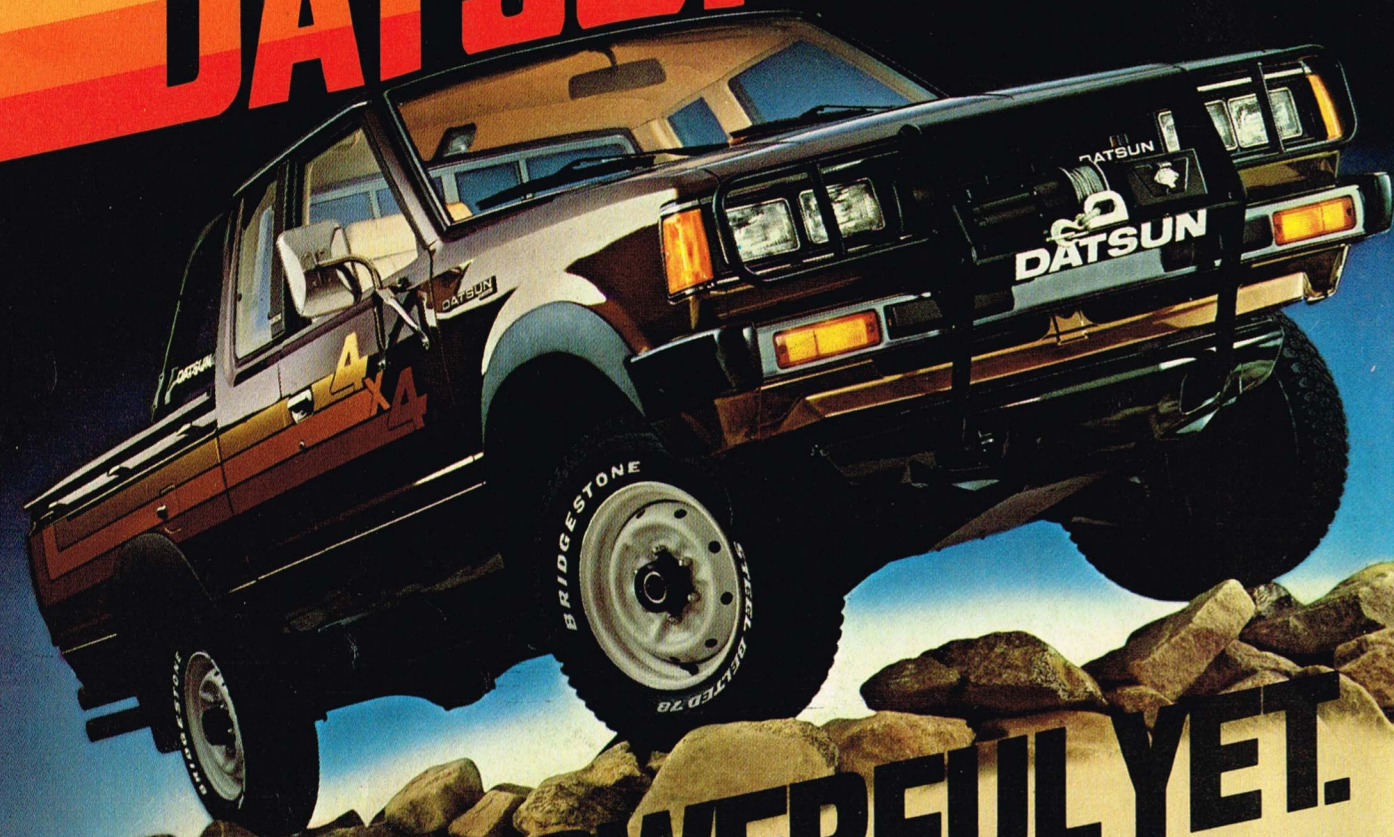


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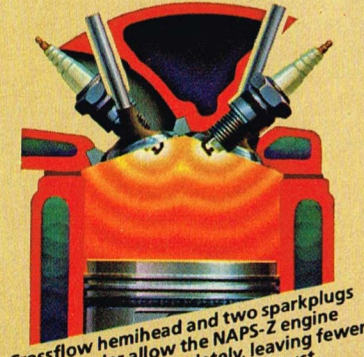
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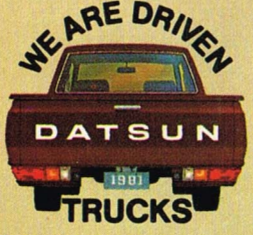
Crossflow hemihead and two sparkplugs per cylinder allow the NAPS-Z engine to burn fuel more completely, leaving fewer unburned wastes in the exhaust.

**21** EST. MPG. **29** EST. HWY. \*EPA estimates for comparison with standard 5-speed. Actual mileage may differ depending on speed, trip length and weather. Highway mileage will probably be less. California estimates: **20** 28.

