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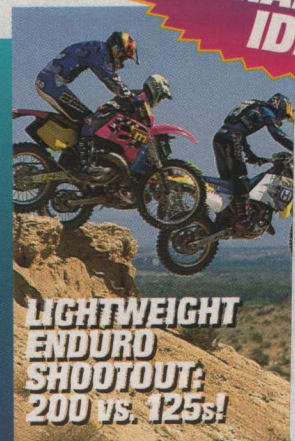
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KX100, KX80, KX60
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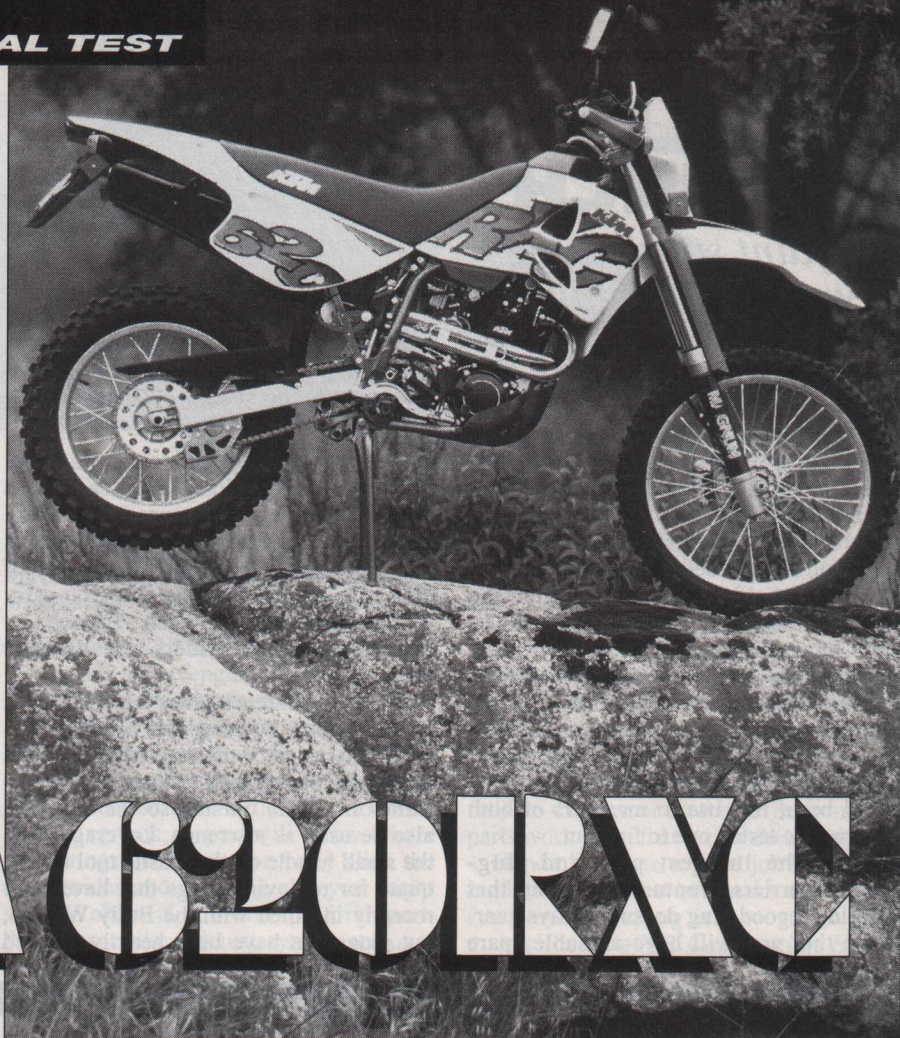


SEYMOUR

Things are getting so weird over at KTM that the LC4 line may become an episode of the *X Files*. We can see it now . . .

Agent Mulder: "What's wrong, Scully? You look like you just bit into a gaso-line-soaked lemon wrapped in aluminum foil."

Agent Scully: "I don't know. Something isn't quite . . . right. Dual-sport bikes are never as good as the dirt bikes they're based upon. Suzuki's DR350ES isn't anywhere as cool as the DR, and Honda's XR600 is a million times better than the XR650L, as good government mandates."



KTM

620 RXC

The king of dual-sports gets even better

By the singletrack-minded staff of DIRT BIKE

Agent Mulder: "Your point being? You're a fed, Scully, and a government-controlled product like a street-trail bike can't be anywhere near as efficient as its unregulated dirt counterpart. You should know that."

