

## DIRT BIKE TEST SUZUKI PE 250

# ...alive and jumping

The Moto-Cross scene is alive and jumping, almost as a logical extension of the healthy trail riding cult, and the blossoming sport attracts more and more spectators and even more competitors at every meeting. And the meetings are many. The short-circuit movement still appeals to its small band of staunch devotees, while the Trials men are assured of several competition rides a month, from Club meetings to open championships.

But the sport which has just begun to take off in this country is the Enduro, a kind of cross-country race against the clock and the almost impossible terrain over which it is conducted. It requires a special technique and a quick eye, combined with lightning reflexes and a tough hide.

It also requires a very special type of motorcycle — a machine very nearly cast in the role of a motocrosser, but with the legal bits required for registration. It could be developed from the basic MX machine, but has to differ in several specific areas. Rather than use a sometimes cantankerous, highly tuned out and out racing engine for the job, it is necessary to run an engine with a reasonable spread of power — but enough, of course, to be able to haul the bike over some pretty hairy countryside at high average speeds. And survive to the finish.

Major factories have been involved in the MX hurly-burly for years, and with huge success, and are now climbing onto the Enduro Bandwagon in a big way.

Suzuki was certainly among the action at the world's top



*It hardly steers itself, but it comes out of water splashes on the pipe and completely under control.*

Moto-Cross arenas, and enjoyed the fruits of much development work on its various models by taking home the gold and the glory in world and national championships all over the

globe. And the company is as aware of the Enduro scene as anyone else in the marketplace, as witness the recent introduction of the 'new' — in effect modified motocross —

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PE250, as purposeful an Enduro mount as you would find almost anywhere.

It is quite obviously based on the successful 250 MX model, even down to the same bright yellow paint finish, but is modified internally where necessary. The only external differences are the fitting of fork gaiters to keep dust out of the hard-working seals, a set of rudimentary lights and a long muffler at the end of the expansion chamber.

The highly successful Tru-Trak frame, with its long-travel rear suspension and high seat position is retained, the forward mounted shocks, gas/hydraulic units naturally, steeply canted under the seat to afford maximum possible rear wheel movement. At 200mm (8") total movement, the rear wheel suspension is well mated to the 195mm (7.7") front wheel suspension travel, with the two-way damping characteristics to control the rate of movement.

High mounted mudguards are naturally adopted. They are flexible and apparently unbreakable.

The lightweight frame is made from chrome-moly tubing, featuring a single downtube which spreads out to a wide, full cradle under the crankcases. A substantial bashplate bolts on to protect the cases.

The swing arm pivots on needle roller bearings. A large, alloy fuel tank is used, fitted with a large filler neck and running back to a large, thickly padded MX-type seat which is soft in the extreme.

Handlebars are high and very wide, ideal for pulling big slides (whether intentionally or otherwise) and the seat kicks up just enough at the back to hold a heavily foot-slogging rider in place whatever the situation.

The long pong-bow fits through the frame in the manner of the MX models, and terminates in a long, barrel-type muffler which is efficient and yet not apparently power-absorbing. A tiny headlight fits behind a small protective grille with the single instrument — a speedometer with odometer fitted — directly above, atop the forks.

A tiny tail-light is fitted to a

small rubber mounting bracket at the rear, purely as a concession to the requirements of the powers that be, and the electrics are completed by a small cut-out switch on the handlebars and a small on/off and dipper switch. The necessary audible warning device is a small bulbhorn.

A rear chainguard and jockey tensioner fits to the frame just ahead of the rear sprocket, to help take the edge off a rear chain which suffers great variations in tension occasioned by the LTR suspension.

Tiny, serrated footrests are fitted, spring loaded to fold upon impact. Very handy for the job, but sometimes hard on the feet.

The matt-black finished engine looks very much like the MX unit, but differs in some significant details. Lighting coils are fitted and the main bearing on the timing side is heavier to compensate for the much larger magnetic rotor needed for the extra generation of current.

The crankshaft is also heavier and slightly longer, with a different taper to accept the larger-diameter (107mm as against the MX component's 58mm) flywheel rotor.

Exhaust port timing is not quite so fierce, the slower porting allowing for more low-speed grunt from the engine. The heavier rotor also helps the bike to pull strongly up steep pinches and through thick mud or sand.

Starting the PE250 couldn't be easier; you just walk up to the thing and kick it over! There is no battery, no ignition switch, and merely a little pin sticking straight up from the body of the carburettor to act as a rudimentary choke.

