

DUAL-PURPOSE PUTTER

SUZUKI TS125T

A nice thing to have around

By The Staff of Dirt Bike

Dual-purpose motorcycles took on a new light for us here at the plush, well-lit DIRT BIKE offices, after recently our staff street machine (forgive us, but the price of gas is getting unbearable) took a sick leave while in the fast lane of the 405 freeway. Not only are the little on-off-rovers great fun to go blasting around on when you can't find anything more constructive to do, but they can also come in very handy when your main source of transportation decides it's time for a vacation.

With our street-legal supply limited, the only motorcycle we could find to get back and forth to the offices with was the little blue Suzuki TS125T. Now, we don't like taking a 125 on the freeway every morning, but in tight situations, certain sacrifices have to be made. Such as suffering with a lack of power and listening to a two-stroke engine scream its head off while pulling 55 miles an hour. Grim city.

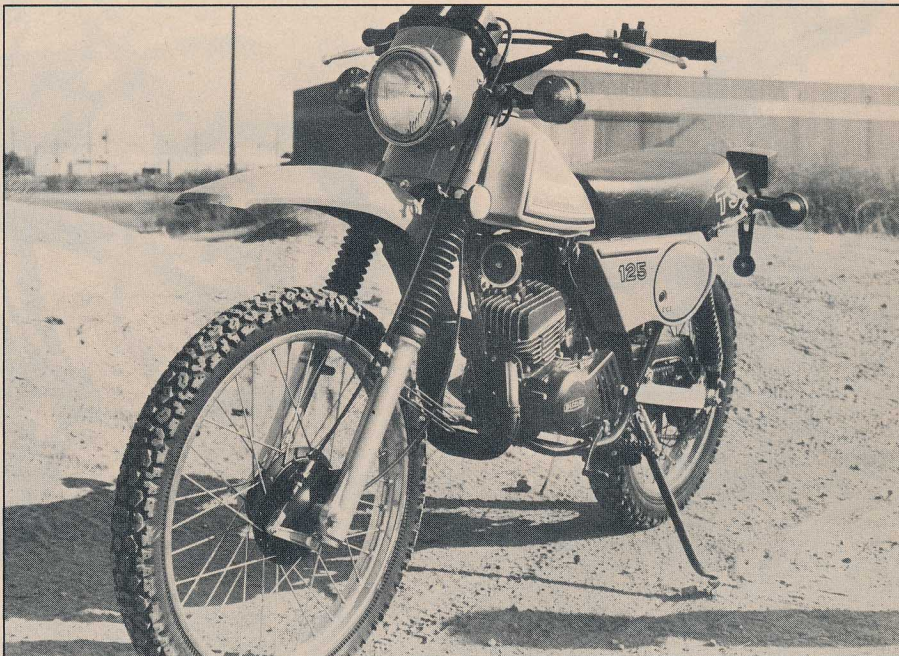
But, the little TS did it, and that's what counts; getting there.

The Suzuki TS125 is not a street-bred machine, though. Its dirt features are far more numerous than its pavement parts. Those off-road features include a close-ratio six-speed transmission, Claw-Action-type tires, leading-axle front forks, and lots of plastic, with the exception of the tank.

The tires made the little TS an exciting machine both on and off the pavement. On the highway, the rubber tracked smoothly and comfortably, something the trials-type tires never could accomplish. But in the dirt, they not only gave decent traction for a dual-purpose tire, but they were really exceptional for sliding the motorcycle through corners.

The suspension of the TS still conforms to the usual standards of the dual-purpose market. Its appearance is better than its performance. Both the shocks and forks are too soft, as is every dual-purpose's suspension, and they bottom quite frequently. Aside from the harshness of metal bashing against metal, the plushness of the units was acceptable during a long ride.

Despite the soft suspension, there was one more thing about the TS that stood out in our minds. The motor. No, it wasn't bad, and it wasn't a pig. It



Overall, the Suzuki TS125 looks like a potent off-road package, but the machine works equally well on the pavement.

was fast. Shocked? So were we. The TS had a powerplant that will better most other stock 125 dual-purpose bikes to date, and it will give a lot of 175s a run for the money at top end.