Agent Scully (frowning): "Maybe it's mass hysteria or some sort of corporate hypnosis or something . . ."

Agent Mulder (shaking Scully violently): "Spit it out! We have to break for a commercial in 22 seconds!"

Agent Scully: "Everybody seems to like the KTM RXC better than the dirt-only 620. How can that be? I've been going over the RXC's EPA paperwork, and it all seems to be in order, so the bike should be a toad, but it's not. Government has clearly failed to eliminate the fun factor."

Agent Mulder: "Oh my God. Break out the body armor; I'll call the President!"

THE TOO-MUCH-FUN CLUB

A weird trend continues. Last year, we liked the handling of the dual-sport 620 better than the EXC, which had a skittish front end. The RXC's headlight and street

hardware added enough weight to the fork to make the front end bite, so it actually turned better than the dirt version. KTM made major improvements to both the EXC and RXC 620s for '96, but, when testing was all said and done, the street version proved to be more fun than the dirt 620. We were pretty hard on the EXC in our 600 shootout (June '96) because the Katoom didn't perform to the standards set by the Husaberg and Husqvarna, but those companies don't make dual-sport versions for the USA. Besides the lack of any real competition in its class, the RXC also enjoys another advantage over the EXC—it has a different carb.

The biggest mechanical difference between the dirt and street models is that the RXC comes with a QwikSilver II flat-slide carb, while the EXC comes with a Dell'Orto carb. The QwikSilver carb allows the RXC to run leaner than the Dell'Orto, and seems to have eliminated the dreaded cough-n-stall. Easier starting and lack of flameout make the RXC better and more fun than the EXC.

This carb is really wild in that it has no real, or fixed, jets. Everything is handled by the needle, which is raised and lowered much like a suspension clicker. The 620 comes with a 10-0 needle set at four clicks from full rich. The flatslide carb

yields much better hot-starting manners, but it requires the pilot to learn a cold-starting drill. It also doesn't have a choke cable, like last year's RXC. It doesn't even have a *choke*. The enricher lever doesn't have any sort of detent, so you have to lean over and eyeball it. Off, the enricher sits at 9:00. Move it to 7:30 (45° downward) for cold-starting.

Here's the drill. With the enricher at 7:30, gas on and ignition off, pull in the decompressor and kick it through five times. Turn on the ignition and give it a hard kick, with no throttle. If it doesn't start first kick (ours usually does), give it five more primer kicks and then try again. This is your basic cold-start drill for older Harleys and new RXCs. Hot, just kick it with no throttle. Once you adapt, the RXC is a completely predictable starter.

MORE FUN STUFF

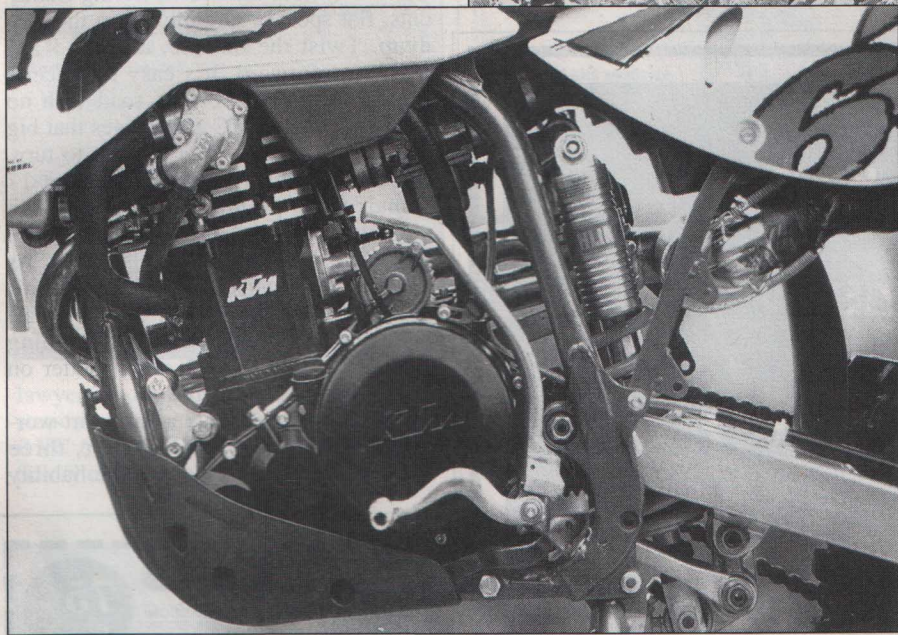
Like the EXC, the dual-sporter got a new frame with a steeper head angle, which places more weight on the front end in addition to improving turning. The EXC and RXC also share suspension for '96. That's right, the KTM is the only dual-sport ever to have a full-race, 45mm Marzocchi fork and Ohlins shock! The RXC's suspension action makes the rest of the dual-sport world feel like it's riding on a half-full water bed. No street-trail bike has ever had such stiff suspen-