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**PIKE'S PEAK:**  
1981 race to the clouds  
**SUPERBOWL TEN:**  
Barnett's Bowl Burner

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HONDA CR450R



PROJECT XR500 — PART III



RM125X TRICKS



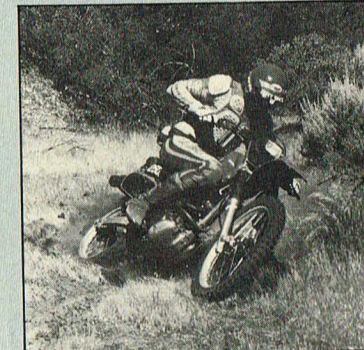
PIKE'S PEAK



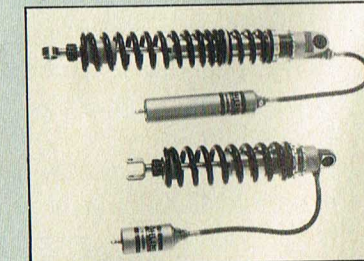
SUZUKI RM465X



SUPERBOWL



HONDA XR250R



THE SUPER SHOCKS

On the cover: Jon Miller, a close, old friend of the entire *Dirt Bike* staff, came out of his forced retirement to drag handlebars with us for a few days. Jon enjoyed it; the RM465 said it was good for him, too. Photo by Tom Webb.

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# PIKE'S PEAK RUN THE HILL!

Just a 12-mile drag race—to the top

By Ned Owens  
Photos by Joyce Marshall  
and Jim Bensberg

The Pike's Peak Hillclimb isn't like any other race in the United States—maybe the world.

If, when you hear the word "hillclimb," you think of paddle-tired monsters churning up a steep, loose hill—a la the Widowmaker—you're way off base. It's not that kind of a hillclimb. It's a race up a twisting dirt road to the top of a mountain.

Called the "Pike's Peak Highway," the road was built in 1916 just to get sightseers to the top of the 14,110-foot, granite mountain rising above Colorado Springs, virtually in the center of Colorado. It winds its way to the summit and stops. The road is paved from the entrance partway, and where the pavement stops the "track" begins. There it consists of a smooth mix of hard-packed clay and crushed granite and then deteriorates as the road climbs above the timberline, until it is rough, rutted, loose and mostly washboard. Some think of it as the ultimate fire road.

Because of the mix of surfaces, the type of motorcycle chosen to conquer

the hill varies. Enormous quantities of beer have been consumed during endless debates over which type of bike is better suited... motocross or Class "C." Past winners have been mounted pretty evenly on each type. Some bikes are a mix—current motocross bike power and light weight, coupled with state-of-the-art Class "C" tires. Regardless of the choice, when it comes down to race day, it's motocrosser and flatracker side by side.

The motorcycle race is part of a full day of racing, staged this year by the Sports Car Club of America, who took over sanctioning of the hillclimb from the United States Auto Club. Open-wheeled sprint cars, stock cars and sharp World-class Pro Rally cars run individual-timed trials to the summit in a race against the clock.

As opposed to these single runs, the bikes race head-to-head in thundering classes of more than 40 riders. Obviously, a good qualifying position and start

are imperative, because the mass start produces a cloud of dust that would warm the nostrils of any desert racer. And, because the road doesn't go anywhere else, the racers have to wait at the top until the rest of the races are finished. There are no warm-up laps, and no second lap. It's a sprint, and if you go down... or off... you're pretty much out of the hunt.

No less than 156 turns connect the 12.4-mile-long ribbon of dirt which winds its way up and around the mountain. Corners range from fast sweepers to decreasing-radius hooks and first-gear hairpins. As a result, gearing ranks second only to jetting in importance. The jetting problems stem not only from the major changes in altitude, but from the wide difference in air temperature at any given time.

"Ground level" in Colorado Springs is already more than 6000 feet above sea level and the starting line is around 9500 feet high. From there, it's

nothing but up—another 5000 feet. Considering that the average motorcycle engine loses about 10 percent of its power for every 2000 feet of altitude, and jetting can change as much as 25 percent, bike tuning is tricky. Then, even in the middle of summer, the temperature can run between 85 degrees on the starting line and 20 degrees on top. Add to this a near-constant, full-throttle, steep climb that makes engines hot enough to turn black pipe coatings white, and you have a tuner's nightmare. Attrition is a very real problem. If the road doesn't get you, the altitude will.

