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'86 KDX200



'86 XR200

DIRT BIKE

# DIRT BIKE

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MARCH 1986

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**'86 HONDA  
CR250:  
IS IT REALLY A  
WORKS BIKE  
IN DISGUISE?**

**SPECIAL ATK TEST:  
WE RIDE THE  
4-STROKE OF  
THE FUTURE!**

**'86  
RACING  
CALENDAR:  
WHO, WHAT,  
WHEN &  
WHERE!**

JOHNNY  
O'MARA,  
TEAM  
HONDA



**PROJECT  
CRX250, PART 2:  
WHY DIDN'T HONDA  
THINK OF THIS?**

**'86 TY350: YAMAHA  
TAKES YOU WHERE ONLY  
MOUNTAIN GOATS HAVE GONE!**

**BARSTOW TO VEGAS:  
1200 RIDERS BEG FOR MERCY IN  
THE ULTIMATE LEGAL DESERT RACE!**

**'86 TRI-Z250: YAMAHA PACKS MORE  
HI-PERFORMANCE INTO TRI-PERFORMANCE!**





# DIRT BIKE

MARCH 1986 • VOLUME 16, NO. 3



TRI-Z250



TY350



XR200



CRX250



ATK 560



KDX200



BEACH RACING



ROCK RIDING

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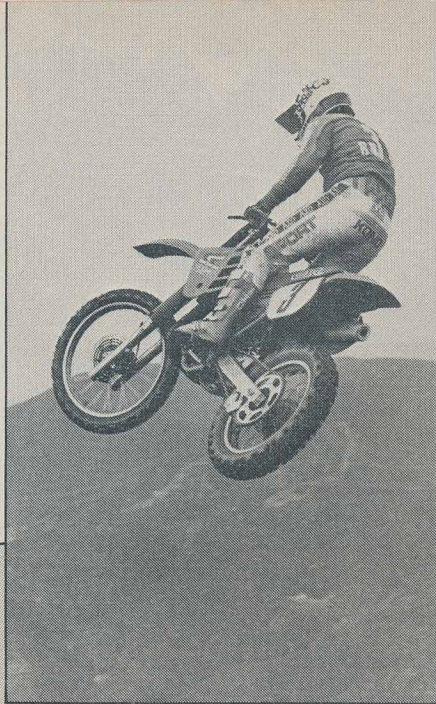
**ON THE COVER:**—Captain John P. O'Mara navigates Honda's '86 CR250 through the airspace over Chatsworth, California, while Mike Webb launches the latest XR200 (upper left) and Jim Holley bushwhacks Kawasaki's stunning KDX200. Photos and ground control by Fran Kuhn; cover design by DeWest; color separations by Valley Film

**WARNING:** Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.









After a week of testing, our riders gathered together to discuss the manners of the machine.

"I'd buy one in a second . . . but it needs a shock."

"It's so easy to go fast on, and it feels unbelievably light, but the rear end is a little bogus."

"I've never ridden a works bike, but this thing has gotta be close. . ."

◀ *Small, medium and large riders will find the CR immediately adaptable. Flight time resulted in big smiles for all our testers. The CR250 feels like you're riding a 125.*

