

PRE-EXCLUSIVES!

FIRST '86 TEST RIDES:
'86 KX250 • '86 CR500 • '86 YZ250 •
'86 HUSKY 4-STROKE • FIRST LOOK AT HONDA'S WILD NEW FAT CAT 200!

DIRT BIKE

DIRT BIKE

NOVEMBER 1985

WPS 34355

**NEW YORK NATIONAL ENDURO:
SURPRISE! SURPRISE! HONDA
STINGS TEAM HUSKY!**

EXOTIC BIKE TESTS:

- SUPER-FAST XR MINI
- HONDA XLV750
- 200 LB. YZ250
- HONDA'S WORKS 4-STROKE



1986 HONDA CR500

\$2.00
UK £1.60

**HOW
TRAIL RIDING
CAN IMPROVE
YOUR MX SKILLS!**

**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS GO
INTO SUDDEN-DEATH SHOWDOWNS:
WARD HAUNTED BY "INSTANT REPLAYS"!**



1986 HONDA 4x4

**4-WHEEL-DRIVE 350:
HONDA'S FLOATING BATTLESHIP
SINKS THE COMPETITION!**



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NOVEMBER 1985 • VOLUME 15, NO. 11



1963 vs. 1971 vs. 1985 SHOOTOUT



'86 YZ250



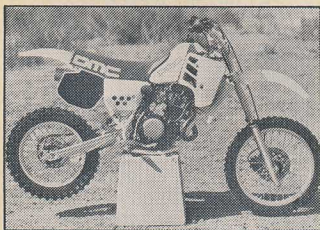
'86 KX250



'86 HUSKY 510TE



'86 HONDA 4x4



RADICAL XR MINI



'86 HONDA CR500

ON THE COVER:—Lots of new stuff for '86. Jeff Hicks twists the latest KX250 production 'crosser while our spy (cleverly disguised as a barm) snaps the shutter. Hard-working Steve Schmitz plows a sandy Hondaland corner aboard the equally hard-working '86 CR500 Honda. Photo by Fran Kuhn. Tom Webb got into his Lewis-and-Clark mode while blazing the Rubicon Trail aboard the incredible Honda Four Trax. Photo by David Gerig, who sneezed profusely because his socks got wet. DeWest stayed late to arrange this startling array of off-road activity into a rather small rectangular layout, and Valley Film did the separations. Thank you, Don Pardo.

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Even Mary Lou Retton couldn't top this one

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.

INTERIOR COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY:—Pages 22, 39, 45, 61, 64, 65—Fran Kuhn; Honda Four Trax, page 65—David Gerig.



TRACKSIDE RIDING IMPRESSION

1986 HONDA CR500R

Lighter, slimmer, meaner

◀ *In stock trim the CR's suspension is improved when compared with the '85 machine's. The suspenders work smoothly and quickly over small stutter bumps but are still capable of handling killer hits from stadium whoops and larger jumps.*

ignition timing and coil to make the monster a little easier to start. Overall, the engine weight has been reduced, the clutch pull is lighter and the transmission has revised shift

forks and engagement dogs on the gears for a longer-wearing and lighter-weight transmission.

Most of the chassis modifications are subtle. The forks now have a cartridge-type damper assembly like the works Hondas, and 14 compression adjustments—two more than last year. A small change was incorporated into the rear Pro-Link to make the damping more progressive and the 12.6 inches of travel more refined. Honda has slim-

Shortly before this month's issue went to print, Honda held a press conference and introduced its all-new 1986 dirt lineup. In the process of viewing the machines, we managed to talk them out of a brand-new CR500. Although we didn't have the time to do a full-fledged race test, we did manage to get in a few hot laps and can give you a brief, seat-of-the-pants riding impression of the biggest '86 CR.

BEAT IT

Honda didn't go overboard with major changes for 1986. They did, however, graft on a few updates, strengthen a couple of weak points, and improve the overall package. Starting with the engine, they reshaped the piston design for increased durability, and they altered the cylinder squish band,

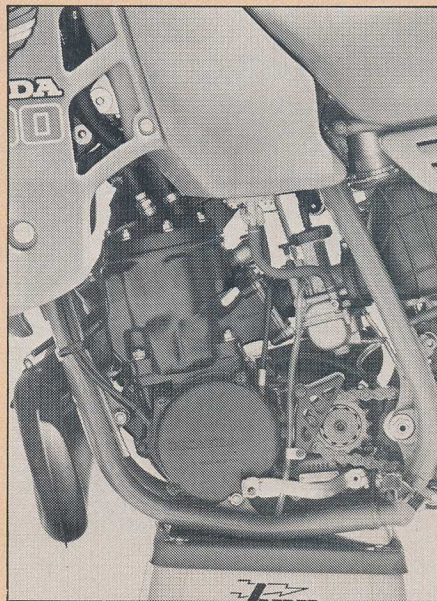


It takes very little rider input to negotiate corners on the CR500. The machine is capable of handling everything from smooth hard-pack to deep, soft sand berms.



