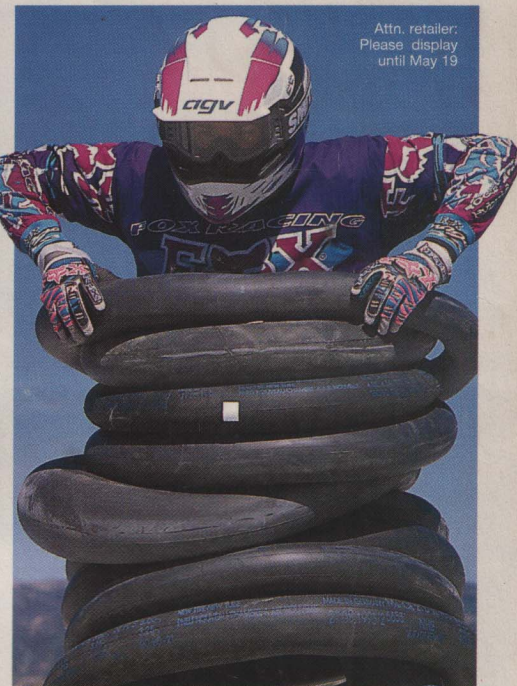
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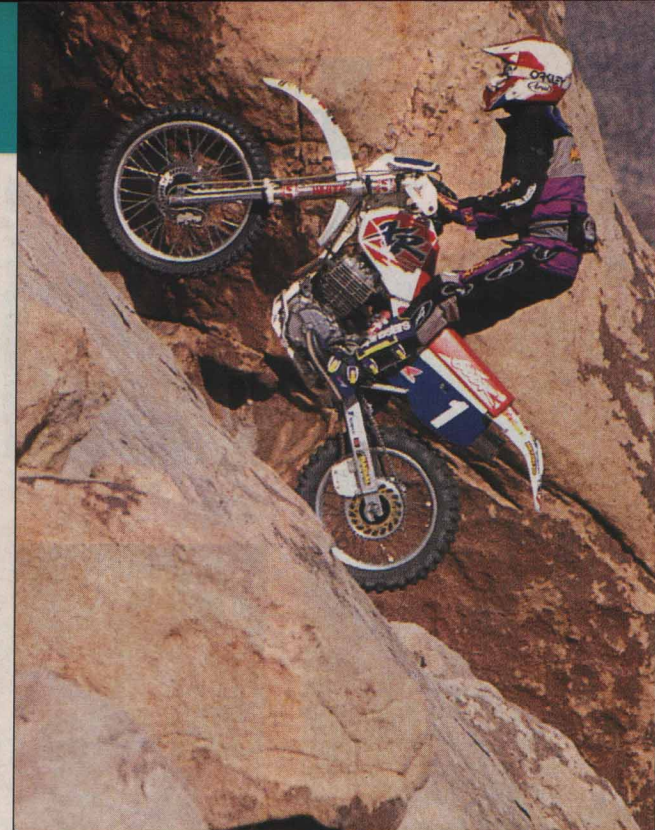
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ON THE COVER: Yes, that's Joe Papa trying to climb out from under an inner tube comparison this month. And yes, those are 500 motocross/off-road bikes leaping into a two-level comparison test, in the same issue as a lightweight enduro bike shootout. And yes, we're looking inside more works bikes. That's us: hopeless yes men. Photos by Joe, Ron and Tim. Color seps by D.I.S.C.

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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. *Dirt Bike* does all of its testing and photography legally on public land, or private land with permission from the owner(s), and we abide by the local laws concerning vehicle registration and muffler/spark arrester requirements. We are not responsible for quality of aftermarket accessories we use.



Remember the last race you saw? Remember how the leader *never* seemed to shut off? Wide-open down the straight-aways, over jumps, through turns? What does it take to ride like that? Awesome natural ability used to be the only thing that could do it. Now there's another way: Suzuki's new DR125SER.

Hold on, now. This new Suzuki *won't* turn you into that fearless race leader, but as long as you have mastered the basics of riding a dirt bike, you will be able to twist the throttle to the stop and hold it there for miles, no matter what. You have to; the little 125 has less power and more weight than any bike we have tested in the past

◀ *There are long lists of things you can and can't do on the DR125S. Most things requiring horsepower and suspension are on the can't-do list. Luckily, having a great time is on the can-do list.*

decade. Full throttle isn't just for going fast, it's often necessary just to keep going.

Suzuki's new DRS lets you do things you simply can't on most other dirt bikes. We also discovered that it can't do some things normal dirt bikes take in stride. Because of its peculiar mixture of capabilities and handicaps, this bike teases the brain as few others do. Investigating it was absolutely essential for us, but for you, is it worth buying? Rigorous testing was the only way to find out.

