



QUICK LOOK: 1980 SUZUKI TS250T

Suzuki Puts The Dual Back In Dual-Purpose

Last year Suzuki's TS250N performed admirably on the pavement: smooth, quiet, fairly comfortable and powerful enough to blend easily with commuter traffic. But it lacked the very essence of its appointed existence: the ability to perform equally well in the dirt. In sum it seemed more a warmed over stew of outdated pieces than a *truly* dual-purpose bike.

Perhaps in an effort to boost lagging sales in the D-P market, Suzuki improved performance dramatically for 1980 by incorporating some subtle, but significant changes.

At a glance you can see some of

the changes that bring the TS up to today's standards. The aluminum colored box-section swingarm is the first thing to catch your eye. A narrow tank and seat, racy-looking side panels and newly designed plastic fenders contribute to the TS's dirt-bred appearance. Square plastic-cased speedo and tach units replace last year's steel instruments, and rubber-mounted turn indicators replace the bendable steel mounters.

When we tested the TS in a two-stroke dual-purpose face-off last October, it came out on top in street performance. It had a clear horsepower advantage at high revs, yet

maintained adequate midrange and low-end torque. This year Suzuki opted to sacrifice some of that high-revving power in favor of even more grunt. They raised the compression ratio from 5.7 to 5.9 by lowering the exhaust port 2mm from the top. They then opened up the intake tract and fitted a single-cable Mikuni carb in place of last year's 28mm push-pull arrangement, reducing weight and unnecessary complication. The result is a more manageable powerband with an ample supply of torque. They've even managed to make the 246cc motor more fuel-efficient in the process. Our TS averaged 47.5 mpg,

Suggested retail price.....\$1449

ENGINE

Type.....Two-stroke piston-port/case reed
 Displacement.....246cc
 Bore x stroke.....70 x 64mm
 Compression.....5.9:1
 Carburetion.....1, 29mm Mikuni slide needle
 Ignition.....Suzuki PEI, electronic

DRIVETRAIN

Clutch.....12 plates, wet
 Final drive.....5/8 x 5/16 (No. 525) D.I.D. chain 40/15

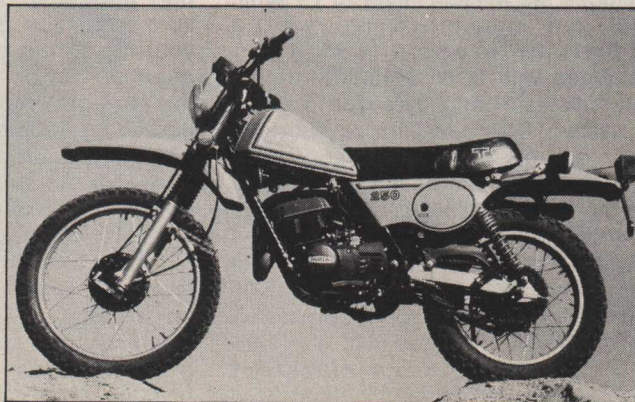
CHASSIS

Fork.....35mm, Showa, 7.6 in. travel
 Shocks.....Showa gas/oil, 5.2 in. wheel travel
 Front tire.....3.00-21 IRC Trials GP-1
 Rear tire.....4.60-18 IRC Trials GP-1
 Rake/trail.....29°/4.88 in. (124mm)
 Wheelbase.....55.38 in. (1406mm)
 Seat height.....33.75 in. (857mm)
 Ground clearance.....11.25 in. (285mm)
 Fuel capacity.....2.6 gal. (9.8 liters)
 Wet weight.....288 lbs. (130kg)

Colors.....Blue
 Instruments.....Speedo, tach, resettable tripmeter

PERFORMANCE

Mileage & approx. range.....47.5 mpg average,
 123 miles
 RPM at 60 mph in top gear.....5568
 Speed in gears at (redline).....(7000) 1st 22.84 mph;
 2nd 34.60 mph; 3rd 48.78 mph;
 4th 62.29 mph; 5th 75.42 mph



8.35 mpg over the previous model. Unfortunately Suzuki didn't see fit to increase the TS's fuel capacity when they restyled the tank. It's still crippled by a meager 2.6-gallon capacity and 115-mile range.

Suzuki ensured the extra midrange found its way to the ground by equipping the TS with longer Showa gas-charged shocks and mounting them to the mild-steel box-section swingarm. They also raised the section of frame supporting the fender and seat to accommodate the added .60-inch of wheel travel. Seat height has been raised a full inch, providing a more comfortable riding position in the dirt. The addition of longer shocks has also altered the frame's geometry slightly. Steering head angle is now half-a-degree steeper, effectively dropping the trail from 5.12 to 4.88 inches. This corrected the greatest annoyance suffered by last year's TS: an unpredictable, often painful, reluctance to turn without washing out.

Of course much of this problem rested in the standard Universal Trials tires of yesteryear. But influenced by the success of Honda's Bridgestone Claw patterned tires on the XLs, Suzuki fitted the TS with similar tires from IRC. Although they are harder in compound than the Bridgestones, the big 4.60-18 rear and 3.00-21 front supply a much greater degree of versatility than the old-school universals. The new skins harbor no rude surprises so characteristic of the universals. Even on the street there is substantial improvement in performance. Visions of full-length scabs dissolve in glimpses of victory as you dart from corner to corner. We took the TS along on a "peg-testing" session in the twisty Southern California canyons with three sporting middleweights, and believe it or not, the TS hung right in there—and in fact exposed its taillight more than once to the unsuspecting streeters. The IRC tires felt a bit skittish when pushed past the sensible limits, but never once came close to spitting us off.

We are enthused by the improvements on the TS. It's likely that Suzuki has boosted performance because they recognize the important role dual-purpose bikes may play in the future of motorcycling and also because they want to inject some excitement into the sinking dual-purpose market. How long the TS and the rest of the two-stroke D-P bikes will last in the face of mounting regulatory pressure from the EPA is another question altogether, but for now Suzuki has managed to meet the stiff emission demands head-on without sacrificing performance. **M**

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