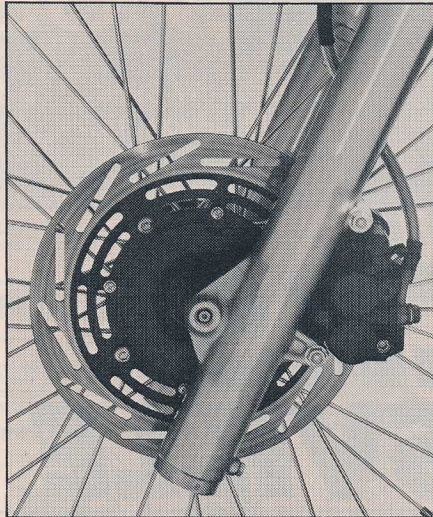
Probably the first thing you'll notice is the new "CR" tattoo on the seat. The Honda's saddle and tank have been slimmed down 20mm, and the new 500 feels a lot like a 250 with a monster engine squeezed into the chassis.

Power? The overall pony output of the CR500 hasn't been dramatically changed, but it has been polished a bit. The motor is at least as strong as last year's, but it's easier to control. It's still got a healthy hit right off the bottom, then runs into a killer mid-range explosion. The top-end overrun is decent, but the engine is most effective when short-shifted. ▶





1986 CR500R



Honda added a sealed cartridge damping system to the 43mm Showa forks. The cartridge controls rebound damping and prevents air and foam from causing suspension problems. The airbox and filter have been enlarged, a redesigned Pro-Link ratio is at the rear, spokes and nipples are stronger, and Bridgestone M41/M42 tires are standard. Overall frame dimensions are unchanged, but the tubing has been beefed up in some locations.

Gold works-style rims are new this year. The front disc has been redesigned—it now features slots instead of holes. Both brakes are strong, progressive and controllable.

med down the tank/seat arrangement for better rider maneuverability, redesigned the airbox and filter to allow the engine to breathe better, and polished the braking action at both ends.

CHASING THE MOON

Once again, the CR500R is definitely not lacking horsepower. This year's machine seems to have a better overall spread of voltage, starts a tad easier and will most assuredly make your eyes bleed if you get too loose with the throttle.

Our entire staff applauded the slimmer layout and, even though the suspension was unadjusted and out-of-the-crate stock, felt it was superior to last year's offering. Only a few laps teach you to short-shift the powerful monster; the mind-bending power, coupled with the flick-and-toss lightweight feel of the machine, had us all grinning like monkeys.

There are many other improvements on the CR500R, and in the near future we'll give you a complete blow-by-blow account of the machine. So far, it looks good, and we can't wait to hit the race track! □

MORE NEW HONDAS FOR '86: CRs, XRs, & THE FAT CAT

And now, the rest of the story



The new Fat Cat is obviously designed to grab a big chunk of Yamaha's BW200 market. The Fat Cat features include a 199cc OHC air-cooled four-stroke engine that develops around 15 h.p., has an automatic clutch with a five-speed gearbox and an electric starter with a back-up kickstarter.



The XR250R has been improved for 1986. Besides the new graphics and plastic, the '86 XR250's new features include a redesigned box-section aluminum-alloy swingarm with a quick-detach feature for easy tire and chain maintenance, 41mm air-adjustable leading-axle forks with 11 inches of travel, an 18-inch rear wheel, and a steering-head-mounted oil-cooler.



Honda made some major changes to the '86 XR200. Gone is the RFVC four-valve head and dual carb setup of the '85 machine—the new single carb/dual valve setup should cut power but make maintenance simpler. It looks as though Honda has stopped chasing the serious 200 enduro/off-road rider and is tailoring the little XR for the play riding market.



The '86 CR250R has a new, redesigned engine that is a full 249.3cc and pumps out a claimed 47.5 horsepower. Other new features include a larger, 38mm carburetor, revised transmission ratios, and a revised frame for improved durability. The rear brake shoes are 3mm wider, and the larger-diameter front disc brake is actually lighter than last year's. The airbox and filter have been redesigned for increased volume, and the new graphics and gold rims look stunning.



The mini crowd will be happy about the '86 CR80R. The new cylinder is now nikasil plated for reduced friction and increased durability, and there is also a new single-ring piston and revised port and ignition timing for improved performance. The littlest CR also sports a larger airbox and filter and a new front disc brake for better stopping power.