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# TB

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TAKES ON ITS  
2005 RIVALS

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OR ENDURO BIKE...



**ARCHIVES: Matchless G80CS**

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# Dig Deep



Juha Salminen: KTM: 2003 World Enduro Champion

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# EDITORIAL

## Stating the Bleedin' Obvious

**J**anuary. Traditionally the month when not a whole lot happens - at least not in this office anyway. So a bit like all the other months then? Well actually no, because the January issue is the one which contains the annual word-fest that is the *TBM Bike Buyer's Guide*.

Of course you already knew that if you bothered glancing at the front cover of this issue before you trousered it and strolled casually out of your newsagents, whistling nonchalantly. Or indeed if you look across to the CONTENTS page opposite - traditionally the location for all relevant information pertaining to the magazine's make-up. Truth is I've always had a bit of a downer on the sort of 'editorials' beloved of indolent journalists too lazy to generate some original copy. These generally take the form of stating blindingly obvious banalities like '...hasn't it been wet recently?'

Before answering their own inane question with a trite little comment like:

'Well if you're tired of getting soaked to the skin, you could do worse than check out our feature on waterproofs this month, which begins on page...'

AAAAAAAAAAAAARGGGHHH.

If there's one thing worse than pointless editorial within a magazine, it's some damn fool editor deciding that I need my hand holding in order to guide me to their lousy features. I'll make my own mind up which bits I bother



reading, thanks. Anyway what's the point in having a contents page if you're simply going to repeat all the information in your editorial? Like I need them to point out the bleedin' obvious for me. What do they take me for? A motocrosser!

Anyway the problem I've got is that, this month - like every other January issue of the mag for the past few years apart from the January 2000 issue which for reasons best known to myself, never actually happened - contains 30 pages devoted to the *TBM Bike Buyer's Guide*. And the reason I've got a problem is that if you just happen to have picked up this magazine for the first time - for whatever reason,

I don't know, maybe you spotted the TBM sticker on the headlamp of Moto-X's long term WR250F and decided you wanted something to read - then maybe you'll think that the format of the magazine is like this every month.

It isn't.

Next month we'll be returning to our traditional format of stuffing the mag full of news, reviews, columns, classifieds, comment and conceited replies to readers letters.

But in the meantime since this is the time of year when riders traditionally change their bikes, have you ever thought about buying yourself a cheap secondhand dirtbike?

If so then you really ought to check out our...

SI MELBER

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## TRANS-PERFORMER

'If it ain't broke don't fix it' seems to describe Honda's approach to the new XL650V Transalp. The 2005 version has undergone a few tweaks, including a new tinted windscreen, clear-lens indicators, plus revised instruments to give it a more modern look.

Following the success of the 30mm low-profile seat last year, this can now be ordered as standard equipment instead of as an option.

Other features include black-finished wheel rims and the standard stainless steel exhausts have been tapered at the ends.

As well as being available in black, metallic silver and the ever-



popular two-tone blue/silver trim, there's now orange, or rather 'mystic orange metallic'.

The XL should be available come the end of March/early April next year and will keep its current price tag of £5249.

## FULL FIGURED

For the fifth consecutive month dirtbike sales figures are enjoying further growth, with 'Adventure Sport' model numbers climbing to 18percent, up another four percent from last month.

Still comfortably ahead of the current total motorcycle sales (registrations) of minus eleven percent, 'Trail/Enduro' bike sales are now only down four percent on this time last year.

There's still no change in the 'Adventure Sport' chart, with the big 'n' 'beautiful' BMW still number one with another 136 units sold, and the second-place Honda XL recording a 45-unit increase.

It's the same story in the 'Trail/Enduro' category, with the little Honda 125 gaining another 98 sales at the top of the chart, while in fifth position, there are now a further 56 DR-Zs out there.

Complete figures are as follows:

ADVENTURE SPORT		
1	BMW R1200GS	1276
2	Honda XL125V	669
3	Triumph 955i Tiger	497
4	BMW F650GS	401
5	CGM R30	350
TRAIL/ENDURO		
1	Honda XR125L	1463
2	Yamaha DT125R	549
3	Suzuki RV125	538
4	Honda CRF250X	506
5	Suzuki DR-7400S	447

## Plain and Simple

Don't say we never listen to you... By popular demand, coming soon to TBM is a technical Q&A section written by Steve Plain, a well-respected dirt bike mechanic. He'll be on hand to answer all your queries from the next issue.

So, if you've got a tricky techie teaser, then email it to us at [tech@trailbikemag.com](mailto:tech@trailbikemag.com) and Steve'll do his best to solve it...

## To Hell and Back

The 2005 Italian Hell's Gate extreme enduro will take place on 5 February, with David Knight hoping to hang onto his title and also scoop the 8,000 euro prize money up for grabs.

Only three riders finished last year - Knighter, Bartosz Oblucki and Mario Rinaldi - testament to just how hard this enduro really is. For more information, check out [hellsgate.it](http://hellsgate.it).

## SNIPPETS

### ★ BIG IS BEAUTIFUL

Like your dirtbikes big? Then enter the new Big Trail Bike Rally Challenge. Designed to encourage more big bike entries in UK trail bike rallies, the championship will be marked on performance and has two classes - above 600cc singles and above 600cc multi-cylinders.

Points will be awarded for starting, number of special stages completed, and final placing. There'll also be trophies for the top three placings in each class.

Sponsored by web developers [onlineworx.net](http://onlineworx.net), the championship will have a dedicated website, [bigbikechallenge.co.uk](http://bigbikechallenge.co.uk), complete with rally dates, classes, scoring etc. And there's no separate entry fee for the championship, just to the rallies themselves.

The scheduled rallies so far include the following events:

**February Patrick James Memorial Rally**  
**March/April Cambrian Rally**  
**May Northumbrian Rally**  
**June Ryedale Rally**  
**August Raiders Rally**  
**September Dyfi Rally, Reivers Raid**  
**October Hafren Rally**

### ★ SNOW PATROL

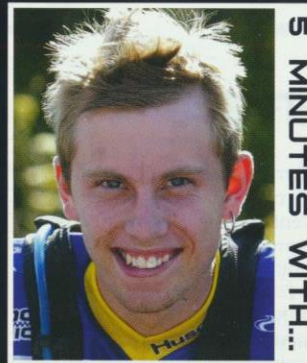
If you fancy riding in a winter wonderland, then get along to the Snow Run Enduro on 6 Feb 2005.

Taking place in the Glyn Saer Forest, near Llandovery, the course will be a 30-mile lap aimed at sportsman/clubman, although expert and championship standard riders are welcome.

Last date for entries is Saturday 22 January - though earlier if it fills up fast. Cost is £45.00 for solos and there's a 250-rider maximum. All riders must be members of a club in the East South Wales Centre. Call Mandy Bartlett on 07890 345695 for more details.

### ★ CAMBRIAN CORRECTION

Following the Cambrian Rally report in the last issue which included the line 'Okay, she [Katrina Price] knows those Welsh forests like the back of her hand', we'd just like to point out that this year's course was completely new to everybody, including Katrina. Thanks to Bob Perring for clearing that one up...



5 MINUTES WITH...

## ONE OF BRITISH ENDURO'S RISING STARS, WILTSHIRE'S DARYL BOLTER IS 125CC BEC CHAMPION...

### WHAT WAS THE FIRST ENDURO BIKE YOU OWNED?

The first enduro bike that I owned was a Husqvarna WR125, like I ride now. It was a 2001 model that my dad bought for me. It was a great bike, and not a million miles away from the bike I raced this year. It was slightly modified with a few motor changes, my own suspension set-up and with a 2C exhaust pipe fitted.

### WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ENDURO?

It was the Natterjack Enduro in 2000. I rode in that before I hooked up with Husky Sport so I was on a KTM 125SX. I was about 16 and rode in the Clubman class. I remember that I finished second overall in [125] class on day one and first overall on day two. The weather was good and the riding conditions were perfect.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ENDURO?

The Polish round of the European Enduro Championship in Kwidzyn this year. The conditions were perfect for me - sandy with a few bogs, which is just what I like. I was third in the 125cc class on one of the days and second on the other. The best way of describing the terrain is to say that it was like a mix of the Breckland and the Crychan or Hafren. It was fun but challenging, which is how events should be.

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST ENDURO YOU HAVE EVER RACED?

The Bob Perring Classic in 2003 (now known as the Beacons Enduro). I can't remember too many details because I crashed halfway round the second lap and knocked myself out. The terrain was constantly difficult, rut after rut and

tree root after tree root. Nothing was easy, not even the fire roads, which were frozen in places. I didn't enjoy it much but it taught me a lot about how hard forestry going can be.

### WHICH RIDER HAS HAD THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CAREER?

I look up to Paul Edmondson because of what he has achieved both in the UK and abroad, he's a very smooth rider and technically excellent. The rider that has helped me the most is Wyn Hughes. As well as having taught me how to ride mud, ruts and over roots he has given me a huge amount of support. My dad has put a huge amount into my racing - he's as big a part of my success so far as anyone, if not more.

### WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR BEST EVER PERFORMANCE?

My result at this year's Six Days in Poland. As well as being my first ISDE it was also the first time that I came up against the top riders in the world. Finishing within the top 15 of the E1 class is an achievement that I'm really proud of. I won a test and beat the riders that had been beating me in the EEC. Everything went well and finishing 14th in class first time out was great.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST DISAPPOINTING RESULT?

I've been lucky I guess because there aren't too many that I remember. Crashing on the last test at this year's John Banks Enduro was disappointing. I finished second overall but I was on for the win and felt good on the last test. I lost a bit of concentration and got thrown over the bars, which cost me the event win.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CRASH?

At the Italian round of the EEC this season. I'd been a bit slower than I needed to be on the cross-country test on day one so stepped it up a gear on day two. The test was pretty fast, rocky and there was a lot of dust hanging in the trees. Basically, I hit a rock that I didn't see, which sent me off the edge of a track. It was pretty steep - as I left the track I was level with the top of the trees below! I broke my left wrist and didn't finish the event.

### WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED ENDURO MEMORY?

Winning this year's 125cc British Enduro Championship at the Natterjack Enduro. Winning that title, and adding it to my 125cc Expert and 125cc Clubman titles

means a lot to me. I won the class on day one at the Natterjack, which meant that it was really mine to lose on the Sunday. I couldn't stop smiling on the last test of the event because I knew I was going to win.

### WHICH BIKE HAVE YOU ENJOYED OWNING/RIDING THE MOST?

I've only ever owned one enduro bike - the aforementioned Husky WR125. They've been great bikes, which have helped me get to where I am now.

### WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED TERRAIN?

Sand. I leaned to ride in the stuff and raced in it for a lot of my schoolboy motocross days. That's why I love the Breckland and the Natterjack events, I really feel confident in those conditions.

### WHAT DOES ENDURO SPORT NEED MORE OF?

I think it needs more places to ride. That means more places to practice that are like enduro courses and more events. We definitely need more BEC events - one-day events, two-day events, whatever, just more good events.

### WHAT DOES ENDURO SPORT NEED LESS OF?

People who take away the places we ride. People who are a part of shutting the sport down, the people who are killing enduros. If there were less people against what we do, less people who don't want to understand what we do, we'd all be better off because there would be more places to practice and race.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SPORT OF ENDURO WILL BE LIKE IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

I think it will either be bigger or pretty much the same as it is now. I don't think it will decline. I think, and hope, that it will get bigger and more people will start to give it a go. It's never going to be a massive sport because it's not on TV. I think if more people understood the sport then a lot more people would get interested and involved.

### WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN ENDUROS?

My goal for 2005 is to win the Junior World Enduro Cup. I'll also be competing in the EEC, which I want to do well in, but my number one goal is to do well in the world championship. I also want to defend my 125cc UK championship, or the Enduro 1 class as it will be known next year. My ultimate goal is to become World Enduro Champion.



## RAIN DEER?

Moose Racing's new XCR Competition jacket certainly won't get you hot under the collar, thanks to no less than nine individual air-vents and a fully breathable nylon waterproof outer shell.

Part of the ventilation system features a large 'T' section on the back of the jacket that when fully open, looks capable of cooling things down pretty quickly.

In terms of storage, there's the usual two front side pockets, a smaller upper chest one and an inside pocket. Pretty neat is the handy self-storage back pouch.

The entire jacket can be fitted into it and then worn as a bum-bag. Reinforced padding on top of the shoulders and along the back of both arms provides extra protection. And adjustable side straps and arm closures make for a more tailored fit, while the soft fleece lined collar feels very snug. The front storm flap is secured by a main zip as well as poppers and features an exit hole for your drinks system tube.

Reasonably lightweight and well-constructed, this jacket has plenty of useful features for its £145 price tag. Colourways include red, blue, grey and orange. Available in sizes M-XXL, larger sizes are available on request. Call the Dirt Bike Store on 01278 424979 for details.

## BEARING UP

Precise throttle control is everything on a trials bike, so this throttle bearing kit from Hebo should help.

As well as giving smoother throttle action, the ally bar-ends should stop you trashing the bike's grips if you do take a tumble.

Installation is similar to fitting wrap-around handguards on a dirtbike.

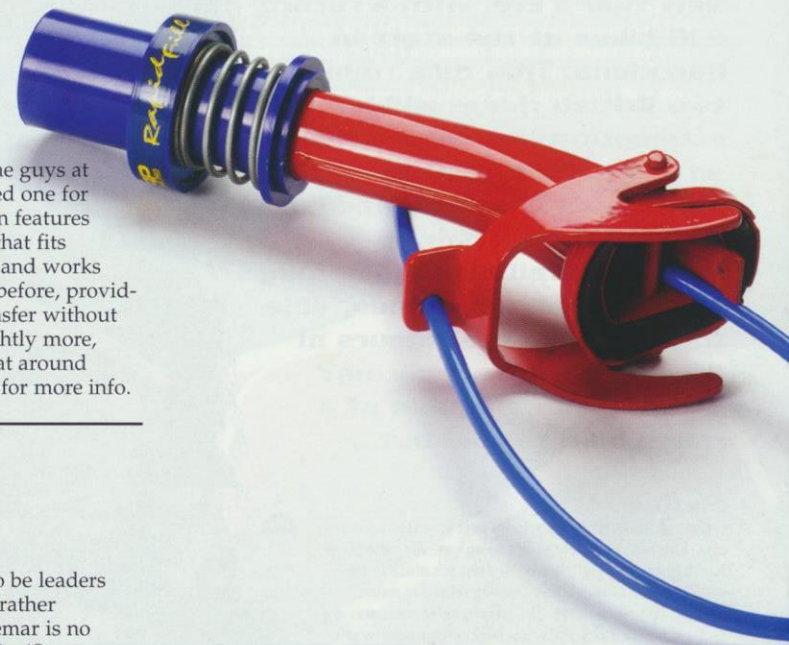
Remove about 10mm from the bar end, (taking off the end of the throttle tube as well), and slide the expandable sleeve inside, followed by the new throttle bearing bit and tighten it all up.

Once fitted the bearing shouldn't get mud or grit in it as it's got sealed neoprene covers.

The kit includes all the necessary bits, including an allen key, and costs £17.50. Vesty UK (0870 7779201) are the UK importers of Hebo, but we got our set from Steve Plain Motorcycles on 01597 825817.

## PETROL HEAD

Following on from our review last month of the handy 'Rapid Fill' nozzle, the guys at Pure Pro have now produced one for metal jerrycans. This version features a sturdy metal mechanism that fits onto the top of the jerrycan and works in exactly the same way as before, providing quick and easy fuel transfer without spilling a drop. Costing slightly more, these are expected to retail at around £24.95, so call 01778 394909 for more info.



## GRAND DESIGNS

The Italians are supposed to be leaders in the style stakes, and this rather swanky-looking lid from Vemar is no exception. The Telefonica Movistar VRX-5 helmet is from their 2005 Antenor Replica range and is currently proving very popular in dirt biking circles.

Weighing in at 1150g, it certainly feels lightweight, and features a tri-composite construction (carbon, kevlar and fibreglass), and has a secure double D-ring strap to comply with Euro regulations and a gold ACU sticker.

As well as removable cheek pads, the rest of the lining also comes out for washing. Made from a 'coolmax' fabric, the lining is semi-perforated for improved air circulation. There's three front air intake scoops, and two permanently open (under-the-peak) air vents, although an adjustable open/close mechanism would be preferable.

Nicely finished, there are two other colour options in the replica range, the Woods and the Chioldi, and all are priced at a reasonable £129.99. The standard option is slightly cheaper at £124.99.

To get your hands on one, phone MotoGear on 01536 526460.





The world's toughest desert event, the legendary Dakar Rallye, is set to kick off on New Year's Eve, with a record 230 bikes at the start in Barcelona. This time round, two British riders will be attempting the 2005 Dakar on BMW F650s. But how much work has been needed to transform a pair of standard trail bikes into fully prepped, rally machines, able to withstand the rigours of 8956km of desert racing? We go under the skin of a rallye bike to find out...

### Engine

Engine reliability takes top priority over enhanced performance. Stripped completely before being carefully pieced back together, surprisingly few modifications are made to the single cylinder DOHC engine. Ensuring reliability means checking that all tolerances are correct, valve clearances are spot-on, and that any parts that might give trouble won't. While the engine is apart, several key bearings in the gearbox are replaced with higher quality ones as a precautionary measure. One thing that is changed is the camchain tensioner. An automatic unit as standard, it is replaced with a manual device, to reduce the chances of it sticking. The ECU is then re-mapped by BMW. The bike's 2.8 litres of Castrol engine oil are changed every three days.

### Brakes

The front brake system is attached to a Magura master cylinder via a braided hose. To accommodate an oversized front rotor (necessary in order to haul up all the extra weight), the Brembo caliper is attached to the Marzocchi fork leg via a spacer. The rear brake system is standard and fitted with sintered pads (as is the front). Not surprisingly, both brake lines are filled with DOT 5 fluid to ensure minimal fade.

### Exhaust

The two-part exhaust uses a Touratech header mated to a Remus silencer. Underslung - because there's nowhere else for it to go - the race system dispenses with the stock catalytic converter, and offers considerably more power. Noise isn't a problem in the desert.

### Fuel Tanks

FIM regulations state that a rallye bike must be able to cover 350km without needing to take on more fuel - should a rider get lost. The BMW F650PP can do this easily. On either side at the rear of the bike is a (one-piece) fuel tank, which when linked to an additional tank directly below the seat (where an airbox is on an enduro bike) holds 31 litres of fuel. The two side tanks on the front (which sit either side of a centrally located airbox where a traditional fuel tank would live), hold 10 litres each, giving a maximum total of 51 litres of fuel. Although the bike can carry 51L, it's not always needed and bikes rarely start short stages completely full. Fuel in Europe is a competitor's own responsibility, but once in the desert it is supplied by the organisers. Fuel filters are changed every three days.



# ANATOMY OF A RALLYE BIKE

STORY & PICS: JONTY EDMUNDS



TOURATECH  
BMW Off Road Skills

# ANATOMY OF A RALLYE BIKE

## Sumpguard

The bike's sumpguard doubles up as a storage space in which drinking water (mandatory 3L) and tools that couldn't be stored anywhere else are kept. Made from carbon/kevlar and aluminium, the sumpguard can quickly and easily be removed to aid servicing. In the desert riders are given water tokens, which are exchanged for drinking water at various checkpoints.

## Clutch

For 2005 the F650PP features a two-piece clutch cover to facilitate easier clutch inspection. With the original one-piece part requiring the bike's coolant to be removed, the starter motor disconnected and then the whole case to be pulled off the gear selector shaft, the two-piece replacement unit makes the job a lot simpler. Internally the clutch is a standard BMW part but uses thicker and fewer fibre plates. Standard cables are used with Magura perches and levers. Not sure about the inscription though!

## Radiators

Overheating problems in last year's race have meant that the single central radiator has been replaced with two oversized British-made GMX units for 2005. A complete new set of hoses has been routed around the bikes, with the system holding more coolant than last year. A KTM fan sits behind the right-side radiator and the bike has a catchment tank concealed under the red bodywork.

## Suspension

BMW's standard forks are replaced with beefy 50mm semi-factory Marzocchi USD units. These are re-valved to make them a little plusher on the beginning of the compression stroke before they firm up quickly. The reason the forks need to be relatively plush is because that as well as fast, flat desert riding, some stages of the event are also very rocky. At the rear, a French-made Fournales air shock is used, which has been specially built for Dakar use. Unlike most shocks that have external compression and rebound adjusters, the Fournales unit is adjusted simply by altering the pressure of the air within and has no steel spring. The reason for using the chunky but lightweight air shock is because last year's BMWs (fitted with WP rear suspension) gave problems in the desert. Also problematical was the bike's bottom shock bolt which together with those used in the linkage have been replaced with high tensile steel fasteners. Balancing plushness while ensuring the bikes don't wallow when fully loaded with fuel has been the hardest part.

## Chassis

As well as the stock frame, the swingarm is also standard but incorporates a modified chain adjustment system. The area that sees the most change is the footpeg bracket / footpeg / rear brake pedal assembly. With the standard parts not designed or built with serious competition use in mind, stronger units are fabricated, powder coated and bolted on (likewise the bikes use stronger gear and brake levers). The sub-frame used is an aftermarket Touratech part, and forms a part of the fairing kit that gives the bike its distinctive look. Much stronger than the standard item, the sub-frame is designed to carry the weight of the rear fuel tank. The chassis is also home to an array of spare parts. A spare gear lever, clutch lever and front brake lever are all attached to the frame's cradle with a spare fuel pump, tyre levers and cable ties attached to the sub-frame. Spare clutch friction plates are housed behind one of the side fuel tanks.

## Wheels & Tyres

The 21-inch front wheel is the same as the strengthened ones fitted to a KTM rallye bike. Why? Well, the wheel has to be made to fit between the non-standard front forks so it makes sense for that wheel to be the same as the one most other riders will be using to maximise spares availability. Not genius, just common sense. The rear wheel features a standard hub, complete with cush-drive that is

re-laced to an Excel rim (with chunky oversize stainless spokes) by Talon. Each rider has four sets of wheels: one in the bike, one on the support plane (in case the service vehicle should fail to get to a bivouac) and two sets in the service vehicle. Three types of tyres are used. Enduro tyres for the two special stages held in Europe (Barcelona and Granada), road tyres for the long journey from Barcelona to Granada and specialised desert tyres for use in Africa (designed to 'float' over the top of soft sand). Tyres are filled with specially designed desert 'bib mousses' (solid foam inserts to prevent punctures), although each rider carries tubes and levers should a mousse break up en-route. Both bikes feature easy to remove axle pullers and wheels are balanced to reduce unnecessary vibration.

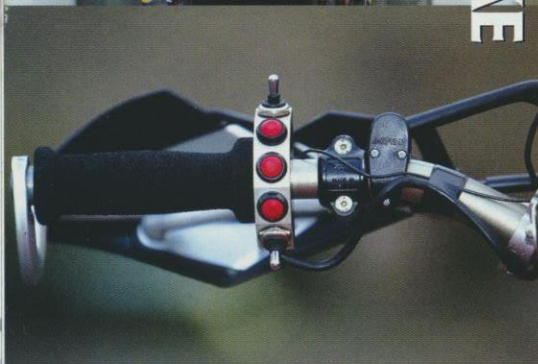
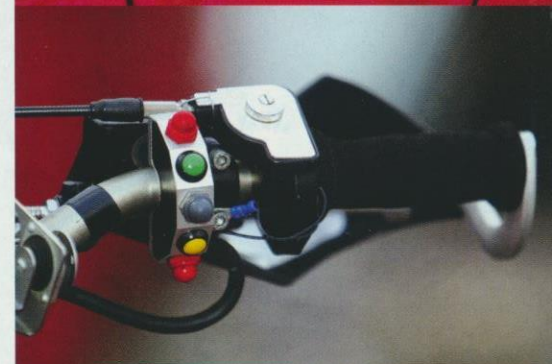
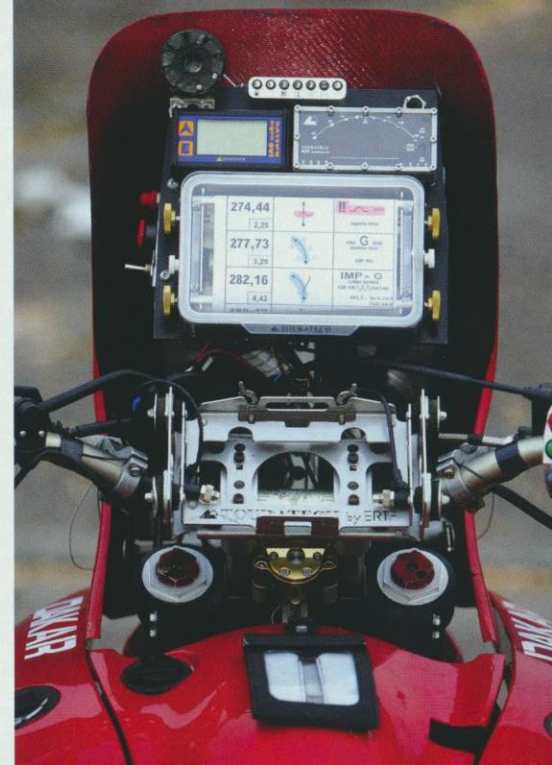
## Navigational equipment

In the top left corner of the instrument panel is a piece of equipment new for 2005. The beacon detector receives a signal emitted from other competitors' machines (bikes, cars or trucks), which then sounds a horn. It's a kind of 'he's behind you' warning device incorporated to warn riders that a 20-ton truck is doing 120km/hour inches from their rear wheel! The row of LED indicators to the right of that are fuel, neutral, oil and temperature warning lights. Below that on the left side (the smallest of the three rectangular shaped devices) is the speedometer and milometer. To the right of that is the navigational arrow. Set to zero when the correct compass bearing has been set off the Global Positioning System (GPS), it tells the riders if they are going straight or not - something that's not always easy to do when riding flat-out across a desert with no landmarks and nothing but open space around you. As the arrow moves left or right it informs the rider how far from straight they are deviating. The piece of equipment with the biggest face is the road-book reader containing instructions for the day's route (in the form of a scrollable paper chart containing direction arrows and distance information [the road book]). A new road book is issued to the riders each morning before the start and it is the competitor's responsibility to scroll through it and then mark on all of the day's (additional) hazards mentioned in the riders' briefing. The two mini joysticks attached to the unit sandwiched between the left handlebar grip and the clutch perch operate the scrolling of the unit. The three red buttons between the two joysticks adjust and re-set the trip meter - used for working out exact distances travelled within a long stage.

On the left side of the instrument panel are three buttons. The top button turns the headlights on, the push/pull switch in the middle immobilises the bike whilst the metal flick-switch turns on the heated grips. The button situated all alone on the top of the panel, above the direction indicator turns on the emergency LEDs - needed so a rider can locate their bike at night if they have to walk away from it. It doesn't drain power from the bike's main battery. The row of multi-coloured buttons on the right side of the handlebars are an engine kill switch (top), engine start (green), main beam (middle), horn (yellow) and fan (bottom). The big space at the bottom of the instrument tower is the bracket for holding the GPS unit, the aerial for which is located on the front mudguard. This year the GPS system is provided by the organisers, ensuring all competitors get exactly the same information. The tower also has a socket for the riders to plug their purpose-made heated suits into (it gets extremely cold in Europe in January).

A satellite phone, again given to all competitors, is also stored in the tower, as is a spare ECU unit with a spare clutch and throttle cable routed outside the existing cables. A steering damper is mounted between the bar mounting brackets and is attached to heavy-duty stays.

The following companies are helping Nick and Si on their Dakar adventure... Dome, BMW GB, Touratech UK, Castrol, World of BMW and the Magic Group of Companies as well as GMX radiators, Talon, Paul Green Tyres, K&N filters, Remus exhausts, HJC helmets, CTI knee braces, RG Engineering, Fournales air shocks, EnduroTech and BMW Off Road Skills.







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# FOREVER FIRST





# On the Stroke of Four

## Now that the new four-stroke Montesa 4RT trialler is finally here, is it as good as everybody expects? Mike Rapley heads for the hills to find out...

**I**t's nearly 20 years since the sport of trials so eagerly awaited the launch of a new trials bike. The trialler in question is of course the all new Honda-Montesa 4RT thumper.

This is a machine that the manufacturer claims will provoke a revolution in trials bike design. That by utilising cutting edge technology aims to introduce a whole new level of advanced modern design and reliability to the sector. And just as the Yamaha TY250 set new standards back in the mid Eighties, so the Cota 4RT aims to do the same in the mid Noughties!

But despite several years of planning, its production was delayed, and when the bikes did go on sale at the end of 2004 they were expensive. So has it all been worth the wait..?

### Different Strokes

The 4RT's predecessor, the two-stroke Montesa Cota 315, has proved immensely popular since its launch in 1997, and the 4RT is a significant development of that successful machine. The 315 has enjoyed success at all levels from World Championships down to club trials and has a reputation as a superbly built bike that has proved reliable, easy to ride, simple to look after and maintains good value.