**THE DR125S CAN-DO/
CAN'T-DO LIST**

Because the little DRS is street-legal, you *can* roll down your driveway, take a daring leap off the curb—thanks to its semi-long-travel suspension—and take off down the street. You *can* then proceed to outrun your neighbor's annoying dog—

as long as you have warmed the astoundingly cold-blooded DR before attempting your escape.

Should the dog chase you toward the highway, you *can't* continue onto that high-speed road legally in some states. Typically, machines of less than 200cc are prohibited from freeway travel, and for good reason. Though the DR125S *can* reach an indicated 70 mph on a still day on level ground, it lacks the reserve thrust for maintaining legal speeds against serious grades or high winds. No matter what road you choose, you *can't* pass many road-going vehicles with the burst of speed most motorcycles provide. In most situations, VW vans and loaded trucks are the only targets within striking range.

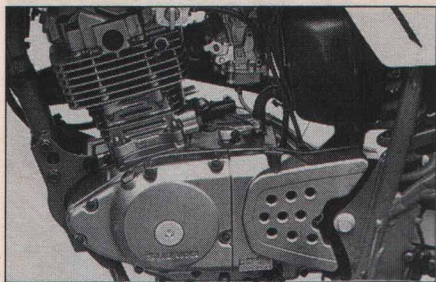
You *can* effortlessly ditch the dog by taking to the dirt. The DR can maintain an impressive pace on hard surfaces and is a

The do's & don't's of the small-bore DRS

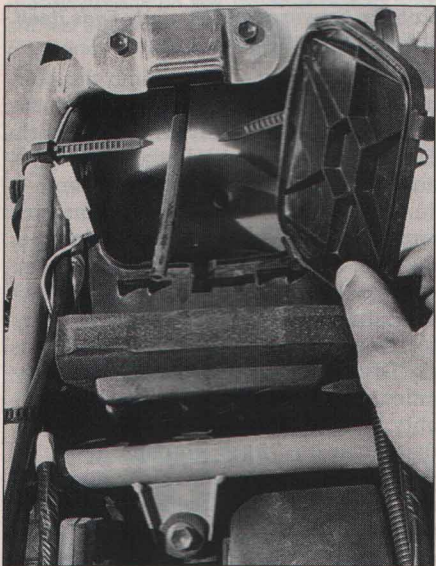
BEGINNERS' LUCK



SUZUKI DR125S



The DR125S's engine has engine styling that calls to mind the '56 Maico Typhoon street twin. Jetted, we presume, for air quality standards for the year 8000, the DR takes years to warm up enough to run without the choke. Some editors feared the approach of deadline before the Suzuki reached operating temperature.



A bulbous airbox hides the surprisingly motocross-bike-like air filter from dirt and water, but not air. The DR125 breathes through the rearward-facing nostrils. Removing the airbox lid makes the lean stock jetting much too lean. You get limp throttle response, less power and pathetic, annoying intake noise. Leave it on and the bike runs perfectly when warm.



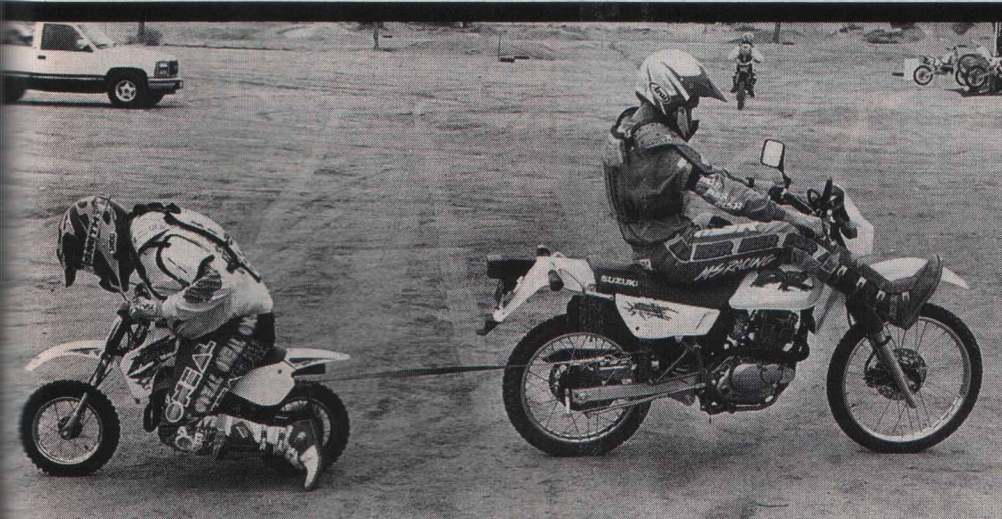
Somehow, supercross rider Darren Hoefft managed to find a way to wheelie the DR125S. A heavy flywheel and road-racing-style top-end cam make for smooth low-speed response and impressive top-end power but keeps the DRS's front end glued to the ground.