In some places on the course, the big bikes will turn nearly 100 mph, and if the speed isn't intimidating enough, try pitching your bike sideways into a blind turn, when all you can see is blue sky on the outside of the corner. A legend that persists from year to year is that if you went off one of the bad corners at speed, you'd starve to death

before you hit bottom. That, of course, is an exaggeration. The worst drop off the outside of a corner is the *Bottomless Pit*, and it's only 3000 or 4000 feet straight down. Besides, you have to go through a foot-thick rock wall first. Nonetheless, one veteran car racer used to bolt a lunch pail to the floor of his car—just in case.

Normally, the bikes race in one of four classes: Open Semi-pro, Open Amateur, 250cc Semi-pro and 250cc Amateur. The Open class bikes are limited to 750cc and no more than two cylinders.

In addition, this year a Celebrity class was added to give some of the past motor racing greats a chance at racing the hill on two wheels. After the races this year, local and national media confirmed that the bikes—treated to an on-again-off-again existence in the past—had, in fact, earned themselves a spot on the race program for years to come. □



## THE 1981 RACE TO THE CLOUDS

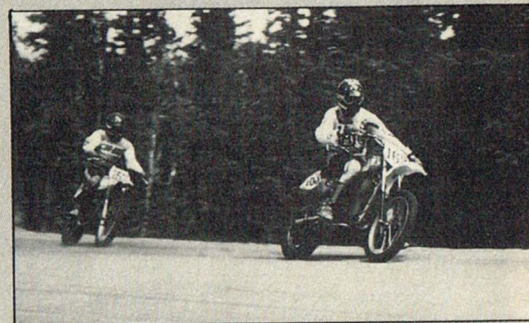
□ Brian Anderson had his work cut out if he was going to go for the Open Semi-pro Class record on the hill. The fastest time ever for this class was set in a handlebar-banging charge through clouds and between snowbanks by Rick Deane and David Korth in 1976. In a last-turn, finish-line charge, Korth went over the edge and knocked down a pole holding the timing equipment wiring and finish line banner. When the dust cleared, Deane had held him off with a stunning time of 13:12.61.

This year, Brian Anderson must have had this battle in the back of his mind as he traded positions with Lonnie Houtchens, defending Open class champion. Houtchens would out-motor Anderson's TT500 Yamaha with his big Shell 750 Yamaha dirt tracker, only to lose the advantage going into and coming out of corners. This fight brought Anderson to within nine seconds of the record and a fine showing with 13:20.86.

Behind Houtchens (13:26.51), Monty Kyle and Sparky Edmonston wrestled back and forth, but ended up in that order. Dave Aldana, who had second fastest time in qualifying on a YZ465 Yamaha, crashed twice and had to settle for tenth in his first try at the Peak.

Aldana's teammate, Mike Baker,

**Pole sitter and eventual class winner Mike Baker (80) and the rest of the 250 Semi-pros slither toward the first turn.**



**Two-fifty amateur Kenny Perkins puts some distance on Tracy Smith through a fast sweeper near the ski area.**

had much better luck as he won the 250 Semi-pro on a YZ250 Yamaha and set a new record for that class. He beat former 250 champion Steve Scott's



**Yamaha-mounted Mike Baker drifts through a 60 mph right-hander near the half-way point.**

1980 record of 13:56.80 by nearly 15 seconds. Scott, six-time class winner, had moved up to the Open Semi-pro class this year only to run off the road in the first mile-and-a-half. Terry Kyle, Gary Palmgren and Geoff Cesmat were strung out behind Baker at the finish.

Cliff Fredericks tucked under the Open-Amateur record (set by Don Seidel last year with a 14:33.69) by two seconds and finished a full 12 seconds ahead of second-place finisher Stephen "How-Could-You-Let-An-Old-Bald-Man-Beat-You?" Doyle. Michael Van

Lienden and Tracy Witt finished third and fourth respectively.

Motocrosser Dan Elder on an RM Suzuki followed up his fastest qualifying time with a win and a new record time for the 250 Amateur class of 14:27.43. Defending champion and former record holder David Doyle (15:09.76) seized his IT Yamaha while leading and went out in the switchbacks below *Devil's Playground*. Gary Podoll tailed Elder to the finish ahead of rapid Bobby Winter and Scott Greenwood.

(continued on page 64)