In fact the 315 is a very hard act to follow, and Montesa have sensibly, stuck to their successful format (where possible). From the steering head forwards and from the swinging arm rearwards, the Cota 4RT bears an uncanny resemblance to the 315 two-stroke. In other words, up front you get 39mm Showa cartridge forks with 22-step compression and 20-step rebound adjustment. However, the Showa forks differ from the 315, as they have a black nitride coating rather than the multi-coloured coating of the earlier bikes.

From the swinging-arm spindle rearwards, again the 4RT is virtually identical to the 315. The Pro-Link rear suspension looks the same as the 315, but has been subtly redesigned as it rides differently to the 'stroker. But it still sports



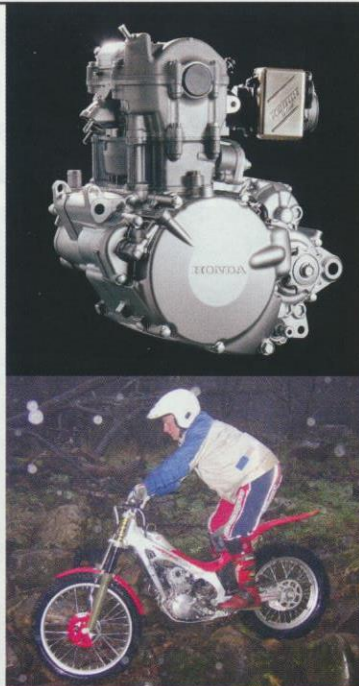
a Showa single damper with stepless compression adjustment and 12-step rebound damping adjustment. The inboard rear brake caliper (hidden out of harm's way behind the swing-arm) has just two pistons (to the front's four) and works on a solid disc for increased rear pad life.

The swinging arm is subtly different - the rear chain adjusting cams have been redesigned (though the clever idea of having two-position lugs for the cams to butt up against has been retained), while Honda have opted for a newly designed 32-spoke rear wheel, in place of the old 36-spoke item in an attempt to save weight. And whilst the 315's rear wheel had a five-bolt sprocket and disc mounting, the 4RT now has four bolt mountings as used by Beta, Gas Gas and Sherco.



## The Full Monty

So, the two ends are subtly different, but what about the middle? Montesa, being owned by Honda, have been able to call upon the very latest technology for the development of their four-stroke lump which is derived from the successful CRF250 motor. The new engine is a liquid-cooled, 249cc, five-speed lump featuring programmable fuel injection (adjustable via a lap-top). No carburettor to fiddle with, strip and adjust. The fuel injection is controlled by the electronic control unit (ECU), which, via sensors that monitor engine temperature, atmospheric pressure, throttle position and other variables, meters fuel to the injector from the 2.1L fuel tank with

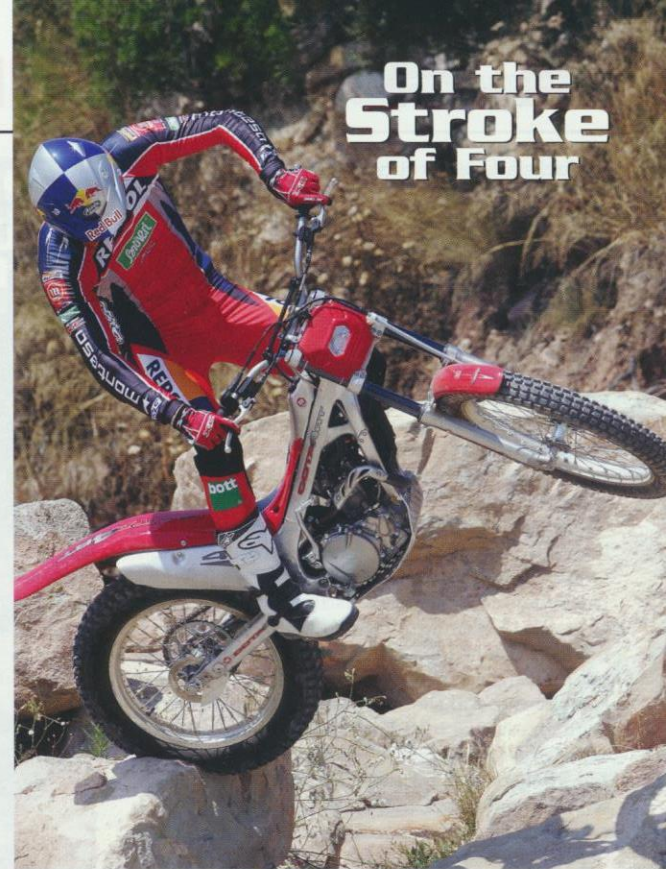
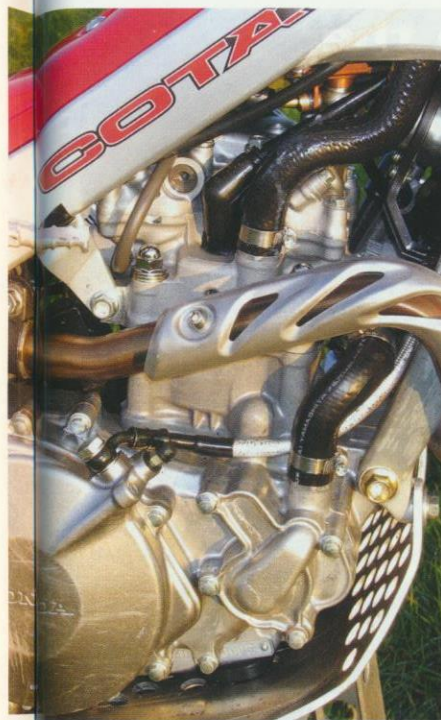


built-in fuel pump.

There's no fuel tap, yet when you take the tank off it doesn't leak as the pump only delivers fuel when the engine is running. All very different from the older generation of bikes! Another good idea is that (like the CRF) the 4RT uses separate transmission and engine oil so there's no cross-contamination.

Fuel injection has always needed a battery to power it, but in a world first, Honda has devised a system in which the kickstart activates a high-power generator that provides the ECU with enough power to run the fuel injection system, whilst cutting off power to ancillaries, thereby ensuring an easy start.

And starting is predictable and fairly simple. Don't stab at



On the Stroke of Four

## THE HONDA HEYDAYS

The launch of the new Montesa Cota 4RT is not the first four-stroke trials bike from Honda. It's worth pointing out that whilst the bike is marketed everywhere as a Montesa, in Japan it is sold as a Honda, and Honda wholly own the Spanish concern.

Back in the early Seventies Honda entered the trials field with a trail derived trialler which Sammy Miller did much development work on. However the production bikes, which were not particularly numerous, were not a patch on the factory machines ridden by Sammy, Nick Jefferies, Geoff Parken, Brian Higgins and Rob Shepherd, who, in 1978 won the British Trials Championship on one.

Then in the early Eighties Honda came out with their TLR range which featured 125, 200 and 250cc versions and many of those bikes, particularly the 200s, are still in frequent use, with a tidy example still fetching very good money today.

Keen to promote their range, Honda went into the World Championship scene, sponsoring Belgian star Eddy Lejeune, whose stunning

ability in an era before trick riding became established, took three World Championships from 1982-84. Production Honda RTL250s were launched, first with drum brakes, then in Rothmans colours with disc brakes and if you could ride them, they were reckoned to be the ultimate tool. But at a price!

At a time when a conventional two-stroke trials bike retailed for a little under two grand, the RTL was double that.

Steve Saunders became a Honda rider in 1983 and though he never managed to dislodge Lejeune, he finished number two in the world. And some of his exploits on the Honda, which in the mud was fantastic at finding grip, are talked about in whispered awe even today, nearly 20 years later.

There are still a significant number of RTLs in sheds and garages, though few are used on a regular basis. And when they come up for sale they are advertised at what seems ridiculous money. But of all the trials bikes ever sold, the RTL still has an aura about it that no other machine has been able to match.



Above: Fuel injection gubbins lives under the seat. Right: 4RT motor is based on the CRF lump. Below: New bike is a far cry from Montesa's 1967 model





the kickstart, gently stroke it over three or four times; this powers the capacitor that drives the pump and delivers the fuel. It doesn't seem to start first kick - each time you need to stroke it three or four times. And you must run with a healthy tickover to ensure the pump is supplied with continual power to deliver the fuel.

There's no doubt that slotting the engine into the new generation alloy frame has been a work of genius - it's a tight fit! A plethora of pipes and wires run from various parts of the engine up and under the rear mudguard, where you'll also find the injector and combined ECU/throttle body, linked via a conventional pipe to the large volume airbox and filter. Beneath the throttle body just above the engine sits the regulator whilst the coil remains mounted on the left frame tube as on the 315.

As the four-stroke motor obviously weighs more than the equivalent two-stroke, the frame has been lightened by more than 1.5kg to help compensate, and slimmed down to take the new engine, resulting in a claimed overall weight of only half a kilo more than the 315.

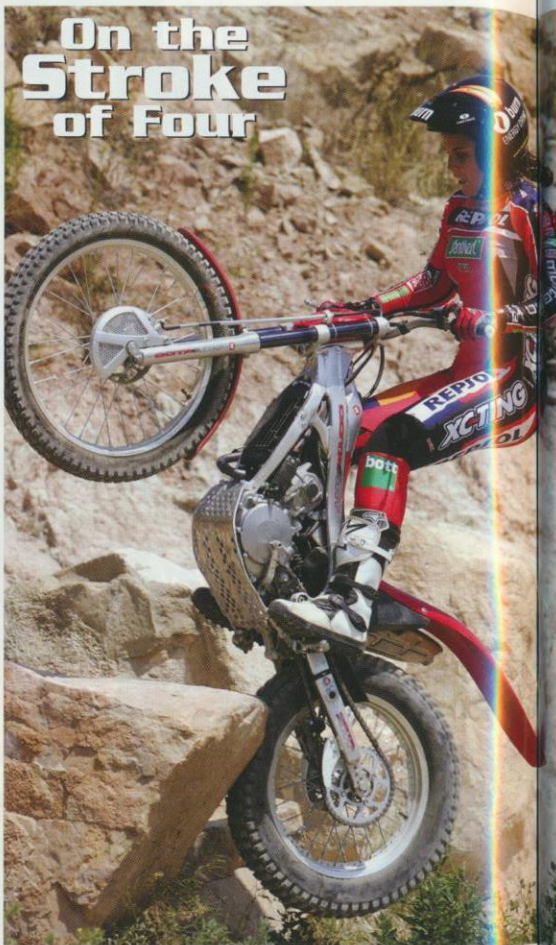
As delivered, the bike is fully homologated which means lights, indicators and a load of extraneous accessories that your dealer will happily remove. The engine also has four restrictors - one in the throttle body and three in the exhaust - plus removing the lights also helps. How much you remove is up to you, but the importers make a recommendation to dealers.

## Easy Rider

So, what does it ride like? Superbly, but it's very different to anything else you'll have tried. We had two full afternoons on the 4RT and the first was in a very muddy wood with some decent but short climbs and lots of fallen leaves. Best tactic wherever possible was to let the engine labour and find grip. Use of second and third gear inspired more confidence than on a two-stroke, particularly third and whilst it would be wrong to say the bike never stalled, it certainly ran more confidently at lower revs in a high gear than a stoker would.

It's not as easy to clear the rear wheel of mud when it is clogged as on a two-stroke though, so ensuring you tackle sections with a cleared wheel is probably more important on the 4RT.

On a decent hillclimb you can either allow the bike to grip, or drive it like a two-stroke by giving it plenty of revs and controlling the drive on the clutch. Using that tactic is possibly just a bit



less successful than on a two-stroke but certainly only marginally.

Where the 4RT really comes into its own is in its stability. The additional weight of the motor gives the bike a secure sense of balance, and that in a nutshell is its biggest asset. It was just so stable, so controlled and so easy to ride. We had been led to believe the steering tended to wash out, but we never found that to be so. Just put the front wheel where you want it; tight turn or wide turn, it was entirely predictable.

When tackling five familiar sections, on four of them the 4RT was definitely a better bet, but on the fifth, which involved a camber to an uphill turn on mud, we never did manage to get up it.

The bike was really quite impressive on the

first day, though we found the fast tickover something that was difficult to get used to when compared with a two-stroke - however on day two, things changed dramatically.

## Trialled and Tested

We went to a different venue where we had three very capable riders together with another privately owned 4RT and a 315 two-stroke with which to compare. The location was very wet, and is notorious for its lack of grip, plus there were several good rock streams to tackle.

To start with, three different climbs were attempted. The first was approached with a tight turn to a steep climb. Both 4RTs, with all three riders having a go, never looked like getting up the hill, yet the old 315 absolutely flattened it first time. Then as it became more slippery, the 315 was good for getting about six yards further each time than the four-stroke.

Hill two was longer and steeper and every time the 315 made it look easy, yet again neither of the two four-strokes made it over the summit. We tried every which way to do it, second, third and fourth gears, revving it or making it pull, they simply wouldn't go up.

But it's not all bad news as the 4RT comes into its own when the rocks get slippery. It feels over-geared as standard, considerably so when in

a rocky stream, and sitting on the bank listening to the bike, it's obvious it needs to go up at least two teeth on the rear sprocket or down one on the gearbox sprocket.

In fact, lowering the overall gearing may well improve the hillclimbing ability. At first we thought that the clutch was a bit like a switch, but we can't really say it was noticeably so when riding, though the second bike's owner had already fitted a larger clutch master cylinder which greatly improved the progressiveness of the clutch action.

## Unfour Comparison?

There's no doubt the Montesa 4RT is a beautifully built bike. Clubman riders should simply love them on the grade of sections used in the bulk of club and centre trials. However, the inevitable comparison will be against other two-strokes, as there is not (yet) a comparable four-stroke to compare the Mont against.

The jury is still out when it comes down to tougher stuff and the day when we have all thrown away our 'stokers for a thumper is still a long way off. Some riders will get on the 4RT and love it, whilst others will find them so different to the two-stroke that they may not adapt. The 4RT has certainly ensured that more than ever before, opinions will be divided in the world of trials...

## LOSS OR LEADER?

**O**K, so you fancy a new Montesa. Then just pop along to the nearest of the 20-plus Montesa dealers, hand over your £4399 and you are the proud owner of the very latest all-singing, all-dancing trials bike.

Saying that, there's a wealth of new trials bikes available - two-stroke trials bikes that is - and each will cost about £3500, give or take. One year from now, if it has been kept in good condition that two-stroke trialler should fetch about £2200, maybe £2300. So in a year it will have depreciated about £1200, or if you prefer, around £25 per week.

In a further year's time, that same bike won't have lost very much more. You will still be able to get about £1850 for it, which is a further £450 depreciation, or about £8.50

a week. These are known facts based on the state of play in recent years.

Now what about the 4RT? Well, it's an unknown quantity, but dealers we've been talking to think that in a year's time your Cota 4RT should fetch about three grand, a depreciation of £1400 or about £27 per week. However, trying to sell a secondhand, one-year-old trials bike for £3000 is likely to be more difficult than selling a second-hand year old bike at £2300.

And while there will always be people willing to pay for the latest technology, the trials scene is notoriously careful with its money. Then again the new 4RT may yet turn out to be as desirable as the old RTLs and so bikes could start fetching a premium.

Only time will tell...







## DIRTY

'PAST DAKAR RALLYE EXPERIENCES TELL ME THAT THE ONLY RELIEF FROM 24-HOUR KEYBOARD BASHING SESSIONS WILL BE REGULAR VISITS TO THE MEDICAL TENT FOR MORE BUM-SQUIRT MEDICATION'

W

ith my trail riding season over and my passport languishing in the Malian embassy awaiting its Dakar Rallye visa, the last month has seen me stuck at home brutally confronted by all the tasks I studiously spend the rest of the year trying to avoid.

Thus bills have been paid, garages cleared out, riding kit sorted and a

### CHRIS EVANS GETS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC...

vast pile of spares ordered ready for 2005. Boring, boring, boring.

Mercifully in amongst this sea of drudgery there have been a few highlights, first of which was the Dirt Rider Expo up at Stoneleigh. Now, in the past I have been slightly critical of this particular event, but I think I am finally warming to it in my old age. Part of the appeal is that I get to *big it up* with the rest of the *TBM massive* for a couple of days. And while you would have never guessed it from their magazine personas, they are actually a surprisingly good laugh.

If it wasn't for their penchant for eating in awful out-of-town themed 'diners' and staying in quaint B&Bs, which are little more than glorified chintz death-traps, the company and 'accommodation part of the equation would have been almost perfect.

The show itself wasn't too bad either. This year the organisers had stuck a big marquee affair onto the main building and there was actually quite a lot to look at. All the major

manufacturers seem to have been present and correct and there were even a few 'specials' to anorak over.

The thing that amazed me most however, was the sheer number of different makes of clothing on offer.

I mean, who buys all this stuff? Now that anybody with a couple of quid in the bank can pop over to China and get a range of clothing knocked up for next to nothing, the market has opened up a little, but it looks a very saturated one to me.

The other fun part of the show is watching and talking to all the punters. It's dirtbike anthropological heaven, with a veritable smorgasbord of reader types laying siege to the TBM stand keen to impart their vision of what direction the mag should take.

And while most of their suggestions were constructive (if perhaps tragically misguided), one was left with the overwhelming impression that you just can't please all of the people all of the time. Which of course is just the way we like it.

With the show over, I was finally able to hotfoot it down to Team Desert Rose's HQ in deepest darkest East Sussex and apply the finishing touches to my long-running SM project.

Somewhere within the recesses of my addled brain had lodged the notion that all that remained to be done was stick some petrol in the thing and fire it up.

But closer inspection revealed that there was still quite a lot of work to do. This in turn provoked a crisis of confidence, and so after half a day

spent scratching my head wondering what to do with a bird's nest of disconnected wires, I was forced to go cap in hand for assistance to Uncle Clive (or Patsy Quick's husband as I prefer to call him).

The downside was a steady stream of rather withering comments concerning my mechanical incompetence, interspersed with largely unwarranted (though not necessarily untrue), more general observations on the shagged state of my sorry existence.

The upsides were that together we finished the bugger off in no time and it started first kick. And although I am naturally biased I have to tell you that the end result looks absolutely magnificent. Maybe not quite bling enough to feature in TBM's sister magazine 'Supermoto', but beautiful enough for me to spend a couple of hours gazing at it like the sad petrolhead I am.

Once I had managed to drag myself out of the shed I was forced to turn my attention to preparing for my annual Weight Watchers excursion to the Saharan desert - something you may know as the Dakar Rallye. With no bike to prepare or assistance truck to fill with kitchen sinks, this mainly consists of shaking dead scorpions out of my tent, trying to arrange alternative hotel accommodation in out-of-the-way places and getting in a lot of sleep.

'Cos while all the other 'Rosbif' entrants will be having fun playing in the dunes or staying up late with their mates rebuilding gearboxes in a sandstorm, I will be chained to my laptop working jolly hard, with little or no chance of a siesta for a whole three weeks!

Past experience tells me that the only relief from 24-hour keyboard bashing will be regular visits to the medical tent for more bum-squirt medication, and interruptions from assistance crews awaiting news about a competitor they last saw days ago. Just thinking about it makes me yearn for another month of drudgery...



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- Normandie 8/9/10 June
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## RUTTED

'WHATEVER ALUN MICHAEL'S REASON FOR NOT HAVING YET BROADCAST HIS REACTIONS TO THE ORIGINAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT, THEY WILL EVENTUALLY EMERGE, AND WE WON'T LIKE THEM...'

**A**bout a year ago Mr Editor Melber phoned me with news of the DEFRA consultation document that, with varying degrees of alarm and accuracy, has been exercising us trailriders on and off ever since. As I write, it's more 'off' than 'on', although allowing for the caprice of our servant/masters in Whitehall, that mightn't be the case by the time you read this.

**DIRT BIKING, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT: MARK WILLIAMS SPECULATES ON THE SPORT'S FUTURE...'**

What is probably certain - and I hope you'll savour that oxymoron - is that Alun Michael, the relevant Minister, has his hands rather full of foxhunters at the moment. And although relatively few in numbers, their apparent constriction in the nation's collective gullet is sufficient to command hundreds of hours of parliament's time and a good deal of taxpayers' money.

For the record, I'm in favour of foxhunting even though the idea of dogs ripping apart poor little Basil Brush is a little unsettling. But then so is the regular loss of my neighbours' livestock, and even more so the social fabric of a countryside I cherish and which is, tragically, fast disappearing under the weight of dormitory villages, forests of ugly unnecessary road signs, mobile phone masts and big, careless supermarkets.

Having got that off my chest, let's return to trailriding. Whatever Mr

Michael's reasons for having not yet broadcast his reactions - or at least his publicly admissible reactions - to the original consultation document, they will eventually emerge and we probably won't like them.

Whilst it is likely that he and his DEFRA mandarins were partisan and certainly careless in drafting their proposals, and whilst it is apparently true (I'm getting a taste for these contradictions in terms) that they were all surprised at the degree of protest that greeted them, such things can be dismissed as meaningless trifles in the mind of a determined legislator.

And Michael, as those who've been on the malign receiving end of his handgun and foxhunting bills know, is nothing if not a determined legislator. So although we are hearing whispers of consensus, comprise and soft-peddalling from those whose business it is to leak, be in no doubt that trailriding as we know it is about to change. Having said which, that may not in itself be a bad thing.

As I've noted before in this column and elsewhere, the collapse of the forestry and farming industries in this country provides opportunities for organised off-road sport which some are already exploiting and others eyeing up. Personally, I find this unsettling, but then I'm in the luxurious, even privileged position of living in the relatively unpopulated heart of prime trailriding country. And I also come from a generation where you actually had to try very hard to go trailriding, so perhaps I appreciate its more subtle benefits more than many younger riders.

And to digress for a moment, thought not entirely, I shall bang on about what those benefits might be: learning to read maps properly so that not only do you begin to understand the broad relationship between the landscape and historical impact of the humanity that inhabits it, but you are also obliged to stop frequently to check where you are and use those static moments to appreciate the majesty of the countryside.

There is also, or rather was, the satisfaction of riding machines that not only were barely suited to their task when new, but had to be adapted - often quite seriously - to survive several hours of up hill and down dale.

This in turn meant that the Bantam Bushman, the Honda XL250 and all the other machines you may've read about in TBM's *From the Archives*, weren't half as capable or reliable as the Serows and XRs and EXCs we ride today. So we had to ride them slower, nurse them along and often patch them up en-route. Trailriding is still an adventure, but these days, it's of a different order.

Today, most riders don't bother to learn map reading, or indeed reading the lie of the land so as to discover its quirks and reasons and odd little rewards. We're in too much of a hurry.

Instead, we leave it to those who know their way around. We let them lead us through landscapes we care little about, because we are mainly interested in riding our gleaming machines with their bottomless torque, abundant suspension, effortless steering and huge dependability.

And we want to ride them as fast as possible, covering as much distance as possible before returning to our vans and scurrying back to lives that are jam-packed with all the diversions that, we generally suppose, give our lives purpose.

One of the consequences of this, and the increasing affluence that many of us now enjoy is that we pay others to do our map-reading and often our maintenance too, thus making the whole trailriding experience as painless as possible. Numerous enterprises have sprung up

both here and abroad that enable us to simply turn up, often without so much as a crash helmet, and get taken on a trip through the countryside.

And even if we decide to ride our own bikes on our own turf, many of us rely on just one or two map fiends to lead us a merry, muddy prance. In both cases the consequence is often large groups of riders heading along tracks whose historic or local relevance, let alone their legality, is irrelevant.

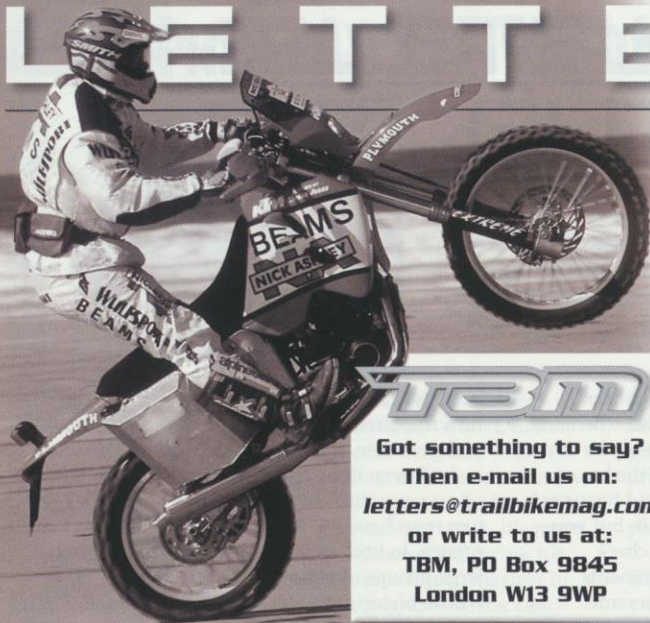
We take it on trust, should it occur to us at all, that whoever's leading the group knows the score, and because he/she certainly knows where they're going, there's little stopping or riding cautiously to check the route or admire the scenery. And where there are commercial imperatives at stake, there is also the temptation for such groups to be very large indeed. And their consequent impact on the countryside to, quite literally, prove damaging.

Think about all these things in the light of the DEFRA proposals which, if implemented in their most draconian form, would actually mean even more densely trafficked use of fewer and fewer legal rights of way. This would very soon lead to justifiable howls of protest from our foes in hiking boots and bobble hats, never mind farmers and NIMBYs whose properties would be dissected by far more dirtbikers than ever before. And would, almost inevitably, augur a complete prohibition of trailbiking.

And although I often miss the slower, more reflective nature of trailriding in the Seventies, I know it's not for everybody and I know I'm now in a minority. But don't be fooled into thinking that just because there's a lot more of us about these days, we'll always have right on our side.

Riding smaller and slower may prove the best insurance we have for the future of our sport, and it might also satisfy a sense of discovery that's entirely absent from simply pushing the envelope of your riding ability, or that of your brand new, hot-shot dirt bike...





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## At What Cost?

Dear TBM

What a shame! I've been trail riding since I was swimming in my Dad's sack, but now the most exiting and enjoyable event that I've ever taken part in has been put out of reach.

I am of course talking about the fantastic Dawn to Dusk. Unfortunately, my employer cannot justify giving me a 28percent pay rise, even after explaining to him that his company must be in the minority because everything I have to pay out for is increasing by a similar percentage (council tax, insurance, Dawn to Dusk!).

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not having a go at you, I am confident that you would have liaised with all parties concerned and done everything possible to keep the cost at a minimum. However, this doesn't make everything okay. Everybody I have spoken to

who competed last year is under the same impression as me and will not be out there competing in the 2005 event (pass me a noose).

I don't know how I will break this news to my trusty steed (XR400), which incidentally performed faultlessly last year, shame the same can't be said about the rider! My wife (bless her soul) said that she might be able to pull an extra shift down t' pit, but I feel this is too much to ask.

The dawn of this event may still be rising, but for me and the people I know, the dusk has already cometh...

Neil Buttrill  
via email

Neil. It's not actually *our* event. As the *sponsor* we have no control over what the organisers charge for the D2D (even though they're mates of ours). Personally I think a 28percent rise in entry fee is well out of

order even though the 2004 event was oversubscribed. On the other hand I know that this year's wet event cost them more than the equivalent dry one because more 'kit' got ruined (such as all the flooring in the marquee). At the end of the day we all have to pay for our sport and if most riders are prepared to pay 30-odd quid for a three hour race, then 90-quid for 12hours doesn't seem too unreasonable (particularly if you ride iron-man). And it's not like there's a whole host of 12hour events out there to choose from.

At the end of the day the paying punter will decide for themselves whether they think it's worth it. However, I suspect that there will be plenty more like you, who will see this as rampant profiteering...

## Scots Wahey

Dear TBM

I just thought I would write and tell you about a recent bike journey I did along the Corriearyrick Pass.

Before doing this ride, I wanted to find out the current legal position of using this road, as everyone you speak to seems to have their own opinion on whether or not it is a legal route. I contacted Scotways, an organisation who are the people to ask in Scotland, and I got the following reply:

'The route is not a right of way for vehicles. I quote from the official tourist board leaflet - Please leave your vehicles before reaching the military road. The Corriearyrick is not

maintained as a public road and is not suitable for use as one.'

They even ask walkers to minimise damage, so the route concerned seems very fragile.

Surprised that the Official Tourist Board leaflet had been quoted, I asked for clarification on the status of the Tourist Board Leaflet as the definitive document.

I received a reply evading the question and stating where they (Scotways) get their information from. Then without further prompting I received another email that degenerated into an almost personal attack, stating I was not responsible, and neither were any off-road motorcyclists who wanted to ride along this route. It also stated they had received correspondence from a group of walkers that had been 'upset' at meeting a group of trail bikes on the pass, and wanted to know if they were allowed to be there.

I had also contacted the Scottish Off-Road club as they had also suggested, and was informed the road was legal to ride on, and in fact they had

been there themselves only a few weeks before.

