

## KAWASAKI KX-80

# TEST TUBE BABY

*Cloned from the big ones*

By the DB Doctors



□ "Igor, is the tube in place? The lab prepared?"

Igor grunts, shifts his hump, and with a sidelong glance nods, "Yes." Doctor Forkenskins strides into the lab, his long white frock billowing behind like a cape.

"We must succeed, Igor. Our reputation is at stake. This time, we must be right. It must live. It must be competitive. I cannot show my face, or you your hump, if this mini turns out to be a monster like the last one."

In a crouch, he circles the room like a vulture, checking settings — adjusting knobs on the banks of life support machines. The crackle of high voltage pierces the air. An acrid blue smoke starts to haze the room.

"Big Green will have us making dental appliances for werewolves if we don't make it this time. Too long, now, Big Green and his organization have been out of the burgeoning — or is it bludgeoning? — mini market. We have studied the remains of the YZ and RM that you dug up at Saddleback Park," he motions to a corner of the lab where two benches are covered with sheets.

"We have the design — we have the shape — we have the color!" he shouts as he pounds his fist on the poster-sized drawings of the KX125 and 250 on his dusty drawing board. "But that's not hard! We've come up with the color and the size in the past, but . . . aaargh. . . the little beggar had the heart and handles of a wheelbarrow!"

"We're ready for the heart. Bring it to me, Igor."

Slowly Igor shuffles across the lab carrying the glass case full of cosmoline. Inside, an 82cc two-stroke single sucks gently through its reed valved intake.

Igor looks distraught. "Master," he pleads, "is it time? It's not fully grown yet," he slobbers. "It has only. . ."

"What, Igor, what?" he shouts, slapping Igor up the side of the head. "What is it?"

"It has only. . . please don't hit me again, master. . . but it has only five speeds in its tiny gearbox," Igor blurts out.

"Drat, and angst!" The mad doctor paces feverishly. His brow furrows deeper and deeper. His face is contorted

Styling is pulled directly from the KX125 — the proportions are very similar, too.





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with anguish. Igor cowers.

"We can't wait. We've waited too long as it is. Big Yellow and Bigger Yellow both have at least two full years on us. We must."

Moving with purpose now, Doctor Forkenskins carefully nestles the powerplant in the black tubular frame. He stops to admire his earlier work — the successful graft of leading axle forks and lay-down gas shocks. The smell of fresh knobbies (a 2.75x17 up front and a 4.10x14 at the rear) wrapped around chromed-steel rims gives him needed confidence. He shall succeed!

Carefully, the heart is bolted in. Igor's seven deft fingers hook up the 26mm carb. Motor control cables are hooked up. The lime green tank is topped off. The minutes pass quickly.

Soon all is in readiness.

"Stand back, Igor. I'm going to throw the switch to give its capacitive discharge ignition the juice." Maniacally, the doctor grabs the right-side kickstarter. With a gleam in his eye and a grit in his teeth he throws the lever through.

Igor stumbles backwards as the little engine burbles to life. The doctor stands back, expecting the worst. The engine idles calmly. Cautiously, Igor and the doctor roll the KX down the ramp off the operating table. The doctor flicks the throttle a couple of times. The revs come quickly and easily. A glassy look comes over his eyes and his mouth curls into a big grin.

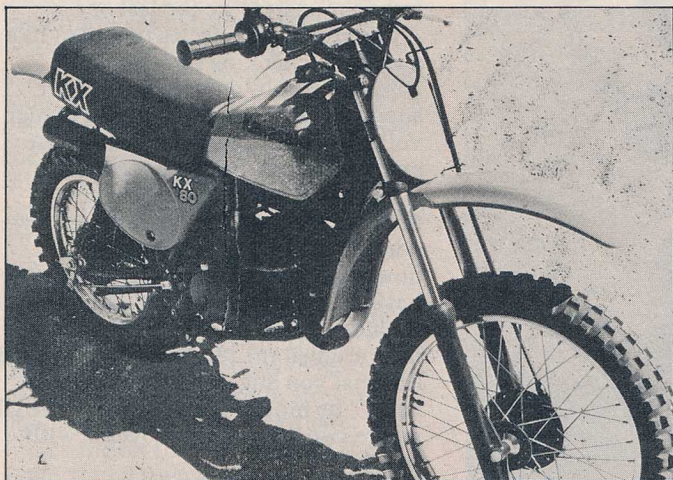
Igor shuffles over with the doctor's helmet and helps him put it on.

