

YAMAHA DT 125R

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My first bike was a DT125, so I guess it was fitting that I should return to the mud and grass slopes of my youth to find out something about this year's DT. First impressions of it are justifiably good; in the cool blue livery with yellow graphics it looks sharp and able. Suspension travel seems extensive, which it is, and the liquid-cooled reed-valve single cylinder two-stroke unit is clearly visible except for the ugly flow of the exhaust pipe on exiting the cylinder head.

The question has to be then, does the bike match up to the looks? Such an enquiry should be viewed relatively as the restriction inflicted on 125s limits them all way below their true capability, whether straight road bikes or on/off types. And this is true of the DT125R. Power starts to come in at around 5000rpm, climbing to a peak near 7000 and unwilling on

existent gearing to rev beyond 8000. This last engine speed equates to a cruising speed of a little over 60mph on the road slightly, but not much, more with a tail wind. Hence, on open roads reasonable progress relies on momentum as much as engine power, and the knack – soon picked up as watching any learner riding fastish will illustrate – of keeping the thing on the boil.

What this means is that needing to overtake at about 50mph is a frustrating and perilous experience. Every time I ride a restricted 125 I'm reminded of just how important it is on a bike to have the power to get out of trouble. The DT is no exception to this rule, but makes up for it in flexible, sure-footed steering and handling and light weight, 240lbs (109kg) to be exact. It is also very manoeuvrable in town, but road use is compromised by one severe let-down – one of the hardest seats it has ever been my backside's misfortune to



Wild-looking, wonderful graphics make the DT125R ideal for town and country posing – it's ideal for riding in both too

KEL EDGE



'It's worthwhile passing a test on, suffering the hard seat, and then letting yourself go on a nifty little off-road bike'

Like most 125s now, the chassis is easily up to what the output asks of it. Getting out in the open and up in the air is its forté



Generous suspension travel and superb styling make the DT look serious

have to sit on. The stage was soon reached where, after a few miles in (or more accurately, *on*) the saddle, at every stop for traffic lights and such I would move to the side to support body weight wholly on one foot rather than sit in pain. The seat height itself is a not insignificant 34.5in so a shift in body weight is definitely called for.

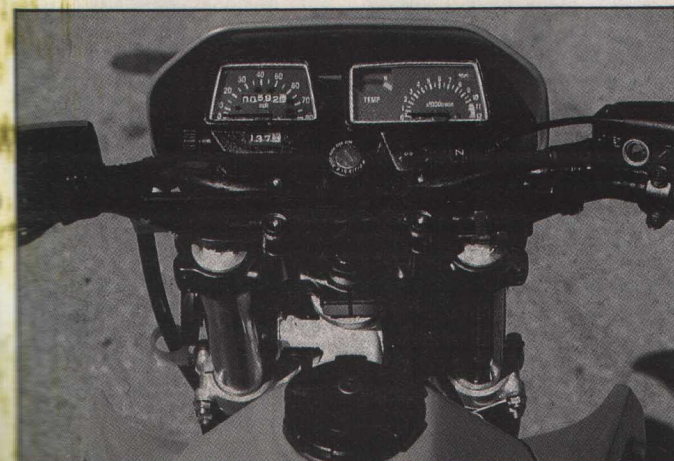
In terms of the inherent discomfort of small bikes this and the engine restriction are the only two serious blots on an otherwise fun-filled landscape. And so we come to the tales of playing around in the mud; back in the days when me and my DT (I can't honestly remember how old it is but it must be ten by now) ruled supreme on the slopes nearby, competition went only so far as who could get the furthest, without falling off. I was, after all, still learning. *This* DT allows a far more confident time in slinging it about, powering out of trouble – even with the loathed 12hp restriction – and relying on better tyres and suspension.

The latter is, as said, generous, with a full 270mm of movement at the front and 260mm at the back. This allows

