

Britain's Top Selling Off-Road Magazine

# DIRT BIKE RIDER

October '84 85p US \$2.75

'85 MODELS

**TESTS** FOUR BIG THUMPERS

MUGEN CR250

SHOCK SERVICING

D.I.Y. TY175

SPENCE POSTER INSIDE



SUZUKI RM250



HONDA CR80



YAMAHA YZ125

**SCOOP** '85 KX250  
IMPRESSION

**PLUS** KTM250





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# MOTOCROSS, TRIALS, ENDURO...WE'VE GOT THE LOT!

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# A TRICK TREAT

Last issue we brought you exclusive first pictures of the 1985 Kawasaki KX250. Now we've ridden it. Read on for our scoop first impressions.

**T**HE buzz that things were happening to Kawasakis for 1985 really began at Hawkstone Park and the British 500 Grand Prix. Team Green wheeled out a pre-production KX500. It looked trick and went quick.

Kawasaki boss Alec Wright brought out a pre-prod 125 a week or two later and promptly picked up some debut wins. The weeklies failed to notice. However, the 250 stayed firmly locked behind closed doors.

At the same time Team Green was involved in the World 500 Championship, even using the production engine in the final round in Italy. Second place in the title chase for Georges Jobe left Wright in a fairly good frame of mind. That's when **DBR** put the hard word on for pictures and a ride impression of the unseen 250.

We got a reply in the affirmative to both our requests. The pictures we brought to you last issue. The ride impression this time around. We got our hands on the bike straight after Andy Nicholls had debuted it at the Nympsfield round of the



250 Championship. Time dictated nothing more than an impression. A full test will follow in a later issue.

Now, to set the record straight. The machine we used was a pilot production KX250C3. Pilot production is one step further up the development line from a pre-production bike, but just short of a production model. By the pilot stage everything but the final cosmetics has usually been confirmed. So expect to see some changes in the plastic work on the showroom model.

The '85 Kawasaki 250 sums up Big K's intentions for next season. Very Serious. The bike has been completely redeveloped from the wheels up. The frame is new, along the lines of those used in the works 500s. There is no triangulation round the airbox, which features an airduct under the tank. Filters from the 125 and 500 are interchangeable with the 250.

The rear suspension has been reworked with a longer unit and adjustable strut. The damper has high and low speed compression damping and adjustable rebound. Up front, the 43mm forks have eight position compression damping, plus three-position spring pre-load.

The front rim is narrower, straight pull spokes on both rims. Both wheels have larger hubs and spindles. The front disc is now drilled, while the rear brake pedal design has been improved.

The big attraction is in the engine,



which now has variable exhaust port timing actuated by lever from the clutch. In the States this arrangement has been labelled the Dynamic Exhaust System. Unlike the Honda and Yamaha systems, it operates either side of the exhaust port. A simple explanation of its operation would be to imagine a pair of swing doors. The more the power the wider they open.

The bike was so new when we rode it that not even Kawasaki's main wrench John MacMillan knew all the tech details of the bike. Like him, we'll have to wait a little longer, too.

Out on the track the first big impression was one of power. DES certainly does his job. The big plus comes in the mid range. From being good but not brilliant this

year, the KX250 moves into a different league.

We found the power came in strong in the mid-range and the engine would rev out with ease. However, we felt it still lacked the impressive lowdown grunt of the current YZ250.

While he can't comment on the Yamaha, Andy Nicholls felt the '85 Kawasaki to be far superior to the bikes he's run this year. "It's got a lot more torque and is faster than any current standard 250. It's easier to ride now with the new power and not so hard on the gearbox."

In cornering and handling we found improvement. For a start the seating position is lower and the rider feels part of the bike. "You sit in it rather than on it," one rider said. Nicholls agrees. "It is better for cornering. It turns faster and feels like a works bike to sit on." Frame redesign and suspension updates obviously work.

Brakes, as ever, are typical Kawasaki. The front is again an excellent one finger

job with plenty of feel and power. We found the rear a little harsh, although considering the newness of the machine and lack of setting up it's hardly a vital criticism.

Since our time on the bike was limited it would be unfair – and unwise – to try to give a definitive verdict on the '85 KX250. But we will say it is a better bike than this year. The technical innovations aren't gimmicks. Our all too brief ride on the bike left us impressed. We'll see if it was justified when we get hold of the production bike for a full test. Stay tuned.



## THANKS TO . . .

John MacMillan (who was late home) and Team Green for the bike, Andy Nicholls for his thoughts, the Stroud Valley club for its co-operation and Ross, Mark, Chris, Daryl and Karin for their inspiration.

