

EXCLUSIVE 2005 450 SHOOTOUT

DIRT BIKE

WPS 34355

DIRT BIKE

NOVEMBER 2004



MX & OFF-ROAD RATED

- ALUMINUM YZ250
- SUPER LIGHT CRF450
- STUNNING KX250F
- BRUTAL YZ450
- FAST KTM 125
- INTENSE KX125

BIG TEETH FOR THE HONDA CRF250X

SECRET TRAILS EXPOSED! DAVIS, ROESLER, KIEDROWSKI, ABBOTT CAUGHT IN THE ACT



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The explosive power of the KTM125 is fun and makes exiting corners easy. The motor likes to be short shifted.

DIRTBIKE

KTM 2005

125SX

The juice factor

► Last year the KTM125 was at the front of the drag race in the 125 two-stroke division. The motor was easily the fastest, having excellent out of the hole power, the meatiest middle, and just enough over rev to finish the puzzle. But handling issues abounded with the machine.

Weaknesses in suspension augmented quirks in the trackside manners of the steed and unfortunately knocked the 125 back to reality. It was the best 125 motocrosser, but just barely. For 2005 KTM has addressed the dark side with a revitalized chassis and suspension updates that they say "get it right for '05". Let's see.

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2005

The SX gets a new frame with bridgework above the swingarm pivot that is 30 percent stiffer than last year's. The goal is to reduce unwanted flex and keep the bike going in a straight line. It was also changed to improve front-end stability. The triple clamps are all new and pretty trick. They are larger, and machined out of a solid block of aluminum for strength. The new clamp allows a rider to alter trail by changing the position of the steer tube in the clamp.

The new fork has balanced inner and outer tubes for equal flex of both tubes for better function during high force impacts. Also, a chrome-plated piston rod reduces friction, a two-lip oil seal improves durability and leak issues, and they've improved the bottoming resistance. The shock body is new and there are two pistons that work separately. One is for bottoming while the other caters to normal track impacts. The new shock has increased progression to the damping, yet is more resistant to hard bottoming. In the past, if you wanted the shock to be soft over small stuff, it bottomed hard on bigger hits. Cranking up the high-speed compres-



The KTM feels light and controllable. The rear brake has new pads for quieter, longer lasting and consistent performance.



MISSES

- Front end still a bit nervous
- signs off on top

Kudos to KTM. The new shock is more resistant to bottoming while absorbing small hits better than last year.

sion improved bottoming but bounced and hacked like a big dog.

ON THE TRACK

KTM made only minor changes to an already field-tested powerplant. Throttle response was slightly improved by lengthening the exhaust flange and altering the port timing. The bike still makes stunning bottom to mid power for a 125. It's truly the only machine in the class that you can short shift and lug. Unfortunately, the over-rev is still a bit weak and doesn't cater to the normal pin-it and rev-to-moon 125 motif. It's more like hammer it, shift it up and keep 'er humming without getting too high into the stratosphere. Race it like an Asian machine and it responds by falling flat and making nothing but racket. Ride it like a 250 and it's all smiles.

The changes KTM made to address handling issues were all for the better. The SX125 goes in a straight line better and now has a much more balanced and controlled feel. The tendency to kick and swing side to side into the corners is a faint memory. Accelerating bumps are also handled much better, so getting that good power to the ground results in better drive out of the corners.

KTM has the most powerful brakes out there which makes coming into corners with a high rate of speed fun rather than a test of nerves. Having a hydraulic clutch on a 125 is awesome, especially for those who love to use and abuse it. The feel is always the same whether it's hot or cold. The

Bridgestone M70 on the rear and the M59 on the front excel in the sand but cross over fairly well to loamy tracks. If you're going to be on the hard pack, change 'em up. We love the air filter access on KTMs and wish every bike out there was as easy.

CONCLUSION

KTM has a keen eye for a complete package; hydraulic clutch, Renthal grips and bars, new adjustable triple clamps and most importantly, a brilliant motor. For 2005 the juice factor reigns supreme and will keep the KTM in the hunt for 125 of the year. But equally as critical, KTM focused on the chassis' trackside quirkiness and has instilled a modicum of confidence via the updated frame, suspension and valving spec. In the shrinking world of 125 motocrossers, KTM has put another notch on the belt to success. □

TYPICAL TEST CONDITIONS & SETUP

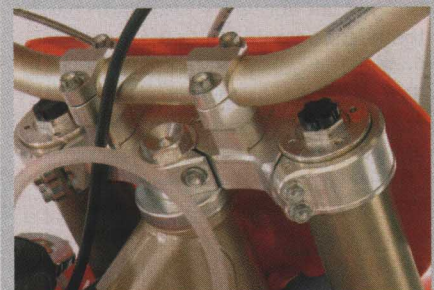
Tracks.....	Glen Helen, Piru, I-5, LACR
Temperature.....	90-100°
Altitude.....	1000'-3000' msl
Fuel.....	Chevron 91 octane, Spectrum TK @40:1
Jetting.....	190 main, 45 pilot, 1469D needle, 2nd position, 1-1/2 turns on airscrew
Fork.....	15C, 18R 2 turn in on spring preload
Shock.....	15C, 25R 2-1/4 turn high speed compression.
MSRP.....	\$5298



The front brake is stronger and a shorter lever stroke ratio means less fatigue to rider's hands.



The only change to the strong motor is a lengthened exhaust flange and the opening on the exhaust port is slightly smaller, improving throttle response.



An adjustable triple clamp means you can fine-tune your handling.



A new frame improves stiffness by 30 percent in the area above the swing arm pivot, helping the bike go in a straight line better.