nimble handler in tight, technical terrain. In an unprecedented move, Suzuki has equipped the smallest DR, a machine aimed at rank beginners, with acceptably firm front suspension for enthusiastic off-roading. Sadly, the spring on the slender, steel-bodied rear shock is pathetically soft. It acts as an off-road speed-limiter. As you motor along in the dirt, the front end says "Go for it!", the rear end says "Slow down!" and the engine says, "What?"

The skinny tires will introduce you, willing or not, to two-wheel drifts. Most of the time you *can* regain control. If the dirt is soft, you will have to resort to the bottom two ratios in the DRS's slick-shifting six-speed gearbox, five-digit revs and frequent clutch brutality. If the dog closes in during a stall, you can get underway again quickly by hitting the electric-start button. Don't waste time looking for a kickstarter; there isn't one. *Don't* waste



The beautifully finished disc front brake with blacked-out trim bears pleasing resemblance in performance and appearance to the impressive stoppers on Suzuki's absurdly fast street bikes. A pizza cutter-like 70/100-21 front tire limits the effectiveness of the fine brake. Surprise! The forks are acceptably firm for trail riding. DR125S riders must consider firmer spring and psychiatric help for supercross.



People see a four-stroke 125 and think it's gutless, so be prepared for some bizarre challenges when riding the DR125. Here, the DR makes fairly quick work of KTM's new 50 in an impromptu "drag" race.

1994 SUZUKI DR125SER

Engine type	.....Two-valve, air-cooled, SOHC 4-stroke
Displacement	.....124cc
Bore and stroke	.....57mm x 48.8mm
Carburetion	.....31mm Mikuni
Fuel tank capacity	.....3.3 gal.
Gearing	.....16/53
Lighting coil	.....Yes
Spark arrester	.....Yes
EPA-legal	.....Yes
Claimed dry weight	.....251 lb.
Running weight w/no fuel	.....258 lb.
Wheelbase	.....54.5" (1385mm)
Rake/trail	.....29°/4.4"
Ground clearance	.....9.4" (240mm)
Seat height	.....31.5" (800mm)

Tire size and type:

Front	.....70/100-21 Bridgestone Trail Wing 19
Rear	.....90/90-18 Bridgestone Trail Wing 18

Suspension:

Front	.....Showa, 8.1" (205mm) travel
Rear	.....Showa, adj. prel., 7.9" (200mm) travel

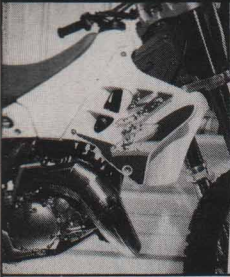
Country of originJapan

Suggested retail price\$2999

Distributor/manufacturer:

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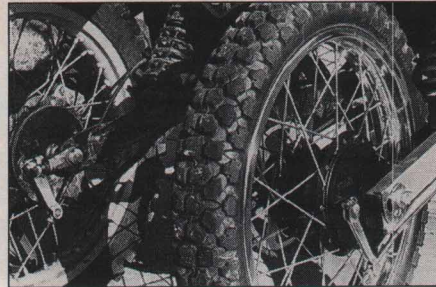
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SUZUKI DR125S



A peculiar enclosed DR125S rear brake system bears an uncanny resemblance to the unit on Junk Man Joe Kosch's '76 RM125A. History books refer to these units as drum brakes. The DRS made no drum sounds, not even a squeak, and worked impressively except when overworked on big downhills. This is hardly a problem because the DR rarely finds itself at the top of large hills.

time by attempting to outclimb the dog; the DR's hillclimbing ability isn't in the same league as a healthy terrier. If there's little or no run at the hill, there's little or no chance you will make it to the top.

As the chase continues, you can remain calm, safe in the knowledge that the dog will eventually tire and give up. Thanks to the generous 3.3-gallon fuel tank, the DR125S can continue motoring for 180 miles before its reserve fuel supply is gone. Avoid full throttle for a few miles and the DR's range grows considerably. This means you can ride farther than most dirt bikes available today. If you wish, you can outdistance annoying dogs in neighboring towns with ease. A topped-off DR125S is a force to be reckoned with in any relay chase.