**A gaggle of 250 Semi-pros winds its way through the Esses below Glen Cove.**

RACE RESULTS—JULY 4, 1981 PIKE'S PEAK INVITATIONAL MOTORCYCLE HILLCLIMB			
OPEN A (SEMI-PRO)			
PLACE/NAME/NUMBER/CITY/STATE	MOTORCYCLE	TIME	
1. Brian Anderson (27), Colorado Springs, CO	YAM 500	13:20.86	
2. Lonnie Houtchens (6), Colorado Springs, CO	YAM 750	13:26.51	
3. Monty Don Kyle (15), Clifton, CO	YAM 465	13:45.33	
4. Sparky Edmonston (26), Valencia, CA	SUZ 500	13:48.38	
5. Jim Hodges (2), Julesburg, CO	YAM 499	13:50.05	
250 A (SEMI-PRO)			
1. Mike Baker (80), Orange, CA	YAM 250	13:37.86	
2. Terry Kyle (65), Clifton, CO	YAM 250	13:53.80	
3. Gary Palmgren (53), Colorado Springs, CO	YAM 250	14:01.71	
4. Geoff Cesmat (60), Boulder, CO	CAN-AM 250	14:16.75	
5. Thomas M. Berry (69), Colorado Springs, CO	YAM 250	14:19.86	
OPEN B (OPEN AMATEUR)			
1. Cliff Fredericks (129), Colorado Springs, CO	YAM 465	13:41.25	
2. Stephen F. Doyle (106), Colorado Springs, CO	YAM 500	13:53.01	
3. Michael Van Lienden (105), Aptos, CA	YAM 750	13:57.41	
4. Tracy Witt (142), Des Moines, IA	YAM 465	14:01.21	
5. Allen P. Trzyna (127), Colorado Springs, CO	MAI 490	14:10.06	
250 B (AMATEUR)			
1. Dan Elders (151), Palmer Lake, CO	SUZ 248	14:27.43	
2. Gary Podoll (152), Woodland Park, CO	KTM 247	14:31.61	
3. Robert C. Winter (171), Denver, CO	YAM 250	14:43.45	
4. Scott Greenwood (165), Colorado Springs, CO	HON 250	15:03.61	
5. Dick Conger (184), Pueblo, CO	CAN-AM	15:04.31	
COLORADO "500"			
1. Malcolm Smith (510), Laguna Beach, CA	HUS 430	13:48.33	
2. Lee Reichart (522), Wheatridge, CO	MAI 490	14:57.23	
3. Wally Dallenbach (500), Basalt, CO	YAM 500	15:02.80	
4. Scott McKinnon (504), San Diego, CA		15:27.78	
5. J. Sherman Cooper (507), Trenton, NJ	HON 500	15:51.33	



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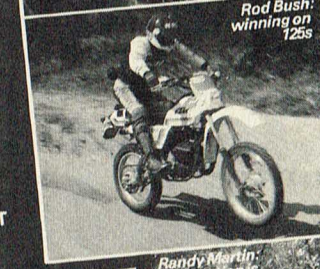
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## RACE TO THE CLOUDS

(continued from page 47)

A hillclimb rookie by the name of Malcolm Smith, of "Neat, Malcolm," fame, won the new Celebrity class handily in his first attempt at the 'Peak. This new class, made up of the Colorado 500 Club (a bunch of ex race-car drivers and other celebrities who undertake a mammoth trail ride from New Mexico to Aspen, Colorado every year), featured former Indy star Wally Dallenbach. Malcolm's time would have made him competitive in the Semi-pro classes, where he says he'll be "next year." Mr. Smith was followed to the top by most of the 250 amateur class then Lee Reichert, Dallenbach and Scott McKinnon, as they finished second through fourth respectively.

As the saying goes, "A good time was had by all" and most of the riders are looking forward to and planning for next year's race. Some are kicking themselves for little indiscretions in certain corners that cost them a position or more. And, it gets tougher. The average finishing times this year were about 30-percent faster than last year. "Just wait'll next year."

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## THE SPECTATORS—PARTY HEARTY

This year, a record 30,000-plus saw the bikes dicing from corner to corner—at least most of the 30,000 saw them.

The "Hill" is traditionally opened up to spectators in the afternoon the day before the race. This turns the hill into a 12-mile-long party. Campers, tents, sleeping bags, fireworks, and what must be 25-percent of the beer consumed in Colorado in a year are mixed together in a moonlit bash that usually doesn't end until the next day.

Since there are no bleachers or stands, the crowds sit, lie, and stand in, or on, every available ditch, tree and rock from the starting line to a spot called *Devil's Playground*. More than two miles high, the altitude and the party factor extract quite a toll on the hardy spectators who inhabit the 'Play-ground.' It's been said that "you don't have to be crazy to watch the race from there, but it helps."

Despite the fact that there are no fences or barriers to keep the crowds back, there are few incidents which pose a problem to the rider—unless someone tries to hand you an opened beer as you dive for a hairpin. □

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# "Ga-Zee-Bo"

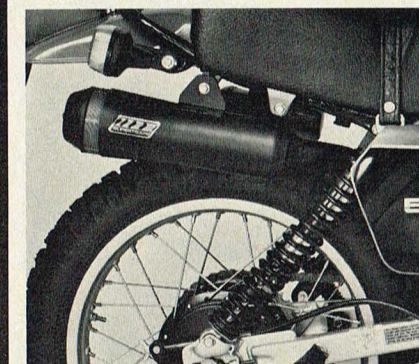
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