As for the TS's transmission, it was weird. Six speeds, and all too close together. First, second and third gears

went by before the speedometer hit 30 miles per hour, then fourth and fifth were eaten up on the way to 40. Sixth gear pulled from 45 mph up to 65, but to get any more out of the 125, you had to have either a strong tail wind, or a steep downhill.

The bike calls for an initial 600-mile



As with most dual-purpose motorcycles, the forks were too soft for the whoops, and the rear end hopped around to boot.



Our TS had a very surprising motor, which was very strong for a 125 dualer.

break-in, then it's straight to the wrenches for a bit of tightening, torquing and miscellaneous inspection. For the maintenance required, we used the tool pouch that came standard underneath the seat of the Suzuki. In it, is a pretty fair selection of screwdriver blades that slip into a universal handle, a pair of pliers that can barely hold a pop bottle top, a steering head wrench, a combination 10 and 12mm wrench, along with a 14/17mm unit, the usual spark plug socket, and a rear axle wrench with an extension. All of the work was done with these tools, just to see if they could do what they were supposed to.

Don't throw this tool bag away. It's useful, and everything but the pliers will keep you wrenching for a long time.

As for the air box, the opening was built like the nostrils on a baby kangaroo. They peek out of the top of the box under the seat, with two dwarfed openings; each smaller than a dime. One cotton ball could stop this thing up, so before you go throwing your gloves under the saddle, be careful not to block the airway.

Inside, the filter is no more than a rectangular piece of foam element which slips into a metal holder. One strap of flexible steel holds it down.

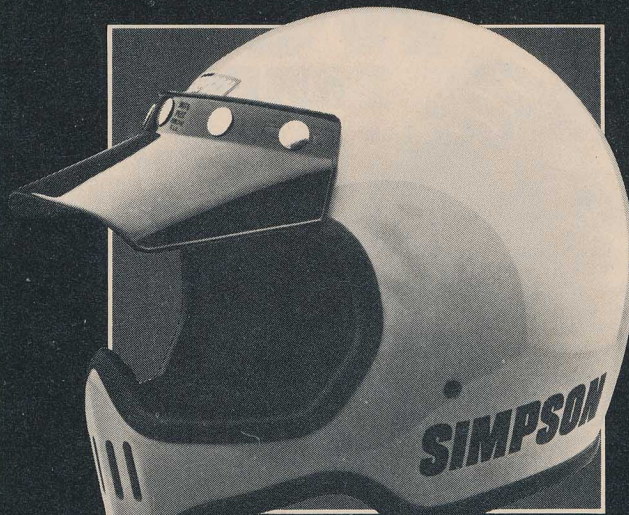
Some of the little features that make the TS125T a good motorcycle are oil injection that doesn't have to be filled for at least a thousand miles, dual mirrors, dog-leg levers, a shifter and a brake pedal that are right where they're supposed to be, and a chassis that allows the motorcycle to handle in both types of terrain: pavement and primitive.

With a sticker price of under a thousand dollars, the little TS125T is surely a nice and handy thing to have around. Trips to and from work can be made exciting after the main source of commuterism decides to commute to sick bay, and it can still be taken out for a weekend in the sands any time your heart desires. With an engine like the TS has, it can go places where many other one-two-five dualers could never imagine. □

SUZUKI TS125T Specifications

ENGINE TYPE	Air-cooled, two-stroke, single
BORE AND STROKE	56mm x 50mm
DISPLACEMENT	123cc
CARBURETION	24mm Mikuni
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.8 gallons
GAS/OIL RATIO	Injector unit
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed constant mesh
WHEELBASE	53.1 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	9.8 inches
WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	214 pounds
INTENDED USE, MFR.	On/off-road
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
DISTRIBUTOR:	
U.S. Suzuki	
13767 Freeway Dr.	
Santa Fe Springs, California 90670	

SEE THE LIGHT



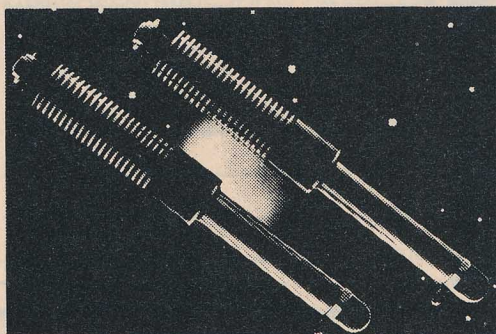
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