I replied to Scotways with this information, and also that I was disappointed with the anti-motorcycle stance they appeared to have, as not all off-road motorcyclists fitted their stereotype, and personally I had no wish to be riding somewhere I wasn't allowed.

I then stated I would be passing the correspondence on to the press (this was a bit of a hollow threat, and was only done to see if it would provoke a different response).

Then the next day, a word document pops into my email. In it, the person I dealt with at Scotways did a complete U-turn, telling me that I *am* allowed to ride the Pass, and furthermore that they were definitely all for 'shared responsible use' of routes such as these, so everyone allowed to use them can do so.

It is disappointing, if not surprising that this organisation appear to have something against motorcyclists and only when threatened with bad press do they back down.

Still, we did the route last week and it was superb fun. It was as cold as it looks, plus the slippery ground was definitely better for me on my little two-smoke (1991 KX125 with an 1989 KDX200 motor fitted), rather than my pal on his big TT600. Next up is a weekend trip into the Lake District, so I suppose I'd better

join the TRF! Keep up the good work on the mag, I buy it all the time now - but you do have a bit of a South of England bias don't you?

Alex Tulloch  
via email

No. We just happen to be based in the South of England. We test all over the country though - but rarely get up as far north as Scotland. Last time was a couple of years ago with a Beta Alp 200. Thanks for the info on the Corriearyrick Pass, we know a few trail riders who have enjoyed riding this historic route and left it exactly as they found it...

## Councillled Out

Dear TBM

I've been tempted to write in a few times but haven't got round to it, but, a few things in the November issue have stirred me into action. Firstly, some advice.

It would be unfair of me to criticise those people new to off-roading as we all have to start somewhere (see Letters TBM111), and it takes a good while to learn how to ride some of the more challenging aspects of our chosen sport.

However, if you plan to race either enduros or hare and hounds my advice is this. Go and watch one first. Most likely you'll be surprised at the speed that the fast lads go and how draining and hard it is for the vast majority of riders. Also, just take note of how competitive it can be. If nothing else, watching will give you a better

Snow Patrol: Scotland's Corriearyrick Pass can be legally ridden according to reader Alex Tulloch...





idea of what to expect once out on the course.

Next up are the mechanically incompetent. You've bought an expensive piece of engineering and are going to do horrible things to it: crash it, overhear it, tip it upside-down, drive it through mud, slop and water. Now all of these things take a heavy toll on the equipment so to be unable to fix it to a reasonable level is foolish.

Imagine you've entered an event, a blocked pilot jet could put an end to your day and it's a ten-minute fix. It could turn out to be an expensive day for the sake of a little knowledge. For example, how many of you know someone who takes their wheels to a shop to change tyres? What would they do on a ride-out? That's right, rely on someone else to do it for them. Nuff' said.

Finally, the lane articles I read with interest. Up here in Derbyshire we don't have too many problems but this could all change. The council doesn't like us much because we don't spend as much money as the tourists do and a lot of the lanes are near heavily visited areas.

But it was the piece about 'Pershute 12' that prompted me to write most of all. In Derbyshire the council has put up signs on lanes stating that the vehicular rights have been removed and the lane downgraded to a bridleway, when in fact they haven't at all.

Needless to say, these illegal signs are removed or twisted round out of sight - a direct

action, the visible voice of an ignored minority. Another problem we have is that the council seems to think all the lanes are full of horse riders and walkers. Absolute rubbish - if it weren't for us and the farmers whose land we're on, loads of lanes wouldn't see a soul all year round.

Strangely though, when a friend of mine went to the council offices to try and see the definitive map, he was told he wasn't allowed to see it. After stating that he was a taxpayer, he was then told he wasn't allowed to know the status of the lanes shown to him on the map. He eventually got the information he wanted but it was hard work.

Geraint Rogers  
via email

## Stand Up and be Count-cilled

Dear TBM

We had a great day's trail riding which was spoilt by some heavy-handed council officials recently.

I live in the Wycombe area and use the Ridgeway as an 'off-road' route travelling from Stokenchurch to the Wiltshire Downs. Once on the Downs, we tend to stay off the main Ridgeway track and explore the many side trails that I have come to know quite well.

So, why was the day spoilt? Because Oxford County Council have erected signs closing this section of the Ridgeway to everything other than walkers. As I don't have a

trailer or access to a van I have to use this part of the Ridgeway to get access to the Downs. To be honest I didn't even see the first few signs, as you really have to concentrate on your riding when the going is as soft as it is now.

So we decided to ignore it on the day as it would mean turning around and riding back over the same (closed) parts again. It really is annoying that they make us all suffer when it is the 4x4s that tear up the surface and not the bikes. They go up there and make huge ruts, and then they get stuck and churn parts to pieces. So we all have to suffer. Now I know all off-road users should stick together but it is hard to feel that way once you have seen the devastation that an irresponsible group of 4x4s causes.

Having said that, the 'damaged' sections are not in any danger of erosion as they are all on flat ground. The mud can't go anywhere! If it was on slopes and hillside and the continued use in poor weather was seriously eroding the soil away then okay, maybe I could see the point in closing down the route.

As it is I expect it is just to appease the dog walkers who insist on walking their dogs on public roads instead of sticking to footpaths. Yes, let us not forget - the Ridgeway is a public road not a footpath! So I guess it boils down to the walkers not wanting to get their boots muddy.

What am I supposed to do now? Pack my bike away until next summer when it opens

again? I don't think so. It has to be time to do something. Stop sitting around talking to people who have no interest in protecting our pastime and DO something! Only groups who stand up and make themselves heard achieve their goals. Great mag by the way!

John Muizelaar  
via email

## Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves

Dear TBM

After nearly a month I have managed to commandeer October's issue from my husband and after reading it, would like to say a big 'well done' to Mel who spent the weekend at an enduro school.

After being the one who is left washing the dirty kit and cleaning the bike for so many years, plus ordering the spare parts for my husband and kids, I finally got to have a go on my husband's CRF250X.

Apparently the plan was that because I moaned about never being let loose on his beloved machine that if I was to actually have a go then it would put me off, but it had exactly the opposite effect.

I have now started to ride (at the age of 31) and am glad to say that I am hopefully one day going to become another fully-fledged female rider.

I would like to say to all the women who follow their husbands all over the country staying in the background wishing they could have a go...

don't wait, just get on and do it! My motto is 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em'. More women are needed in the sport and it is great fun. Thanks to Mel who gave me the push to finally do something about it, and keep up the great work on the mag.

Helen, Monmouthshire  
via email

Helen, it's always good to hear about how other lady riders are doing, and I couldn't agree more about encouraging all the long-suffering wives and girlfriends out there to throw away the Fairy Liquid and give it a go. Well done, and glad I could help! Mel

## Tech Talk

Dear TBM

Just dropping a line to say how much I enjoyed reading the article in last months rag, 'Prepare to meet thy Maico'.

The descriptions and termi-

nology used by the author Si Melber bought back so many fond memories of motocross meetings in days gone by when Maico riders really did command respect (eee, it's the conical hubs that did it for me).

I was slightly surprised however, that you'd compared this bike to a WR450. Whilst I haven't a bad word to say about the Yam (I have a 2004 model myself), don't you think that a fairer comparison would have been to compare the old Maico against an EXC450 or a Husaberg 450?

To say that the Yamaha is a good representation of today's technology is a little unfair; after all, the five-valve engine has been around since the days when Maicos were on track. Four or five years ago, I would have agreed with you wholeheartedly, but today it's the non-Jap stuff that feels light, simple and fast (maybe just like in the days of the Maico).

With Suzuki and other manufacturers continuing the



Mega Maico: Lots of you wrote in to say how much you enjoyed the Maico vs WRF test. We enjoyed it too...





# LETTERS

development race, Yamaha will have to up the ante in the next year or two won't they? Just look at companies like Sherco and Gas Gas producing fuel-injected engines for their 450s.

The technology is there and it seems a pity that bike manufacturers take so long to get it on board. Seriously, if you want progress just have a look at what companies like Orbital of Australia can do with a two-stroke engine - this is the stuff that's coming our way... Some day.

But hey, I'm not knocking the WR, far from it. I call mine 'da-sofa' and at my age that'll do just fine. If you want fun stick a pair of supermoto wheels on a WR with an auto clutch and back brake on the bars... Does the Maico sound so good to you now?

Oswyn Lloyd Hughes  
aka Fred Dibner  
via email

Fair comment mate. You're right of course, but part of the reason we chose the big ol' WR450F was to give the Maico a bit of a fighting chance. Had we opted for a KTM 450EXC it would have blown the Maico into the weeds...

## Mega Maico

Dear TBM

I was quite impressed by your article 'Prepare to meet thy Maico'. I used to ride a CR250, but as luck would have it, it got

nicked. I spent a while looking for a cheapish replacement as the CR had swallowed all my pocket money.

I stumbled across a mate of a mate who had an old Maico 250 Mega 2 with a screwed gearbox that had been residing in his hut for a few years.

I quite warmed to the idea of a Maico as I had heard all the legends as a kid. A hundred quid later, and I had a broken bike. It was soon fixed thanks to Wulfsport UK, and I'm still very impressed with the bike.

Although it lacks the grunt of a big thumper or a modern two-stroke, it is very tractable, unlike my CR. I rarely suffer arm pump, but still have enough power on tap to keep things interesting.

I am currently looking around for an old 490 engine, which will be even more fun (especially with those brakes!). Keep up the good work!

Gordon Archibald  
Edinburgh

PS If Mr Melber persuades you all at TBM to get a Maico as a staff bike, I think you'd be pleasantly surprised.

## Brake Break

Dear TBM

Reference your test of the Maico - great to see the old girl on the cover!

It's not so much the front brake cable that needs adjustment on your test bike as the position of the actuating lever on the hub. If you move it one spline anti-clockwise from

its present position, it has more leverage as it's applied rather than less. Just make sure it's pushed fully home on the spindle, or it will foul on the rib below the axle and the brake won't work at all.

Also, it's wise to check the condition of the torque arm. If this snaps (and it can), the back plate rotates when the brake is applied and smashes the slider.

Now, does anyone know how to change the primary chains (ask your granddad) without causing themself some serious injury? I never did work that one out.

Best wishes from a failed former Maico mechanic who long ago converted to disc brakes and primary gears.

Richard Simpson, Gloucester  
via email

## On The QT

Dear TBM

Thanks for printing my last letter, and it was great to meet some of you at Telford a few weeks ago.

Anyway, I have heard that regulations are coming in next year to enforce even quieter pipes than we already have. Does this mean if you've just bought a groovy new DEP pipe for £250, you're going to have to go out and buy another one in the new year?

The odd thing is I haven't read anything about this in the mags, it was my local dealer who mentioned it.

Nick Barrett  
via email

Changing regulations affect us all Nick. We're not aware of any impending new regulations as far as the sport of enduro goes, but we wouldn't be surprised (or unhappy) if we were forced to ride quieter bikes, mate...

## Holiday Heaven

Dear TBM

Just returned from a great holiday with Trailblazers in Southern Spain - thanks to Graham and his team.

This is the second holiday I have had with my mates at Trailblazers. The trails were awesome, and different every day, with fantastic scenery and superb weather. Great value for money, and the bikes, the organisation, hotel and attention to detail were absolutely second to none.

I really recommend this holiday to anyone who wants to keep their biking alive all year round. Graham can be relied upon to gear the routes for all levels. A couple of our party hadn't done as much riding as the other three of us, but the routes were sufficiently challenging and great fun for each and every one of us.

Patrick Cody  
via email

## Blazing Saddles

Dear TBM

As a subscriber to TBM for many years now I want to share a pleasant story with you and the other readers. First of all, I would like to say that I think

you do a sound job in putting together this monthly mag.

I enjoy it even more now that you are noticeably more receptive to criticism than you have been previously and I particularly like the way that, unlike other mags, when you open up yours there isn't a whole deluge of junk mail falling from within.

Anyway, to my story. We are a bunch of trail riders (and occasional enduro Seamuses) from Northern Ireland. We have been riding for quite a few years now and it was always an ambition for some of us to go abroad and ride dirt bikes - somewhere like Spain, Portugal, Morocco etc.

So, one of our group confronted some of us with the offer of going out to Spain to stay in his recently acquired apartment and take in two days trail riding while we were there. Needless to say it took us about 30 seconds to make up our minds and four of us were all set for the off.

The flights were booked to Alicante two months prior to the trip and arrangements were made with a trail riding company local to the area - happy days!

We were due to fly out to Spain on 11 November and everything was going to plan until some grave news the week before - the trail riding company could sadly not accommodate us due to a bereavement in Blighty.

Now whilst we fully commiserated, that was it. No contingency, no alternative company and no mention of our deposits. In fact there was

absolutely nothing - no contact whatsoever.

An emergency meeting was called and we all assembled at my house with a TBM issue in one hand and BT Broadband in the other. We checked out six other companies and very soon realised that if anything was going to be salvaged then we would have to travel some 350 miles to the Malaga area.

Red Tread tried hard but came back to say they could not do anything with such short notice but they recommended Trailblazers whom I had tried to contact. I eventually got through to Graham Ross at Trailblazers on Sunday afternoon and he confirmed that he could help. A quick call to all the lads and we were ready to go ahead even though it was now going to cost us considerably more.

We set off on schedule and arrived at the beautiful mountain village of Competa, which is north of Malaga in what must be a record time of five hours at the capable hands of Cliff - we were told it would take six and a half!

We settled into the hotel which was all part of the arrangements of Trailblazers and after a few nightcaps turned in for the night. Next morning we went for a village walk to the local store to be greeted with a cloudless sky, cool air, and some absolutely spectacular scenery.

After a hearty breakfast Graham turned up right on cue at 10am and I travelled with him to the departure point (Graham's house) while the others followed in the hire



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car. There we met the lovely Liz who made us feel very welcome. After signing up and paying our fees we set off at 10.45am and that's when everything became worthwhile.

Riding DR-Zs with the all-important E' button the bikes were in very good order - no broken levers, torn seats, slappy dry chains, bent bars or worn tyres here. The going was a mixture of dusty, stony, rocky trails through forests, goat paths, grassy tracks etc, riding at 3000m with absolutely breathtaking sights.

Graham kept a watchful eye on things and at the same time gave us plenty of rope to let us enjoy the day. After day one we retired to a restaurant recommended by Liz, which was just what we needed.

Next morning we arrived bright and early with Graham to be told we were going to do more difficult trails and climbs that day - and he was right. The riding took in a marble quarry, a disused airfield from WW2, plenty of cliffhanging ledges and of course the well-received lunch in a remote village, which is included in the price.

After 160km (most of it off-road) we reluctantly returned to base, got the customary cool drink and said our farewells. We cannot thank Graham and Liz enough for our Spanish experience and could say without reservation that we would recommend it to anyone who wants to pursue this type of holiday. Graham was not only an extremely good host

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and guide but also a very accomplished rider in many biking disciplines.

Keep up the good work TBM and remember 'Doing The Rounds' invitation is open in Northern Ireland.

Gary Diamond,  
Northern Ireland  
via email

## Top Marks

Dear TBM

Great mag, have been with you from the beginning - oh, those grainy days of black and white.

In issue 110 you compared a Honda CRM250 mkIII against a Honda CRF250X at the Dawn to Dusk, and as you stated, the CRM probably was not in the most pristine of conditions. Plus the fact it was a ten-year-old trail bike against the latest enduro weapon, so the bikes were of a contrast, but the conclusion was that the CRM suspension was a bit lacking, and the bike felt a bit heavy.

Rather than go and get all

upset because I have a mkII CRM, I would like to say thanks, because my £1300 purchase gives me a huge amount of pleasure and I don't have to spend nearly £5000 to have as much fun! I have ridden a few of the new 250 four-strokes and they feel a bit flat until you rev them hard, and the CRM makes a great all-rounder as it's not an out and out racer.

The CRM has a lovely motor as you commented, at low revs it pulls you through the gloop but when you wind it up it gives you a grin that splits your face. We all know about Honda build quality and the CRM is no exception - well-built and very reliable, will go on for miles without the need for a rebuild. That's probably why they hold their secondhand value so well. Turn up at any club enduro, hare and hounds, long distance trial, or trail ride and there will be a CRM or two in various states of abuse still going strong.

Many like mine are ridden there and back, and to work again on the Monday morning.

Honda CRMs? There have been plenty in TBM over the years...



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Lots of the latest four-strokes are too noisy or too expensive to repair when they go bang - when my friends DR-Z lunched its top end I could have bought a CRM with the cost of his bike's rebuild!

And with the standard exhaust the CRM is near silent, which is important these days as the booming four-strokes can be heard for miles.

As there are a lot of CRMs out there (mkIIs especially) why not run an article on how to improve your CRM suspension (Maxton - what bits from the CR would fit?) or to make it lighter or generally improve what is a great bike. Not everyone can afford to buy or run the latest bit of kit, and want a bike they can rely on.

If you want a bike to use as a test-bed you can use mine, I have already carried out quite a few mods already.

Vince Proto  
via email

Good to know you're such a long-standing reader Vince. And as such, you'll hopefully recall that over the decade during which TBM has been going, the CRM has to be the bike we've tested (and I guess admired) the most. We've run a CR-framed CRM as a project bike for almost two years, and I've personally owned three of them. CRMs have featured on front covers, been tested in standard form, tricked up form, tuned versions (by Mugen), supermoto versions, and we've

produced a buying guide to purchasing them secondhand. But now the CRM is getting old, it's no longer available new, and progress, (particularly in the 250cc four-stroke category), has left the CRM looking slightly old-fashioned.

We may yet get around to writing a feature on improving CRM suspension, but I suspect that a quick visit to one of the suspension specialists will do the trick for you...

## The Lost Boys

Dear Mark (Williams)

Did your mother ever tell you not to tell lies or exaggerate? If she did you didn't take much notice!

A friend and I were riding recently when we came across a few chaps going the other way so stopped for a brief chat. Pete, their leader, explained that you were doing an article for TBM ('A Watery Rave').

Now, I'm new to the sport and I do buy the magazine. You couldn't believe my surprise when I read November's issue to find that we had been mentioned, but I do have to correct you on a few points!

Kids? Think that might be pushing it, I'm 28 and my friend is of a similar age but with the liver of a 50-year-old. Lost and without maps? Had my trusty OS Explorer with me and I was in Yarner Wood - where were you? Suggest you start carrying spare dictaphone batteries with you in future!

Nick Shaldon  
via email

## Pulling Power

Dear TBM

Following up on the Mark Williams article and Doing The Rounds, we trail ride the same area that he did in the December issue and also have had some experience with loud bikes.

The other weekend we were pulled by north Yorkshire police, a case of mistaken identity, but very interesting. The traffic sergeant was very decent but did say that they are planning days of checking up on illegal bikes. The three big issues were tyres, number plates (size and mud removed) and illegal silencers.

The officer said that noise was one of the biggest sources of complaints from the general public, along with illegal trail use and irresponsible riding. This seems to be a warning to all, but he did say that repeated offenders would be prosecuted.

Anton Hopwood  
via email

## Lean, Mean Fighting Machine

Dear TBM

Thanks for a great magazine - your write-ups have been directly responsible for my purchase of an Armstrong MT500, CCM 604, Honda XR400 and an Alfa VR250, which have all provided me with many laughs.

I now do the occasional enduro - is there a chance of you doing an article on

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# LETTERS

suspension set-up for a given rider weight, event machine preparation and rider fitness improvement so that one day I may get a decent result?

Tom Wibault  
via email

Possibly Tom, but it would have to be a bit generalised don't you think...

## Cold Feet

Dear TBM

Been reading the mag since 2000 and can't get enough - I've even come round to the trials riding articles!

I've just bought a YZ450F after years of enduro bikes, and then I panicked when a lot of the trails around Horton in Ribblesdale were closed off to us... beginning of the end of trail riding?

I do however get a chance to ride in the Lakes that combines some fantastic scenery with some of the most enjoyable riding that I've ever done. Not sure how long we can co-exist with the other outdoor users though.

Enough waffling anyway - issue 88, December 2002 featured a boot drier on page 64 from a company called ATD (Advanced Technology Distribution) whose phone number is now defunct. Any clues please?

Michael Ginn  
via email

PS New logo - Why why why? Bring back the old one. And, cannot understand why no-one napalmed the 'Jungle' whilst Janet Street Porter was there! All the best for 2005 and carry on the good work with TBM.

Sorry Michael we've drawn a blank on this one. But if anyone reading this knows ADT's whereabouts, perhaps they'll get in touch. Incidentally we've been using one of their boot driers for nearly two years and it works a treat. Moving on to the new logo, a straw-pole at the recent Dirt Rider Expo came down in favour of the new logo, three-to-one. Napalm Ms Porter? I'd rather let her work for the other side... Because most people I know can't stand her!

## Side Splitting

Dear TBM

I was so pleased and impressed to see a sidecar article in the November issue, albeit with enduro outfits - well done!

I have a KLR650 outfit that I built to 'long distance trials'

regulations. I currently use this as my regular green lane bike. The KLR has EML/Wasp MX forks, sidecar brake, etc...

In my collection I also have a Soviet army two-wheel drive (KMZ Dnepr MT12 brought up to MW750 spec) outfit with 'split torque' differential and 'diff lock' that is also interesting, but weighs in at 350kg dry!

Besides congratulating you on a fine journal I was wondering if you intended to follow up the enduro sidecar article with a trail riding sidecar piece. If so, I could help by possibly providing a machine or two and to show you their capability (pros and cons) on local green lanes. You will find both outfits more comfortable than the enduro ones, but of course the green lanes are open for them. I look forward to a call.

Anyway, my background - I was TRF national secretary for a few years, and in the 1980s used to ride a Bultaco 325cc trials outfit in the northwest region. I'm also technical adviser to the Cossack Owners Club.

Peter Ballard  
Chippenham, Wiltshire

Reader Peter Ballard offered to lend us his green lane sidecar outfit. Is he mad...?



Did you not see what happened the last time we went out in a sidecar outfit Peter..?

## Getting On... With It

Dear TBM

Owing to increasing age and infirmity I am looking for slightly less demanding events. What I mean are events like the Green Dragon etc, the kind of thing Blez usually reports on - they do not appear on Bob Mullins's very useful website.

Is there some other possibly secret source of information, as the first I see of them is when they are written up in the magazine?

George McGowan  
Strathpeffer, Ross-shire

No. But hopefully our new website will carry information about them as soon as we hear of them. More details about the website shortly. By the way are you saying Blez is infirm?

## Show-Offs

Dear TBM

It's very rare I write letters but I felt I should. Can I offer some constructive criticism?

I attended the dirt bike show a few years running and last year thought I'd say hello at your stand. I was greeted with total ignorance but shrugged it off as one of those things.

So I thought I'd make more of an effort to try to chat this year but was greeted with a grunt as you all carried on your own private chats. I work with the public and I know you can get very cynical - sometimes you can only see this from the outside.

Anyway, I've read your mag for years - bit too much competition stuff lately. Don't turn into T+MX! Phew, that's off my chest! You're still the best read out, so see you next year...

M Sewell  
via email

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# We Are FAMILY

TEST: SI MELBER; PICS: BARNI



**TBM got the exclusive first UK test of the brand new Beta 450RR and put it head to head with its competitors in a European 450 shoot-out. How would the new kid on the block perform against such established competition?**

**A**mong the many house rules here at TBM Towers (ensure you never leave the van with more than a thimbleful of diesel in the tank, don't answer the phone Monday-through-Friday, and try and avoid returning test bikes on time), the one we always try and stick to is to never include more than one machine from the same manufacturer in our

multi-bike tests. Of course there are times when it can't be helped (such as during bike launches for example), but in general it's something we steer clear of. And while other bike journals are happy to test a range of one single manufacturers' products against each other (it certainly helps keep their advertisers happy), we've always found it counter-productive to establishing any

kind of objective conclusion. In fact it's only by exposing differing machines to fair and open competition that you can truly establish their worth within the general hierarchy of the marketplace. Remove the competition and you're left with little more than good PR for the manufacturer involved.

So why bring together a test of three Euro 450s,

all of which have a connection with the KTM factory? Well, firstly because that's the economic reality of today's cross-fertilised enduro market. And secondly because part of our plan for this - the UK's first exclusive test ride on the brand new KTM-powered Beta RR - was to discover exactly how it stacks up against its most obvious rival - KTM's all-conquering 450EXC.



Despite familial DNA, all three manufacturers represented here design, build and market their own stand-alone products which compete for a slice of a lucrative mud-pie. The latest of these is Beta, a company better known (in the UK at least), for a range of small capacity trials and trail bikes. Negotiating a deal with KTM for a supply of their complete line-up of four-stroke EXC motors (250, 400, 450 and 525cc), has given this relatively small (but long established) Italian concern a leg-up to compete on a more or less equal footing with established market leaders, fast-tracking them directly into the big-league.

You may be wondering why on earth KTM should want to supply their excellent range of four-stroke engines to a rival third-party manufacturer like Beta? The answer of course is 'control'. Not only does it make sound financial sense to spread the cost of developing powerplants across a broader range of products, but it doesn't take a genius to figure out that this deal empowers KTM with yet more influence in a highly competitive marketplace. Obviously the purchase of engines and spares will add directly to the orange coffers, while the introduction of a new marque will inevitably rob sales from rival manufacturers. And even in the unlikely event that a significant number of customers were to 'defect' from KTM to the Beta brand, in effect they'd still be buying from KTM - indirectly.

Similar thinking no doubt applied when KTM purchased the Husaberg brand from its Swedish owners and incorporated it into the mighty KTM Corp. And despite retaining that products' individual identity, there's no mistaking the Austrian influence which has come to bear on this once idiosyncratic Swedish marque.

So we have a collection of Euro 450s assembled for a head to head shootout. The location is mid Wales, the testing involved four riders and as diverse a range of terrain as we could hope to find on a miserable winter's day. Bring it on...

### Beta Bet: Beta 450RR

Despite a few machines already finding owners in the UK, it's our guess that a significant number of punters will be awaiting the outcome of our test and subsequent reports by other magazines on the new range of Betas. Why so? Because no matter how popular KTMs have become, there will always be those people who like to be a little different. They may be existing long-term KTM customers who are ready for a change of direction - and colour. Or they may be the complete opposite - riders who (for whatever reason) have up till now avoided buying orange because they don't like the KTM doctrine (PDS suspension etc), but are in no doubt that the

product is essentially sound. Whichever side of the fence you find yourself, one thing's for sure - the introduction of a new marque into the dirtbiking firmament is an event to be warmly welcomed. The fact that Beta have chosen to wrap a class-leading engine with contemporary cycle-parts while at the same time attempting to improve upon a few of the donor bike's failings, has got to play well with prospective purchasers.

So what is the Beta like up close? Well to look at it's not all that dissimilar to a KTM: it utilises an oval-tubed steel chassis (with aluminium rear subframe and one-piece aluminium swing-arm) enclosing the Beta-badged KTM lump. The difference lies in the detail. In place of the KTM's WP suspenders, Beta have chosen to equip the RR with a set of plush 45mm USD Marzocchi Shiver forks, while rear damping is taken care of by a (red anodised) Sachs shock operated via a rising-rate linkage. Braking Wave discs are fitted either end (255mm front, 240mm rear) along with excellent Japanese Nissin calipers and (front) Nissin master-cylinder. Together these elements endow the RR with a plush, fully adjustable suspension set-up which offers plenty of ground-hugging damping, set slightly on the softer side compared with the KTM. And the bike's exemplary braking characteristics (with none of the squidgy lever-feel of your typical Brembo set-up), make it feel quite different to the Katosh.

The other striking difference is in the size, shape and feel of the RR which is slightly lower, and feels narrower and more compact than either the KTM or the Husaberg for that matter. Beta have done an excellent job of packaging their product and it shows as soon as you clamber aboard the relatively low (940mm high) seat. The slimline (round topped) saddle looks like it might be uncomfortable - but thankfully isn't - while the tank is commendably narrow and the rad-shrouds well sited, up out of harm's way. The tank in particular feels smaller and lower than virtually any other enduro bike's (thanks in part to its close-fitting nature and flush-fitting fuel-cap), yet it holds the requisite 8.5L of fuel and manages with just one fuel tap (to the Husaberg's two).