Laughing crazily, Forkenskins wires the throttle on and wheelies toward the huge oak doors. They burst open as the front wheel smashes through.

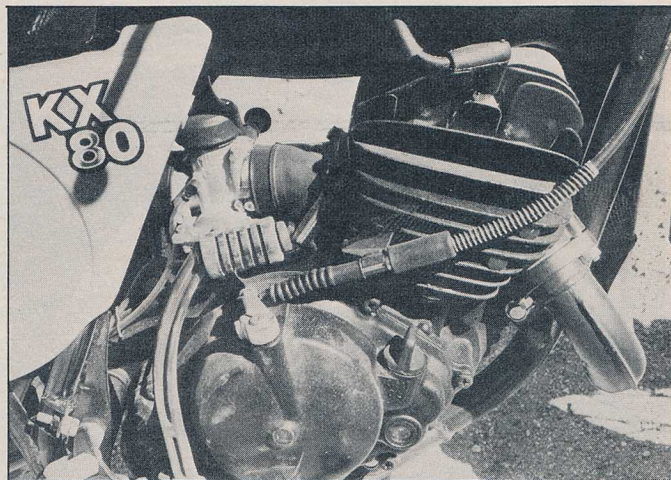
Igor pads his way over to the door and peers out into the mist. The doctor is hot lapping at a fair clip. After 30 minutes and one lap, the doctor heads back for the lab.

Screaming, "Success! Success!" he wheelies back through the lab doors and centerpunches the slow-moving Igor. Sprawling to the floor, Forkenskins thumps Igor back to consciousness and they begin to take orders from Big Green dealers all over Transylvania and the continental U.S.

Igor, still reeling from the centerpunch, rubs his bruised hump and secretly hopes that the mad doctor doesn't get the call for a 650cc single. ■



Leading axle forks and inverted, lay-down gas shocks provide the suspension at each end of the Little Green Machine.



A 26mm Mikuni feeds the reed-valved 82cc engine. Ignition is via CDI magneto.

## BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS . . . .

Kawasaki, out of the competitive mini scene, is a company that despite their tardiness, still wants to test the market. Such is the case with their KX80A1. They want to see how it will be accepted by the dealers and the buyers.

The Little Green Machine has a lot of potential. Claimed power and weight figures are well within the guidelines of competition as set by Yamaha and Suzuki. Damping at both ends is admirable for a stock machine and seems to be better than the stock YZ80E setup. Travel, at 6.7 inches front and 4.2 inches rear, is adequate.

A combination of the porting and pipe provides a wide, yet strong, usable power range that isn't as peaky as either the Suzuki or Yamaha. More riders, of varying skill levels, will be able to go faster on the KX.

Rider position, in relation to the bars and pegs as well as the seat tank juncture, is correct for the size of rider to whom the KX is directed.

Being down one gear on the transmission compared to the RM and YZ, the KX five-speed is a smooth unit that works well with the wide powerband. Less gear mixing means less time lost — as long as there is a strong motor that will keep pulling.

It's impossible to tell at this point how the KX will fare against the '79 YZ and RM80s, because they each have changes for this year, but the KX is an excellent machine as far as usable power, good suspension and handling are concerned. The bike turns where it's pointed.

Kawasaki seems to be on the right track.

## Kawasaki KX80 A1

ENGINE TYPE	.. Air cooled, two-stroke single
BORE AND STROKE	..... 48.0 x 45.8mm
DISPLACEMENT	..... 82cc
<b>HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY)</b>	
.....	15hp at 11,000 rpm
CARBURETION	..... VM-26SC Mikuni
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	..... 1.4 gallons
GAS/OIL RATIO	..... 20:1
TRANSMISSION: Five-speed, constant mesh	
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	..... 14/ 48
IGNITION	..... CDI
WHEELBASE	..... 1155mm (45.5 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	..... 245mm (9.6 inches)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	..... 63 degrees
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	..... 144 pounds
INTENDED USE, MFR	..... Motocross
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	..... Japan
DISTRIBUTOR	
.....	Kawasaki Motor Corp.
.....	2009 E. Edinger
.....	Santa Ana, California 92705

<b>OVERALL RATING, FROM 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:</b>	
Handling	..... 95
Suspension	..... 92
Power	..... 97
Cost	..... —
Attention to detail	..... 90
Effectiveness, stone stock	..... 95