

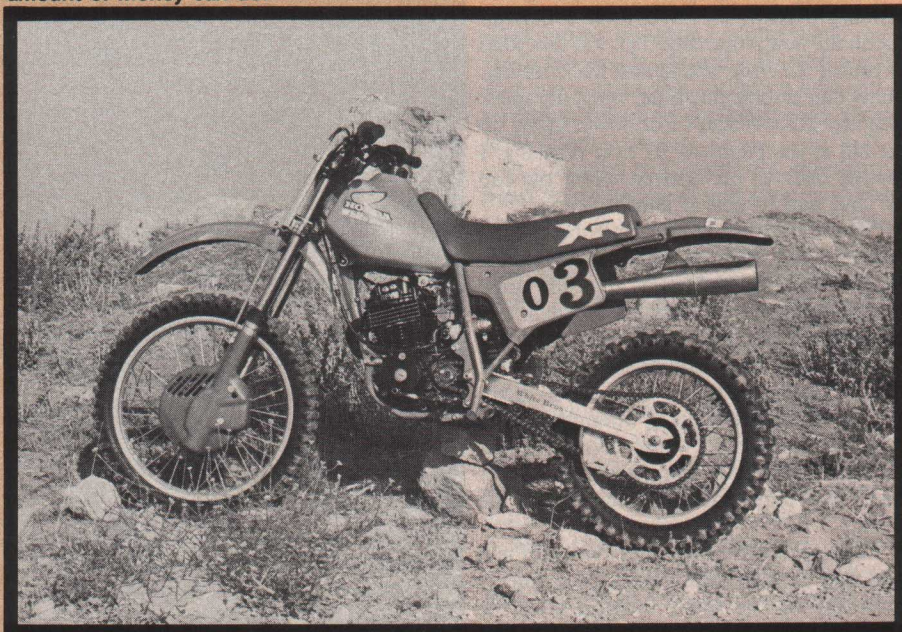
PROJECT HONDA XR 250

*Race-testing a
maximum-effort
four-stroke*

By Rick Sieman



A sanitary effort, the White Brothers XR250 shows what a lot of work and a moderate amount of money can do.



We liked the new Honda XR250 enough to explore its potential. Stock, the bike delivers 22 horsepower at the rear wheel and has a good spread of power, with most of the punch in the mid- and upper rpm range. The suspension left us a bit on the cold side, but the bike did have good manners overall.

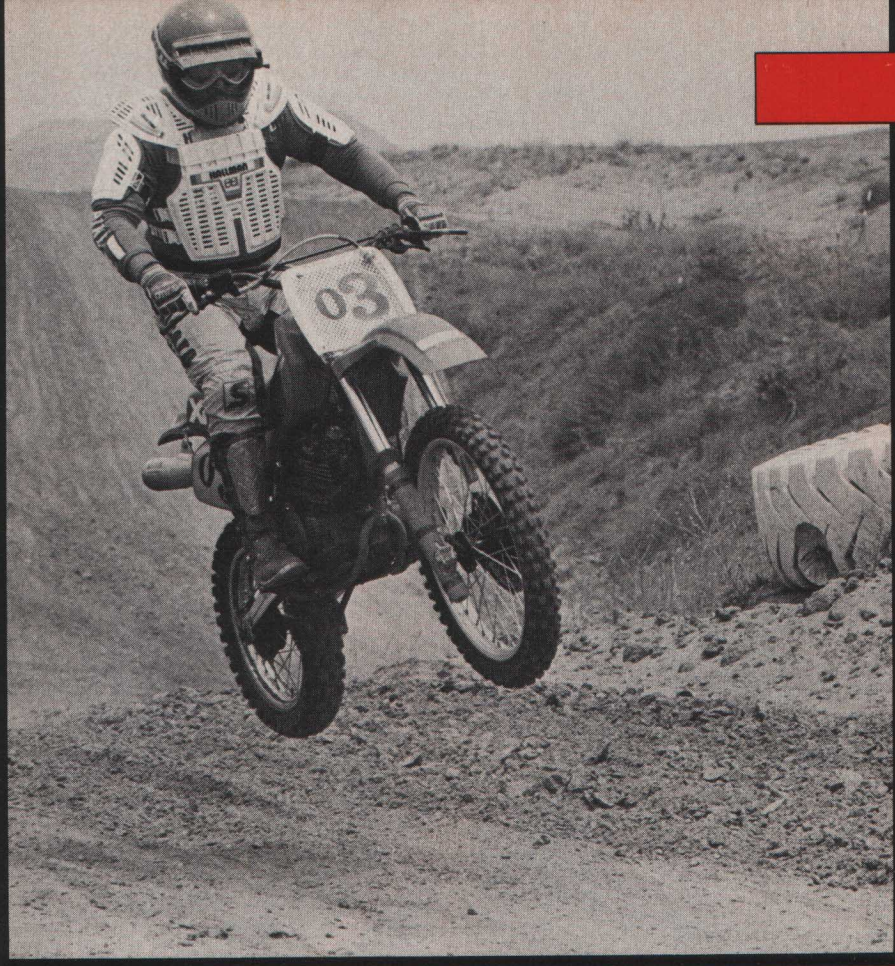
A trip to the famed and feared White Brothers was in order. These four-stroke specialists were eager to see just what could be extracted from the new radial-valved engine. While they were at it, they felt that the potential of the chassis should be explored. This meant suspension work.