In fact the bike's styling (in most riders' opinion) is one of the RR's virtues. Thankfully this elegant design extends to details like the Beta's waterproof black digi-speedo tucked away behind the headlamp (slightly larger but easier to read than the new KTM/Berg dials), the four-position braceless Magura bars, the streamlined mini-indicators (though the right rear is placed behind the exhaust). And along with items like the high quality switchgear, broad chamfered pegs, carbon-fibre frame protectors and machined

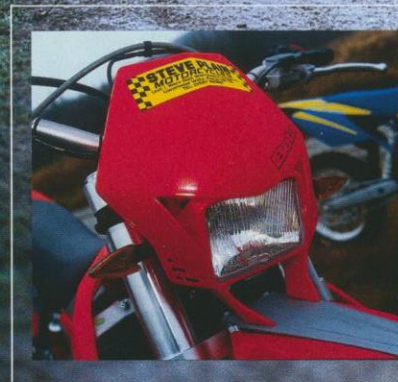
### Second Opinion: Barni

*On this day, in these conditions, it was the KTM all the way. Whilst the power can overwhelm traction, the motor's smooth enough to allow fine throttle control. The suspension gave loads of feedback (despite being a little firm at the rear) and the whole package felt right (dodgy Brembos excepted!). Still number one.*

*The Beta was much better than the other two over the rocks, but let down elsewhere by the slightly vague front-end, which meant you couldn't plant it*

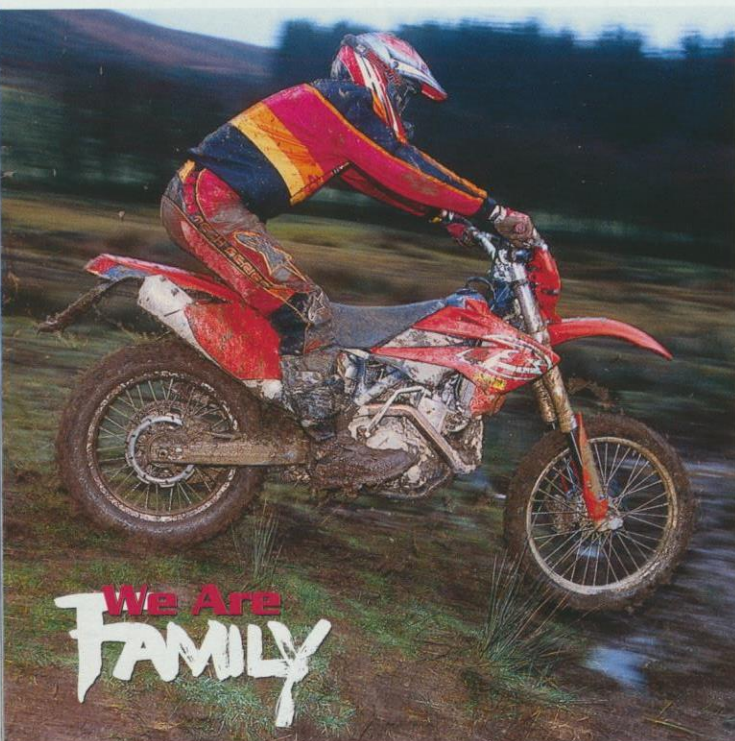
*in the turns or make the most of the excellent Nissin brakes. This wasn't helped by a plush rear-end and slightly too firm forks. The bike definitely has the potential for greatness, it's just not quite there yet.*

*And then there's the Berg. It could be argued that the FE was the easiest bike to ride of the three. But the lumpy motor was pretty awful on the stream ride, and elsewhere it didn't excite. Of course, that means I'd probably go quickest on one, and you probably would too, but that doesn't make me want one. Good... But only if you like that sort of thing!*



Left: Beta shows off its chiselled features. Above: Smart black speedo is compact and easy on the eye. Right: RR's tiny filler cap looks really neat...





## Standard Bearer: KTM 450EXC

It's a measure of just how far KTM have come in the past four years (since the introduction of the current EXC four-stroke range of engines), that their enduro bikes are now considered to be the benchmark by which all other manufacturers' products are judged. This fortunate situation hasn't arisen by accident or happenstance, but thanks to a clear vision and commitment on the part of the Austrian factory. Love them or loathe 'em you can't help but admire KTM for their single-minded determination. While the Japanese can't even get around to homologating their enduro bikes for European (road) use, the Austrians have got on with not only refining their (road-legal) product, but pretty much perfecting it, and along

the way have come to dominate the market. Maybe, just maybe those two facts are related.

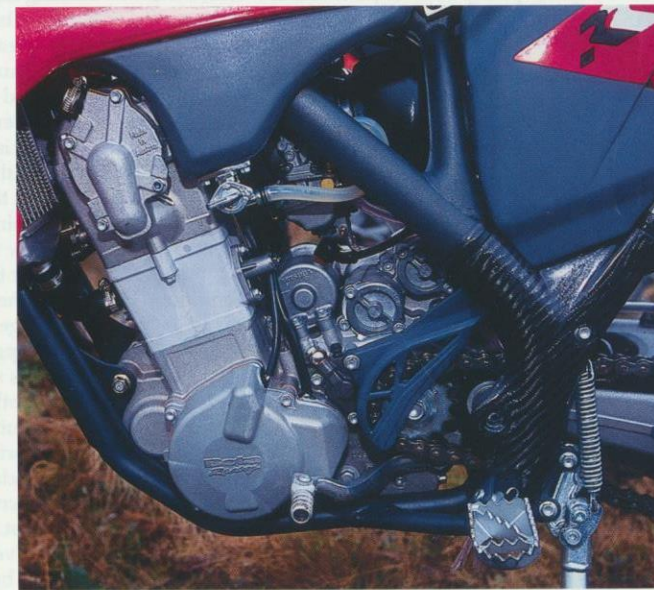
So that now when you buy a KTM, you buy into the complete orange package - lifestyle and all. And even if you're one of the thousands of orange users who couldn't care less about matching riding gear, KTM branded casual clothing or the annual KTM Festival, you probably will be interested in taking advantage of the range of off-the-shelf aftermarket factory items (such as QD bashplates, case-savers etc) designed to improve, enhance or personalise your orange product. And even if you never go near a racetrack with your bike, you'll have come to appreciate the logic and simplicity with which the bike is laid out - especially so when it comes to spanning time.

For 2005 (three model years into the 450's development), the EXC gets a range of updates designed to keep it looking and feeling fresh. These include the adoption of the new-style (oval-section) frame and cast swing-arm, completely redesigned plastics (lighter, slimmer and more modern looking than before), miniature electronic dials, Excel rims, suspension tweaks and a couple of other detail changes.

There's no doubt that now more than ever, the KTM is THE complete enduro package. Its speed,



Above: Elegant simplicity and attention to detail gives the Beta its good looks. Below: Opting for a Nissin/Braking disc set-up provides superior feel. Right: All wrapped up: KTM 450 power-plant looks right at home in the Beta







until the CRF250X came along this year, the 450EXC had been the UK's biggest selling pure enduro bike for the previous two years.

### Yellow Fever: Husaberg FE450e

In the past it's fair to say that you were either a Husaberg fan or you weren't. This (formerly Swedish) marque has earned a reputation for being hardcore, specialised, expensive and prone to breakage. For many years Bergs were bought by the sort of people who think the idea of wiring-up their garage door to the national grid to prevent burglary is a perfectly reasonable decision. You know who these people are. Most of the time they are highly rational, intelligent individuals, then all of a

handling and power are a match for anything on the market, while its quality of finish, standard equipment and design integrity complete the package. But before you think we're being paid by KTM to write this stuff, let's just remember a few of the bike's weaker points for a moment. The Brembo brakes have always been a let-down. For instance our brand new test bike began this ride with plenty of lever pressure, and ended the day with the lever all the way back to the bars.

The WP rear suspension though far plusher now than on earlier models is still not quite up to the very best linkage-based set-ups. And the steering though exceptionally light and quick turning, can in the wrong conditions (rocky downhill for instance) be a complete ball-ache thanks to the bike's inherent twitchiness. Moreover in this sort of going (as well as in slippery mud) the engine's surfeit of power can easily make finding traction all but impossible.

Yet for 90percent of the time in most conditions the 450EXC is a tremendous bike to ride. The 'long-stroke' motor has unparalleled reserves of torque together with a ballsy top-end. The handling and suspension work brilliantly as a package and the bike feels extremely neutral in its handling. While the ergos and riding position are nigh-on perfect. And to top it all, the 450EXC is not a bike which requires you to be at the top of your game - it's just as happy pootling along a single-track as it is powering out of a rutted corner on a special test. It's no wonder then that

sudden something snaps, and they decide that in order to stop the neighbour's cat from crapping on their lawn they'll give it a little fright... by bunging in the microwave. It's a little known fact that Mr Burns of the Simpsons rides a Husaberg.

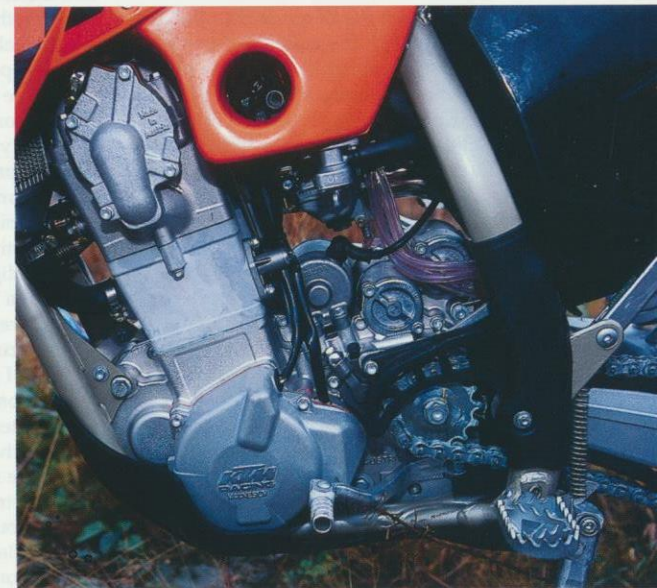
But all that has changed in the past few years. The Austrians have wrested the bike from the clenched fists and dribbling demeanour of its barking mad Swedish proprietors and set about building bikes in the likeness of a yellow KTM. That's meant the adoption of plenty of KTM parts (good), Austrian standards of build quality (also good) and a mellowing of the brand's bonkers nature (very good). The problem they've got however is that most dirt bikers still regard the brand with the sort of suspicion they'd have if they saw the milkman emerging from their house doing up his flies.

So now that Husabergs are more mainstream than ever before, what's stopping people from buying them? It's a fair question and one which we'd wager has as much to do with the Berg's unique appearance as its reputation as a fire-brand. Its styling is so far west of main street that it's in another postal district. But while it looks a little 'out-there' it's never been better to ride.

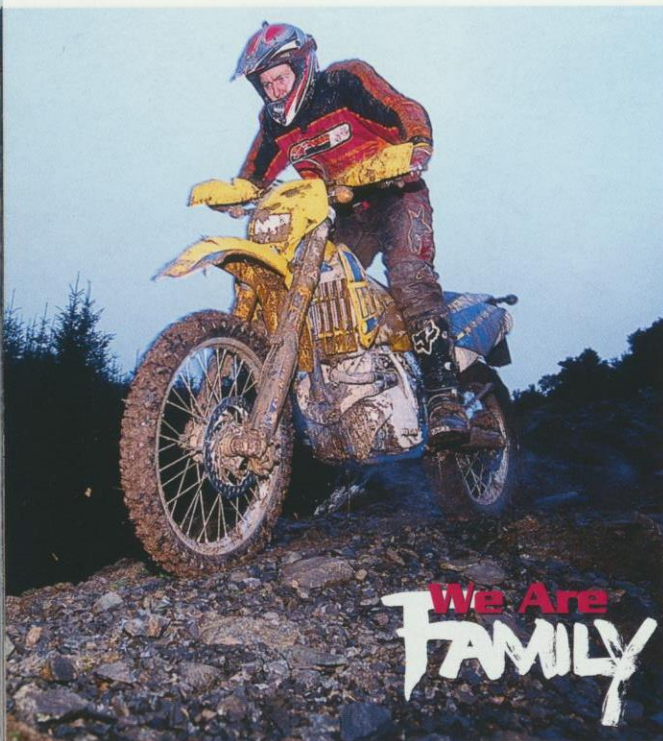
For starters Husaberg's new owners appear to have addressed the age-old problem of its nose-down attitude so that although it still steers pretty fast, it's a much more neutral handling bike. We've always liked the Berg's riding position, but there's no doubt the high-set pegs,



Above: The 450 Katosh still turns heads thanks to a few subtle tweaks. Below: Unfortunately the Brembo brakes still can't take the pressure. Right: KTM engine provides oodles of torque and big top-end power...







of its attraction these days. As they say, you can take the bikes out of Sweden...

### Back to Back to Back

Three 450s: one new, one old, and one familiar. For want of a better place to begin our comparison, let's start with... ease of starting. All three fire up easily on the button (using choke when cold) with no hint of churning - though the Berg does require you to decide which of the two fuel taps you're going to use. Once warm, chokes can quickly be dispensed with and all three settle into a steady idle - the Berg being the fruitiest, the Berg the cobbiest, the KTM the most civilised. Likewise all three carburate very cleanly right through the rev range though the Berg requires you to work the throttle just a bit harder off the bottom to prevent it occasionally cough-stalling at low speeds. In normal riding you simply wouldn't notice this, but part of our test ride involved clambering our way up an extremely slippery set of rock steps washed smooth by a stream. And

tucked in (feet) controls and upright bars take a little adapting to. Whilst the overly broad tank (thanks to the air filter being positioned between your legs), is beginning to make the bike feel old fashioned now.

In terms of equipment the Berg matches the KTM for the amount of kit it wears (digi speedo, frameguards etc). The problem is that while that equipment looks cleverly integrated into the design of the EXC, it looks like a last-minute addition to the FE purely to make the bike saleable in showrooms.

Performance-wise this is the first mid-sized Berg we've ridden for a good few years which hasn't felt under-powered. In fact we were kind of getting used to hopping on the 400/450 Bergs when we were feeling tired because they didn't work you too hard. But not this one - this one was a flyer, with a chunky bottom end, healthy mid-range punch and all the performance you could want for. And what's more, that performance was arguably much more accessible thanks to the slower-revving nature of the lump compared with either of the KTM-powered bikes. Of course the electric-start, sohc, donk feels vibey, lumpy and agricultural after hopping off either of the 'KTM's', but in a sense, with the Austrians having de-Sweded the Husey, that's almost part

here where we needed to be very delicate with the throttle the Berg was definitely the hardest to get just right - either stalling or spinning its tyre.

Perhaps it's not the natural habitat for a bruiser like the 450 Berg, but the new Beta felt right at home in this environment despite the KTM engine's ability (in both bikes) to spin-up the rear if you applied more than a whiff of throttle. The difference came down to the Beta's added stability on the slippery rocks. Where the KTM was easily deflected off line, the Beta suffered no such problems and tracked up and down our stream section the sweetest of all three. This despite a slightly heavier clutch action than either of the others and the feeling that it felt ever-so-slightly overgeared.

I'm at a bit of a loss to explain the gearing issue, given that it shares the same engine and final gearing (14:50T) with the KTM, and that felt fine. But I should add that I'm not the first hack to mention this - some of the foreign press have commented that they felt the same. Besides it's nothing that a change of sprockets couldn't overcome so that some of the low speed obstacles could be tackled in second gear rather than in first as you have to now.

If the Beta impressed with some much needed stability on the stream ride, in other situations



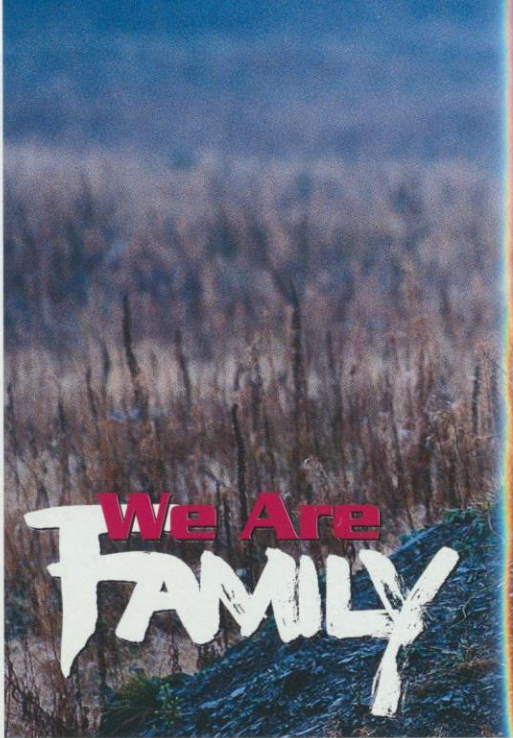
Above: The big Berg's quirky look and bold styling is definitely individual..!  
Below: Usual Brembo brakes felt better on the FE than on the EXC.  
Right: Much improved, accessible performance from this year's FE-e..





this could translate into a slight feeling of vagueness from the front end - as if you weren't really sure what the front was going to do. Whether or not this was down to the Beta's lengthier wheelbase compared with the other bikes (1500mm RR, 1490mm FE-e, 1481mm EXC) or perhaps some fairly conservative geometry (Beta don't publish the figures for rake and trail) we can't really be sure. What we can say with absolute certainty was that on the day all of us could feel this sensation to a greater or lesser extent and for two of us it was noticeable enough to make us want to try and alter the bike's set-up if it were ours - either by dropping the forks through the yokes or stiffening up the rear end so that it didn't sit so far down through its stroke. In my experience this feeling is characteristic of bikes with a healthy amount of trail at the front end - bikes like the CRM or the original Gasser EC400 which work brilliantly as trailies but are slightly less successful in competition.

Whether or not you'd be able (or even want) to dial this out with some suspension alterations depends entirely upon the sort of rider you are and the terrain you generally cover. For columnist Chris who spends much of his time riding through the rocky trails of southern



### **Second Opinion: Chris Evans**

Mid Wales in the middle of winter isn't one of my preferred destinations and under normal circumstances any request to schlep the 200 miles down there on a soggy December night would have been met with a impolite refusal. But the chance to test three 450 four-stroke enduro bikes - the category of bikes most relevant to me (and probably you) - was just too good an opportunity to miss. You can trail ride them, race them, you can even ride them on the road in reasonable comfort. They are the closest thing to a Manx Norton for the 21st century and I was busting to see how Beta's new boy compared to a couple of established models.

I'd seen the Austro-Italian hybrid for the first time just a couple of days earlier at the Dirt Bike Expo and had immediately liked the cut of its jib. Apart from the slightly cheap looking pre-production plastic, it appeared well put together, and on paper at least, promised to provide everything I was looking for in my next dirt bike - the best engine on the market, combined with a slightly smaller and forgiving chassis than its KTM cousin. Which is probably why in true Adult Attention Deficiency Syndrome style I muscled everybody out the way to have first go on the Italian stallion.

And I have to say that the bike pretty much lived up to its on-paper promise. For my compact but

perfectly proportioned frame it offered an almost ideal riding position, whether standing or seated. In bum down mode I could get quite a lot of foot on the ground, and despite its almost triangular profile, the seat was surprisingly comfortable. Standing up felt even better, with the pegs appearing to be a little lower than on the KTM and the handlebars falling naturally to arm's length. As an added bonus the new Beta also seemed noticeably slimmer than the other two bikes.

The suspension also lived up to expectations. The linked rear suspension, with its sexy red anodised Sachs shock, gave the sort of controlled suppleness that PDS systems have so far not quite managed to achieve, while at the front the 45mm upside down Marzocchis proved more comfortable than the WPs fitted to the other two bikes. They also helped make the bike feel nice and stable, and while the rest of the TBM team complained of a slight vagueness to the front end, to me the level of feedback seemed just about perfect.

Next up was the latest 2005 version of a bike I have covered an awful lot of miles on - the 450EXC KTM. It is a machine I have enjoyed riding enormously since I bought my first 400 back in 2000 and the product has been consistently refined since then into an extremely complete package. Beautifully put together and a joy to behold, the only issue I have with the Katoche stems from the fact that for someone like me it is just a little bit too race-orientated. The suspension is

noticeably firmer than on the Beta, the steering a tad quicker, the seat foam a smidgen harder. In fact every aspect of the bike is just slightly harder edged than its rivals and for people who ride at my speed that can be a little bit too much of a good thing. This hard edge, combined with its larger physical proportions made me feel less 'at home' on the KTM than on the Beta and consequently less confident.

Finally it was time to turn my attentions to the Berg. Now they say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but there is such a thing as consensus, and I know I'm not alone in finding the Austro-Swede a bit of an ugly duckling. It isn't just in the looks department that the Berg is a shade 'different', the riding position and engine characteristics are also just a little bit out there. Although the seat height isn't excessive, it feels a big bike. The handlebars are a stretch and the wide tank does nothing to help diminish that impression of 'bigness'. The engine is also noticeably more vibey than the other two bikes and felt less refined. It did however manage to give better grip in the sloppy conditions than the other two bikes - though I suspect that might have a lot to do with the rear MX hoop the dealer had cunningly fitted to our test model.

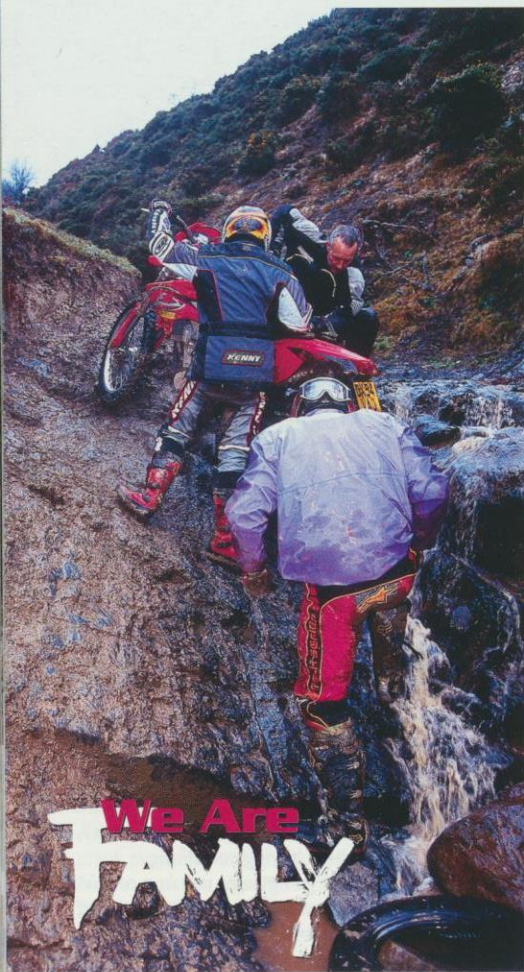
Don't get me wrong - the Berg is a very good bike. And to be perfectly honest I would happily have loaded any of the three bikes we had on test on the back of my

fabulous Citroen Xantia Activa and driven them off back to civilisation. But tests are all about winners and losers, and for me the winner was the Italian newcomer. The engine is well proven - so you don't have to be nervous about buying something under-developed that is going to go pop in a couple of weeks time - and the rest of the bike features good build quality and a fine array of components.

Objectively it isn't any better than the mightily impressive KTM and if you are a strong and talented racer your future is probably still orange. The large range of accessories, both from KTM and other manufacturers, also make the Austrian bike an attractive purchase, as does an excellent dealer network and the whole 'buzz' that the Austrian marque have so brilliantly conjured up in recent years. But if you are neither big or fast, aren't too worried about image or conversely like the idea of riding something a little different, then you should seriously consider the Beta. As for the Berg, despite (now) being made on the same production line as the KTM, the Husaberg is the odd one out here. It looks strange and doesn't feel as up to the minute as its rivals. Tellingly, despite its grippy rear tyre, it was the one that was the least in demand when it came to swapping bikes.

No I'll take the new Beta please - though preferably with a nicer set of plastics...





**We Are  
FAMILY**

France, the Beta's extra stability was a welcome improvement over his own bike's twitchiness (he rides a 2004 KTM 450EXC), but personally I found it slightly disconcerting. It's ironic really, given that we've been banging on for years about the KTM's instability and how we'd really like a bike which offers the same powerplant but with additional stability. Well here it is, the 2005 Beta RR - but somehow I'm still not quite satisfied. Wouldn't it be great if there were something which offered a happy medium?

Well there is - it's called the Husaberg 450, and I loved it. In the slippery, technical conditions in which we conducted our test, the Berg offered all the grunt and performance you could ask for, and more importantly managed to put more of its power to the ground. Sure it was fitted with an MX hoop where the others had enduro tyres (which obviously helped), but this wasn't simply

a matter of grip - rather the bike's sheer usability and rideability. Two of the other TBM testers complained about the Berg's agricultural motor and bulky tank (with which I have to agree), but it was by far the easiest machine to hustle around a slippery special test because it spent far less time going sideways and much more time driving in the direction you wanted to go. And with the Berg you could feel the bike working for you rather than against you. For instance, the engine gathers revs at a slower pace than either of the KTM-powered machines, and this in turn means that it's much easier to finesse the throttle as you balance revs, wheelspin and ultimately forward motion. What's more, the Berg's engine seemed to pack the most enduro-friendly power-curve. There's plenty of go for when you need it, but the chunky bottom-end migrates into a really meaty midrange and finishes with a top-end flourish. The problem for both the other bikes was that the linear smooth KTM 450 engine is just soooo powerful - particularly at the bottom - that it breaks traction far too easily in the wet.

And whereas the KTM handled fine (if occasionally felt a bit skittish) in the slop, and the Beta was the complete opposite, the Berg managed to exhibit a happy medium. Perhaps if the conditions had been drier, the end result might have turned out differently. All I know is that it was actually very hard to split these bikes because each of them had attributes you couldn't find in the others; whether it was the Beta's low seat height and stable chassis, the KTM's superb build quality and all-round ability, or the Husaberg's usefulness in the sloppy conditions, the chances are that you'd pick a different bike for a different set of circumstances. And that really is the nub of the question as to which bike is best. My personal preference was for the Berg, but would I buy one? That's another question.

But I'm going to give the last word to the Beta - the newcomer in this triumvirate. It is without a shadow of a doubt a superb new entry in a hotly contested marketplace. That it can even hope to compete on level terms with the Berg and the KTM owes a lot to its clever choice of motor, its high level of specification and equipment, and its talented Italian designers. In some areas it manages to eclipse the market leader (KTM) and sensibly Beta has chosen to go its own way in terms of approach.

Whether that will ultimately prove correct remains to be seen and I look forward to riding the other bikes in the range to see if they all feel like this one. I have no doubt that the Beta will prove a popular addition to the UK marketplace and that owners will like what they find. In fact the only doubt I have... concerns that steering! ■

# Beta

23416

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## Enduro

### RR250, RR400, RR450, RR525

KTM 4 stroke 05 engines • Marzocchi Shiver forks • Braking discs  
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# The X-FACTOR

**Motorcycle factories are just places where a bag of bits goes in one end and a brand-new bike pops out the other, aren't they? Well, not all. Jonty Edmunds finds out just what gives TM that special something...**



A few engines awaiting homes...

I was never much good at maths when I was at school, always struggling to understand what the hell my teachers were going on about.

While complex numerical puzzles had me scratching my head back then, simpler 'real life' mathematical challenges don't seem to be much of a problem nowadays.

Like knowing 40 (as in riders) rarely goes into one (that being a corner), without someone (normally me) ending up on the floor.

But I am baffled by a seemingly impossible calculation - how the niche Italian motorcycle manufacturer TM manages to remain in business. By selling just 2,000 bikes a year TM manage to employ 60 people, run teams in the World Enduro Championship, the Supermoto and Motocross World Championships, and make profit, all with no outside investors.

## A Factory Like No Other

I've been fortunate enough to visit a few motorcycle factories in my time, from the purpose-built USA Cannondale plant to Gas Gas in Spain. None were anything like TM.

Cannondale spent millions of dollars on a large new factory, some expensive machinery, lots of

broken engines and two production lines that were producing next to nothing.

Gas Gas, with their fingers imbedded firmly into both trials and enduro pies, were bursting out of their old Gerona base assembly plant. The new factory is a well-oiled machine, with not much manufacturing going on.

The Pesaro based TM factory is unique in many ways. Difficult to find, it's also tucked behind a coffee shop and seemingly shares its car park with several buildings around it. Apart from a modestly sized TM Racing company logo proudly displayed above the door, the fact that a brand new 125cc motocross bike had been parked, almost abandoned, outside the loading bay was a good clue I was entering the right factory.

While most factory offices are situated either in a different building or upstairs away from the hands-on, dirty business of actually making motorcycles, the corridor off which the TM office workers reside leads straight to the heart of the factory. And what a factory it is.

## Made in Italy

Most manufacturing and production facilities are normally piled high with raw material at one end while at the other is a finished product and TM is no exception.

What is impressive is just how much of a TM motorcycle is made in the factory. With the exception of the rough castings and the cylinder plating everything else is made there. Frames are





700cc supermoto nearly tore the dyno of its mountings...

triple clamps. What is interesting is that rather than manufacturing a run of 500 125cc cylinder heads, enough to complete all the 125cc engines they'd build for the coming season, the machines produce parts pretty much as orders come in.

Off from the manufacturing area is the well-organised labyrinth of a spare parts department. With millions of euros worth of stock, the spares area is spitting distance from the machine shop. One serious factory fire and not only is production halted but the spare parts go up in flames as well!

The engine assembly section is where required parts are placed on shelves behind the workers before being brought together to produce cylinder heads, engines etc. With older, more experienced workers happily building engines alongside younger employees the all-male workforce are in no rush to finish the job. Visiting the factory over two days one technician took the best part of that time to finish five four-stroke cylinder heads. Clearly not the actions of an employee of a company keen to simply get units out of the door.

