



RM TO RMX & RMX TO RM CONVERSION

*Swapping parts for
top performance*

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

How can you make your RMX snort like an RM? What's the simplest, least expensive way to get an RM woods-ready? Here's how to convert your Suzuki RM or RMX into the machine that works perfectly for your type of riding.

RMX TO RM

Getting RM engine performance from your RMX is simple and fairly inexpensive. Both machines use the same head and cylinder, so the only changes needed will be to the exhaust pipe, silencer, carburetor, head gasket and power valve system. Most riders like the stronger low-end response the RMX piston provides, so there's no reason to change to the RM piston. A new two-stage power valve system on the 1990 RMX smooths the hit and is becoming a popular motocross modification even among Team Suzuki's power-crazed factory motocross riders, so we wouldn't recommend going to the expense of switching to the harder-hitting RM valves. The RMX's heavier flywheel isn't interchangeable with the RM part but it adds tractability and is a benefit in most riding conditions, including motocross, so nothing is lost by leaving it in place.

The pipe and silencer simply bolt on to replace the heavy double-walled RMX pipe and its bulky, restrictive steel silencer. Aftermarket manufacturers offer exhaust parts that are lighter, less expensive (about \$229

for an aftermarket pipe and silencer vs. \$313.18 for original Suzuki parts) and more stylish than the stock RM items. Unless you are converting your RMX for motocross-only use, we'd recommend an Answer Sneaker (\$119, [800] 423-0273, [805] 357-4411) or Cobra Hush Puppy (\$99.95, [714] 779-2191) silencer/spark arrester for quietness, though you can make the bike off-road-legal by adding an inexpensive Answer Legalizer, Cobra Sparky, DG Terminator ([800] 854-9134, [714] 630-5471) spark arrester tip (about \$39) to a silencer.

An RMX carb only needs the top from the RM carb (\$18.70) to let it work like the RM carb. There's a stop on the RMX carb top that prevents the slide from moving anywhere near the wide-open position. You can also grind off the stop.

If you have a 1989-model RMX, you'll need to replace the power valve cover with an RM part \$14.38 or grind away or pull out the limiter pin on the RMX cover to allow the power valves to open fully. Owners of 1990 RMXs will need to remove a limiter in the power valve mechanism to let the valves move freely. This is a bit more of a chore, as the power valve actuating rod must be unhooked on the right side of the cylinder; then the cylinder must be removed. Then you must remove the preload mechanism on the left side of the cylinder. This is an adjusta-



small plate with two Phillips screws in it. After removing the screws and the retaining plate, turn the cap one turn clockwise (unless you've added or subtracted preload) and the cap spring and spacer will come out. Then remove the Allen screw on the rod that joins the valves, the Phillips retaining screw in the right case behind the actuating lever and pull the rod that joins the valves out by the actuating lever; then pull the valves out. Pull out the spacer between the first- and second-stage valve and reassemble.

Your RMX will now pull as well as an RM. Now it can charge through woods with the best enduro machines and command respect on a motocross course, even with its wide-ratio gearing, woods-valved suspension and enduro looks.

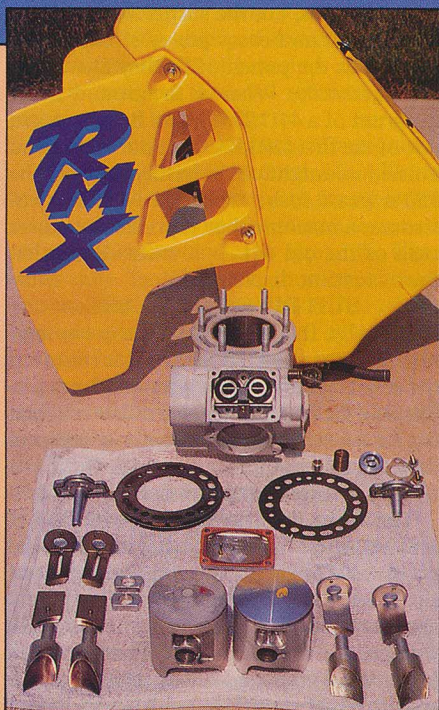
RM TO RMX

At just \$100 more than the RM, the fully off-road-equipped RMX may be the bargain of the century. You get a one-gallon-larger fuel tank, a fuel valve with a reserve position, a rear fender with a tool bag platform and a taillight, a headlight/number plate, an odometer, quick-change wheels, an ignition with a heavier flywheel and a lighting coil, a wide-ratio gearbox, an ultra-quiet exhaust system, zerk fittings on all the rear suspension linkage points, engine guards, hand guards, a disc brake guard, steel sprockets and an O-ring chain. An accessory fuel tank alone costs more than \$100. Suzuki's sleek 2.9-gallon RMX tank will set you back a dizzying \$258.42, but IMS ([714] 781-5849), Acerbis ([619] 562-1440) or Clarke ([503] 829-2156) can get you tanked in the \$99 to \$129 range. Clearly, if you're a woods rider and you bought an RM to save money, you made a mistake.

All is not lost, however. An RM doesn't make a bad woods machine in stock trim and it certainly has potential. In fact, it finished midpack in the off-road portion of our 250 motocross shootout. Remember, it was competing against other stock motocrossers there; it's not the finished woods machine an RMX is. Motocross suspension valving and power delivery don't adapt as well to the trail as woods suspension and engine response do to motocross.

Any reputable suspension shop can lighten the damping in the initial part of the travel so the bike will soak up roots and rocks better (about \$200). Engine response can be mellowed with a heavier aftermarket flywheel from Moose racing ([800] MOOSE-IT) or Steahly Products ([503] 695-2417).

Once you've got the type of power, suspension and fuel capacity you need for enjoyable off-road travel, only the details remain. Lighting and a way to power it are a problem because the RMX ignition doesn't fit the RM crank. Acerbis or Moose Racing battery-powered lights (about \$189) is the simplest solution. An ICO ([800] 331-0470, [504] 882-3107) electronic odometer (\$199.95) is an economical alternative to the RMX's mechanical odo and drive system. Handguards (about \$20) and a skid plate (about \$40) from Acerbis, White Bros. ([714] 554-9442) or Maier ([916] 272-9036) can add the needed body and engine protection. □



◀ **Aftermarket tanks are an economical alternative to the \$258.42 RMX tank. Power-hungry owners of '89 or '90 RMXs will want to use the thin RM head gasket, an RM or trimmed RMX carb top (right) and remove the power valve limiters. The power valve limiter was a simple pin in the power valve cover (center, above pistons) on '89 RMXs. On '90 RMXs, there are limiters in the trick, two-stage valve assembly (the two small, squarish aluminum parts to the left of the pistons). The two-stage valve assembly costs \$416.65. RMX pistons (left piston) have deeper oil grooves and offer better sealing and low-end power than the more slippery, quicker-revving RM piston.**

ble feature of the Suzuki power valve mechanism. You can run from one-half turn to two and one-half turns of preload to change how quickly the power valves open. Use less preload for strong, instant power and more preload where more torque and smoother power delivery are needed.

The preload mechanism is held by the