DR MAINTENANCE

(THE DON'T-HAVE-TO-DO LIST)

Even though the DR125 gets a serious workout on every outing, it rarely shows signs of fatigue, even on extended rides. Our DR125 never got the gentle break-in Suzuki recommends. It was shoved into a rough life of continuous wide-open riding and got almost no maintenance at all during the test. When we finally looked at the little DRS we found the valve clearances were just as Suzuki set them, the engine didn't use or leak a bit of engine oil, and even the air filter remained clean despite repeated rides in dusty, sandy conditions.

The chain and the rear brake were the only parts of the DR that cried out for attention. The drive chain, a shoelace-like, non-O-ring 428, was overworked by yanking the chunky DR along. The drum rear brake required regular adjustments to maintain adequate power and pedal height.

THE RIGHT-THING-TO DO LIST

For a first-time adult rider, the Suzuki could hardly be more on-target. It should have a kickstarter so learners could get used to using one, but it doesn't lack anything else beginners need. Its seat is low but the bike is spacious enough for full-

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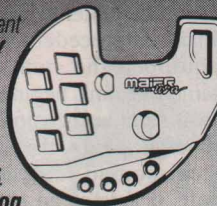
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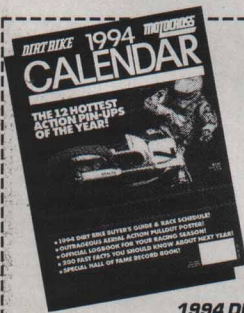
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The DR's shoelace-like drive chain stretched like hot pizza cheese pulling 420 lb. of bike and rider around. Fortunately, the steel sprockets wear like diamonds. We installed a SideWinder Mini-Max 428, a chain designed for 20-hp mini motocrossers, on the stock sprockets and shifted our chain adjustment schedule from once-a-ride to once-a-month.

sized humans—two if the need arises. It uses gas so efficiently the fuel may go stale on occasional riders before the tank is drained. The bike requires less maintenance than a concrete sidewalk. Best of all, you *can* have fun riding it as long as you accept its limits. At the moment, the DR125S is the only adult-size beginner bike that offers electric starting, street capability and near-zero maintenance. It's really the only bike in its class, so you *can't* make a better choice. □

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Best 8 Scores Count Toward 1994 Series Championship

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Sun.-BIKES
12 NOON

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(Tuesday-bikes/Wednesday-quads)
- Mar. 13 (Sun) MANCHESTER ST FOREST Sumter, SC
Sat. Registration 6 PM - Days Inn (Sumter, SC)
(quads 10 am/bikes 1 pm) West of Sumter, SC on Highway 76/378
to Highway 261S to Wedgefield, right on Rimini Rd
- Mar. 26/27 LORETTA LYNN RANCH Hurricane Mills, TN
70 mi. west of Nashville on I-40, Exit 143 to Rt 13N
- Apr. 23/24 BROWNSVILLE PARK Brownsville, PA
East of Washington, PA on Rt 40, downtown Exit south to city park
- May 7/8 WHISKEY RIDGE Sharpsburg, MD
I-70 to Rt 65 S to Sharpsburg, right on Main to South
Mechanics/Harpers Ferry Rd.
- May 21/22 BOYERS Boyers, PA
50 miles north of Pittsburgh, I-79 to I-80 east to Rt 308 S
- June 4/5 LAUREL RIDGE Laurelville, OH
1 mile east of Laurelville on Rt 56
- June 18/19 BLACKWATER Davis, WV
Rt 219 to Rt 32 into Canaan Valley
- Aug. 27/28 BURR OAKS Millfield, OH
Rt 13 east of Athens to Millfield (614) 653-7395
- Oct. 1/2 HARDROCK Bunner Ridge, WV
I-79 to East Fairmont Exit 139, follow signs
- Oct. 15/16 STARVATION POINT Elizabeth, WV
I-77 to Mineral Wells Exit, take Rt 14 to Elizabeth
- Oct. 29/30 HIGH POINT Mt. Morris, PA
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FOX
Friends don't let Friends ride...
YAMAHA
People who think they know everything annoy the HECK out of us who do!
NO BRAINS RACING TEAM
I MAY BE SLOW... BUT I'M AHEAD OF YOU!
Do Use Others Before They Do Use You...
WILD CHILD
CAUTION: Rider may bail at any time!
I EAT WHEN THAT HAPPENS
BEH RAY
SCOTT
BORN WILD
TURN THE GAS ON DUMMY
DEJIS
GREAT NEWS THE LAB CALLED YOUR BRAIN IS READY
WHAT? EVER
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