KTM RXC620

sion, but the 620 is still mega-compliant over stutter bumps, rocks and expansion joints.

Also, just like the EXC, the RXC got downsized radiators and a smaller, thinner gas tank. This cuts range by almost 30 miles, but the handling and ergonomic benefits far outweigh the loss of range. The RXC's new range is 75-90 miles, depending on how much you stretch the throttle cable and abuse the gearbox. The



We have waited a long time for a dual-sport that's a barely street-legal dirt bike. KTM's RXC620 is so dirt that it isn't even comfortable on the street. The lights exist solely to connect trails—as quickly as possible.

◀ *Overall, we like the 609cc RXC mill, except the gearing is too tall and the clutch is grabby when cold. The RXC starts predictably and doesn't flame out, though.*

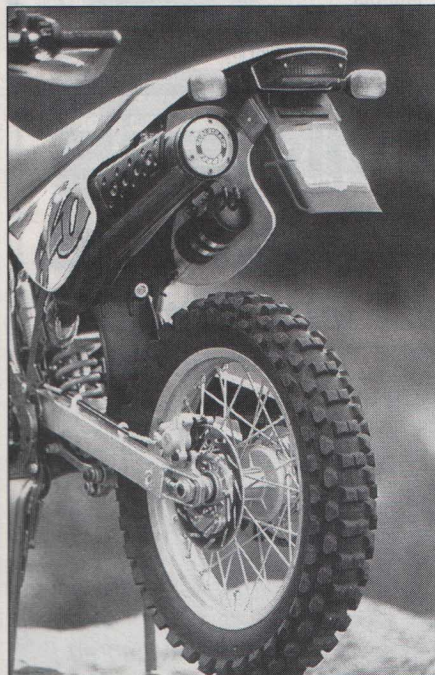
RXC and EXC also share Michelin's DOT-approved AP10 knobbies, front and rear. We hated these tires on two-stroke Katooms, but they work pretty well on the thumpers, especially the RXC. With the added weight of the dual-sport (17 pounds more than the EXC), the Michelin Baja meats stick well and give ample warning before letting go in corners. The rear tire howls big-time on the street, but only in a straight line. New handlebars and a lower seat height also improve ride quality.

NOT-SO-FUN STUFF

It seems KTM achieved the lower seat height by simply compressing the seat foam 20mm. The seat is harder than an ice-cold Trelleborg. When KTM went to a new tank, it should have opted for a larger gas cap. The RXC likes unleaded or leaded premium, both of which are expensive these days. Although the RXC uses the same emissions canister as the Honda XR650L, KTM placed it behind the right side plate. Gas and fumes from the gas cap empty into the canister (yielding the longest vent-tube known to man), which collects and feeds them into the carb. This is good, but a crimp or leak in the tubes would be very bad. To pass EPA and CARB emissions, final gearing was raised to 16/40 (the EXC is 15/50). This gearing is way too tall for any dirt work outside of Baja. We went to a 15



Meet the only dual-sport bike to come stock with a race-ready Marzocchi fork and Ohlins shock. Acerbis Rallyguards are also standard equipment.



The muffler is direct from KTM's Euro-only GS series, with a SuperTrapp on the end to keep the USFS happy. Hoses run from the gas cap vent to the emissions canister to the QuikSilver carb on all RXCs this year (not just California models).

KTM RXC620

countershaft but still had to slip the clutch a bunch in really tight stuff. If you ride mostly dirt and city streets, 15/45 would be even better.

