



## SUZUKI PE175C

*An eternity after the first PE was introduced, Suzuki broadened the range with a 175. The wait was certainly worth it. This is the bike which should stomp the 175 class.*

**O**ccasionally, a Japanese bike comes along which gets you all fired up. The original PE250B had a lot of people interested, but it left them cold because of a few handling quirks in rocks. The C was much better. But all the while, rumours were thick about the PE175.

It was going to be this, that and the other. It was going to be essentially an RM125B with lights and better bottom-end power. It was going to weigh next to nothing. It was going to be able to handle rocks better.

It's here now, and all the rumours







have been verified. It is good. It is essentially an RM125B with lights. It does have good bottom-end power. It is light.

The very first ride on the PE175 was up in Queensland at the finish of a two-day trial. It was the bike ridden to a class position by Geoff Udy, of Mayfair Suzuki (the Queensland distributor) and the officials of the event let it run over the special test course.

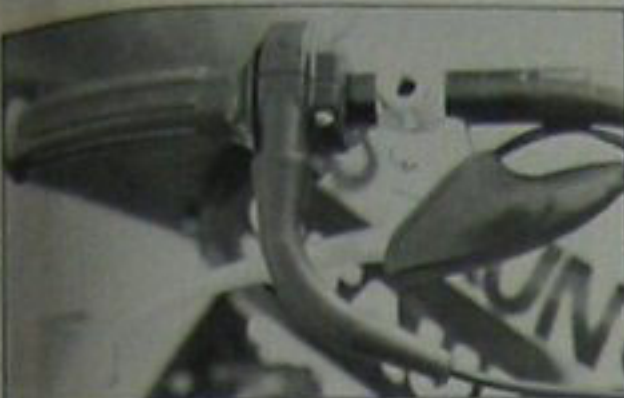
This course was a seven or so minute thing over terrain which had everything: off cambers, rocks, a steep uphill with a few turns, a steep downhill with a few turns, a creek crossing, a huge jump, a long straight, a fast berm. Everything was there.

Right from cold, without doing anything more than adjust the front brake, the 175 was ridden around the special test course just five seconds slower than the fastest time of the weekend! It was, purely and simply, a pleasure to ride. And because of its light weight, it was a lot of fun.

Let's ride the special test.

From the start, a quick run of twenty metres down a grassy bank to a rocky creek crossing, in the middle of which you had to execute a left hand turn to the bank. Out of the water and a right turn past a tree and up a slight off-camber ledge. In the creek the front wants to hunt around a little over the rocks, but





There is even a front brake light switch! Just like your average trailbike!

Bashplate is excellent. With the increased ground clearance riders should spend less time hung up on rocks or looking after their engines from abrasion. Seat height, though, is not too tall for riders of average height.



no probs because the thing doesn't weigh much and it's easy to tell it where to go.

Up the bank and point the first is felt: it literally pulls like a train! Great! Up a short incline to a left hand sweeper. Gas it around here to check out the racing manners of the Suzuki. Hmmm. Pretty good. Shows it is descended from an RM. Steers perfectly, too, and leans down a lot easier than the 250.

Jump on the brakes for the sudden right turn up the hill again; bit of rear chatter there, typical of a PE. Too bad it doesn't have the fully floating rear brake of the RM250C. Front brake works well, though. Nice feel, light but strong. Up over the bank; wow! this thing sure pulls! Easily done in second, could have probably pulled third on that. Around through these few trees. Feels light and agile. No problems weaving in and out, power is right where you want it all the time.

Hey, this is fun.

Now, across the flat through the long grass. Doesn't wind out too much by the feel of it. Going pretty fast, though, so it must be doing the job. Upshifts nicely. That power is great in low and mid range, though. Super strong. Feels more like a 250.

Brake and downshift around these trees. Whoops, tricky right turn be-

## SPECIFICATIONS SUZUKI PE175C

Test Bike: Geoff Udy/Mayfair Suzuki,  
Brisbane, Cornell Suzuki, NSW.

### SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	Single cylinder air-cooled case reed valve two-stroke
Bore x stroke	62x57mm
Capacity	172cc
Claimed power	18 kw (24 hp) 9,500 rpm
Claimed torque	18.5 N.m (1.90 kg-m, 13.7 ft.lb) 7,500 rpm
Compression ratio	7.6:1
Lubrication	Premix
Carburetion	32mm Mikuni
Electrical	PEI
Starting	Primary kick

### TRANSMISSION

Clutch	Wet, multi-plate
Final drive	520 Daido chain, 48/12 sprockets
Primary reduction	2.761
Gear ratios:	
1st	3.090
2nd	2.214
3rd	1.647
4th	1.250
5th	1.045
6th	0.875
Shifting	LHS, 1-N-2-3-4-5-6

### DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	1,420mm
Handlebar width	880mm
Ground clearance	280mm
Weight	98kg (216 lbs)
Throttle turn	1/4
Fuel capacity	12 litres

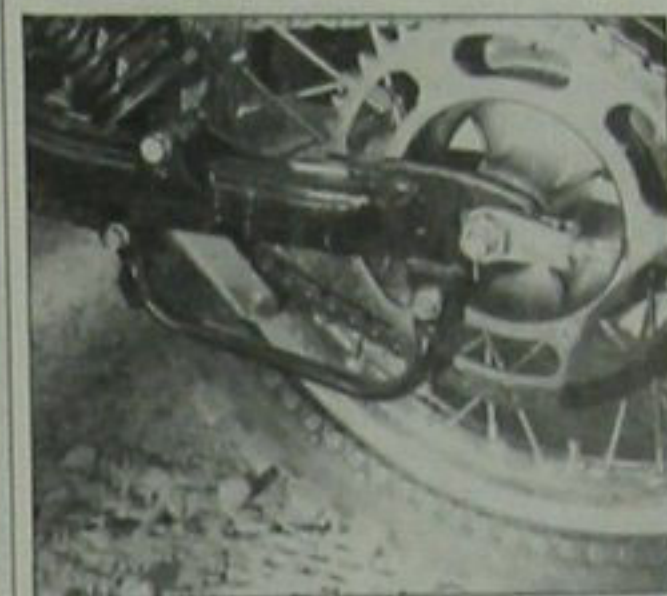
### FRAME AND SUSPENSION

Frame	Single downtube chrome moly semi-double cradle
Suspension:	
Front	Telescopic hydraulic forks, 230mm travel
Rear	Lay down gas/oil shocks, 244mm wheel travel
Wheels and tyres:	
Front	3.00 x 21 knobby, alloy rim
Rear	4.00 x 18 knobby, alloy rim
Footpegs	Cleated steel folding spring loaded
Mudguards	Yellow impregnated unbreakable plastic, integral rear taillight
Numberplates	Unbreakable plastic, three of
Spark plug	NGK B9EV
Kill button	Spring loaded, LHS
Compliance Plate	Yes
Horn	No
Mirror	No
Chain guard	No
Silencing	Excellent
Air filtration	Oiled foam



The rear brake torque arm is a confusing affair. Doesn't really help quick tyre changes. Rear brake chatters a bit, but the bike is so light that they are acceptable.

Chain tensioner is the same as on the 250: you need to run the chain slightly loose otherwise it will eat up tensioner rollers. There is a neat rock guard now — good idea.



tween these two, with a bit of camber. Front doesn't seem to steer as well as the old KTM, but it sure feels a heap better than the B model PE. Down here, left then power down the bank into the bottom.

Suspension near bottomed out on that! Very soft ... Soon see with these rocks ... Whup! Yes, same manners in rocks — bounces around a bit. Not as bad as the 250 because you can haul it back into line. That low and mid range doesn't help you power over these damn rocks. Wish I was on the — no I don't, this is getting to be fun, it's so light! Let it bounce, it seems to make little difference. Doesn't tire you out, either. Good one.

A quick brake for the gate; those brakes are fine! Drop it around through the gate, then down that steep bank. Bottomed the rear again. Front feels nice, though. Dammit, where's that rear brake lever? Hides under there a bit ... that's it. Oops. Locked it up. Bumps easily, though. No problems.

Getting on the pace now. Up the hill we go; the torque is going to make mincemeat out of this! Yep! Sure is. Around we go ... hey, miss the log ... oh oh ... off line here, lost the powerband a bit ... can't find the gearlever. Hey, no worries! It's pulling away well. Ha! Going to sauce this in! Back into the



# PE175C

power now for these whoops up the hill. Mmmm, not quite as stable as some bikes here. Presses on, though.