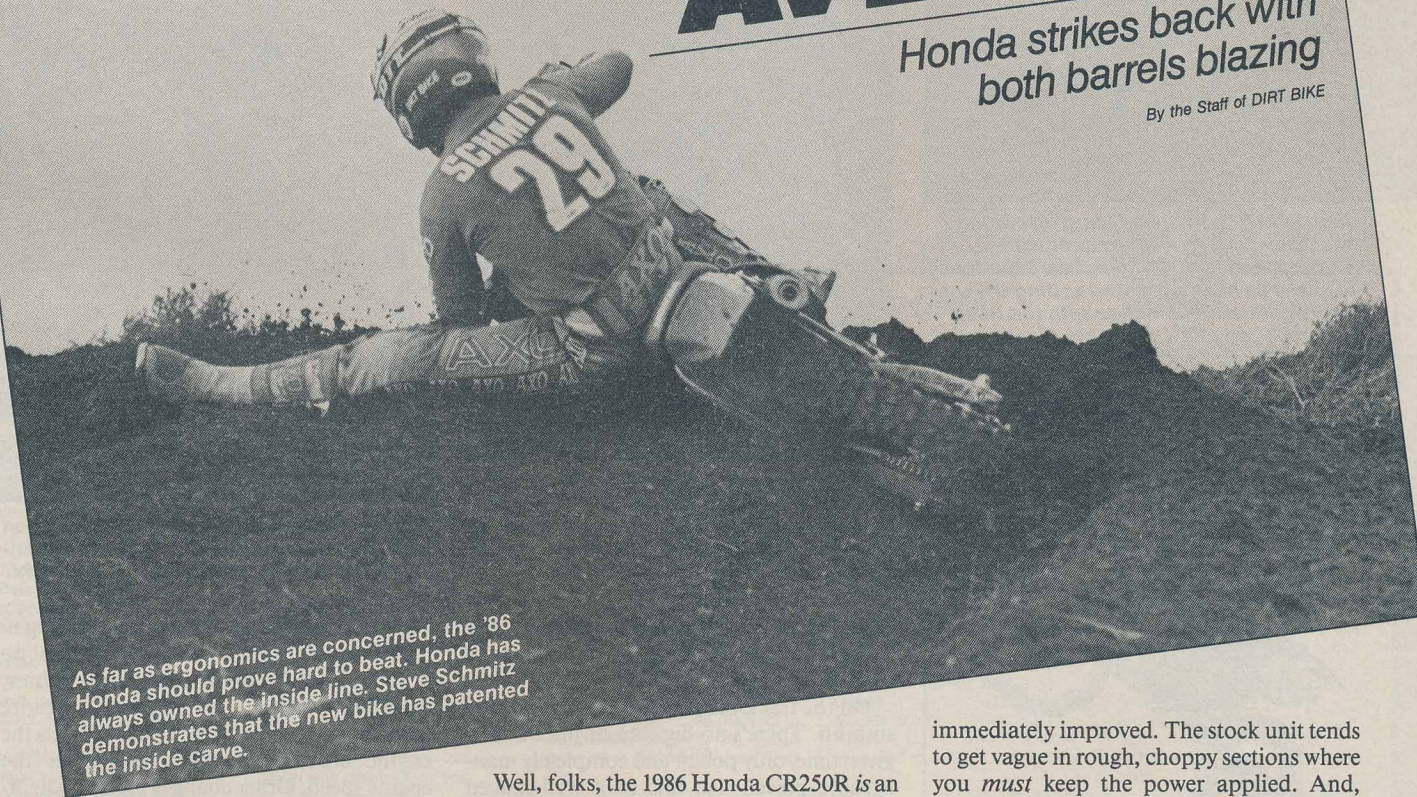
The Honda's fanny has been improved, but only slightly. A new Showa shock and a refined Pro-Link rising rate are better than past efforts but aren't enough to make the unit feel great. More like average. Under any full-throttle situations in gnarly terrain, the rear end hops around like a wounded sand crab. We traced the dilemma straight to the shock. We bolted on a White Power rear damper, and the rear end's performance

## HONDA CR250R

# THE RED AVENGER

Honda strikes back with both barrels blazing

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE



As far as ergonomics are concerned, the '86 Honda should prove hard to beat. Honda has always owned the inside line. Steve Schmitz demonstrates that the new bike has patented the inside carve.

The immediate feedback was startling. Every test rider had the same observation and the exact same response to the machine. They loved the way the Honda sat and felt. Its cornering prowess seemed to be nearly flawless, the forks . . . magical. The power was vastly improved over the froggy '85 model, and it took almost no time to adapt to the Red Rover's handling traits. But no one liked the rear shock. "Too harsh," "Too weird," "It just doesn't feel right," were the various comments.

Well, folks, the 1986 Honda CR250R is an amazing machine. It's one of those bikes that make testing state-of-the-art motocrossers a virtual joy. So, without babbling like idiots, let's get down to bare knuckles.

### THE SHOCKING TRUTH

Is the shock *really* that bad? No, it's not. Basically, Honda improved the front Showa units so dramatically that the tail section, by comparison, feels anemic. Up front the cartridge-type damping system has taken Honda out of the Dark Ages in front-end hardware technology. We never had to fiddle with oil levels, damping settings or fork heights. Nothing, nada, zippo. They're excellent.

immediately improved. The stock unit tends to get vague in rough, choppy sections where you *must* keep the power applied. And, every once in a while it hops, skips or whips in an odd manner. The rider must then back off and regroup. With the White Power unit none of this happened.