### Access All Areas

Exiting the ground level of the factory in the same direction finished engines do when heading to be married up with a chassis, a short ramp lead to what was for me the most interesting area of the factory - the dyno room.

An area of most factories that visitors can look at from a distance and certainly not touch, the fact I was allowed into the 'dyno dungeon' with my camera was a big surprise.

Stopping me for a while as something they didn't want me to see was covered with a rag, I was then free to watch as the factory's 700cc single-cylinder supermoto machine was strapped to the dyno before we

were joined by the boss, Gastone Serafini. The fun started as the boss fired the 700cc machine into life.

Deafeningly loud, the reverberations of the exhaust fumes as they bounced off the wall behind the bike pushed my ear defenders off as I tried to photograph the ever broadening smile on Mr Serafini's face. As he revved the machine to more than 12,000 rpm it was clear to see he

## The Story So Far...

It all started back in 1976 with two childhood friends, Claudio Flenghi and Francesco Battistelli. At just 12 years old, Flenghi, already working in car and motorcycle workshops, started gaining experience working in the Motobi racing department and the Benelli experimentation and testing centre.

Battistelli loved motocross and managed to involve Flenghi in his passion. After playing around with friend's bikes, they decided to do the job in earnest by preparing an Aermacchi on which Battistelli won the regional championship.

At the same time Flenghi began to cultivate his real interest, go-kart racing, learning about two-stroke engines. And so the idea was formed of building an original motorcycle with an engine made by themselves.

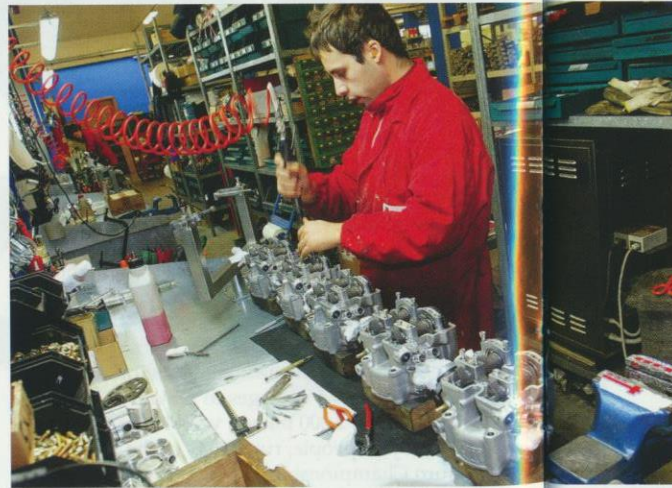
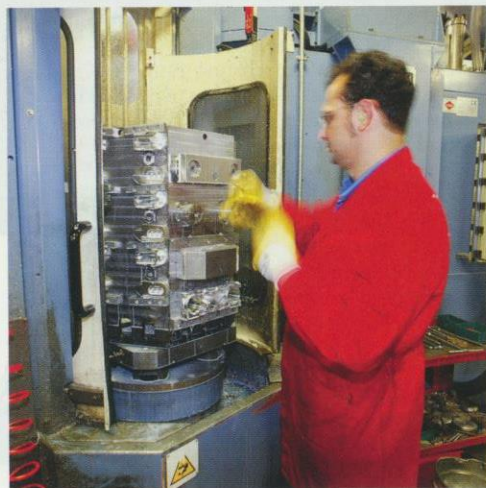
Flenghi came up with an engine that was fitted into a motocross frame built by the competent Battistelli, who also took care of road testing the bike.

In 1977 the two friends left their respective occupations and founded TM (from the initials of the names of their sons, Thomas and Mirko). A bike was entrusted to Gastone Serafini, a young rider from Pesaro, who was to be a determining figure in helping Battistelli develop the bike and who would go on to achieve competition results at the highest level.

At the 1977 Milan Motorcycle Show TM was an unexpected success, prompting them to move from Flenghi's small workshop to new premises located in Pesaro. It was then that the Serafini family stepped in to become part of the organisation and as a result, the 200 motocross bikes were produced in 1978.

A year later TM expanded its racing team, adding Tommaso Lolli alongside Gastone Serafini, and the first TM enduros were built. In 1982 Battistelli decided to leave TM and his place was taken by Serafini, who had reached the end of his professional racing career. The following years saw a succession of different riders achieve excellent results both nationally and internationally - TM and its bikes soon became leaders.

The advent of four-stroke engines has certainly not taken TM unawares, having expanded its range with three new four-stroke cylinder capacities - 250/400/530cc. Great attention has also been paid to the new 450cc's development which will eventually replace the 400cc, due more to market trends than trying to increase the performance of the already powerful 400cc machine.



fabricated off-site but all other parts that need machining are done so in-house. As a result, TM has complete manufacturing control over the parts fitted to its bikes.

Two machines that can't be missed are the one million euro machining centres. As big as a long-wheelbase Mercedes Sprinter, the machines are busy machining and 'finishing' everything from four-stroke cylinder heads to

# THE X-FACTOR



The finished product...



# The X-FACTOR



machine on down the line, they were actually building bikes from start to finish - no assembly line unit fast-tracking going on here.

## The Official Line

With pretty much every corner of the factory visited I sat down with TM's sales and marketing manager Tony Amoriello. A relatively new addition to the payroll, he started to shed some light onto the way the company operates.

Wanting to find out how TM manages to remain both in business and in profit from only 2,000 machines sold each year, Tony quickly refers to the car business. Putting forward the view that Ford Motor Company isn't really making any money (in doing so he likens Ford to Honda in as much as they are a large volume manufacturer with their products being sold into a very competitive market), he

points out that Ferrari, and niche companies like them, are the only companies thriving at the moment.

Although his comparison was a little disjointed I got the point he was trying to make. TM isn't interested in becoming a company that produces high volume for low profit. 2,000 machines is the number of machines they are comfortable with producing at the moment. Knowing that they could easily modify the products they have to give them mass appeal and make them cheaper and more readily available, TM simply doesn't want to. They're also in the slightly tricky situation in that to improve some of their machines, or lower the cost of others (like fitting Japanese suspension, perceived by many to be

better than a European product), they have to commit to buying a given number of units. Funding that isn't a problem, but it is when a minimum order from certain suppliers exceeds that of the number of machines TM might be planning to build.

Touching briefly on the fact that running enduro, motocross and supermoto world championship teams is a financial drain on the company, Tony is quick to point out that TM do it because they are much more about racing than they are about promotion.

In fact, with so few machines entered into high-level competition he admits they are taking a massive risk. More often than not only one TM motorcycle takes to the start line of a MX GP or a supermoto world championship race, and only a few are entered into each class of the WEC. If that bike breaks down or even runs out of fuel it means that TM have 100percent failed to finish. Something that can be very damaging for a small brand like TM. But testing under the very public

magnifying glass of top-end racing is something that has never fazed them.

## Ready To Race

One thing that's clear is the fact that TM is, and has been for many years, a very successful kart engine manufacturer. What isn't clear is if the kart side of the company props up the motorcycle side in times of famine.

What I was able to work out is that TM does what TM wants, and isn't worried about getting any bigger, which is great. Not caring what other manufacturers are doing, TM does what it does best, which is make things faster, lighter and stronger and produce 2,000 motorcycles a year.

They're a company that is first and foremost passionate about racing and a motorcycle manufacturer second. Each machine that leaves the factory probably takes at least five times longer to produce than the equivalent Honda or KTM, but TM doesn't care. And I for one applaud them for doing it their way.

## TM UK's Nick Craigie looks back

**'M**y relationship with TM really started at the Polish ISDE in 1987. I had spent most of my riding years on Husky machinery but at that time, Husky didn't have a good 125, which was then and is now my capacity of choice. TM, previously known for producing the unbeatable 80cc enduro bike (on which Italian Gian Marco Rossi won three World Enduro Championship titles), arrived at Jelenia Gora with three new 125 machines. They looked and sounded awesome and seemed to have the performance to match their beauty. Based largely on the all-conquering CR Honda 125 of the time, the engine was fitted into a handmade frame and finished to an extremely high standard. I had to have one.

That proved difficult, as the 125 was not for sale. In fact it was not until September 1989 that I arranged to acquire one at the enormous price of £4,200. I drove to Pesaro and collected the bike myself. Arnaldo Querci, my daily contact in the factory, was my contact then and the six people who made up TM Moto (as they were then known) in 1989 are still there today. In typical Italian fashion, assuming the commercial relationship is okay, I have always been treated as one of them - part of the TM family.

Back then I had no intention of selling TMs in the UK, but when I arrived at the Breckland in March 1990 my TM 125 created quite a stir. John Deacon suggested that if I were to import the bikes, he would sell them through his Plymouth based shop, and so the first 'production' TM 125 arrived for sale on the UK market in late 1990 for

the 1991 season.

I still have that bike and it would be competitive today. Sales were never going to be big, but they grew steadily. Unfortunately, John, who was contracted to Husky and then KTM, came under increasing pressure to drop TM as it was seen as a conflict of interest.

In 1996 we set up TM UK at Corsham in Wiltshire, under the control of Woody (Laurence Woodsworth), who had previously worked with the Husky importers Pro Circuit UK. All bikes and spares are handled directly by TM UK. The TM brand over here will never be a volume seller, but we carve out a niche market for those who want something different, something handmade and a finished racing product. Also, we can only sell what we can get from the factory and supply is limited, particularly at the time of year (September - February), when bike sales are best. Now, approximately ten percent of TM's production is sold on the UK market.

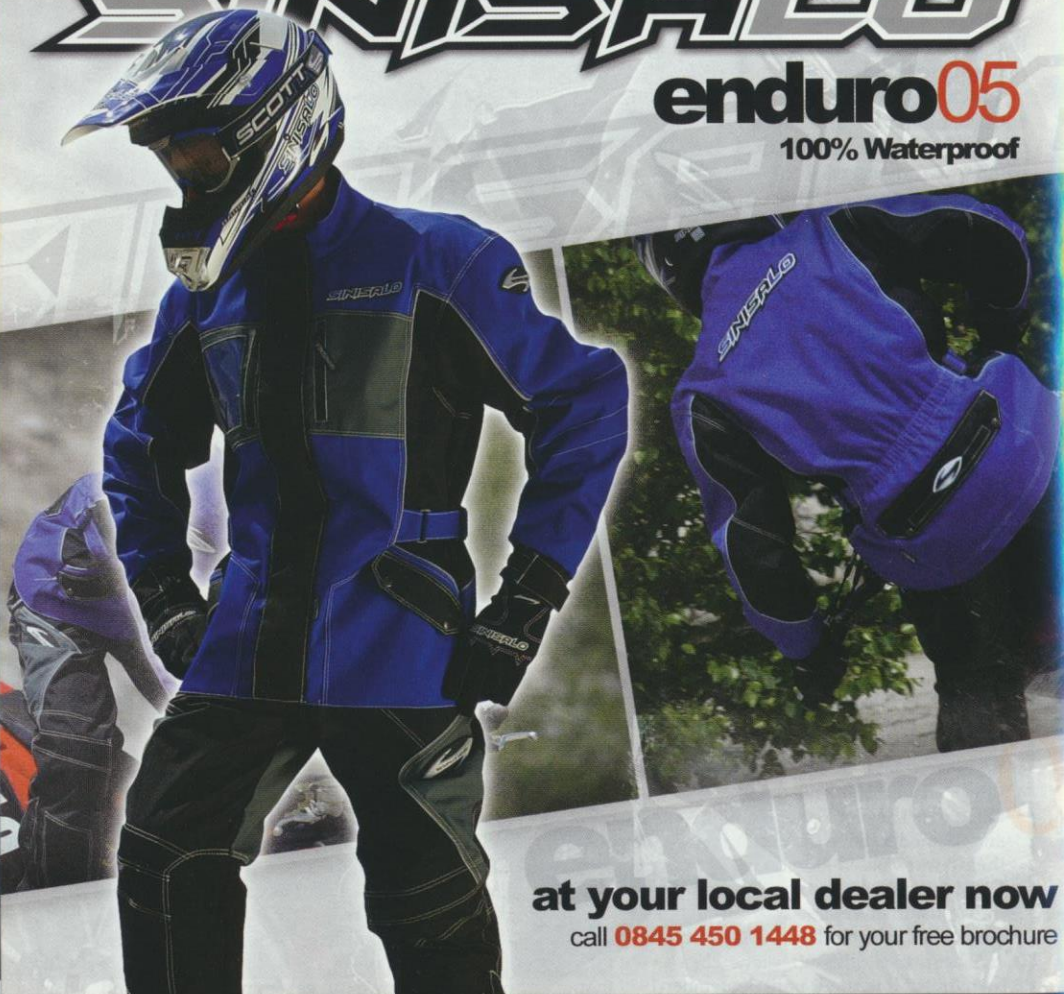
Over the years, we have been fortunate to promote the brand with riders of the quality of Rob Sartin, Tim Lewis, Jonty Edmunds, Simon Evans, Jon Pettitt, Justin Morris, Jordan Rose, Adam Lyons, Davy Tougher to name but a few. Strangely, our first British Championship was gained on a four-stroke with Davy Tougher on the 660 supermoto bike. It has taken a little time, but TM, while maintaining their two-stroke development, has successfully made the transition to manufacturing four-strokes. All this from a little factory in the holiday resort of Pesaro.'



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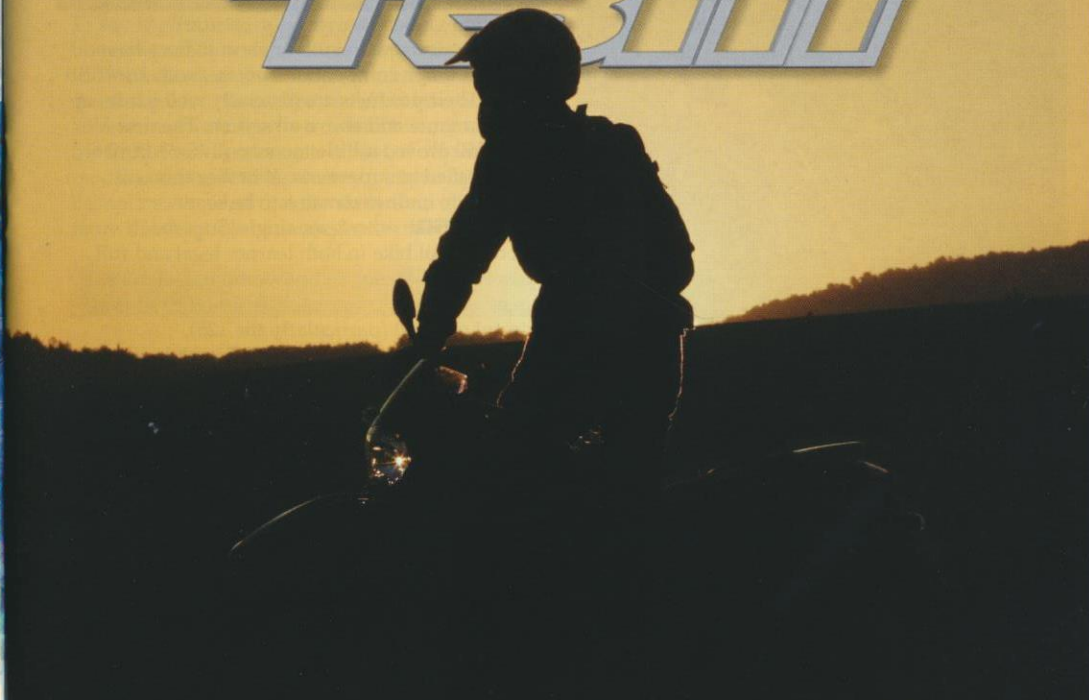
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# THE TBM



## BIKE BUYER'S GUIDE 2004

### AJP

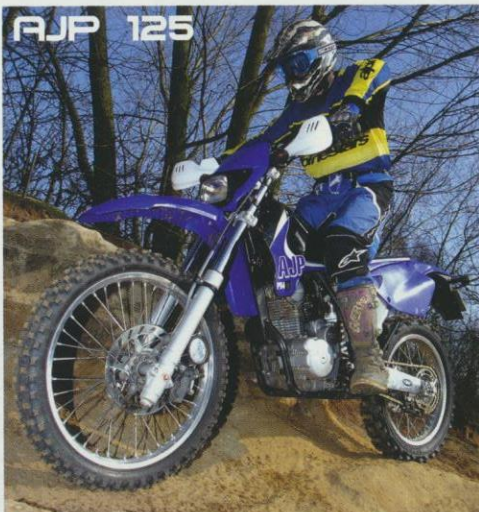
Made in Portugal doesn't get stamped on the frames of many bikes, but AJP's range of lightweight bikes are certainly worth a look for the novice rider seeking their first trailie thrills. Budget quality seems to be the order of the day but the bikes feature some nice finishing touches which belie their lowly sticker price. Plans are afoot to build a range of beam-framed dirt bikes using Suzuki RM-Z motors. And the first pictures look quite promising...

**PR4 125:** 124cc, a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 2-valve single, dual-start. 110kg (claimed) Taiwanese

four-stroke motor powers this budget learner-trailie. Decent build quality and Paioli suspension matched to a strong looking alloy swingarm mean that the PR4 has a lot to offer for not a lot of dosh. Under-seat fuel tank and mild power delivery make this bike a cinch to ride for the novice green laner. **Verdict:** Cheap intro into dirty biking for the younger rider.

**PR4 200:** 198cc, a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 2-valve single, e-start. Styled the same as the 125 (albeit in a different colour), the 200 also rides very similar. Using a 200cc Taiwanese copy of Honda's SL230 motor, the PR4 200 is a surprisingly competent trailie for those happy to ride at a slower pace.





**R125**

**APRILIA**

Italian concern who in their short history have enjoyed much competition success, with 26 world titles. Their products are generally well made, up to the minute and above all stylish. The new V-twin 450 proved a little too smooth for MX use, but excelled at supermoto. Whether this will transfer to enduro remains to be seen...

**RX125/50:** w/c, 2-str, single. Superb, modern trail bike in both learner legal and full power form. Peaky and powerful engine with great suspension, and massive amounts of pose. Useful off-road (particularly the 125).

**Verdict:** A modern Italian DT.

**Tuareg 50/125:** w/c, 2-str, single. Smart little trail bike with Paris-Dakar styling cues designed to encounter nothing more hostile than Rome's potholed streets.

**Tuareg 125 Rally:** w/c, 2-str, single. Outrageously good-looking Paris-Dakar styled trailie with a high spec inc USD forks, fully adjustable suspension etc. High seat height more than made up for by poseability.

**Verdict:** Peaky poser.

**Pegaso 125:** 124cc, w/c, 2-str, single with a claimed 31bhp, 110kg.

**Tuareg 600/650:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, Rotax-powered single, e/s. Paris-Dakar look-alike with a high specification (USD forks etc), and flashy paintjob. Reasonably light and not overly tall for this type of bike, nice machine if you can find one. **Verdict:** Posing tackle that works.

**Pegaso 650:** (1992-on) w/c, DOHC, 4-str, e/s single, with a claimed 50bhp, 157kg. Stylish and quick trailie using punchy 5-valve Rotax engine, good for about 110mph with tarmac cornering to match. Lighter than the BMW F650 and the Pegaso's twin exhaust is much better tucked in, but it has a higher, less comfortable seat (36 inches) and fewer layers of paint. 19-inch front wheel limits tyre choice, and beware iffy sidestand, cunningly hidden fuel tap and small reserve. Has a much softer edge to the styling with the later 'cube' model. Updates for 2001 included fuel injection and a fresh set of plastics. Capable big trailie both on and off the road and good value. Tuscany-Tibet model gets suspension mods, 'overland' luggage and a burgundy/orange paintjob! Pegaso Strada is new for 2005 supermoto-style version.

**CapoNord 1000:** (2001-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 8-valve, V-twin, e/s, 6-speed, 98bhp

**ALFER**

Small-scale Spanish manufacturer of two-stroke enduro bikes, and lightweight trailies. Yamaha-derived enduro bike was due to appear two years ago but now unfortunately appears to have been shelved. All feature truly awful swirly graphics, though if you can look past these you'll find them to be great bikes.

**VR125:** a/c, 4-str, counter-balanced, SOHC two valve, e/s, 6-speed, 119kg, seat height 920mm. Learner legal mini-thumper styled (and specced) like its two-stroke brethren. Excellent off-road abilities, unlike most learner 125s. A lower spec, and therefore cheaper, version is on the way, with a steel (instead of ally) swingarm and less expensive brakes.

**VR250/260:** (Up to 2002) w/c, 2-str, counter-balanced, adjustable powervalve, 6-speed, 107kg (claimed), seat height 945mm. Powered by a versatile Rotax two-stroke motor that can have the power characteristics altered with a twirl of an Allen key. When supplies of the Rotax motor started to dry up, Alfer looked at building a new motor based on Yamaha's WR250 stroker, but the bike didn't get past the development stage. High quality suspension, a full road legal kit and a keen price made the Alfer a sensible option for those who like to be different. A great bike, and for those on a budget it makes a good second-hand racer. **Verdict:** Jekyll and Hyde enduro racer.

(claimed). Introduced mid-2001, the CapoNord is Aprilia's first dip into the giant trailie market. To say it's 'futuristically' styled is being polite, but powered by a re-tuned version of their RSV-R Mille superbike motor it certainly isn't short of performance. The standard bike is more adventure-tourer than a true trail bike, though the Rally Raid version gets a host of off-road mods. Long travel suspension, a higher seat, and bashplate etc mean that the Rally Raid should be more than capable of some gentle off-road.

**ARMSTRONG**

Grew out of Jeff Clews' CCM company of Bolton and CanAm/Bombardier bikes for the army (Bombardier were originally a French Canadian company that manufactured snowmobile engines - they are now a massive worldwide engineering company that owns Rotax, among others).

250: a/c, 2-str, singles (Bombardier engines).

500: a/c 4-str, singles (Rotax engines) with left-hand kickstarts. **Verdict:** Army surplus...

**ATK**

Predominantly a/c 4-str, SOHC, Rotax-powered singles. US-made, high quality motocrossers with unique engine-sprocket mounted rear brake on some models. ATK acquired the remains of the defunct Cannondale concern and simply rebadged the bikes and added blue plastics. They also produced a crazy 700cc Maico derived stoker which was launched in 2003. But all are incredibly rare in the UK.

**BETA**

Perhaps best known for their world championship winning trials machines, the Italian factory are now making in-roads into the enduro market. A tie-up with Suzuki produced the 'Alp' trail bikes, and now links with KTM have resulted in a range of well-specced enduro bikes, using the 250-525EXC motors.

**50 Enduro:** w/c, 2-str enduro bike built for Italian one-make enduro series, available here in road-going form. **Verdict:** Spaghetti screamer.

**RR50 Alu:** w/c, 2-str fifty that looks like a factory enduro racer. Alloy beam frame gives it CR styling, whilst tuning kit gives it a beautiful



**BETA RR450**

exhaust and a whopping 11hp!

**Alp:** w/c, 2-str, 250cc, 80kg. Beta's early version of the Pampera with strange pyramidal petrol tank. **Verdict:** Nice oddball.

**Alp 200:** (2000-on) a/c, 4-str, SOHC, e/s, 95kg, seat height 870mm. Beta's 200 Alp is a nicely styled low-seat (light-ish) trailie in the Serow mould. Old-fashioned air-cooled Suzuki lump feels dated and is crying out for a sixth gear. Nevertheless it works well and featured a re-style for '03 on. **Verdict:** Head for the hills.

**Alp 4.0:** (2003-on) a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 4-valve, e/s & kick, 145kg trail weight, seat height 865mm. A low-seat height, middleweight trailie using the torquey and reliable lump from the good old DR350. Grunty and enjoyable on-road, it's compromised off-road by soft suspension and excessive weight, though as a package the bike gels nicely. Like all Alps the 4.0 enjoys individual yet highly appealing styling, but unlike all the other Alp derivatives, this bike has got working brakes! **Verdict:** Feels like a sumo trials bike.

**RR250/400/450/525:** (2005-on) 1/c, 4-str, SOHC, 4-valve, dual start, 117kg dry weight



(claimed), seat height 940mm. All new range of enduro bikes using KTM engines. Well built, with high spec including Marzocchi Shiver forks, Sachs shock and Nissin brakes. Despite Austrian motorvation, the bikes feel very different to ride thanks to the much more stable chassis and linkage suspension.

## BMW

Traditional air-cooled, pushrod boxer flat twins. Some rare collectibles: early pre-G/S ISDT boxers which weigh only 155kg! Genuine Paris-Dakar machines. Newer Boxer engine launched in early 1990s still with oil/air cooling, but more complicated four-valve head layouts, offering much more punch and modern styling. 2004 saw the all new 1200 launched to great acclaim.

**R80G/5:** a/c, 4-str, 797cc, twin. One of the first mega-trailies. Launched in 1981, Monolever rear-end, kick and optional electric start. Special big-bore versions of which took Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier to four Paris-Dakar wins. Original 'Paris-Dakar' version of G/S was just the standard model with a big tank and bore no relation to the real desert racers, which were built specially by Herbert Schek. The most trailable of all the Beemers distinguishable by its high front mud-guard and simple instruments.

**Verdict:** Rommel wished he'd had these.

**R100G/5:** (1988-on) a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. 220Kg. More powerful 60bhp engine complete with double-jointed drive shaft (Paralever) and much improved suspension front and rear. Colours were white/blue and black/yellow (the wonderful 'bumble-bee') with mini-fairing. One of the most versatile motorcycles on the planet with neat panniers, clock and heated handlebars all available from the BMW catalogue. Superb go-anywhere tourer with surprising off-road-ability but a bit thirsty on the motorway (35mpg).

**Verdict:** A two-wheeled Land Rover.

**R100G5:** a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Revised in 1991 with proper fairing and more garish paint job. Final revision for UK in 1993 with 'P-D' version when humungous plastic tank (already available on the continent) finally became legal. Also sported a set of external fairing crash bars. Single-seat with extra large rack available as option. Last officially imported in 1994.

**Verdict:** Big and butch.

**R80G5:** a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Small bore version of the above with much the same dimensions and 50bhp.

**R1100GS:** (1994-99) & **R1150GS:** (1999-2003) o-a/c, 4-str, 8-valve, 1086cc, twin, e/s, 5-speed, 80bhp. Mega-Monster trailie based around the later four-valve boxer engine mated to Telelever chassis. Huge stomp plus ABS, which can be turned off if desired. Superb road bike but heavier than the old boxers. Recall in '94 for

problems with Telelever ball joints. Hugged out to 1150cc for '99, more power and torque, even funkier styling and a six-speed trannie kept the Bee-Emm on the pace. Adventure model got a light restyle (and was all the better for it), longer travel suspension and a wealth of practical overland optional extras.

**Verdict:** The first superbike trailie.

**R1200GS:** (2004-on) o-a/c, 4-str, 8-valve, 1170cc, fuel injected twin, e/s, 6-speed. Not a restyled 1150 but in fact all new. A claimed 30kg lighter than the 1150, and a hefty increase in power gives it great performance whilst retaining good off-road ability for such a big bike. Has suffered some

niggling warranty issues (spindles, gearboxes, rear wheels) though that hasn't stopped them selling in droves. **Verdict:** Even more of a superbike..?

**'Funduro'/F650 6S/**

**Dakar:** w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 652cc, single, e/s, 48bhp (claimed). Aprilia-built, Rotax-engined trail bike launched in 1993 to bring BMWs to the masses. Based on Aprilia's Pegaso, but with four valves instead of five, more expensive, heavier and more 'roadified', with larger tank, stainless exhaust and much lower seat, although still eminently trail-able. Great fun to ride on- or off-road, and surprisingly quick - these babies make a genuine 46bhp at the rear wheel. Beware clunky gearboxes, 19in front wheel limits tyre choice on standard bike. All models were up-dated for 2000 with fuel injection, twin cat exhaust cans, ABS option, and a new set of clothes. Dakar model is more suited to off-road thanks to its 21in front wheel and the rally-replica paint job makes the bike stand out. 2004 saw a further update, with a few technical tweaks here and there.

**Verdict:** Solid, stylish and sensible.

## CAGIVA

Sometimes troubled Italian manufacturer now under the banner of Gruppo MV Agusta, along with Husqvarna.

**W4:** w/c, 2-str, 50/80cc, single, 6-speed gearbox trail moped. Looks like a pukka enduro tool but restricted model wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding - 80cc version much better bet.

**WB 125:** a/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 6-speed, 31hp. Excellent trail bike version of above but with a couple of ponies less and no upside down forks. Re-introduced into the UK a number of years later.

**T4:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 450cc, single. A few imported to UK in 1989 by Moto Vecchia. Fore-runner to W12 and W16. Plastic tank holds 4 gals, e/s option as well as kickstarter. Alloy rims and swingarm. **Verdict:** Something different.

