

TRAIL BLAZER

Suzuki TS125ERZ

DID the Government introduce the 12bhp learner law with the off-road enthusiast in mind? Surely not. Suzuki's TS125ERZ has all the requirements of a good trail bike – but lacks the usable power to effect serious trail riding.

First thing to notice about the motor is that it has no bottom end – in fact nothing below 5500 rpm. Yet surprisingly it will pull way into the red.

When starting the bike on choke it sounds like you're winding up an elastic band. It's not until you disengage the choke that the motor feels anything like correct. Initial pull always are a disaster: The TS almost stalls. The weight of the rider may have something to do with it but unless 5000 rpm is seen the bike is reluctant to move.

However once under way it's very easy to ride: with liberal use of the gearbox you'll find the pace quite quick for a 125. Given time 70mph will indicate on the speedo but that doesn't do anything for the wellbeing of the bike.

Stopping, once you've wound the TS up, is impressive. It might only be equipped with a single leading shoe movement front and rear but you certainly don't need anything more sophisticated. Both brakes are light with a good deal of feel provided they're kept well adjusted.

Clutch and gearbox operations are excellent, both light and smooth. Emergency stops can catch you in the wrong gear at a standstill. Then a heavy punch on the lever is required to get you back into bottom cog.

Once used to the engine the chassis can be put to the test and it comes through with flying colours. Suzuki certainly hasn't cut any corners.

The TS comes complete with the now established Full Floater rear end which features an alloy box section swinging arm. And with a 13 stone rider up front the damping on this test bike didn't seem bad.

However the front end suffered somewhat. The average learner isn't as heavy or as tall as the test pilot. We found the normal riding position uncomfortable simply because the bike is small. Riding distances results in a nasty dose of *numbus bumus* . . .

Yet with a range of 120-130 miles it's not made for long distance runs. Night riding on a trail bike has always been hazardous. That is until now. The TS sports exceptional lights (for a trail mount). Only a large shadow cast by the front fender interferes with the main beam.

The Bridgestone Trail Wing tyres

perform 'predictably' on and off-road. Unfortunately trail tyres on the road lull you into a false sense of security, ending up with the inevitable nasties. Off-road the TS tends to hop about a bit . . . but if you can hang on you can usually get away with it!

However a close look at the bike reveals what could be an expensive problem: the expansion box is vulnerable to anything that happens to get in the way. This is unusual because the rest of the bike looks so right. It appears Suzuki ran out of places to route the pipe.

The TS has some nice extras that help finish it off. A good example is the oil catch around the oil tank filler, plus a usable tool kit, helmet lock, steering lock and good instrumental illumination.

Suzuki seems to have got most things right in the small capacity classes in recent years. So its no surprise to find that the TS lives up to the factory's reputation.

DIMENSIONS

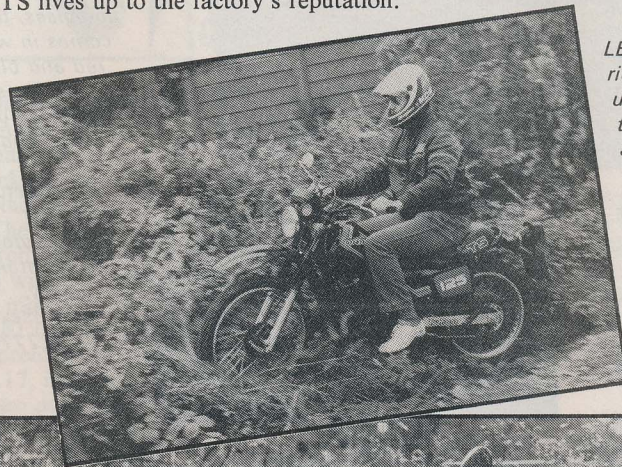
Price (inc VAT).....	£759
Engine.....	Single cyl. 2-stroke, reed valve
Bore x Stroke.....	56 x 50mm
Capacity.....	123cc
Gearbox.....	6-speed
Comp ratio.....	6.7:1
Carburation.....	24mm Mikuni
Max power @ rpm.....	12bhp @ 8000

CYCLE PARTS

Tyres.....	Bridgestone Trail Wing
Front.....	2.75 x 21
Rear.....	4.10 x 18
Brakes	
Front.....	130mm drum
Rear.....	110mm drum
Suspension	
Front.....	Telescopic fork
Rear.....	Swing arm (five position pre-load)

SPECIFICATIONS

Dry weight.....	96kg (212lbs)
Wheelbase.....	1346mm (53ins)
Seat height.....	830mm (32.7ins)
Fuel capacity.....	9.5 litres (2.1gal)



*LEFT: The 13 stones of rider Terry Homan were an uncomfortable weight on the small-statured Suzuki. Though brakes and pace were impressive. . .
BELOW: The TS125: limitations of 12 brake horse power prevent it becoming a serious trail-riding steed.*