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE

There's no doubt that last year's 250 was a dog. Although the machine handled well, cornered flawlessly and felt good, it was a woofier. Honda completely redesigned the jug on the CR250 for 1986, and in the process they uncovered a gold mine of usable low end, a blast of mid-range muscle and a decent bit of revvability. Now it whistles out of corners rather than burps. It slams into



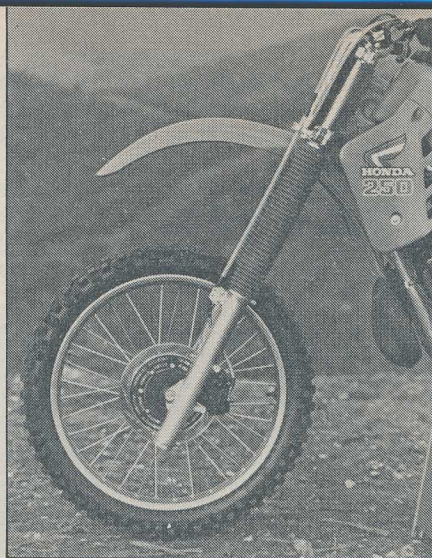
# HONDA CR250R



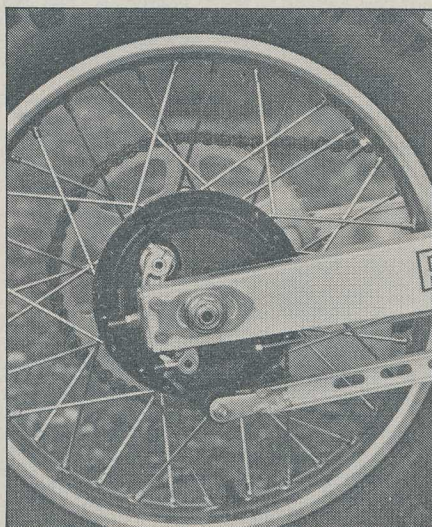
*Just point it, peg it, and hang on—Honda has taken care of all your other worries. At higher speeds the CR does have a tendency to shake its head a bit, and setting the rear sag is critical. Four inches with the rider aboard . . . no more, no less!*



*We have a small gripe concerning the low-hanging header section of the exhaust pipe. If you look closely, you can see a rather large dent on our machine.*



*Honda's Showa cartridge forks just might be the best stock front suspension on the market today. The action of the forks on this year's 250 is as close to works as you're going to get. Fitted with a replica of the internals from last year's factory legs, Honda's new boingers have set the standard.*

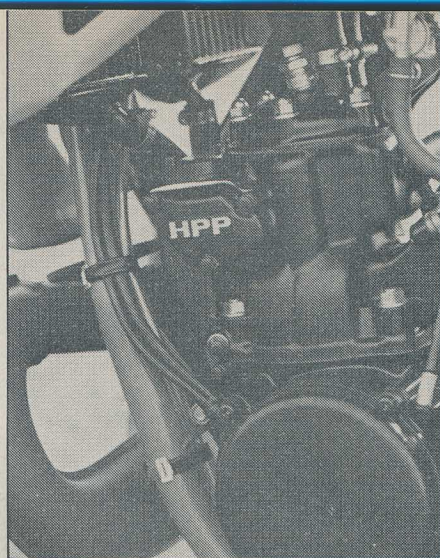


*The standard shoe rear brake still graces the CR for '86. With Kawasaki going to its brilliant rear disc for the new year, even the trickiest shoe brake will remain average by comparison.*

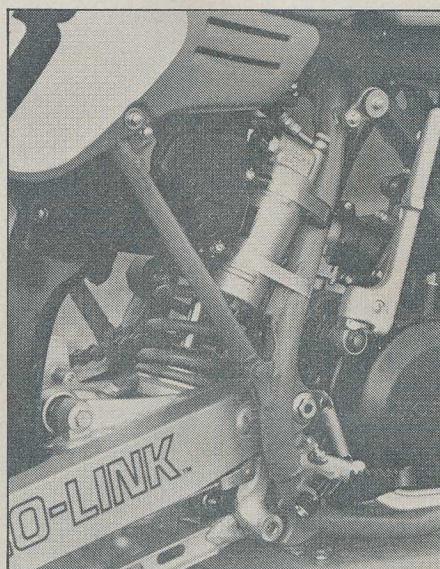
the mid-range like a lightning bolt, and thankfully, it flows into an upper hook that's usable.

On the track the power is almost electric smooth. There's no big slap of juice at any given time, only potent and completely manageable power. Tie this to a well-spaced transmission and a feather-light clutch trigger, and you've got a Supercross machine that makes getting around a track fun rather than an exercise in clutch-fanning or short-shifting. There's enough low and mid-range tissue to be competitive; it'll grunt and claw for the moon out of corners, and the velvety transition of power makes for a brutally quick and effective racing engine. Good stuff.