**W12:** a/c 4-str, SOHC, 4-valve, 350cc single, e/s, 6-speed, 25bhp. Simple no frills trail bike (as used by the Italian military), a bit like an Italian XT350

## CAGIVA NAVIGATOR



but not as tough. Rare in the UK.

**Verdict:** Why bother?

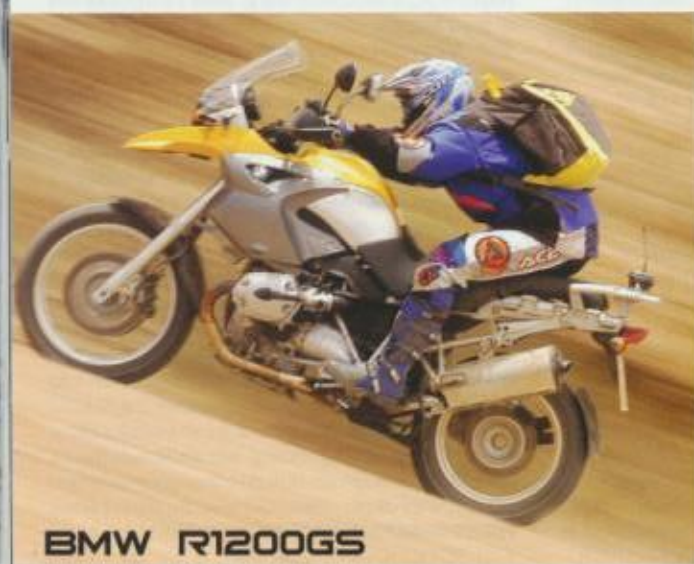
**W16:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 601cc, 4-valve, single, e/s, 34bhp. Tasty looking, but a little under powered at only 34bhp for new learner laws. Looks similar to Yam XT600E but lighter, lower and more colourful - less robust off-road.

**WMX5000E:** w/c, 2-str, single. Oh my god! 500ccs of sheer insane two-stroke terror. Built for Stateside desert racing the DE (Desert Enduro) was imported in small numbers (approx 27) during the late '80s. Huge 18 litre tank and over 300mm of suspension travel combine to make this bike way too big and brutal for the average rider. **Verdict:** 'Nurse, the screens please'. **Elefant:** mid-eighties. o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin. Engine originally derived from Ducati Pantah. Started as 650cc in mid-eighties, grew to 750cc by 1988, though there was a smaller 350cc version available to suit learner laws in other countries. Pick of the bunch: Lucky Explorer 900ie.

**Elefant 350:** o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. Middleweight version of the lovely 750, with much less power but almost the same weight. Not many imported for the simple reason that no-one really wanted one.

**Verdict:** Curiosity value only.

**Elefant 750:** (1988-1990.) o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. 188Kg. Distinctive looking big trailie with white/red/blue/blue paintwork and angular styling with gold anodised rims (21 inch F, 17 inch R). 750 motor was nice, but suffered from poor carburetion at bottom end thanks to fitment of Bing carbs. Nimble handling and pretty good



**BMW R1200GS**



off-road ability.

**Elefant 750/900 (Second generation):** o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin,

e/s, 60bhp/68bhp (claimed). Second generation Elefants from 1991-ish are bigger, and slightly heavier than their predecessors. Lovely torquey engines are based on the Ducati 750 and 900SS. 1991 versions (distinguishable by Lucky Explorer paint scheme, Ohlins suspension and electronic fuel injection), were higher spec and more powerful than later ones. Although they have a high CofG the second generation Elefants make a great touring bike for the road, but they're a bit monstrous off-road - more like a Super Tenere than the original Transalp-sized 750s. **Verdict:** For those who like to be seen and heard.

**Canyon 500/600:** (1996-on.) a/c 4-str, 4 valve single, e/s only, 165kg, seat height 795mm. Stylish faired urban trailie, but a tad under-powered with its Euro 34bhp motor.

**Verdict:** Italian Gelding.

**Gran Canyon 900ie:** (1997-2000) o-a/c, 4-str, desmo V-twin, e/s, 62bhp, 213kg (wet), seat height 825mm. Beautifully styled successor to the Elefant. Much more suited to tarmac than off-roading. Great fun and almost practical for an Italian thoroughbred. Service history a must.

**Verdict:** A sexy Italian TDM.

**Navigator 1000:** (2000-on) w/c, DOHC 4-valve TSCC, 90 degree V-twin, e/s, six speed, 96bhp, 210kg, seat height 850mm. Successor to the Gran Canyon, even more road biased, but with a much smoother and more powerful Suzuki TL1000 motor. The Navi is right up there with the best of the bunch, though certainly more giant motard than big trailie.

**Verdict:** Italian Stallion.

**CANNONDALE**

The US mountain bike giant turned their hand to the internal combustion engine, bringing about their own demise..!

**E440 Enduro:** (2003) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 4 valve single, fuel injection, e/s, 110kg (claimed). Innovative design from the American MTB manufacturer, featured fuel injection, reversed cylinder head and crankcases that can be stripped from the side of the bike. Despite all this technology the E440 still managed to be overweight and underpowered. Well specced (alloy frame, Ohlins shock etc) but simply didn't have the performance the 450 class demands.

Unsurprisingly went out of production mid-2003 only to emerge from a buy-out sporting an ATK badge. **Verdict:** Modern museum piece...

**CCM**

The woes of the Blackburn company have been well-documented over the past year. CCM have risen from the grave more times than a Haitian zombie, and in their latest guise, CCM (Britain) Ltd, are once again back in the hands of the Clews family (and others). Once majored on big-bore machines (using the agricultural belt-driven Rotax motors) but switched to using Suzuki 644 and 400cc engines after supplies began to dwindle in 2002. Bikes are relatively tough, though a lack of attention to detail lets them down. Currently selling off the bikes acquired from the liquidators, and soon to be producing a small number of machines... though second-hand residuals slipped thanks to the bankruptcy and dealers discounting bikes.

**C26, 350/604 Enduro:** a/c, 4-str belt-driven SOHC, 597/348cc (up to '98), single, e/s: The original modern CCM, in enduro trim only (with an optional road legal kit). All of the usual CCM 'refinements' with a choice of 50mm or 45mm Marzocchi front forks. 350 version has smaller 34mm carb. **Verdict:** Better than it ought to be.

**604E Sport:** (1998-2002). A proper trail bike version of CCM's Rotax big banger. High spec with Paioli forks, WP shock, and Talon wheels. A huge range of factory options were available including rally tanks, tune-up kits, and choice



of paint finish. Later bikes cheapened slightly, but kept improving.

**Verdict:** British Beefcake.

**644 DS:** (2002 - on) a-o/c, SOHC, four valve, single, e/s. Featured the old Suzuki Freewind lump. Similar to the 604, only much more refined with a smoother engine. WP suspension front and rear. Good on the dirt considering its size and weight. **Verdict:** Still beefy but better.

**404 DS:** (late 2003-on) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, single, e/s, 5-speed. Looks good, in a parts bin kinda way (CRF rad panels, Husky headlight etc). Uses the Aussie-spec DR-Z enduro lump slotted into a decent chassis, with WP suspension and other quality components - it's the bike the DR-Z should have been. Enduro model featured more suspension travel and a lofty seat height. New MX version comes with wiring ready for lights and can be bought as a 450. Cheap, but then it needs to be.

**CH RACING**

The racing arm of Husqvarna also, somewhat strangely, dabbles in budget trailies. Four-strokes utilise air-cooled Yamaha motors and all wear Husky a-like plastics.

**WXE50:** 1/c, 2str, single. Proven Minarelli engine, Marzocchi forks and Sachs shock, plus cool Husky looks should make it popular with the kids.

**WXE125 Trail:** a/c, SOHC, 4-str, e/s single. Budget 125 trailie combining traditional cool Husqvarna with e-start Japanese reliability. Not the best 125 thumper, but then not the worst.

**WXE250:** a/c, SOHC, 4-str, e/s single. Similar idea to the 125, this time using Yamaha's TT-R250 lump. The e/s and easy manners of the smooth and revvy motor should see it sell well to UK customers for trail riding and commuting. Should undercut the TT-R by a considerable margin, though probably won't see the light of day until 2006.

**DERBI**

Spanish manufacturer of small capacity machines with a long history of GP World championships.

**Senda 50:** w/c, 2-str, 6 speed, oil injection, 89kg. Surprisingly capable both on and off the trail. Light weight and okay-ish suspension makes it a cinch to keep on the pipe. Three

**CH 125**



versions available: Racer, X-treme and DRD, with chassis and styling mods differentiating between each. Supermoto bike also available. **Verdict:** For teenagers everywhere!

**ENFIELD**

**Bullet trail:** (1953 - on!) a/c, 4-str, ohv, single. Indian made version of the venerable Royal Hen, now with 12v electrics.

**Verdict:** Days of the Raj.

**FACTORY**

Another small Spanish concern - actually little more than a shop in Barcelona. Links with Alfer mean that they once sold a re-badged (and better graphic'd) version of their Rotax-motored 250 2-stroke enduro bike, though now they concentrate on 125s and 50s (also built by Alfer).

**GAS GAS**

Spanish manufacturer of enduro and trials machines with many recent world championship victories. Enduro bikes (EC) come with all of the necessary road gear, and quality components such as Ohlins, Marzocchi etc. Pre '96 bikes have TM motors. 2004 versions were refined with slim-line tanks and a host of minor changes, and the '05 models received new barrels alongside the list of updates. Unfortunately, the variable build quality remains and therefore care is required





when buying second-hand.  
**Pampera 200/250/320:** (1996-on) w/c, 2-str, 6 speed, pre-mix and kickstart only, 85kg. Curious combination of pukka trials iron and trail bike. The ultimate go anywhere trailie but early ones were a little too specialised for extended road use, and not particularly reliable. MkII version launched in '98, not so well equipped but better suited to the trail. Latest mkIII version even more trail friendly with better suspension, brakes and chassis, but trials motor (and gearbox especially) still takes a little getting used to. However, it's still a superb and affordable green laner, which'll tackle any terrain.  
**Verdict:** Funky and fun...

**Endupam:** w/c, 4-valve, 399cc, e/s single. Bizarrely named trail version of the latest four-stroke enduro bike. Downsized to 400cc, the motor sits in the same frame, albeit with shorter travel suspension and therefore a lower seat height. Conventional forks and smaller brakes hint at a budget price, but it'll need to be significantly cheaper than the PSE. Due to be available this year, though it could well be 2006 before it appears.  
**EC80:** w/c, 2-str, 80cc, single. TM-motored enduro bike dating from a time when there was a World Championship class for such machines.  
**EC125:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Extremely revvy, even for a 125, though easy to ride thanks to typical Gas Gas manners.  
**EC200:** w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Quite possibly the best two-stroke clubman enduro bike out there. Hugely easy to ride, and ride fast, it has great stable handling and excellent brakes. Not so good on the trail and still suffers from

Gas Gas' indifferent build quality, but as a racer it's hard to beat.  
**EC250:** w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single. Quite possibly the best 250 two-stroke clubman enduro bike out there. Not as fast as the competition, but perhaps all the better for it. 2004-onwards, the bikes are more powerful though still incredibly forgiving.  
**EC300:** w/c, 2-str, 295cc, single. The 300 makes strong and smooth power - just what you'd want from a 300. Far too much oomph for the average racer, it's nonetheless a good sport trailie for those wanting two-stroke power. Most popular of the Gas Gas strokers.  
**EC400FSE:** (2002-03) w/c, 4-valve, 399cc, e/s single. 6-speed. The first fuel injected production dirtbike and Gas Gas' first foray into the world of four-strokes. Came fully street legal and with quality kit from Ohlins, Marzocchi, CRD, Nissin etc. A bit weighty for an out 'n' out racer, with beautifully smooth power it made a good stable trailie.  
**EC450FSE:** (2003-on) w/c, 4-valve, 444cc, e/s single. 6-speed. Possibly the first enduro 450 to hit the showrooms, though early bikes suffered with head gasket problems. Exhibited similar traits to the 400 (smooth power, great stability etc) but with more 'go'. For 2005 the bike has undergone a complete redesign to make it a more competitive enduro machine. A new frame, reworked engine and other detail changes should bring it closer to the competition.

## GILERA

Part of the Piaggio group with legendary road-racing history.  
**50:** a/c, 2-str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported (later w/c 50 trail and supermoto).  
**Apache 125:** w/c, 2-str, single. Big trailie style with peaky powervalve-equipped motor. Better on-road than off-road, and definitely not for those short of leg.  
**RC125/125R:** w/c, 2-str, single. Grey import only Dakar replica, RC and more trailable R version, powerful and well suspended but obviously a rare sight in the UK.  
**RC600:** w/c, 4-str, 558cc, single, e/s. Nice-looking P-D styled trailie with unimpeachable Paris-Dakar winning pedigree. Shares engine with Northwest. **Verdict:** Italian eye-candy.  
**XRT600:** w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Clumsily

styled, Paris-Dakar influenced big trailie that uses the stock Gilera lump in yet another manifestation. Big, heavyish and extremely rare in the UK.  
**Verdict:** Ugly duckling.

## HARLEY-DAVIDSON

Not the V-twins, but a mish-mash of European-made stuff with the H-D badge.  
**H-D 90:** a/c, 2-str, 90cc, single. Aermacchi-made 1970s mini-trail fun-bike. Passable off-road, but very rare these days.  
**H-D 350:** a/c, 4-str belt-driven SOHC, 348cc, single, e/s. CCM sold the rights to the Armstrong army bikes to H-D circa 1992, and H-D duly won the British army contract. Now electric start (after heavy squaddie casualties with the old left-side kick-starts) and reportedly more robust but downsized from 500 to 350cc.  
**Verdict:** Army Hog.

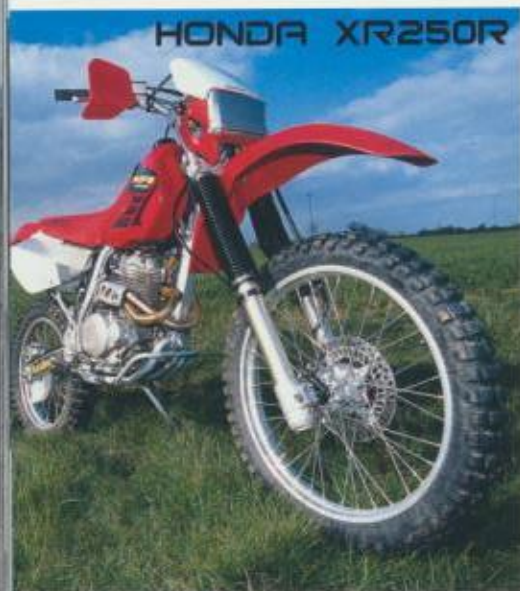
## HONDA

**XL:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **XR:** a/c, 4-str, enduro. **MTX:** a & w/c, 2-str, trail. **CRM:** w/c, 2-str, trail. **CR:** a/c & w/c, 2-str, **CRF:** w/c 4-str Mxers, **CRF-X:** latest generation of w/c enduro thumpers. **Basic beginners' bikes:** XL100S, XL125S, XL185S. 1970s-80s. All use basically the same SOHC air-cooled engine in twin-shock chassis (but with different gearboxes). Great bread-and-butter trail bikes, but getting long in the tooth nowadays. As with all small Hondas, frequent oil changes are the key to a long, trouble-free life.



**Cub 90:** Wacky off-road 'scooter' for wacky off-road riders, different, but lacking any lights or credibility! **Verdict:** For planet-e.  
**MT50:** a/c, 2-str, single. Many a 16 year-old's first bike. Unburstable moped-legal trail bike. **Verdict:** Fun in a small package.  
**MTX125:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 103kg. Learner-legal monoshock trail bike with an unfortunate propensity for brewing up in serious off-roadery. Second gear also gave problems. Not as robust as the XLs.  
**MTX200:** w/c, 2-str, 198cc, single. Bigger brother of 125, but never quite lived up to expectations. Quite rare and prone to boiling up - no cooling fan. Be careful replacing ceramic seal on water pump. Questionable reliability with early ones. **Verdict:** Water heater.  
**CL250S:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Bit of an oddity sold to farmers in the early Eighties, for on- and off-road work. Unusual in that it featured a 5-speed gearbox with a range of both high and low options. More roadified than most trailies with low saddle and front mudguard, and chromed (twin) shocks. Boxy styling and front and rear drum brakes makes it rare but not that desirable. **Verdict:** Ideal for muckspreading!  
**TLM200/250:** a/c 2-str, 199/243cc single. Like the original 2str Beta Alp, the TLM (and TLRs) were more or less trail bike versions of trials irons dressed up for the road. Not as single purpose as a pukka trials bike, but perfect for real snotty lanes and long distance trials.  
**TLR200/250:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 199/244cc single. As above but thumper version. Cheap to buy and run, also easy to ride with a low seat height. Rare 250 Jap import version available.  
**XL100:** a/c 4-str SOHC, single, 6-speed. Very basic, cheap to run and insure novice friendly trailie. Later versions were much smaller all round with more basic instruments. **Verdict:** Good starter machine if you can still find a good one.  
**XL125:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Basic, twin-shock learner bike used by legions of beginners in the 70s & 80s. Usually badly treated, unusually they still survive.  
**XL125R:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Monoshock version of above, analogous to 250R and 500R. Later, Italian-built monoshock Dakar version with big tank and electric start can be found as grey import. Still available new up to 2003 as e-start only.  
**XL125V Varadero:** 1/c, 4-str, 4-valve SOHC, 125cc, V-twin. A miniature version of the one-litre





HONDA XR250R

Varadero for learners and commuters who want that adventure bike feel. And at a claimed 149kg dry, it should prepare them for a big bike.!

**XL185:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 185cc, single, 5-speed. One of the definitive original green-laners. Twin shock version only, but can be upgraded with later 125R parts, including chassis!

**XL250:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. Started life way back in the 1970s with the Motosport, a basic twin-shock trail bike not unlike Yam's XT500.

**Verdict:** Capable plodder.

**XL250S:** (1978-88), a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 248cc, single, which sported a four-valve, twin-port head, but 6-volt electrics at first; twin shocks and poor SLS front and rear brakes and an unusual 23 inch front wheel, giving little tyre choice. Later versions adopted the Honda Pro-Link rear end and 12-volt electrics. Good all rounder, but better on the road than off it. Comfy saddle and decent build quality make this a reasonable second-hand buy if you can find one. 12-volt RS250 flywheel, generator and engine cover bolt straight on to any of the 6-volt XL or XR 250s and 500s. The accelerator-pumped carb of the RS roadbike will also give a useful power increase to the 250.

**XL250 Degree:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve single, e/s only, 119kg, seat height 790mm. Grey import low seat trailie with smooth high tech liquid-cooled motor but off-road capability limited by

soft suspension. Ideal bike for the short novice rider who spends more time on the street than on the dirt. **Verdict:** Green laner for the vertically challenged.

**XL500S:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Practically identical to the XL250 apart from the bigger cylinder and head and a longer frame, but loads more stomp and the same poor front brake! Fortunately the 23in wheels can be re-laced with 21in rims which improves the handling and provides a vast increase in tyre choice! Beware starting problems and low revs misfire caused by furring of the alloy earthing plate - solution is to take a lead direct from engine to coil.

**XL250R/500R:** 1984-on, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. The cylinder heads were now blessed with Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC), vastly superior Pro-Link mono-shock suspension, beefier forks and much better TLS front brake in a 21 inch wheel, and 12-volt electrics - a much better bet all round than the 'S' models. The early CR crosser front-end will fit straight into the XL headstock so long as you use the whole assembly. Beware top-end seepage of oil between head and barrel. The XL250R finally lost its metal tank and was developed into the XR version. Frequent oil changes are essential to avoid the dreaded knackered head syndrome caused by the camshaft running direct in it, although bearing conversions are available. Some 250s suffered from dodgy gearboxes and top-end problems. **Verdict:** Cheaper than an XR.

**XL350/400:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Grey import originally built for French and Japanese markets - a big-bore version of the 250 rather than a sleeved down 500.

**Verdict:** Very rare.

**XL600R:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Larger version of 500R later swapped its drum front brake for a disc.

**XL600LM:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Paris-Dakar version of above with big tank, flashy twin headlights, red painted engine, tubeless gold spoked rims and electric start. Unfortunately it didn't go as well as it looked - one of the magazines put one on a dyno at the time and got only 26bhp at the rear wheel.

**Verdict:** Individual but soft.

**XR75/80:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. Small wheel mini-bike with poky engine for teenagers, but we know of at least one street-legal one used as a fun green-laner after modification with big wheels. **Verdict:** The perfect start.

**XR100:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 99cc, single, 6-speed,

68kg, Mini off-roader based on XL100 engine but with 19in front and 16in rear wheels. Great, fun bike on which to learn basics. World champion road racer Kenny Roberts uses them to teach sliding techniques to GP hopefuls.

**XR125L:** (2003-on) a/c, 4-str, SOHC 123cc, single, 6-speed. New take on an old idea. Built in Brazil for novice, learner trail fans on a budget. Great on-road, not so good off-. Has sold in huge numbers. **Verdict:** Cheap and cheerful.

**XR200:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single, 5-speed. Early twin-shock bikes (originally based on the XL185) made brilliant green-laners. Still fairly popular though later monoshock versions are better and more plentiful. Drum brakes let it down though some late Japanese spec models come with discs. Light enough to pick up if need be. **Verdict:** Still a great trail bike.

**XR250(R):** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Based on both XL250S and 250R with identical frames but more suspension travel, disc front brake and slightly hotter cam giving small power increase. Early monoshock with twin carbs could be difficult to start when hot - go for the later single-carb model. The XR250 makes a good off-road all-rounder - reasonably light weight and adequate power makes it great for trail riders and novice enduro riders alike, and tolerable on the road. Not a match for a new generation 250 thumper, but still popular. Baja version available with huge twin headlamps, among other detail changes. Fully street legal Jap import version sports e-start and other road going niceties.

**XR250L:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Grey import with road-legal lights, speedo and indicators. Slightly heavier than the R.

**XR350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Mid-Eighties twin carbs, (monoshock) version, only imported for a very short time and now rare in UK. Much the same as the early 250 but with extra poke and unfortunately extra weight.

**XR400R:** (1996-on) a/c, 4-str SOHC single, 5 speed, kickstart only, 118kg. Seat height 930mm. The much-loved XR4 has undergone only minor updates (such as red plastics for 2000) since its introduction to the trail/enduro market. Heaps of useable grunt coupled to a quick-steering chassis provides all the real world performance you could ask for. Decent suspension, good build quality and bullet-proof motor make the XR400 the people's choice. It's getting on a bit, and alongside the XR250R is likely to cease production this year. **Verdict:** Soon for retirement...

**XR500:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single.



HONDA CRF250X

Bigger version of XR250, early version was developed into the XR550RR on which Cyril Neveu won the 1982 Paris-Dakar rally.

**XR600:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Several versions since 1984, mostly imported from USA until Honda UK started importing in 1994. Early versions easy to identify by their drum rear brake and twin carbs. All are great off-roaders, with pukka suspension and lightweight chassis, but some can be real pigs to start. Euro versions come with proper speedo and head and tail lights (but no indicators). Great wheelie-pulling ability, and very light compared to something like an XT600. Become the privateer's desert bike and makes a decent overlander - light, relatively simple and very robust. Official HRC hop-up kit with big bore (630cc) is available but tons of other people make bits for them. **Verdict:** The definitive big banger.

**XR650L:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 644cc, single, e/s. Grey imported, fully street legal version of the XR600 using electric start Dominator engine and some of the road going niceties. Weight penalty, but balancer shaft makes this a much nicer animal on the road, and not much worse off it. Not to be confused with the newer, liquid cooled XR650R.

**Verdict:** Worth searching out.

**XR650R:** (2000-on) w/c, 4-str SOHC 4 valve single, 5 speed, kickstart only, 144kg (wet), seat





**HONDA  
TRANSALP**

**XLV600VP Transalp:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, SOHC, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, its name befits its description. True dual-purpose machine, great all-rounder. Engine based on the VT500, and larger versions now power the Bros and Africa Twin. Unburstable and torquey motor churns out a claimed 55bhp but can be tricky to work on unless out of the frame. Expensive cosmetics worth protecting if you're going to venture off-road. Early versions had drum rear brake which was prone to going oval. Suffers from rotting wheel rims (like Dominator) in certain cases, and single front discs (identical to CBR600s) can

wear fast. Slight facelift in 1993 improved fairing protection slightly. Later versions also come with centre stand which was an option on earlier models. Beware handlebar rubber-mountings wearing out giving 'twisted' and remote feel to bars. Sensible secondhand prices. **Verdict:** Superb trail tourer.

**XL650V Transalp:** (2001-on) w/c, 4-str, SOHC, 6 valve V-twin, e/s. The latest 'Trannie' is blessed with a larger 647cc lump which offers a tad more power and torque than the 600 model it replaced. Smoother rounded styling give this Italian-built all-rounder a new lease of life, and continues to get detail changes to this day. **Verdict:** Same as before only more so!

**XLV750:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, V-twin. Grey import mid-80s precursor to Transalp and Africa Twin but featuring shaft-drive, no fairing and red engine. Was quite common in France.

**XR650V Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, SOHC, V-twin, e/s. Even closer to HRC P-D specials, mass-produced monster trailie that was extremely popular in Europe in 1989. About 100 were specially built for HRC-supported mass entries to Paris Dakar.

**XR750 Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, SOHC, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Bored out from 650cc to 742cc in 1990 to make an impressive but rather top-heavy Paris-Dakar styled mega-trailie. More expensive than the competition at the time, though they had high build quality and came with trick on-board computer. Better off-road than you'd imagine, great on fast and dusty trails.

**XR750R Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, SOHC, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Lightened, lowered and improved 1993-on version of its forbear. Top quality all-rounder.

height 935mm. Alloy framed, liquid-cooled successor to the XR6. Seamless grunt off the bottom together with arm wrenching mid-range and seriously quick top-end makes the XR650R the one to beat. Feels its weight and small brakes mean that it could do with more whoa to stop all that go. And where's the electric start, Honda?

**Verdict:** Not for the faint-hearted.

**NX125:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Mini-mini Dominator for continental learner market, based on the XL125 motor. Popular commuter in France, not seen much over here.

**NX250/350:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single, e/s. Mini-Dominator, much smaller and lighter than big brother and surprisingly quick (85mph) thanks to a relatively highly tuned water-cooled engine. Ideal for the vertically challenged and for doubling up as an economical commuter. 350cc (Sahara) version built in Brazil for South American market.

**AX1:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of the NX250, built for the street only, with cast wheels and twin tail lights. Rare in the UK.

**NX650P Dominator:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 644cc, single, e/s. The definitive civilised big-single four-stroke trail bike, with genuine off road ability. Torquey motor with handy electric start - early versions had kickstart as well. Classy cosmetics make crashing expensive and despite the mini-fairing still much more tiring than something like a Transalp on motorways. Nevertheless, a good touring bike providing you don't want to go too fast. Watch out for rotted wheel rims on early models. Plentiful in UK but high build quality means secondhand prices are quite steep.

**XL1000V Varadero:** (1998-on) w/c, 4-str, 8-valve, V-twin. Huge (and some say ugly) cast wheel shod super-trailie featuring a cracking re-tuned FireStorm motor. Weird and over complex linked brake system coupled to a dry weight of over 220kgs gives the 'Dero' only limited off-road ability. ABS an option from '04 onwards. Honda luggage system available and together with a true 130mph plus performance makes this bike a serious adventure tourer.

**Verdict:** Point south, next stop Marrakech!

**CRM50/125:** Smaller versions of the extremely popular CRM250. Very rare in Britain.

**CRM250:** (1989-2000) w/c, 2-str single, balancer shaft, oil injection, kickstart only. Only ever available as a grey import, since the mid '90s the CRM250 has sold by the container load and has changed the face of the British off-road scene. A fantastic smooth, powerful and more importantly grunty two-stroke motor endows the CRM with more than enough performance to tackle just about anything. Surprisingly little changed until the advent of the Active Radical AR model in '97 - continues to be a good seller secondhand. **Mk1:** (1989-91) Conventional forks, oil in frame, red plastics. **Mk1i:** (1991-94) USD forks, beefier rear shock, updated graphics.

**Mk1ii:** (1994-97) Re-styled, up-rated suspension, separate oil tank, stainless steel silencer. **Colours:** Pink/purple, white/black and white/purple. **AR:** (1997-2000) Complete redesign of the motor with its 'eco-friendly' Active Radical ignition. More torque but less power. Up to date styling the AR is the best looker of the bunch. **Colours:** Black/purple, white/black/red and purple/white. **Verdict:** Quite probably the finest trail bike ever.