Hit the big hole fast — those forks are magic! Back's definitely a bit soft. Wonder how Geoff Udy found it? Nearly to the top now ... this engine just pulls! What was it Kevin Lavole said? Stylin'. That's it. This thing is just stylin' up this hill!

Over these rocks and back down. Careful not to stall it ... that front brake is nice, but the back wants to lock up too much. Pull the clutch in just in case ... around this damn tree ... careful, don't lose the front ... steered well around that! Accelerate now, it's all over on the tricky part of the descent. Power down the winding slope. Flip-flops well, too. Super light! Love that.

Nice little jump there and across to the creek crossing. Crunch! That bank is getting pretty bad ... now we'll see if it upshifts well, with this water dragging on things ... yep! Well, they've certainly come a long way since my B model 250. Blast through the water — the PE airbox is the same as always, waterproof.

More rocks. Doesn't really dig rocks, but the weight sure helps out. More in and out of trees. This is fun. Another creek with a steep rut climbing out: no

problem to the power. Wind it on before this jump. Hey! Unreal jump. Feels like you could go forever.

Belt it down a few for the berm, squirt it around then power over the rise to the finish. There they are, waving to slow down. No problems. Five down and stand on the brakes. Lock the front up to impress them.

What's that? Five seconds slower than the fastest time. Heh heh.

The PE excels in a lot of areas — frame geometry, weight, components — but it stands out particularly in one: engine performance.

Bottom-end and mid-range was the forte of the 250, but a lot of people were worried that the smaller 175 would not get the same treatment. Fortunately, it has. The other pretender to the 175 class throne (from Japan) is the IT175. The PE powerband is far superior to the IT, right through. Geoff Udy had the chance to go for a ride with Geoff Petler, the Queensland 1977 enduro champion, who took along his well prepared IT175. Their conclusion was that the PE powerband was far stronger in bottom and mid range, with about the same at the top. This is crucial in a small bore bike: if they can't get up the hills, a rider has a lot of pushing to do.

But the 175 goes on torquing (!) its way to the top of even the worst hills. The six-speed transmission helps, of course, but the broad spread of power



Footbrake is superbly detailed. You need to replace the pins on the footpegs with high tensile bolts, and you need to keep an eye on the frame weld to the peg brackets, otherwise you could lose a pet. Old Suzuki problem.

Shocks are softer than the RM version, but are OK for the slower work of enduros or trailriding. Three spring preload settings.



Tricky special tool does everything necessary for chain adjustment and wheel removal. Headlight and surround is well thought out and offers protection for the speedo.



Forks are not gas/oil: they are straight spring/oil units, but they are acceptable for enduros. Front brake is great; speedo drive works well, rims are fine alloy models and fork boots protect the seals from mud.



New rear guards offer somewhere to put spare tubes etc if you are so inclined. Protection from flying mud is also far better than it was on the B 250. Taillight is out of the way.

Seat is comfy; bars are comfy; suspension is comfy; power is comforting; the whole bike is a nice thing to be near; even nicer if you are riding it against others in class.



The engine is just as everyone had hoped: super strong in the bottom end, yet strong in midrange and fairly reasonable at the top. A six-speed box makes it all happen at the right ratios.



cannot be faulted. It starts first kick with no throttle, never hiccups at loading up, shifts cleanly and easily and is a pleasure to maintain.

It isn't perfect, naturally. There is still a tendency for it to hop around on rocks at the front end, something Suzuki still hasn't bred out of its PE series. But the tendency is nowhere near as pronounced as with the 250s. The rear brake chatters and often a rider locks up the rear wheel and stalls the engine. It still uses the same old chain tensioner, which requires meticulous attention and the right chain tension, otherwise it destroys rollers. It still lacks things such as a chain guard to stop mud from the tyre falling onto the chain, a toolbag, although there is an ingenious special tool held on near the headlight. It still lacks a centrestand.

Owners still need to strengthen the lug on the sidestand where the return spring is located. It still lacks snail cam chain adjustment.

Otherwise, it is a superbly thought out enduro mount. With the Compliance Plate and the quiet exhaust, it even makes a brilliant trailbike.

This bike is certainly going to grab the lion's share of the 175 enduro and trailbike market. Already, shipments are presold before they even arrive.

Now, if only Suzuki would make a PE400C.



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