

KTM 520SX vs. YZ426F vs. VOR 503 vs. FC501

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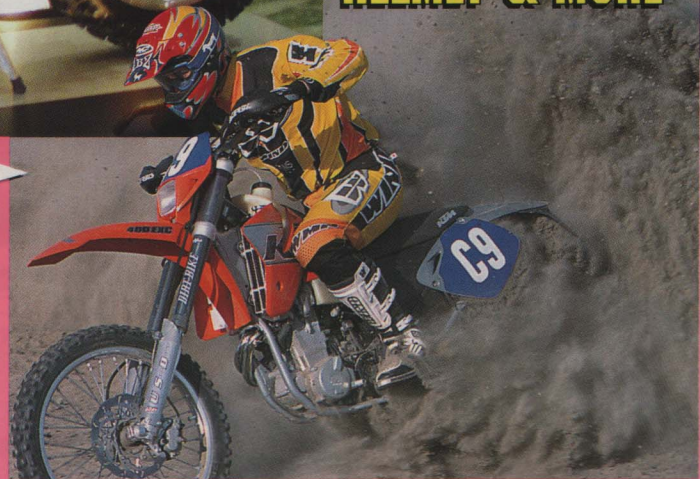
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CANNONDALE NEWS!

Delays explained and two new models!

By the multi-purpose DIRT BIKE Staff

You'll no doubt notice that the long-awaited Cannondale MX400 wasn't included in our 500cc motocross thumper shootout in this issue. That's because unavoidable circumstances have repeatedly postponed production of the all-new, lightweight thumper. Folan was originally slated to develop and build the MX400's fuel-injected, electric-start motor, but things fell apart between Cannondale and Folan during development. Cannondale found an automotive company to assemble the engines for the project, but it eventually became evident that the replacement couldn't produce the volume needed fast enough.

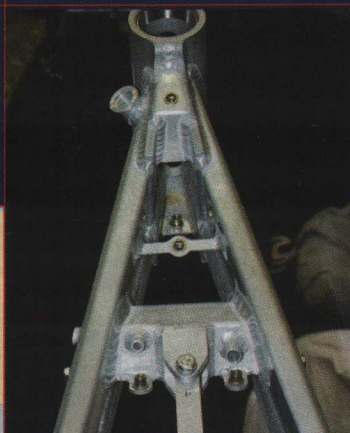
So, Cannondale tooled up to build its own engines, and the tool-making process has stalled production even further. That's bad news for those who have already put deposits down on the new MX400, but it's actually good news for the rest of us. Simply put, the delay has allowed Cannondale to rethink its market strategy and design two off-road versions to complement the motocross version. Yeah, baby!

BEYOND THE 400

During preproduction development, Cannondale wasn't getting the horsepower it wanted out of the MX400, so displacement grew to 432cc (which should make YZ426 owners nervous). That translates to a 95mm bore and 61mm stroke. The EFI system has a sophisticated Engine Management System that reads ambient air temperature, air pressure, coolant temperature, RPM and throttle position, and the EMS varies ignition timing for optimum throttle response. The system also compensates for altitude, so mountain men won't have to re-jet to reach the clouds.

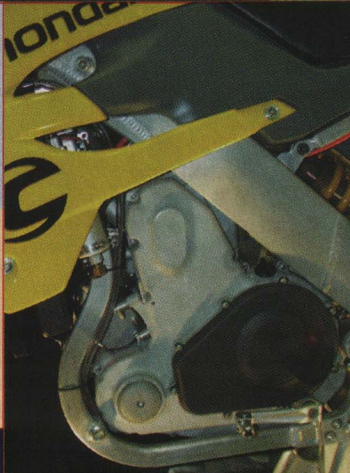
Cannondale and Ohlins formed an alliance to develop the MX400's suspension a year ago, and Ohlins will

The aluminum perimeter frame naturally forms a pseudo-air-box, so Cannondale made it official. A pre-filter on the front of the headset delivers semi-clean air to a larger filter under the gastank. Holy Husaberg, Batman!



Cannondale upped displacement to 432cc on all three models and resisted the urge to make the EX and XC wide-ratios. An EMS unit gathers data from and gives orders to the ignition and EFI.

Like the VOR 503MX, the Cannondale has a bolt-together frame and cartridge transmission. All resemblance ends there, as Cannondales have an EFI body where headpipes usually go and a Big Gun exhaust where a carb usually sits.





Based on the MX400, the 432cc EX400 has an engine map and suspension valving to make it more effective in tight woods, but it retains the high-performance 12.5:1 compression ratio. Enduro hardware adds a claimed seven pounds over the MX.

help Cannondale hone the suspension during the 2000 250cc MX and Four-stroke Nationals, with Keith Johnson perhaps being joined by one other rider. Weight has also been an issue on the MX400's release, and Cycra has come on board to save more than one pound off of the 432 with plastic alone.

ENTER THE XC AND EX!

While the MX400 comes in Viper Red or Super Black, the enduro-equipped EX400 will come in Viper Red or Team Yellow, and the off-road hybrid XC400 will be Team Blue or Viper red. Both off-road versions are slated to have the same engine settings (12.5:1 compression) as the motocross version, presumably with a heavier flywheel on the lighting-capable ignition. The EX and XC have an 18-inch rear wheel, 3.0-gallon tank (instead of the MX's 2.1), odometer and spark arrestor

CANNONDALE TECH INSPECTION

- DOHC, reversed-cylinder engine with EFI
- One-piece crankcase with cartridge gearbox
- Electric start engine has no back-up kicker
- Two airfilters on frame a la Husaberg
- Ohlins FG9910 fork and position-sensitive shock
- Aluminum perimeter frame and subframe
- Special-built Nissin rear brake system
- Cycra plastic and EX/XC handguards. •

for the Big Gun-designed pipe and silencer. Both off-roaders also come stock with Cycra's Pro-Bend handguard system.

Along the lines of KTM, the EX has full lighting and enduro-specific ignition mapping and suspension settings, and the XC is a combination of MX and EX settings. The XC has identical engine and suspension to the MX and comes with no lights, although the ignition is capable of powering full lights. All three versions carry oil for the dry-sump motor in the left upper frame spar, while the subframe and engine cradles bolt to the aluminum perimeter frame.

Cannondale claims the dry weight for the MX, XC and EX versions to be 242, 245 and 249 pounds, respectively. We can't wait to get all three versions on the track, trail, dyno and official *DIRT BIKE* scale! Tune in next month for a full test! □

Don't want a red or black Cannondale MX400? Then the yellow XC400 is the machine that can turn heads on the trail and still rail berms like the MX version. The 18-inch rear tire, handguards, spark arrestor and odo add a claimed three pounds to the XC400.