**SL230:** (1998-on) a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 2 valve, single, e/s only, 112kg. Big H's attempt to muscle in on the successful Serow market. Smooth, soft motor and supple suspension give the mellow 230 a sensible trail bike image. This combined with a low seat height of 810mm and frugal appetite for unleaded, make this an ideal bike for the short of leg novice green-laner. Less robust than the Serow however. Only available as a grey import. **Verdict:** Unusual and pretty

**CRF230:** (2003-on) a/c, SOHC, 2-valve, single. Available as a grey import only, the simple but



**HONDA CRF230**

effective CRF230 is the latest in a long line of air-chilled Honda thumpers. Off-roader only, though most are made road legal before they leave the dealers. Should be popular with the ladies as well as those of diminished stature thanks to its low(ish) seat, light weight and easy going trail manners. Looks great, too..!

**CRF250R:** (2003-on) w/c, SOHC, 4-valve, k/s, single. Great new generation MX thumper, with dedicated chassis built to suit small motor. Torquey 'Unicam' motor makes it very easy to ride. Many converted to enduro spec, especially for hare 'n' hounds use.

**CRF250X:** (2004-on) w/c, SOHC, 4-valve, dual start, single. The most eagerly awaited enduro bike of recent times. Not quite as quick as the MXer promised, and requires derestricting for serious racing, but still a great bike for clubman racers. Good and torquey, with great suspension, it was by far the best selling enduro bike of 2004, despite not coming road legal! Problems with valves receding into the valve seats and rear wheel spokes loosening off will hopefully have been sorted on the '05 models.

**CRF450R:** (2001-on) w/c, SOHC, 4-valve, k/s single, e/s, 5-speed. Trick alloy beam-framed CRF thumper comes with a fantastic Honda pedigree. Plenty were converted into trail/enduro spec but really produces too much (fierce) power to make a decent enduro bike. **Verdict:** Much too much...

**CRF450X:** (2005-on) w/c, SOHC, 4-valve, dual start, single. Honda have really taken their time enduro-ising the CRF450R. Will need to be milder and (lots) quieter than the MXer to beat the established enduro names. To be launched part way through 2005.



**HUSABERG  
FE450E**



**HM ITALIA**

The Italian Honda importers convert CR and CRF 'crossers (plus the little 230F) into enduro (and trail) ready machines. Almost bewildering range of models and spec. Expensive to buy new and still rare in the UK thanks to a lack of importer.

**CRE Six/Baja 50:** 1/c, 49cc, 2-str, single. Enduro-styled, ally-framed, two-stroke 50s that look more than capable off-road. Same cosmetics as other HMs, though not badged as Hondas.

**CRF230 Easy Trail/Enduro:** a/c, SOHC, 2-valve, single. HM give the little thumper their special treatment. Enduro wears more serious rubber and comes with increased suspension travel. Both come road-ready and with disc brakes front and rear.

**CRE125/250/500:** w/c, 2-str, 5-speed CR transmission, kickstart only. Modifications to all bikes include a heavier flywheel with lighting coils, re-sprung suspension, quieter silencers, and lighting kits. Versions include steel and alloy framed 125 and 250, and a fire breathing CRE500. The CRE250 remains the pick of the bunch.

**Verdict:** Good, but DIY is cheaper.

**CRE450F/X:** w/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. As with the strokers, Honda's MX thumper gets the enduro treatment. X model will be HM's version of the soon to be launched leccy start CRF450X.

**CRE250F/X:** w/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. The Italian HM crew beat Honda to it with this enduro-ised version of the 250 four-stroke 'crosser (CRE-F). The CRE-X is an HM worked version of the X-model enduro bike.

**HRD**

A range of French-built enduro bikes using Yamaha WR125 and YZ250 motors and a sensible mix of quality Euro/Japanese high spec running gear. Sadly went out of production in 2003.

**125/250 GS:** (up to 2001) w/c, 2-str, single, (6-speed 125, 5-speed 250), 118kg (wet). Paioli fork, Ohlins shock, Excel rims and Nissin brakes together with the powerful Yamaha YZ powerplant give the GS bikes a trick factory feel.

**Verdict:** Sensible exotica.

**HUSABERG**

Swedish-designed (though now KTM owned) range of competition inspired four-strokes which use what is basically a two-stroke style bottom-end mated to a four-stroke barrel and head. Light, powerful and fast. Early ones suffered reliability problems but later bikes much better. Gained leccy starts in 1995 and splash-fed top-end featured until oil pumps arrived in 1997! Redesigned in 2000, the Bergs have undergone a piecemeal change and they seem to improve year on year. All w/c, 4-str, 4 valve singles with 6-speed gearboxes. Some 470s around, mixing parts from the 400 and 501.

**FE350:** Low powered early/mid-nineties model. Same frame as bigger bikes with smaller, less powerful motor meant that they got thrashed... and then broke. Now very rare (thanks to mechanical 'disadvantage') and not a particularly good second-hand buy..!

**FE400/450:** Original 400 not particularly fast (tuned for torque thanks to small-valve head), and now very rare. Later (2000-on) models were easily a match for the new generation thumpers and made excellent clubman racers. Changed to 450 for 2004, retaining its easy to ride nature, with good mellow power. A great clubman 450...

**FE501/550:** Perhaps the best known bike in the Husaberg range, and possibly the nicest. Long and low with smooth power, the 501 was amazingly easy to ride for a 500 and made a decent race bike. Early bikes suffered reliability issues, but rarely thrashed like the smaller models. Was to be dropped for '04, but popular demand kept it in production until this year.

**FE600/650:** Ballistic big-bore Berg, far too much for off-road use. 650 version appeared for 2001 and is now more popular as a supermoto.

**HUSQVARNA**

Previously Swedish, now Italian-owned company (Grupo MV Agusta) manufacturing a range of trail, supermoto and competition enduro (and MX) bikes. Earlier models (esp four-strokes) were renowned for their good power to weight ratios, though used basic old-style motors similar to the Husabergs'. Thanks to financial problems the new DOHC thumpers took an eternity to arrive, but when they turned up in 2003 they continued the tradition of good power and light weight.

**WRE125:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, oil injection. Modern, superb, high specification trailie with powerful revvy motor and electronic powervalve. SM125S supermoto also available.

**WR125/250/360:** w/c, 2-str, single, 6-speed, 93kg to 104kg. Seat height 890mm. Originally stylish and well appointed enduro racers - but motors a little dated. Major cosmetic make-over for 2000 models, and more updates for 2005. 360 model only recently dropped from the range.

**Verdict:** oldie but a goodie...

**TE350/400/ 410/510/570/610:** (1989-on) w/c, 4-str, 4 valve single, RAL lubrication system, 6 speed, 118kgs, seat height 900mm. 350 quite revvy and a good, well-specified enduro bike of the time. 400 came after the 410 but was basically the same bike, renamed to fit in the 400cc enduro class. 510 was one of the first modern open-class thumpers, and widely liked. 570 gave heaps of grunt and an eye watering top-end rush, now slipped out of production (along with its supermoto counterpart).

**TE/E 410/610:** (1998-on) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve single, 6 speed, e/s, dual oil pump, balancer shaft. Externally similar to the enduro model but this is a completely different machine designed as a fully equipped and civilised trail bike. Kick-start on the right (early models only) and electric start, luggage rack, full instrumentation and a dual 'cat' exhaust makes the TE/E a well-specified if heavy and slightly less 'lairy' alternative. 610E still survives in 2005 model range thanks to its dual-sport nature. Factory SMS supermoto now out of production.

**TE250:** (Early 2003-on) w/c, DOHC 4-valve, 4-str e/s, single, 6-speed. The lightest of the new 250 thumpers, and one of the best. Sharp handling and a revvy motor will keep you on the ball, but ultimately a rewarding ride. Cosmetically updated for 2005, plus a range of technical mods. New Keihin carb has cured the

carb glitches of the earlier Mikuni-fed machines.

**TE400/450:** (Late 2002-on) The TE400 was the first of the new generation of DOHC Husky thumpers, and very nice it was too. Lightweight, with a blistering top-end, it was fun to ride but never really saw production as the class moved on to 450cc. The extra 50cc filled in some of the bottom-end power, but the 450 is almost too quick. Early bikes also from carburetion woes, but the new Keihin should have sorted this. 2005 models received a range of mods and beautiful new bodywork. SM450R supermoto version also available.

**TE510:** (2004-on) w/c, DOHC, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s 6-speed single, 118kg. Stroked 450 motor built to give Husky a bike in every enduro class. Possibly more suited to fast rally-type events or supermoto than typical British enduro conditions, with plenty of performance from the 501cc lump. Limited edition Centennial model (TE510C) built in 2004 to celebrate their centenary, with titanium pipe and carbon fibre everywhere all matched to retro red and white plastics, and a polished alloy tank. Priced at a wallet straining 12.5k, the Centennial is more of a work of art than a dirt bike. Standard 2005 TE models get TE-C inspired plastics, which look awesome. SM510R motard also available.





**HYOSUNG**

**XR125:** (2001-on) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, e/s single. Korean built trail bike based on an early Suzuki DR motor. The XR125 offers the first time rider a cheap and cheerful entry into the wonderful world of trail riding. **Verdict:** Not much in the way of eastern promise...

**JAWA-CZ**

**Penta 125:** a/c, 2-str, 123cc, single. 12bhp learner legal trail bike from the Czech manufacturers - unknown quantity.

**KAWASAKI**

**KE:** a/c, 2-str, trail. **KL:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **KLR:** w/c, 4-str, trail. **KLX:** w/c, 4-str, trail/enduro. **KMX:** w/c, 2-str, trail. **KDX:** a/c and w/c, 2-str, enduro & trail. The big news for 2005 is not a new bike, but the fact that Kawasaki UK now don't have an enduro machine in their range (having dropped both the KLX300R and KDX220R). However, there should be an enduro 250 thumper (based on the KX250F MXer) arriving in 2006.

**KE 80/100:** a/c, 2-str, 79/99cc, single. Very basic disc-valve learner trailie with drum brakes both ends. Has been around for donkey's years, very cheap and cheerful. Ideal second-hand bike for the vertically and financially challenged to start trailing with.

**KE125/175:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early twin shock, disc valve trailie dating from the Seventies. Popular then, but most will have rotted away by now. Easy to learn on, many were used as farm bikes. Later versions styled to resemble KDX. Lengthy production run means Kawasaki must have got it right. **Verdict:** Long lived.

**KMX125:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. 98kg. Very able little trail bike powered by reed valve and KIPS power valve engine, which can easily be de-restricted. Most will have been mercilessly thrashed by learners.

**KMX200:** (1987-92) w/c, 2-str, 191cc, single, 6-speed, 100kg. Big-bore version of the 125 which makes a more capable all-rounder. Though not as reliable as the 125 and when used hard off-road had a propensity for boiling over. Suspension could also feel pretty soggy by modern

standards. Occasionally KIPS valve can give trouble, as can clutch and radiator. 200 also lumbered with a 17in rear wheel, so it's quite common to fit the 18 incher from the 125 to improve off-road tyre choice. KMX also suffered from indifferent build quality, and could be fragile off road. Pads and discs wore out quickly but low seat height is more accessible for shorties than KDX. **Verdict:** More tea vicar...?

**KDX125SR:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. 124cc. Similar engine to the KMX (with KIPS power valve) but with the stronger competition-derived 'perimeter', square-tube chassis. Later ones had upside-down forks, but were slower than cheaper KMX in restricted form.

**KDX175/200:** a/c, 2-str, single. Originally sold as a competition-only machine with no speedo or horn and a plastic tank when they were still illegal on the road. Fine for enduros but a bit uncivilised on the road. Peaky and a bit raucous, the first models were however lighter, lower and torquier than the later w/c models. **KDX200/220:** (1989-2004) w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Completely redesigned from a/c version with increased suspension travel, revised Uni-Track rear end, and more top-end power. Went on to become an extremely popular clubman enduro bike (helped by a one-make race series) but just as happy on a green lane. 220cc version from '95-on claimed to offer more torque but it's hard to tell the difference. Now dropped from the UK range. **Verdict:** The original clubman weapon.

**KDX200/220SR:** 2-str, 199/220cc, single, oil injection. Street legal Jap-market trail bike version of the venerable KayDeeEx. Looks the part but rarely impresses, there are far better Jap trailies. **Verdict:** Looks can be deceiving.

**Super Sherpa 250:** (1998-on) a/c, 4-str, single, e/s, low seat grey import trailie in the mould of the Serow. Strange retro/military styling but with modern running gear and a less vibey motor than the Yamaha, makes the Sherpa a viable alternative for shorties.

**Verdict:** Smooth green Serow.

**KDX250R:** w/c, 2-str, single. Rather large for a 250 enduro bike but plenty of power from its lusty motor. Only officially imported for a couple of years during the early '90s.

**KDX250SR:** Street legal oil injection trail bike version of the above. Good well damped suspension at both ends and more power from the harsher motor than the CRM makes the 250SR the boy racer of the trail bike world. Oil tank a



**KAWASAKI  
KLX300R**

swine to get at and motor is not as robust as the CRM. **Verdict:** Fast 'n' furious.

**KL250:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 246cc, single. Late Seventies twin shock trail bike derived from the 200cc road bike commuter. Pretty basic but also pretty reliable, and extremely frugal.

**KLR250:** (1987-on) w/c, 4-str, SOHC, 249cc, single, 120kgs (dry). Reliable if rather unexciting trailie which goes better than it looks (just as well). Despite the complexity of a w/c engine they're very robust, and easy to service. More than capable of economical daily commuting, but not very fast on- or off-road. Revived as a budget trailie alongside more expensive KLX having been dropped a few years before. **Verdict:** Excellent starter trail bike with good manners.

**KLX250:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, 246cc, single. Enduro version of the early twin shock KL, with less road manners.

**KLX250R/5/5R:** (1994-on) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, 249cc, single. The four-stroke equivalent of the KDX, with similar perimeter chassis. Looks good, with handling and suspension to match, but performance of the street-legal 5 (e-start) trail version is a bit flat. The lighter enduro version is a lot more satisfying to ride, but early ones had carburetion difficulties and were difficult to start when hot. All need to be revved hard to produce their power and are quite tall in the saddle. SR grey import offers a slightly better suspension set up than the 5 model. **Verdict:** Good but don't stall it.

**KLX300R:** (1997-2004) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC 298cc single. Despite broadly similar spec to the KLX250 on which it is based, the 300 is a

completely different animal to ride. More grunt, more top-end and a superb sweet-handling chassis makes this bike a serious and svelte alternative to the XR400. Low pegs and wide frame rails are a problem in ruts and the 300s can also be difficult to start when hot, but pretty handy. No longer available new.

**Verdict:** Underrated clubman thumper.

**KLX400R:** (2003-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, single, e/s. The tie-up between Kawasaki and Suzuki produces a green DR-Z. For some reason not officially imported.

**KL500:** w/c, 4-str, 8-valve, DOHC, 498cc, parallel twin, 178kgs. Slightly oddly styled 'town trailie'

which shares its engine with the EN500/GPZ500. The revvy little KLE makes reasonable power but is far less trail-friendly than the torquier Transalp and more tiring on the road with its minimal fairing. Quite fast for the money and pretty good around town, but doesn't suit everyone's taste or backside. Supposedly dead and buried in the late 90's but they've resurrected it for 2005 with a new set of clothes. **Verdict:** If you must...

**KLR600:** (1984-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 564cc, single, 164kgs. Big banger trail bike which started out with a kickstart but became the first big trailie to be fitted with an electric start. Some suffered from balancer chain problems and early ones overheated due to poor siting of the thermostat, but otherwise a fine road machine with plenty of trail-ability. **Verdict:** Reasonable thumper.

**KLR650:** (1987-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 651cc, single, 171kgs. Bored-out version of the 600.

**Verdict:** Competent rather than spectacular. **KLR650 & (Tengal):** (1989-95) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 651cc, single. Bored out to 651cc in 1987, Kawasaki have never had any success in the African rallies, but the Tengai (launched in 1989) is their be-fairinged homage to the genre.

**KLX650 (& R):** (1993-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 651cc, single, 153kgs. Bigger version of the 250 with the same drop-dead looks, but with USD forks. Early ones were designed without enough clearance between the rear wheel and the mud-guard which meant the wheel hammers into the CDI unit at max compression with expensive consequences. No bashplate either. Not as torquey as the Dominator or the Pegaso but great for smooth dirt roads or gravel-strewn tarmac. Ideally suited



as a supermoto or town bike. Fast(ish) but not much plonkability. Grey import KLX650R Enduro version was much meaner but overly wide tank and excessive weight meant it couldn't match the less sophisticated XR6.

**Verdict:** Good, but not quite good enough.

**KLX1000:** (2004-on) w/c, DOHC, 8-valve, V-twin. Thanks to the tie-up with Suzuki, Kawasaki get themselves a big trailie. A badge-engineered V-Strom.

## KRAMIT

Small Italian manufacturer who built enduro and supermoto bikes. Using high quality components, these rare machines offer more than their fair share of Latin style. At least they did before production of the Rotax motors stopped during 2002 and the company ceased bike production. Had planned to employ a big-bore Jawa-based thumper motor, but decided against it...

**250GS:** Rotax, w/c, 2-str, single, adjustable powervalve, counter balancer, left side kickstarter, 6-speed, 107kgs. Drop-dead gorgeous styling together with high quality kit (Ohlins, Marzocchi, Excel) plus alloy fuel tank and carbon-fibre airbox and panels gave the Kramit a works bike look. Slim and fast but slightly too specialised for some. Pretty rare, but they do crop up occasionally and spares are still available. 17in rimmed supermotors were also available.

## KTM

**EXC:** 2T, w/c, enduro bikes; 5-speed except 125/200 (6-speed). **EXC Racing:** 4T, w/c, enduro bikes, which come with road kit in the box. All EXCs well specced and well built. **EGS:** street legal versions of early enduro bikes. **LC4:** four-stroke trail bikes. **SC:** early four-stroke competition bikes. A major player in the off-road enduro/trail/rallye scene. Older KTMs are reasonably abundant, and while most are competition bikes, there are a few trailies as well. But it's the newer EXC models which are the most popular, selling in huge numbers. All modern EXCs are blessed with extremely quick-turning (some may say 'flighty') chassis and WP PDS suspension. Some people don't like this link-less rear shock and on the early bikes it was too harsh. Seems to improve year on year, though. Six Days models are crossover bikes



between model years built specifically by the factory for the ISDE, incorporating many of the following year's changes into the existing spec.

**LC2 125/Sting:** w/c, 2-str, single, 6 speed, oil injection, e/s, cat exhaust, 121kgs, seat height 860mm. Trail bike with a top specification. Brembo, Paioli, Dell'Orto etc make the LC2 a cut above the average 125. Sting 17in rim supermoto version also available with 'Duke' style ergos. Went out of production 1999.

**125EXC:** Superlight, with the torquiest motor in class, makes this the 125 of choice for the serious racer. As with all enduro 125s they don't sell in huge numbers so scarce second-hand.

**200 EXC/GS:** Launched in 1998, the 200 is essentially the same bike as the 125, with a bigger barrel and piston. Power builds quickly from low down, and at times feels like it overwhelms the light 125 chassis. But most owners seem to love 'em. EGS model arrived alongside the EXC in 1999, with autolube, softer suspension and other trail details. 2000 saw the EXC(GS) replace the EGS. This was essentially the same as the EXC but with autolube and larger tank, and proved hugely popular. Was eventually scrapped in 2002, leaving the pre-mix only EXC. Plenty of 200s out there to choose from.

**250EXC:** Lightweight superfast racer more suited to the experienced rider. Earlier bikes had almost brutal power delivery and you had to be fit to compete on one. In 2004 gained a new motor (an enduro-ised version of the new SX motocross lump), which made more power though with far smoother delivery. Adjustable powervalve allows fine-tuning of the power on

what can be a very rewarding bike to ride.

**300EXC:** Too much to race, the 300 is a popular sport trail bike. Perhaps not quite as strong as the Gas Gas low down, it still makes heaps of mid-range grunt and has a good top-end. Doesn't feel as flighty as the other EXCs. **360/380EXC:** w/c, 2-str, 5 speed. Now long out of production, these were true open classers. Unlike a 'tuned for torque' 300, these were all about big power and therefore could perhaps best be described as 'a bit of a handful'. If you could hang on long enough...

**350/400/620SC:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve single, 5 speed, 121kgs, seat height 940mm. Kickstart-only competition bikes that were the mainstay of the KTM range until the new EXCs arrived. Power, stability and dependability are the LC4 powered SC's strong points. Left-side kickstart and weight are the downside. Out of production since 1999, and now quite rare.

**540SX:** 1999-only Kari Tienen replica built to honour the multi-world champion Finn. Broad strong power made it feel halfway between the mellow 400 and storming 620. Amazingly easy to ride, but dated now and not many around.

**400EGS:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single, e/s. 139kgs, seat height 900mm. Trail bike version of the old LC4-powered enduro bike, but with the added civility of a balancer shaft and e-start. Tall seat height and left-hand kickstart made it tricky for shorties. Top notch suspension, but not as light as it looked. Major revisions for 1998 models. LSE low seat (870mm) and supermoto version was available. **Verdict:** Tough, dependable, heavy.

**620/640EGS:** As above but more so. Major restyle for 640cc models for 1998 and 2001, LSE low seat model available.

**640 LC4 Enduro:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dual start, single. Latest in long line of LC4 powered trailies. Good dual sport ability but probably more popular in SM guise. Also more competition-oriented 625SX version available.

**250EXC Racing:** (2002-on) w/c, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s, 6-speed, single. Sleeved down version of the bigger EXC lump. The 250 suffers slightly from carrying the same weight as the more powerful bikes, with early bikes slightly reluctant to rev. Later bikes (March '02-on) a vast improvement on the original, and later bikes almost as good as the competition. But the class has moved on, and the Austrians have a new DOHC motor racing in GP MX. Whether it'll be launched in enduro trim for 2006 we'll

just have to wait and see...

**400EXC Racing:** The EXC 4T motor took the off-road world by storm when launched in 2000, and initial concerns over rebuild intervals have proved largely unfounded. Regular maintenance still a must, though! Squeezed into the 250 stroker's chassis, it was lightweight, quick-turning, and with good power. And an immediate hit. The 400 was dropped from the range at the end of 2002 to make way for the 450, but it was resurrected for 2004 when many found the new 450 too powerful. Still the same very over-square motor, but with the latest upgrades. Great on the trail and a good clubman racer.

**450EXC Racing:** THE enduro 450. Sold in vast numbers since it was launched in 2003, thanks to extremely grunty (stroked, rather than bored-out) motor in the nimble chassis. Lays down its power extremely well, though perhaps a little too much performance for some (see above). However it's happy (and easy) to ride at trail pace.

**520/525EXC (MXC) Racing:** As you'd expect from a new generation open-classer, the biggest bike in the EXC range is a bit of a missile. But the power only intimidates if you let it, and it's happy to grunt along in tall gears. Way too much performance for enduro competition (unless you're David Knight), the 520/525 is much more suited to open trails or the UK rally scene. 525 is simply an updated model of the 520 (still measuring a true 510cc). MXC version built





for desert racing (and 'European rallies') with cooling fan and larger 13L tank.

**Adventure (& R) 620/640:** (1997-on) w/c, 4-valve single. 166kgs, 940mm seat height. KTM's attempt to cash in on their successful rally raid bike, the Adventure is a street legal rally replica featuring a 28L tank and a rally style twin headlamp fairing complete with trip computer/GPS hook up facility. Early versions featured twin low level exhaust and no centre stand facility, later versions (98-on) came with high level single pipe and restyle.

**Verdict:** You too can be Kini!

**660 Rallye:** w/c, 4-valve single. Virtually ready to race Dakar bike; available to select few privateer rally racers. Uses 'big power' version of the 660 LC4 motor.

**Adventure 950 (& S):** (2003-on) w/c, 4-str, V-twin. Awesome monster trailie with great off-road ability. Carries its 200kg low, and therefore feels light and nimble for a big bike. By far the best off-road performance in class, and with purposeful styling to match. Originally launched as base model (silver) or more off-road oriented S-model (orange paint, longer-travel suspension etc); though the 'S' became special order only in 2004 and available in Dakar rep colours only. First year's clutch recall should've been sorted on all used bikes, check if buying second-hand. For 2005 the standard bike is markedly lower as many found the flat seat that bit too tall. V-twin motor formed base for 990 Super Duke and next year's 950 Supermoto.  
**Verdict:** Crazy Horses.



**KTM 950 ADVENTURE**



**KTM 640 LC4**

## KYMCO

**Stryker 125:** a/c, 2-valve, 4-str, 5-speed. Old Honda motor slotted into Malaysian chassis. More for tarmac learner than young dirt junkie. Acres of plastic bodywork and humpy styling look like an accident between a TDM and a Mitsubishi Galant. Unfortunately without either vehicle's performance...

## MAICO

Unbeknown to many, the famous marque still produces bikes in the Netherlands, albeit in limited numbers. Dated styling gives the bikes limited appeal, as does the claimed 67hp that the 500cc stroker spits out!

## MALAGUTI

**Monte 50:** (1975-77), a/c, 2-str, single, pre-mix, 6-speed, 50ccs of frantic, 9bhp screaming fun. Fitted with a full sized enduro chassis and running gear the 16er-legal Monte offered the 70s teenager real Italian racer performance unfortunately at the expense of reliability.

**Verdict:** The best and worse of the Italian bike industry rolled into one.

**XTM Enduro:** 1/c, 50cc, 2-str, single. Cool looking learner trailie, styled similar to a CR Honda. One of the best looking fifties out there. And even better looking in supermoto trim.

## MORINI

**Camel:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Oddball twin shock, V-twin trailie utilising the heron-headed Morini lump. High saddle and limited spares can be a problem, but otherwise quite robust and great fun if you can master the left-handed kickstart. Not very plentiful, but fairly cheap.

**Verdict:** Eccentric transport.

**Kanguro:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, 344cc, V-twin. Looks like an accident between an XT350 and a Transalp. Lovely engine is a bit dated really, but the Kanguro (couldn't they spell Kangaroo?) is definitely worth a look if you're after something a bit different and don't mind the left-hand kickstart. Sold very slowly and remained in production for a number of years - cheap for an Italian bike. **Verdict:** Strangely alluring.

## MOTO GUZZI

**V65TT:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Middleweight Guzzi trailie of average ability. Hard work on the dirt... and on the road. Not many around.

**Verdict:** Not many around... for good reason!

**Quota 1000ie:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Big Guzzi that like Triumph's Tiger is really just a road bike in trail bike clothing, but without the Triumph's impressive on-road performance. A truly monstrous beast with a seat-height that requires a ladder if you're under 6ft. It makes even the Tiger feel small by comparison.

Agricultural engine with torque reaction from the shaft and dangerous lack of ground clearance both on- and off-road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government health warning.

**Verdict:** Proves that the Italians do have a sense of humour!

## MOTORHISPANIA/ MOTO-ROMA

Spanish company producing a range of small capacity bikes, quads and scooters. Moto-Roma is a brand name for the UK marketplace, rebadging other manufacturers' machines.

**Furia Cross:** w/c, 2-str, oil injection, 49.7cc

single, 6-speed. Capable learner-legal (16) trailie. Well screwed together and easy to derestrict.

Conventional Paiolis replaced the USD Showas of the '02 bike. **Verdict:** Teenage trail tackle.

**MRX125:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, e/s, single Well specced learner four-stroke trailie powered by the ubiquitous Yammie TT-R125 lump in a very similar (read identical) vein to the Rieju. Pro model comes with extra anodising, alloy bars, handguards and knobbles.

## MZ/MUZ

Ex-East German maker with a reputation of making stodgy, solid bikes. A few a/c, 2-str, 250 ISDT specials around, most road MZs are robust enough to be 'trailified'. Cheap and cheerful.

**500 Saxon Country:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, Rotax-powered single.

Old-fashioned looking trail bike, that's really just a roadster with a set of trail clothes on. Expensive for what it is. **Verdict:** Proof that the Germans have a sense of humour!

**Baghira/Mastiff:** w/c, 4-str, 5-valve single, e/s. Yamaha XTZ660 powered and downright weird styling gives the MuZ Baghira and Mastiff supermoto a good punchy and reliable motor as well as a unique profile. Sort of capable off-road but much happier on the blacktop where the Yam motor shines.

**Verdict:** German Rubik's Cube!

## PRAGA

Czech built enduro, trail and supermoto bikes with reasonably high spec components but old technology motors - at bargain prices.

**250ED:** w/c, 2-str single, oil injection. Fully



**PRAGA 250ED**



road-kitted trailie with low compression engine based on a works Jawa lump from the '80s. Solidly built but heavy for a stroker and slightly dated looks. High comp, pre-mix enduro version also available. **Verdict:** Two-wheeled Skoda. **610:** w/c, 4-str single. Styled same as 2-T with engine similar to old Husky and 'Berg thumpers.

## REJU

Spanish manufacturer of small bore bikes and scooters. Currently developing two new enduro bikes using Yamaha WR250 and 450F engines. Production bikes could well be ready for 2006. **RR50/125:** (1997-on) w/c, 2-str single, 6-speed, oil injection, 89kgs. Good looking Minarelli-powered mini trailie that can be great fun both on- and off-road. 50 has very basic suspension but still performs surprisingly well in the dirt. Even rarer (full-size) 125 has up-rated running gear but faces much stiffer competition. **Verdict:** Cheap 'n' cheerful... **MRX125 (2002):** a/c, 4-str, SOHC 2-valve, e/s single. The Spanish factory has really gone to town with the styling of its new Yamaha-powered MRX. Beam frame and Showa suspension make the bike look much more serious than it really is. A similar SRX supermoto version is available. **Verdict:** Chip shop racer.

