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Hey dad, they got it right again!



This shows just how light the 'chair is. Care must be taken though, when youngsters make a right-hand turn, because the sidecar wheel lifts easily. There are no rough edges for the kids to hurt themselves on, and the quality of construction is superb.

SMALL is good. Small can be better. So says my five-year-old son Tom, who, after a brief encounter with Yamaha's best-yet offering in the mini-bike range, is convinced that his favourite bike the Yamaha PW50, is even better now that there's a sidecar as an optional extra.

style sidecar with details like the drilled aluminium floor, sidecar wheel suspension and alloy wheel arches, not to mention a smashing three-spoke easy clean knobby-tired sidecar wheel, was any better than the solo version, he came out with a long, thoughtful "yes". With a nonchalance only mastered by kids, he and his mates took to the sidecar version of Yamaha's "Pewee" like ducks to water. The original solo version of the 50cc air-cooled two-stroke



with shaft drive - proved to be one of Yamaha's best sellers with adults finding every opportunity to ride the bikes. Proof of the pudding is that the dozen or so PW50s that Yamaha have been carting around the country on their year-long promotional activities have stood the test of time, with some, after a tiny bit of refurbishing, set to see out another year of ill-treatment in the hands of unsympathetic nippers.

But if one is company, then two is a sidecar team, and now junior can take dad for a ride on the bike. The sidecar outfit is really that strong. My thirteen-stone neighbour, a trials rider himself, delighted in pottering around on the minuscule outfit on some pretty rough ground, with the bike showing no signs of strain.

The bike is a tough little nut. In its original form, it has a restrictor plate inserted in the exhaust pipe. This is to keep the power down whilst junior gets used to the handling of the bike, and can be removed by simply slipping out the

LEFT: As beautifully made as the bike itself, the little sidecar will hold a 12 stone adult without any problems. Hidden is the suspension unit behind the sidecar wheel. Note the drilling of the sidecar platform. An alloy plate protects the legs from the exhaust system.

Specification: PW50

ENGINE: Single cylinder two-stroke; 49cc (40 x 39.7mm), developing 2.7bhp at 5,500rpm. Compression ratio 6.0 to 1. Automatic lubrication. Electronic ignition.
DIMENSIONS: Overall length, 48in; overall width, 22in; overall height, 28in; seat height, 19in; wheelbase, 33in; ground clearance, 4.1in; dry weight, 81lb (solo); tyres, 2.50 x 10. Drum brakes front and back.
PRICE: £425 with sidecar, £285 solo.
IMPORTERS: Mitsui Machinery Sales Limited, Oakcroft Road, Chessington, Surrey. Telephone 01-397 5111.

by Geoff Aspel

plate once the exhaust pipe is loosened from the cylinder head - a job that takes about three minutes.

But it's not all plain sailing, because there aren't many adults who can handle a sidecar outfit, let alone kids. The right-hand mounted sidecar is very light and will easily lift on right-hand turns, so children should be forewarned. It's really a good idea to keep the restrictor in position until the rider is completely familiar with the outfit's handling.

With its low seat height, separate oil and petrol tanks, and shaft drive, which is a miniature of the pukka thing,

the most anxious parent should be satisfied with safety.

There's also the novel starting switch mounted on the right-hand handlebar. To start the bike, flick the switch to 'start'. This will of course, enable the bike to be kick-started, but opening the throttle merely revs the bike up.

To move off, the switch has to be moved to the 'run' position, and finally, there's the 'off' position. A flip-up choke lever is mounted on the steering head.

Brakes are mounted bicycle-style, on both handlebars; there is a deep padded seat which comes right up to the fuel tank like the moto crossers, and the sturdy three-spoke wheels are strong and easy to keep clean.

In our household, the solo Yamaha was raved about, but with the sidecar attached, it's a downright sensation!

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