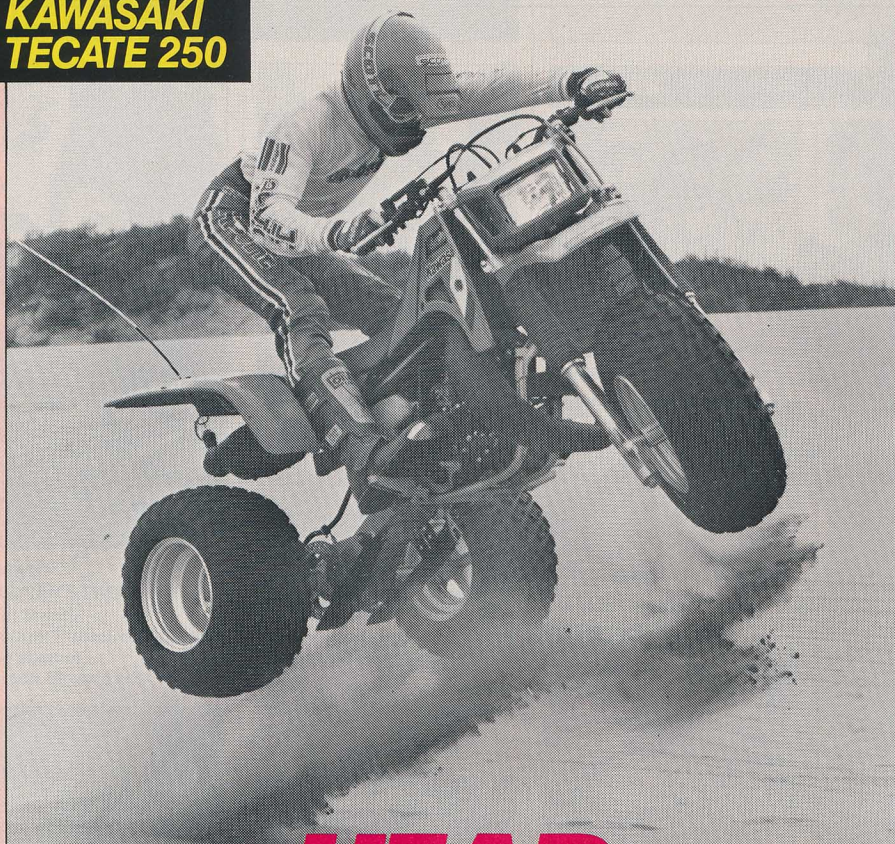


KAWASAKI TECATE 250



HEAD KNOCKER

It slides, it's fast, it handles, it's awesome!

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

Someone in Kawasaki's ATV department must have gotten his butt kicked at the end of 1985. The Tecate 250, Kawasaki's version of a competitive sport ATV, had seen better days and got a thorough waxing from Honda's ATC250R last season. For 1986, Kawasaki entered the ATV arena with both barrels blazing, and their efforts haven't gone unnoticed. It's lower, faster and handles so well, it makes its year-old brother look like a motorized wagon by comparison.

SO EXACTLY WHAT IS NEW?

Everything. The engine is still water-cooled, but now features a power valve. Kawasaki calls it KIPS, Kawasaki Integrated Power-valve System. The concept behind a power valve is relatively simple: It's a variable valve that alters the exhaust port so that the machine will have the low end of a tractor and the upper hit of a galactic star cruiser.

They completely junked the old chassis and replaced it with a low-floating unit meant to greatly improve the Tecate's cornering abilities. Last year's forks would bottom on a ballpoint pen, and the 36mm units flexed badly. They've been replaced with giant 41mm telescopic, and the travel was upped from '85's 8.7 inches to 9.8 inches.

On the rearward side, the Uni-Trak single benefits from a new damper with 20 rebound adjustments and just under ten inches of travel.

Last year's machine's radiator was mounted high on the forks. Thankfully, they've replaced it with twin units mounted to the frame, under a smaller gas tank. This one modification helps lower the center of gravity considerably. A steel swingarm and Uni-Trak strut are mounted in place of the anchor material used last year, and the Tecate has lower-profile rear mounts aimed at increasing its slideability.

SLIDIN' GREENIE

Kawasaki accomplished a minor miracle with the Tecate. The power has gone from light-switch to a monstrous mid-range charge that revs to the moon. Although there is a bit of a flat spot off the bottom, the generous middle portion of the powerband blows out enough juice to trail ride, and with a stab at the clutch, shoots into hyperspace in seconds.

Couple the new-found adrenaline with a chassis that craves full-lock, scream-at-the-stars slides, and the true virtues of the Kawa quickly surface. The lower-profile rear rubber aids the new chassis in railing, sliding and maneuvering with excellent results. Al-

◀ *There's no doubt about it, the Tecate is one serious machine. With a new chassis, suspension and motor, it's the new challenger to the Honda-dominated world of high-performance ATVs.*

though the front is a tad soft, we upped the oil level to five inches from the top of the tubes, and found that the Tecate's big front silverware will definitely take some abuse. In addition, the updated rear damper takes the crusher hits just fine and works in harmony with the 41mm KYB forks. The machine tracks through whoops without skipping or hopping, and killer jumps are soaked up with little effort.

GLITCHES AND GRACES

Say hurrah for the twist throttle! Apparently Kawasaki isn't afraid to try something *new* in the ATV market.

An excellent front headlight/numberplate replaces the birthday candle found on last year's bike.

The kickstarter is awkward and stupid. It slams your foot right into the footpeg and attempts to painfully remove your toes. This is not good.

Something has to be done about the vibration of the machine. After a 30-minute riding stint, your teeth will chatter and your hands will get numb as if you've been riding with chewing gum in place of motor mount bolts.

STACK THE CASH

There's no doubt about it, the Kawasaki Tecate is an excellent high-performance/sport ATV. It has a generous roost factor, loves to slide, and has the suspension to smooth out gnarly terrain. Watch out, Honda, Team Green is seeing red! □



KAWASAKI TECATE KXT250B1

Engine type	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled
	2-stroke
Displacement	249cc
Bore and stroke	70mm×64.9mm
Carburetion	Mikuni VM34SS
Ignition	CDI
Transmission	5-speed
Fuel tank capacity	2.3 gals.
Wheelbase	50.4 in.
Overall length	73.6 in.
Width	44.5 in.
Seat height	29.5 in.
Weight, dry, claimed	280 lbs.
Suspension:	
Front	41mm telescopic forks, 9.8 in. travel
Rear	Uni-Trak single shock, 9.8 in. travel
Brakes	Discs front and rear
Intended use	Racing/recreation
Suggested retail price	\$2349
Country of origin	Japan
Distributor/Manufacturer:	
Kawasaki Motor Corp. USA	
2009 E. Edinger	
Santa Ana, CA 92705	