Hot or cold, it fires in a couple of kicks — provided you boot it with some determination. Gear-change is short and swift, and so is the clutch which works like the typical dog-clutch you



Every inch an Enduro mount, the PE250 shows it lines. The Tru-Trak LTR suspension and high mounted rear guard complement a similar set-up on the front, with the very high ground clearance and closely tucked-in footrests and controls featured as part of the machine's design.



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still see on lathes and some other industrial applications. It engages in the twinkling of an eye and just won't slip, no matter what you do with it.

Sometimes it makes a smooth start impossible. Particularly when you have to take off in mud or sand. The drill is to wind on the revs and drop the lever, trying to get as much weight where you want it, as quickly as you can get it there. And that is not as easy as it sounds especially when short legs are fighting the very high seating position, legacy of the LTR suspension. It

means a sudden weight shift is called for as soon as both feet are on the rests, not an easy task when it is trying to fish-tail at the back and claw for the sky at the front!

But the handling is very forgiving, the bike picking its path over most surfaces, guided by its anxious pilot feeling as though he is rapidly approaching his doom. But you can naturally exercise as much control over the machine as you need, it's just that it is happier being driven under power, and preferably on the rear wheel.

It is an easy bike to ride in

many ways (if you can make such a comment about a machine which spends much of its time off reasonable surfaces, and therefore mostly **just** under control) and is quite at home on sealed surfaces, although the no-nonsense knobbly tyres are less than ideal for that application.

The bike is a scorcher when ridden briskly on tar, and certainly a surprise to many people who see it as just another trails machine. Brakes are OK for off-road use, although the rear component lost some of its usefulness when it became waterlogged, and are just about



*Off a wet berm and spinning mud, the PE250 handles better than a lot of others, thanks to the LTR suspension and 'usable' power.*

up to the job on the tar. If ridden with the verve the bike reasonably demands, the brakes are not really good enough for the road, but that is not an important consideration.

The PE250's prime function is as a competition mount, which is perfectly capable of doubling as a hack vehicle if you must. There will probably be many owners who will prefer to utilise its talents the other way round, which is fine, but its better to use the bike for the purpose for which it was designed.

It has few creature comforts, and makes few concessions to the 'casual' owner. It has no blinkers, which makes one revert to the quaint and usually out-moded custom of holding your hand out at arm's length whenever you want to deviate from the straight and narrow, and it relies on the petrol system of lubrication — just like your old lawnmower. Don't knock it, it's easier than you think and totally efficient. It's also good enough for all the racing two-strokes around.

Most owners will want to mix their own petrol and oil, and to their own particular ratio, but you can buy pre-mix at the right places and it works just fine.

Its success has made the RM250 an acceptable MX racer, and it seems a fair bet the PE250 could accept the same sort of reaction from those riders into the Enduro scene. It has all the ingredients to make it a successful model, and in fact it performed very creditably indeed in its debut in England some months ago.

The competition from a rash of highly specialised European factories is very keen — so, too, is the competition in the events themselves — but its past record should stand the Suzuki in good stead.



## SPECIFICATIONS

### ENGINE

Type . . . Two-stroke air-cooled engine  
Maximum Horsepower . . . 28 hp/8,000 rpm  
Maximum Torque . . . 2.78 kg-m (20.1 ft-lb)/6,500 rpm  
Intake System . . . Piston and reed valve  
Bore . . . 67.0 mm (2.64 in)  
Stroke . . . 70.0 mm (2.76 in)  
Piston displacement . . . 247 cc (15.1 cu-in)  
Corrected Compression Ratio . . . 7.0:1  
Ignition Type . . . SUZUKI "PEI"  
Carburetor . . . MIKUNI VM38SS  
Air Cleaner . . . Polyurethane foam element  
Clutch . . . Wet multi-plate type  
Transmission . . . 5-speed constant mesh  
Gearshift Pattern . . . 1-down 4-up  
Starter System . . . Primary Kick  
Lubrication System . . . Fuel/oil premixture with 20:1

### SUSPENSION, TIRES & TANK

Front Suspension . . . Telescopic, oil damped  
Rear Suspension . . . Swinging arm, gas/oil damped, spring 3-way adjustable  
Front Tire Size . . . 3.00 21-4PR  
Rear Tire Size . . . 4.50-18-4PR  
Fuel Tank Capacity . . . 12 lit (3.2/2.6 US/Imp gal)

### DIMENSION & WEIGHT

Overall Length . . . 2,140 mm (84.3 in)  
Overall Width . . . 855mm (33.7 in)  
Overall Height . . . 1,270 mm (50.0 in)  
Wheelbase . . . 1,440 mm (56.7 in)  
Ground Clearance . . . 280 mm (10.2 in)  
Dry Weight . . . 109 kg (240 lbs)