This gearing would make the bike unsuitable for extended freeway travel, as it would vibrate big-time and guzzle fuel at 65 mph. You will just have to experiment until you find the optimum ratios for your specific needs. When cold, the clutch is very grabby and makes funny noises. Once warm, though, the clutch has great feel and thrives on abuse—so much so

that we could live with 16/40 gearing, if it weren't for that huge gap between first and second. Instead, we used second on nasty uphill and abused the clutch with 15/40 gearing. The brakes started squealing on the street after 250 miles of hard dirt. They worked fine in the dirt, though. Also, the 620's temperature light would come on whenever the going got slow and technical. Those smaller radiators just can't keep up at slower trail speeds.

THE BEST GETS BETTER

Despite these complaints, the KTM 620 RXC remains the best mass-produced, Open-class dual-sport for going fast in the dirt. All of the street hardware is just barely legal, and the battery is a

tiny gel-cell that saves *beaucoup* weight. Basically, the RXC componentry is the same quasi-legal hardware that the Euros get, so the dual-sport conversion doesn't produce behemoths like the DR350ES or XR650L. There isn't this mentality that, since it's a street bike, the RXC should be as comfortable on the street as a Gold Wing. Japan could learn a thing or two from the Austrians.

KTM proves that a street version doesn't have to weigh 40 pounds more than the dirt model and that you don't need an electric starter to achieve consistent starts. The RXC proves that you can get good, linear power out of a comparatively lean carb without suffering flame-outs, flat spots or any hitches in the giddyup. Twist the throttle, and the RXC 620 leaps forward. It's easy to wheelie for obstacles (logs, or any road with no cops on it). The RXC also proves that big dual-sports don't need a tugboat to turn. In fact, we hardly notice the extra 17 pounds when pushing the RXC through our favorite twisties. It turns very well and is dead-nuts stable. Also, with its race-ready suspension, the RXC proves that it's possible to pick up the small bumps comfortably without bottoming like a hot knife through warm butter on the big bumps and jumps.

For Japan to produce a truly dirt-worthy dual-sport of RXC caliber, three things must happen: 1) Send the liability

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KTM 620 LC4 RXC

Engine type.....Liquid-cooled, 4-valve, SOHC 4-stroke
 Displacement.....609cc
 Bore and stroke.....101.0mm x 76.0mm
 Carburetion.....38mm QwikSilver FS
 Fuel tank capacity.....2.3 gal. (8.7 L)
 Gearing.....16/40
 Lighting coil.....Yes
 Spark arrester.....Yes
 EPA-legal.....Yes
 Running weight w/no fuel.....302 lb.
 Wheelbase.....59.5 in. (1509mm)
 Rake/trail.....28.0°/4.1"
 Ground clearance.....14.2" (361mm)
 Seat height.....37.0" (939mm)
 Tire size and type:
 Front.....90/90-21 Michelin Baja
 Rear.....130/90-18 Michelin Baja
Suspension:
 Front.....45mm Marzocchi conventional cartridge,
 adj. reb., comp., 11.4" (290mm) travel
 Rear.....Ohlins 3A aluminum piggyback, adj.
 prel., reb., comp., 13.0" (330mm) travel
Country of origin.....Austria
Suggested retail price.....\$6778
Distributor/manufacturer:
 KTM Sportmotorcycle USA
 1906 Broadway
 Lorain OH 44052; (216) 246-1062

PARTS REPLACEMENT COST

Piston set.....	\$307.80*
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Clutch plate (driven).....	10.35 (7)
Front sprocket.....	29.69
Rear sprocket.....	85.59
Front brake pads.....	41.24
Rear brake pads.....	51.36

*Forged piston w/rings, wrist pin and circlips.

lawyers and marketing types to a weather station in Antarctica, 2) Buy a '96 KTM RXC 620, and 3) Copy it before Agent Scully closes in on the trail. ☐

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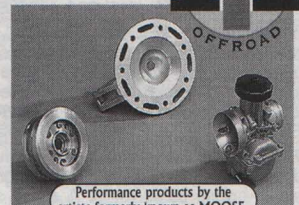
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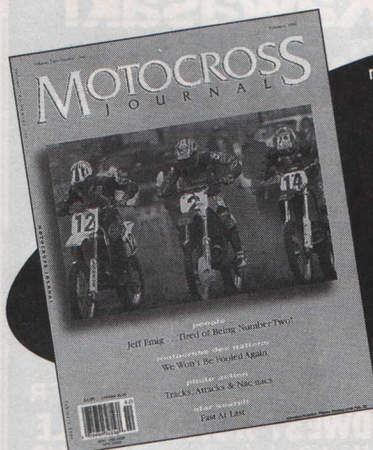
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