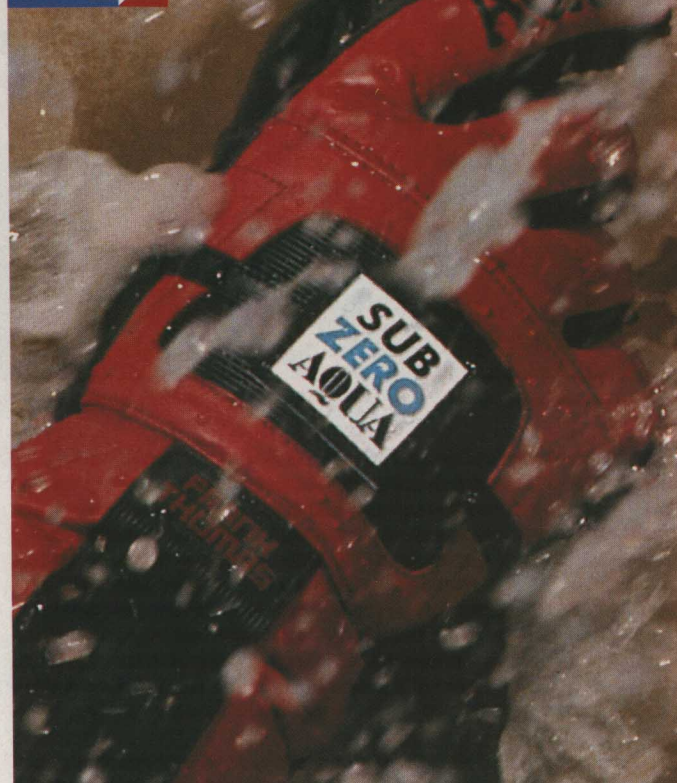
you with such a light bike to be fairly careless in what the back's doing, noting only the serious losses of traction when shutting off soon regains grip. The riding position and general ergonomic appointment is, other than the seat, excellent throughout with the controls seeming always to be where you last left them and footpegs never sliding under-foot.

The minimalist chassis is, say Yamaha, closely based on their YZ motocross design, and it is faultless on or off road. The Yokohama tyres contribute to this general sense of security, and really the only thing halting serious scratching is the power limitation. It's not too nice rounding a bend with a power-band that's limited in power and extent. In all though the DT125R is as capable on the road as any 125 with muddy ability could be asked to be.

There is, however, a more serious edge to all this. On collection Kemp passed his Enduro-eye over the DT and began getting excited about stripping off all the bits not needed – the rather pretty rear footrest rails and indicators are two examples – and taking the



The clocks are visible, if a little on the dark side, and braking up front excellent



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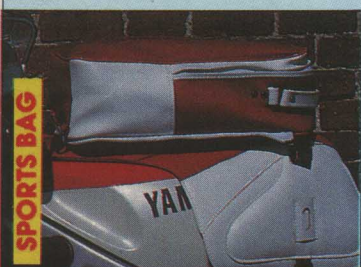


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The limited output of the DT doesn't forbid powering in and out of traction and the like

whole thing seriously; which means as well, de-restriction. As the DT is not going to keep up on straights or round corners with road 125s, there is a case for saying the restriction isn't as bad as it could be. Honda's NS125R is easily capable of taking on larger machines when liberated from its 12 horsepower. The DT on the other hand is far less frustrating on the road, because the chassis is not going to cut it with small red things tarmac-wise; therefore buying and de-restricting just for off-road fun is an attractive option. It went through my mind anyway as I showered Kel with dust for the pictures. The thing is damn good fun doing what it's best at. This makes it worthwhile passing a test on, suffering the hard seat, and then letting yourself go on a nifty little off-road bike.

Rumour has it that it'll put out nearly twice the horsepower when de-restricted, but as this is a family magazine, we won't go into that. For the £1600 you pay for this bike the details are nice, flashy front disc cover, brightly coloured frame *et al*, and the size is impressive, which it has to be to justify the massive-looking suspension travel and bright paint-job. I came away liking the thing a lot in the end; it is a hundred or so more than it's rivals, but against the KMXs and MTXs of this world it has an altogether more serious off-road feel to it and secure, if still restricted, road manners. The controls are suitable for both types of terrain, the engine keeps its head in town and out (although a long blast will have it smoking) and it seems a reasonable proposition to fiddle it into a good small bike for off-riding.

It will, of course, never make it as a green-lane bike in the tradition of travelling miles on

paths and hills. It's too frenetic for that. But therein lies its appeal: you have no qualms about ringing its neck as the bike is light enough to keep in hand, and powerless enough to keep track of what's happening. Whatever you do, don't waste this bike on just passing your test. It deserves a bit more than that **David Lancaster**

YAMAHA DT 125R

Price	£1599
Motor	Liquid-cooled, two-stroke single reedvalve single
Displacement	124cc
Bore & stroke	56.4x50mm
Compression ratio	6.7:1
Maximum power @ rpm	12hp @ 7500rpm
Maximum torque @ rpm	10.8ftlbs
Carburettors	Mikuni TM28SS
Transmission	Sixspeed
Front fork	Telescopic 270mm travel
Rear suspension	Monocross 260mm travel
Brakes front	Single 199mm disc
rear	Single 189mm disc
Tyres front	2.75 - 21
rear	4.10 - 18
Wheelbase	55in
Seat height	34.5in
Width	32in
Weight	240lbs (109kg)
Fuel capacity	2.2 gal
Fuel consumption	42mpg
Top speed	60mph (indicated)