Honda dropped the ATAC exhaust chamber and replaced it with their HPP, or Honda Power Port. The new system employs two sliding fingers controlled by a centrifugal



*Good news is that Honda has dropped the ATAC for 1986 and substituted the HPP (Honda Power Port) system. The power-band of this year's 250 makes it one of the easiest bikes to go fast on instantly. We dropped the main jet one size and felt a noticeable improvement.*



*The rear suspension suffered in comparison to the superior front end. This is one department that definitely requires improvement.*

governor to alter the exhaust port timing in relation to the speed of the engine. The higher the rpm, the more the fingers withdraw, revealing a larger port window for more high-rpm power. In essence, the HPP lets the engine breathe more fire the faster the engine speed. Other changes include a lightweight nikasil-plated cylinder that provides better heat transfer and less friction. New reeds and a bigger set of lungs in the airbox help in the breathing department.

## RAD CARVER

The CR250 feels and fits better than a full-body tattoo. The controls, bars, seat, tank and peg relationships are ideal. Along those same lines, the machine performs acrobatics with just a pinch of rider input. It corners by simply leaning forward and doling out enough throttle to keep it on track. Jumping, whether it's kickers, long straight takeoffs, or big-lipped hair raisers, feels like





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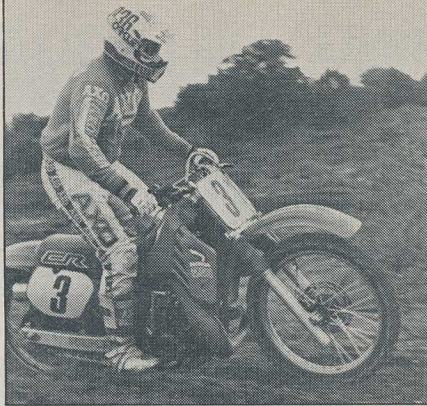
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*With superior front suspension and an almost electric motor, the only blemish to the overall package is the average rear end.*

you're riding a Schwinn bicycle that'll peel off asphalt in huge chunks. The light weight of the machine is also beneficial in a long, rough moto.

#### THIS AND THAT

While Honda did a great job with the forks, the nice blue fork boots are stupid. They bunch up under full compression and look like a big ugly boil.

The Bridgestone rubber proved to be excellent in most conditions. Basically they seem to be ideal all-around tires. We liked 'em.

Great brakes, all the way around. No one had a snivel with the binders, their action or intensity.

## HONDA CR250R

New gold-colored rims are the most significant change in the outward appearance of the CR. They look nice.

While the aluminum sprocket is lightweight, it also wears quickly. When you get ready to change it, you might consider opting for a one- or two-tooth bigger Side-winder model. They last longer, work better in the mud, and the additional teeth make the Honda a little quicker for tight MX work.

The airbox is slightly larger, but getting out a dirty filter is a pain. For some reason the filter seems to be bigger than the opening.

#### GRABBIN' FOR THE GOLD

Combine the powerful electric-motor surge of the engine with the flyweight feel and chiseled ergonomics, and you've got a machine that craves the high-impact world of stadium-style motocross. The entire package swells with race-bred glitter; everything has a place, a meaning and a job. This bike is a winner that's designed to sting the competition with an effective combination of manners, motor and magic. The year 1986 looks to be a good year for the rider in red. □



### HONDA CR250R

Engine type	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	66.4mm x 72mm
Displacement	249.3cc
Carburetion	38mm flat-slide Keihin
Factory recommended jetting:	
Main jet	175
Jet needle	R1368N
Pilot jet	60
Fuel tank capacity	1.8 gals.
Lubrication	Pre-mix
Gearbox ratios:	
1	1.800:1
2	1.389:1
3	1.150:1
4	1.000:1
5	0.870:1
Gearing, front/rear	14/53
Ignition	CDI
Recommended spark plug	NGK BR8EG
Silencer/spark arrester	Yes/no

Wheelbase	1480mm (58.3 in.)
Ground clearance	340mm (13.4 in.)
Seat height	960mm (37.8 in.)
Rake/trail	27.5°/112mm
Wet weight, no fuel	219.8 lbs.
Tire size and type:	
Front	Bridgestone 80/100-21
Rear	Bridgestone 110/100-18
Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	Showa, cartridge type, adj. comp., 305mm (12.0 in.)
Rear	Pro-Link, single shock, adj. comp./reb., 320mm (12.6 in.)
Intended use	Motocross
Country of origin	Japan
Retail price, approx.	\$2598
Distributor/Manufacturer:	
American Honda Motor Corp.	
100. W. Alondra	
Gardena, CA 90247	