

**250 SHOOTOUT** HONDA XR250 vs. YAMAHA WR250F vs. TTR250 vs. YZ125  
vs. SUZUKI DRZ250 vs. KAWASAKI KDX220 vs. KTM 200EXC

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# DIRTBIKE

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## DB'S GUIDE TO THE NATIONALS:

### ANOTHER CROWN FOR CARMICHAEL?

YZ125 ENDURO



## PRO PROJECTS



ULTIMATE WR250F

### YAMAHA'S SECRET NEW 4-STROKE: 16,000 RPM 125CC SCREAMER



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IT'S BACK...



*This version isn't made for motocross, but we couldn't resist putting Gary Jones on it for a few laps around Lake Elsinore Motocross Park. The suspension was clearly set up for off-road use, but bottoming still wasn't an issue.*

# CANNONDALE CROSS COUNTRY

The hiatus is over and bikes are rolling out of the factory again

By the staff of Dirt Bike

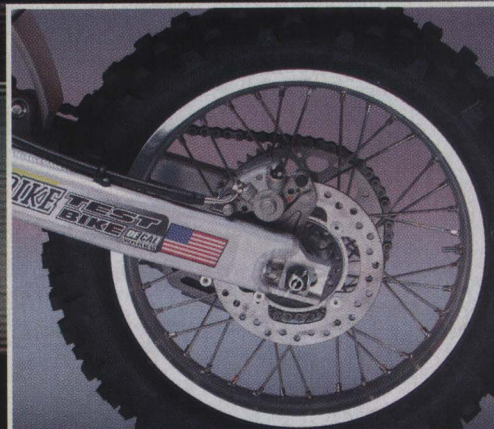
If there were a hotline for abused and battered motorcycle companies, Cannondale would be a regular caller. Last summer the Cannondale MX400 was released to the world, and it was met with reactions ranging from mild discouragement to outright horror. The bike wasn't finished. It had strange carburetion glitches (EFI glitches?), it was a little heavy, a little slow and a nightmare to work on. Cannondale stopped production and worked on getting the bike right. This month we got a brief ride on the new Cross Country version.

## WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

Frankly, the off-road world is less demanding of its motorcycles than the motocross world. A bike that weighs 260 pounds might be too heavy for a motocross track, but it's right in line for a trail bike. A bike that produces 42 horsepower might be a little slow for a 432cc motocross bike, but it's a rocket out on the trail. The standards just aren't as high. Aside from playing to a less critical audience, there are a number of differences between the new Cross Country and that motocross model that we tested. The



**Cannondale isn't afraid to spend some dough. The Ohlins fork is probably the most expensive front suspension to come on any production motorcycle.**



**This early version came with an 18-inch European spec Eco tire. The U.S. versions will probably have full-size knobbies.**

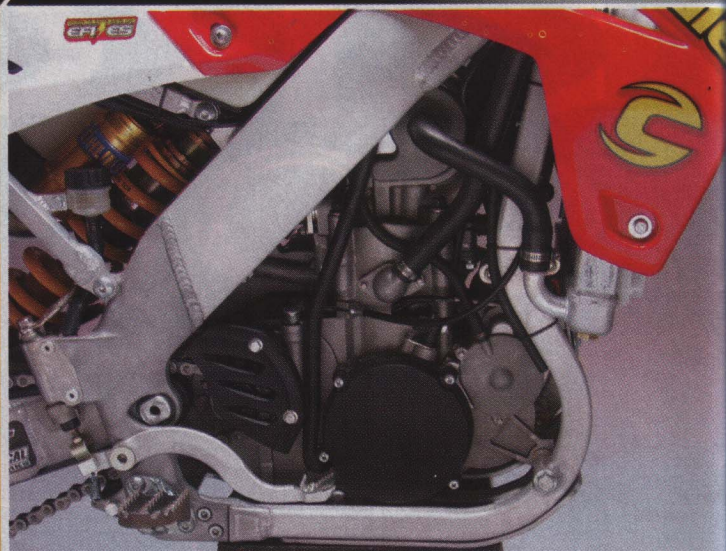
Cross Country has different EFI mapping, an 18-inch rear wheel, a skid-plate, handguards, 100 watts of lighting capability (but no lights), and a kickstand. The bike has a much more finished appearance, with injection-molded plastic shrouds and number plates, and much of the zip-tie construction has given way to a more professional package.



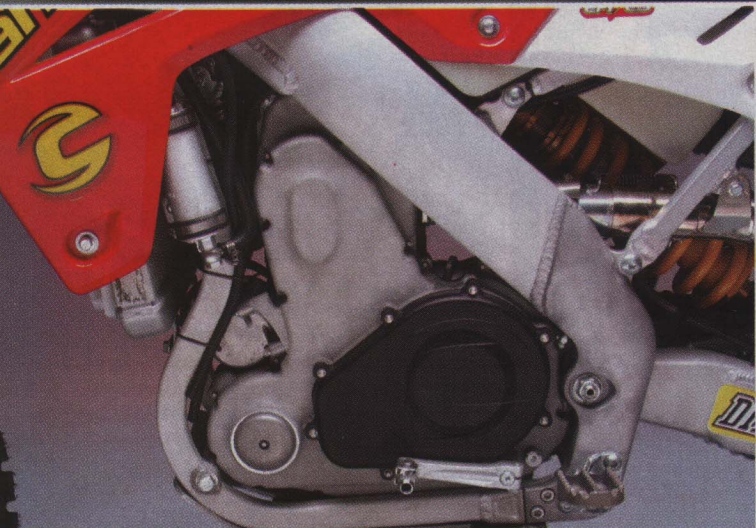
# CANNONDALE CROSS COUNTRY

## WHAT'S THE SAME?

The Cannondale still is a combination of excellent construction and really weird ideas. It still has a super clean aluminum frame (Honda should take a lesson or two), top notch Ohlins suspension components (with softer valving for off-road), excellent rims, handlebars, chain, sprockets and virtually every other part you can think of. And it still has an oddball backwards cylinder with the fuel-injection in front and the exhaust header in the back. It is an electric-start-only bike, but the battery has a much larger capacity now, so you probably don't have to carry jumper cables in your fannypack. It still has two air filters, one of which is under the tank and positioned so that water can pour straight into the engine when you wash the bike. Not the greatest setup we've seen.



*If the Cannondale ever goes into full production, there will probably be a black hose shortage felt all across the U.S.*



*What are the differences between this bike and the motocrosser that we struggled with earlier in the year? There are something like 77 updates. Plus there are the usual off-road items, like a lighting coil, a skid plate and so forth.*

## IS IT BETTER?

We don't have enough time on the bike to declare it the best motorcycle of all time, but so far we are impressed. The handling is super stable at speed, and the horsepower is better than a KTM 400EXC, which is the best bike in that class right now. Our biggest concerns are that the bike still seems to stall easily when you first let out the clutch—evidently the changes in the ignition mapping weren't the real problem there—and the bike runs rather hot. Both of those features aren't good for a trail bike. Next month we plan on racing the bike at the Glen Helen Six-Hour, which will give us a more realistic idea of how it performs. Stay tuned. □