Their goal was to make a 250 four-stroke that could win its class in four-stroke racing and give a decent account of itself against the two-strokes at something less than the frenzied level of Expert racing.

A BIT BIGGER, BUT STILL LEGAL

We went with the 272cc kit on our XR; this is right at the outer limits of still being considered a 250, at .080 over. WB also has a 265 kit available that keeps you legal and offers an overbore later on.

After much work (see the parts/price chart), the White Brothers ended up with 31 horsepower at the rear wheel, a full nine-horsepower increase over the stocker. And they did



In a four-stroke-only race, the XR was competitive enough to run with the 500s. Here, DB editor Rick Sieman enjoys the peppy little thumper at the Four-Stroke Championships.



Aluminum alloy abounds on the WB Honda, with a Megalloy muffled silencer and a trick swingarm. Engine mods were basic but effective enough to add nine ponies to the mild stocker.



In actual race conditions, the modified XR gave away too much on the starts to the two-strokes but was able to turn competitive lap times.

it without turning the bike into a rev monster. Four-strokes tend to run hot in stock trim, and if you make them rev too high, the reliability goes right out the window in direct proportion to the rise in heat and horsepower.

When riding the modified bike, none of the low-end flexibility is lost, and there's a big increase in power in the mid-range and upper rpm. The motor does not seem to rev any higher than a stocker, but it sure puts out a lot more steam when running through the gears.

CHASSIS SHAPE-UP

The Terry kit used in the XR made the forks very good—better, in fact, than the forks on a CR250. At the rear, the heavier spring and the reworked shock were big improvements, but we still experienced some fade after 20 minutes on a rough MX track. Overall, though, the suspension was dramatically better than stock, and for trail/pleasure riding it would be super.

The long (and expensive) aluminum alloy swingarm helped the bike track straighter and did not seem to slow down the steering in the turns. A good all-around feel was the end result of the fork, shock and swingarm mods. The frame was left alone.

One important piece of advice: The stock foam filter is pitiful. After two 30-minute motos, the bike started to run ratty. The problem was traced to clogged foam. The K&N filter from WB is a *must* if you even think about a long trailride or a race. It's our firm conviction that you *could not* finish a 100-mile enduro under moderately dusty conditions with the stock filter. It's pathetic!

TWO KINDS OF ACID TESTS

With the bike completed and broken in, we ran it in a typical motocross in the Vets' class. Frankly, the bike got smoked on the start. Even with 31 horsepower at the rear wheel, a typical 250 two-stroke is putting out 37-plus... a big advantage.

However, once we got past the start and worked on lap times, the XR didn't seem to give anything away. It was easy to ride and gave us a mid-pack finish.

After that, the bike was entered in the CMC Four-Stroke Championships at Saddleback Park. Here, in its element, it easily wheeled on the 250 Junior class in the first moto, only to have the ignition start to shoot crows in the second moto. More than competitive!

In the Old Bozos class, the 250 ran second against a field of 500s, giving little or nothing away to the big thumpers. Truly impressive little scoot and absurdly easy to ride.

THE BOTTOM LINE

While still not ready to take on the two-strokes, this is clearly the best and most competitive 250 four-stroke we've ever slung a leg across. On a rough track it'll give bigger four-strokes fits. We'd have to call the WB Project XR250 a genuine success and a pure joy to ride. □

WHAT IT COSTS AND WHERE TO GET IT

Complete exhaust system with Megalloy silencer	\$149.95	Twin Air Holland disc brake and fork guards	26.95
K&N Fabric filter	23.00	White Brothers aluminum alloy swingarm (1 inch longer than stock, 2½ pounds weight savings, with bearings and rub pads)	299.95
Carb jets, 2 mains (raise both needles)	6.00	Stock modification (rebuild, extend travel ½ inch at rear wheel, improve damping)	70.00
Heavy-duty clutch springs	15.95	Heavy-duty shock spring with adapter sleeve (stock spring 560-pound rate, WB spring 630 pounds)	52.95
Clutch extender for easier clutch pull	10.95	Notes: Complete engine kits: 5-percent discount. Cam, piston, valve spring kit together: 5-percent discount.	
272cc big-bore Arias piston kit (265cc kit also available)	74.95		
High-performance camshaft (\$56.00 refundable core charge)	99.95		
High-lift valve spring kit	68.95		
Terry fork kit (increases travel 5/8 inch)	65.11		

WHITE BROTHERS

11750 Seaboard Circle, Stanton, CA 90680
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