## SACHS

**ZX125/ZZ125:** (2001-on) w/c, 2-str, single, e/s, electronic power valve, 6-speed. The German made Sachs ZX125 is a competent and well-built (if slightly overweight) alternative to the usual offerings. Weight penalty makes for modest performance, but Sachs impresses with solid engineering and fine handling. Supermoto version available. **Verdict:** Teutonic trailie...

## SHERCO

French/Spanish alliance and popular amongst the feet-up trials posse. Sherco are seriously committed to expanding their off-road range, having launched the new 450i and produced a diminutive 250 enduro engine.

**125 CityCorp:** 123cc, a/c, SOHC, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s and kickstart, 6-speed. Formerly an HRD bike, the Sherco uses the tried and tested formula

of putting someone else's motor in your own frame. Off-set shock looks a little odd, but low seat height and smooth styling are a plus. **Enduro 4.5i (2004-on):** 448cc, 1/c, SOHC, 4-valve, fuel-injected, 4-str, e/s and kickstart, 6-speed, 109kg (claimed). All new 450, though the motor bears more than a passing resemblance to a KTM lump. Featuring fuel injection and a conventional chrome-moly steel frame, the 4.5i sports Kayaba-Paioli suspension front and rear and Spanish made AJP brakes. Only recently readily available, but already popular thanks to its smooth power and easy-going manners. A great clubman enduro weapon.



**SHERCO**  
**ENDURO 4.5i**

## SUZUKI

**TS:** a/c then w/c, 2-str, trail. **PE:** a/c, 2-str, enduro. **SP:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **RMX:** 1/c 2-str enduro & trail. **DR:** o-a/c 4-str, trail & enduro. **DR-Z:** 1/c 4-str, trail & enduro. Four-stroke RM-Z250 crosser makes a pretty good enduro conversion, but really should be built at the factory. New four-speed RM-Z450 obviously not as ripe for modification. **RV125:** a/c, 2-str, single. Strange looking fun bike from the Seventies with small wheels and balloon tyres designed for riding on sand. Looks a bit like a full size monkey bike. Quite fun, but rare and more than a bit odd. Now re-done as the Van Van and looks pretty funky... ish! **TS120 Trailcat:** a/c, 2-str, single. One of the first purpose built trail bikes to come into the UK

in the early Seventies, with unusual, Land Rover style high and low ratio 3x2 gearbox. Lightweight and easy handling twin-shock chassis. A bit of a collector's item, if you like that sort of thing.

**Verdict:** For anoraks only. **TS125/185:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early Seventies twin-shock trailie with distinctive high-level pipe, which was unusual at the time. Not many left now - thank goodness. **TS125/185ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. Peaky learner bike from early Eighties still with twin shocks. **Verdict:** Not bad considering its age. **TS250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Much the same as the early 125 but with punchier 250cc motor, and low-level chrome front mudguard. **TS250ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early Eighties trail bike that's a bigger version of the 125 with twin shocks and electronic ignition. **TS50:** a/c, 2-str, single. Undistinguished twin-shock trailie. **TS50ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above. **TS50X:** a/c, 2-str, single. Modest trail moped with a roaring 3bhp on tap, and 'Full Floater' monoshock suspension. Good for a 50 though. **TS125X:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Very competent learner legal trailie. Better than the equivalent DT at the time. **TS125R:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Later version of above with powervalve fitted that just needs connecting up to get full power. **TS200R:** w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Grey import had its own French championship. As above but with more poke and better spec (alloy rims etc). Relatively popular Jap import. **PE175:** a/c, 2-str, single. Basic twin-shock clubman enduro bike from the Seventies, styled on the RM motocrosser. Poky at the time, but not by today's standards. Last ones had 'Full Floater' suspension. Reasonable number of tatty ones still about that can be had for not much money. **PE250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Similar to 175 but with a better spread of power. Lots of fun, but noisy as hell. Not as nice as the 175. **PE400:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above but with more power than most people could use in this chassis off-road. Not as nice as the 250. **Verdict:** Wild. **RMX250:** w/c, 2-str, single, 5-speed, 113kgs, seat height 955mm. Enduro bike based on early RM moto-crosser, the RMX evolved slowly to become a regular sight in the enduro paddock. A tad heavy by modern standards the well suspended and grunty RMX is more KDX than CRE - but makes a good racy trailie thanks to



**SUZUKI**  
**RMX250**

plush suspension, 12L tank and comfy seat. Unfortunately for enduro fans, it never followed the RM's line of development. Cosmetics can soon look shabby but basically a sound bike - secondhand ones incredibly cheap. Powervalves can give problems, so maintenance is essential. **Verdict:** Lots of bike for the money. **RMX250S:** w/c, 2-str, single, oil injection, 5-speed, 121kgs, seat height 895mm. Fully street legal version of the above with metal tank and indicators etc. Decent suspension for a trailie, with slightly more power than a CRM - motor can be vibey though, and can have indifferent build quality. **Verdict:** Suzuki's CRM! **SP370:** a/c 4-str, SOHC, single. Early eighties twin-shock trailie that seemed to go on and on. Frugal, robust and reasonably reliable despite lack of balancer shaft. Good, cheap hack. **SP400:** a/c 4-str, SOHC, single. As above only even more so. **DR125:** o-a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. Small and not very powerful trailie with the benefit of being robust, reliable and frugal. **Verdict:** but solid. **DR125 Raider:** o-a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. As above but with false header pipe and (marginally) bigger P-D style tank. **DR200:** o-a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. As above but despite bigger motor, still a little bit underpowered. Not sold as street legal. Beware rear wheel collapse on early ones. **DR200 Djebel:** o-a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of above with



more street mods (including electric boot), and less trailability.

**DR200AE:** o-a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. A truly hideous looking farm bike built for NZ sheep farmers to carry their girlfriend back to the farm! **Verdict:** Hurry up or all the pretty ones will be taken!

**DR250:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. Grey import baby brother of the 350 we get here in the UK, only with USD forks and a brilliant ride height control making it more accessible to little people. Big headlamp Djebel version available.

**Verdict:** Worth searching out.

**DR250 (& Djebel):** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, e-start single. Later version of above with much more modern DOHC engine and leccy boot - most had electronic dials. Good suspension, nice styling and easy to live with. Fine trailie for those that like quarter litre thumpers - Djebel version came with big headlamp. **Verdict:** Mini DR-Z?

**DR350s:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Superb little trailie with dry-sump motor, excellent suspension, but tiny petrol tank. A bit cheap in places, but lightweight and fairly robust. Better off-road than on it. Front disc brake not very powerful and wears out rapidly. Can look tatty quite quickly. Kickstart only (until '95), and high seat height rules it out for sub five and a half footers. Engine feels unburstable and will rev and rev though some have been known to drop valves occasionally.

**Verdict:** The definitive trail bike of the 90s.

**DR350:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Enduro version of above which is slightly 'harder' all round. Different carb, stiffer suspension, altered geometry, simpler lights and no dials - but no 'leccy start versions available. **Verdict:** Cheap thrills!

**DR400s:** a/c 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 396cc, single. Updated SP400 from the mid-Eighties with alloy petrol tank, but still twin shock and 6-volt. Beware camshaft rattles at high mileages. Very economical, but without the benefit of balance shafts. Watch out for things shaking loose like engine bolts or perhaps your leg. **Verdict:** Shake, baby shake.

**DR-Z400s:** (2000-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 4-valve, single, e/s, 5-speed, seat height 935mm. The replacement for the DR350, a worthy successor to the much loved oil/air cooled trailie. Fully equipped for the street, the e-start only trail version has a superbly versatile liquid cooled lump that pulls well off the bottom and makes reasonable power all the way up to the red line.

**TM EN250**



Suspension offers masses of adjustment for the compulsive fiddler (but lacks grease nipples). Over-gearred and a tad porky for serious off-roading and the general fit and finish could be improved upon, but overall the 400S takes the DR-Z range a step in the right direction. Starting to show its age a bit now, though as what is essentially Britain's biggest selling trailie it seems plenty of people like 'em. **Verdict:** Hugely popular all-rounder.

**DR-Z400 (& E):** (2000-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, 4-valve single, e/s (E version), 5-speed, 127kg, seat height 945mm. Enduro version of the above with far less in the way of road going niceties but more power/suspension, flat-slide carb, simpler electrics, altered geometry and ridiculously noisy (baffle-less) exhaust (factory baffle is now available). Huge amounts of grunt means you're never stuck for power but the suspension feels soft for a race bike. Rare kickstart versions are about 4 kilos lighter, but not so desirable. Cheesy finish and an exhaust system that'll wake the dead - as standard it's too loud for enduro use!! Oh, and watch out for the output shaft seal (behind the front sprocket) failing and losing the engine oil. Essentially the same motor as the CCM 404 but in a worse handling package. **Verdict:** Time for an update?

**DR500s:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. Foreign market, bigger-bore version of the 400. None known in the UK (thank God). Apparently also the model name given to a smaller version of the DR600.

**DR600s:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 589cc, single, 136kgs. Classic big banger with modern monoshock rear end and balancer shaft motor. One of the best (and most sensible) of the DRs,

but a bit overgeared and heavy. Can be awkward to start when hot till you get the knack. **Verdict:** Good secondhand at the right price.

**DR650SE:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 640cc, single, e/s. More road than trail bike, longer, heavier than earlier DRs and with civilised half fairing and twin silencers. Good road bike, but first gear very high for trails and despite half-decent suspension, still a bit of a handful on the dirt no thanks to its seat height. Engine sounds like a tractor and vibrates like one. Carbs can give iffy running at low revs. **Verdict:** Okay I s'pose.

**DR650:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single, e/s. Last version of above without the half-fairing or twin exhausts. Was still over-gearred, and still rather tall, but featured the best suspension in class. Not very refined and felt a bit cheap.

**DR750:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. The original 'Dr Big' - Suzuki's first attempt at a Paris-Dakar style big trailie. No-one has built a bigger single - except Suzuki themselves. **Verdict:** Not for the faint hearted.

**DR800:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, single. The ultimate ultimate. Monstrous single with gargantuan tank, massive seat height and weird styling. Could win awards for ugliness, but pretty good handler and surprisingly nimble. Massive tank gives good range. Dropped from the UK range in about 1993, suffered badly from Norwich Union's capacity-based insurance grading, but should be much cheaper to insure now..! Many engines found their way into singles racing. **Verdict:** Why bother?

**DL1000/650 V-Strom (2002-on):** w/c, DOHC, 8-valve, V-twin. Monster trailie using detuned TL1000 motor. Excellent handling but cast wheels and limited off-road ability make this more tourer than trailie. Oddball looks are typical of the class. New in '04 650 version (using the SV650 engine) proving popular, less weight and bulk together with a lighter price tag to boot. **Verdict:** Stick to the hard stuff.

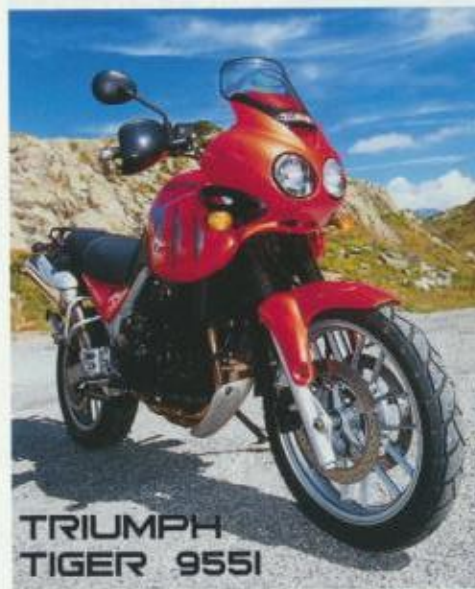
**TM MOTO**

Small Italian concern with a long history of getting big horsepower out of small two-strokes. Extremely well equipped enduro racers with high quality running gear, but not particularly suited to the novice rider. Pink plastics up to 1996 ensure cheap secondhand prices!

Completely restyled perimeter frame design in 1999. For 2005 there's a range of updates including new frames and engine mods. They've also mellowed the bikes to broaden their appeal, but they remain definite race machines. **80/125/250/300 Enduro:** w/c, 2-str, single, 6-speed (300 5-speed), 85 to 102kg, 10.5 litre tank (optional alloy tank). High quality Ohlins and Paioli suspension matched to a stable sweet-handling chassis and big horsepower motors. 125s can feel peaky to ride, 250s ballistic, 300s even more ballistic (though hopefully now a little less so). Definitely not designed to be pottered along green lanes! Engines are pretty strong and spares relatively cheap. **Verdict:** For race use only...

**250/400/450/530 4T:** (2001-on) w/c, DOHC 4-valve, 4-str single. Early models kickstart only, later versions with both. Beautifully styled, well-specced racers, though never perform quite as good as they look. 250 quite good, but slightly down on power compared to class leaders. Kick-only 400 proved virtually impossible to start and all top-end power. Electric start wasn't that much more reliable, though modified for 2005 bikes. 450 should have a better spread of power.

**TRIUMPH**



**TRIUMPH TIGER 955I**



**Tiger:** w/c, 4-str, 12-valve, DOHC, 885/955cc, triple. Good (though softly suspended) road bike, styled to look like an off-roader. Grunty engine makes it quick on the road but don't bother venturing off-road, as the suspension leaves a lot to be desired and smooth motor not suited to the dirt. MkII fuel injected version much improved with lower CofG and neater styling. 2001 saw the latest 955 lump from the Daytona sportsbike fitted, and the Tiger received cast wheels and luggage as standard for 2004. Suspension requires setting-up to make the most from the stonking motor. **Verdict:** On-road only...

## VERTEMATI

The Vertemati brothers developed their high performance gear-driven SOHC thumper motor together with superbike builders Bimota. Following a short link-up with VOR, the brothers went their own way again to produce a more expensive development of the original. Superb attention to detail on these exotic enduro thumpers, though occasionally let down by niggling faults..! Went out of production last year, though are apparently now running under a different name. No UK importer at present.



**VERTEMATI E450**

## VOR 530



**V492/400:** w/c, 4-str, 4 valve, gear driven SOHC, 5 speed, 116kg, seat height 940mm. More suited to serious competition use rather than casual trail/play riding. Weird non-primary kickstart is forward acting, but is great once you get the hang of it. Needs riding hard to get the best from the chassis and motor. Very few around.

**E450:** (2004) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, gear driven SOHC, e/s, single. 6-speed. Gorgeous to look at but simply didn't produce the goods. A lot more expensive than the competition, too tall and heavy, and the under-seat fuel tank led to some odd handling characteristics. Ultra rare, and perhaps with good reason.

**E501/570:** (2002-on) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, gear driven SOHC, e/s, single. 6-speed. Awesomely quick open-classers. The 570 enduro bike was factory order only, though the 501 was more than enough on the dirt. Originally sported a weird forward acting kickstart which was then replaced with an electric boot. Underseat tank, again, did nothing for the handling and the bikes were much more popular as supermotos.

## VOR

Offshoot of the original Vertemati concern (VOR - Vertemati Off-Road), went on to become a producer in their own right manufacturing exotic gear-driven SOHC thumpers. Bikes aimed at thumper pilots who want something a little different. Up to the end of 2001 VORs were all kickstart only (with strange forward-acting kicker). Redesigned for 2002 with more mainstream look, oil-pumped engines, perimeter frames and electric starting. Unfortunately, like most Italian manufacturers, they've been plagued with financial problems and have now halted

production. Supermoto versions available. **400/450/503/530 enduro:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve gear driven SOHC, 5 speed. Smooth, powerful motors coupled with high quality running gear makes the VOR an exotic (or eccentric) alternative for the serious racer. Fantastic attention to detail, but no primary starting. New engines and chassis launched in 2002 with a 450cc option and electric start.

## YAMAHA

**DT:** a/c & w/c, 2-str, trail. **IT:** a/c, 2-str, enduro. **WR:** w/c, 2-str and 4-str, enduro. **XT:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **TT:** a/c, 4-str, enduro. **TTR:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **TW:** a/c, 4-str, trail/fun. **BW:** a/c, 4-str, trail/fun.

**DT50/80:** a/c, 2-str, single. Dependable 16-er special that changed little throughout the years. Until now. Latest 2004 model water-pumper European built DT50 features trick digi-dash and big bike looks and feel. Also available in supermoto trim. Unfortunately it's barely powerful enough to pull first gear.

**TY50P:** a/c, 2-str, single. The original Yam trail 50. Early unrestricted versions came with moped legal pedals! Not many around now.

**Verdict:** Field bike special.

**DT125/175MX:** a/c, 2-str, single. The DTs are the bike that brought trail riding to the masses! Started out as a basic twin-shock trail bike back in the late Seventies before adopting cantilever rear-ends. They built up a reputation for being an extremely competent trail tool and taking an amazing amount of punishment. The 175s were dropped when the 125 learner laws came along in 1981. **Verdict:** One of the best trail bikes ever.

**DT125LC/E:** (1987-on) w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of water-cooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top-end, together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're easy to ride, but with the adjustable power valve kit fitted, even better! Later models ('96-on) harder to derestrict, almost to the extent that it's not worth bothering. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtaken by trickier looking tackle, they were still top the sales chart until the latest Euro 2 emissions regs saw the original DTR pensioned off. New in '04 DT125RE variant is a

worthy replacement and features an electric start as standard equipment.

**DT200(R):** w/c, 2-str, single. Grey import big bore version of the DTR125 with slightly higher spec (alloy rims etc). Extra oomph made it easier to ride and altogether more useable than the 125.

**Verdict:** Competent all rounder.

**DT200WR:** w/c, 2-str, YPVS, oil injection, single. 115kgs, seat height 895mm. Grey import trailie version of the WR200 enduro racer. Slim, well suspended lightweight trail bike with a superb quick revving and powerful motor. Not as civilised as a CRM either on- or off-road but addictive top-end surge more than makes up for it. **Verdict:** Cheap thrills.

**DT230 Lanza:** (1998-on) w/c, 2-str YPVS, oil injection, single, electric and kickstart, 125kg (claimed), seat height 875mm. Unusually civilised trailie with superb grunty motor with the benefit of an electric boot. Let down by an overweight chassis and less than perfect suspension, though still not a bad bike. Supposedly featured 'traction control' though we never found it.

**Verdict:** Well worth a look.

**DT250MX:** a/c, 2-str, single. Late-Seventies cantilever shocked version of the smaller bikes, more power but less agility.

**DT400MX:** a/c, 2-str, single. Hairy-chested version of above, not many left now - thank God.

**IT125/175/200:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early eighties enduro tool. Useful off-road, but a bit hairy on it no thanks to drum brakes. 200 is the better bet if you can find one.

**IT250:** a/c, 2-str, 246cc, single. Less peaky, bigger bore version of above with enough power for any off-road activity. At the time it boasted more power and much less weight than the equivalent water-cooled RD250LC twin!

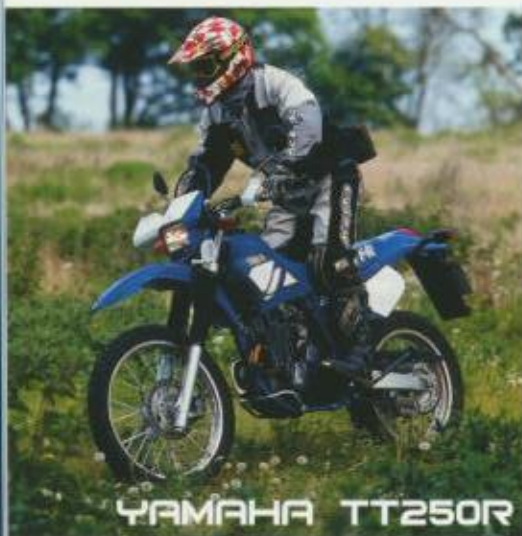
**IT425/465/490:** a/c, 2-str, single. Fire-breathing, hard to tame, old monster stroker. Only for those with lots of skill or very large gonads. Not the most reliable bike in the world.

**Verdict:** Melts goggles at 50 paces.

**WR200:** w/c, 2-str, single. Brilliant clubman enduro bike with lightweight chassis and 'soft-tune' engine, but plenty of power and largish tank. Easy to ride with a nice light front-end. **Verdict:** Modern classic.

**WR250:** w/c, 2-str, single. Enduro version of the YZ motocrosser but with wider ratio gearbox and slightly softer tune. All WRs make great enduro bikes. Early ones had big tanks, but the later the model, the better they are. Last model ('98 & 99 & some 2000 ones!) the best of the bunch





YAMAHA TT250R

- still very much in demand. In fact, the Aussies still get a version of the WR (YZ250WR) built from the MX bike. **Verdict:** Once the best 2-stroke enduro bike. Sorely missed!

**WR500:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above but using YZ motor. **Verdict:** Why would you?

**TDR250:** w/c, 2-str, parallel twin. A TZR250 in trail/SM clothing. Great road bike with demon brakes thanks to dinner-plate sized front disc, and all or nothing powerband. Peaky motor makes it difficult to use off-road apart from on fast fire roads, supermotard or competition road rallies for which it is ideal. A thoroughly uncivilised motorcycle - raucous, peaky and excruciatingly uncomfortable with an unquenchable thirst for fuel - and absolutely fabulous. Beware seizures on left-hand cylinder, and high speed wobbles on the road. Has a few passionate and delinquent supporters. **Verdict:** For petrolheads everywhere.

**XT125:** a/c, 4-str, single. Learner-legal motorcycle without the need for restriction! **Verdict:** Reliable but intensely boring.

**XT125R:** a/c, 4-str, single. Styled to look like the XT660R (only worse), the new for 2005 XT-R is unlikely to get teen pulses racing. Supermoto available. **Verdict:** Save up for a DT...

**XT225 Serow:** a/c, 4-str, single. Small but perfectly formed grey import trail bike with kick and e/s versions. Quite light, manoeuvrable, and easy to ride. Brilliant attention to detail such as mini indicators and sensibly placed grab handles

marks this out as a superb green laner. Small engine needs to be worked hard especially on the road, but it's a small price to pay for such a good little trailie. A steady development over the years means that the Serow is still a superb buy, and holds its value well. Looks dated though. Huge variation in spec, depending on country of origin. **Verdict:** Makes sense.

**XT250:** a/c, 4-str, 249cc, SOHC, single. Early Eighties cantilever shock trailie of some note. Light and strong with balancer shaft engine, though occasional early ones suffered valve problems. Nice and low though not very fast. **Verdict:** Good all-rounder.

**XT250:** (1989-on) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, single. Foreign market mini XT350 with all the benefits but slightly lighter and smaller. Rare.

**TT250-R/Raid:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, single, e/s. Modern mini-thumper trailie that is as civilised as it is competent. Revvy motor and a reasonable spread of power, but metal tank and excess weight a drawback. Watch out for restricted header pipes on later Aussie spec bikes. Big tank/big headlamp Raid version more suited to tarmac. Later all-blue plastic-tanked (2000-on) model has both kick and electric starters, and revised geometry and suspension. Officially imported from '03 onwards. **Verdict:** Mr Nice guy.

**XT350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, single. Plain Jane trailie that's better than it looks. Early versions boasted 31bhp (claimed), but later ones emasculated to 17bhp due to noise regs. Chassis and suspension a bit limited but nevertheless still pretty competent. Plenty of bottom-end, not too tall in the saddle, and excellent economy (80mpg if you try hard). Long production run shows it was good. **Verdict:** Carry-on trailie.

**TT225:** a/c, 4-str, 2 valve, single. Kick start only enduro/play bike version of the brilliant Serow built for US market. Basic spec, but nice and low and great fun to ride - starting to show its age now.

**TT350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, DOHC, single. Grey import enduro version of the XT, with improved suspension, more power, and basic instrumentation and lighting. **Verdict:** Not bad.

**TW200/125:** a/c, 4-str, 18bhp, single, e/s. Fattish-wheeled fun bike which makes a brilliant and economical (though odd-looking) trail bike for the short of leg, with both electric start and kick. Surprisingly good on the road, and makes a competent commuter (70+mpg possible), but let down by lousy SLS front drum brake on early

models. Trendy 125cc UK model (learner legal) gets a much needed front disc, but needs an extra gear. Suspension very basic and tyres can be expensive. **Verdict:** Strangely attractive.

**BW200:** a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. True beach balloon-tyred version of above but not street legal. Not recommended for anything other than sand. **Verdict:** Sand sled.

**BW350:** a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. Hairy-bummed version of above using XT350 lump. **Verdict:** No thanks.

**WR250F:** (2001-on) w/c, DOHC, 5-valve 249cc single, k/s, 5-speed, 105kg. This is without a shadow of doubt one of the best 250 thumpers available to date. Superb quick-revving motor makes more power than some 400s and simply demands to be caned to within an inch of its life. This bike was so good when it was released, that it sent all the other manufacturers scurrying back to their respective drawing boards. All that and a rolling chassis to match. Electric start for 2003 saw it edge even further ahead of the competition, until the CRF-X came along to spoil the party! Updates for 2005 include slimmer tank/rad shrouds, a lower seat, and 48mm forks. **Verdict:** Still got it...

**WR400F/426F:** (1997-2002), 5-speed, 121kg. Yamaha's latest generation of enduro thumpers promised much when launched. Fantastic, powerful high-revving lump coupled to a decent chassis made the Yam a quick but stable enduro weapon. Early bikes could be troublesome starters (particularly when hot) and the quality of finish wasn't up to Yamaha's best. Much improved 2000 model featured slimmer ergos, tweaks to the steering geometry and suspension. The motor also got a few carb and ignition mods to help improve hot starting. The fit and finish were also improved. 426F offers lots more go but little extra torque.

**WR450F:** (2003-on) w/c, 4-str, DOHC, five-valve single. The big WR gained an electric start for the first time, though also picked up a couple of extras kilos. Combined with an awesomely powerful motor, this made the 450 feel more like an open-classer and it often struggled to put its power down in slippery conditions. Great on fast, open going but too much of a handful in technical conditions. Lower and slimmer for 2005, hopefully it'll be easier to ride. **Verdict:** Muscle Machine.

**WR450F 2-Trac:** Having played with two-wheel drive for over a decade, Ohlins/Yamaha finally put it into production



YAMAHA WR450F 2-TRAC

on the 2004 model 2-Trac. Hydraulic pump driven off the countershaft sprocket sends power to the front wheel via fluid drive. And boy does it work! The 2-Trac drives where others sit and spin! Costs eight grand, but it does come with Ohlins suspension and steering damper. **Verdict:** The way of the future..?

**XT500:** a/c, 4-str, SOHC, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all. Produced for years and years, even when superseded by later versions. Twin-shock, 6-volt, character-building bike that could often get into more trouble than it could get out of. All sorts of special parts were produced for it for the would-be overlander. Vibrates like a jack hammer, and very basic by modern standards but the lack of sophistication is part of its charm, and the low seat height makes it much easier to 'paddle' than some of its more monstrous successors. Can be horribly unreliable and a pig to start, but it's easy to work on and plenty still around. Classic buffs have inflated the prices, but don't pay over the odds. **Verdict:** Your dad would love it.

**XT550:** (1982-86) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, SOHC, 558cc, single. Updated version of above with 4-valve engine, twin carbs and cantilever rear end. Smoother than 500 but hard to get excited about, some had gearbox problems. Not many around now. **Verdict:** Not as good as the original.





**YAMAHA XT660R**

powerplant. Tall and early grey import models kickstart only. Italian built serious trailie but certainly not a race bike. Ohlins, Paioli, Brembo etc give the TT600R more show than go. 2003 saw an officially imported leccy start E model take over where the old XT6 left off - or fill in until the XT-R turned up! **Verdict:** Nice face, shame about the legs!  
**XTZ660:** w/c, 4-str, 5-valve, DOHC, single. Another attempt at making a long-distance overland/road version of the venerable XT. Heavier, with less range but plenty of power. Less crashworthy than the first and the taller saddle may put some off. Nevertheless eminently trailable (in the dry). Twin headlamps 96-on. **Verdict:** Another good Yam.  
**XT660R:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve,

**XT600 Tenere Mk1, II & III:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with unburstable engine, supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world over thanks to its huge touring range. Later versions inherited a full fairing and twin headlights. Feels like riding a big cosy armchair, and regardless of Yamaha's claims to the contrary seems to have more power than later 'cooking' versions. Real off-road ability in most hands, but high mileage ones break second gear. **Verdict:** Best of the big Yams.  
**XT600E (500):** (1989-2003 R.L.P.) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, e/s, single. No frills version of the much loved XT. Heavier and more sluggish than the original thanks to steel rims and generally lower spec. Unsophisticated especially in the suspension dept, but thoroughly crashable and respectable plodder. Heaps of grunt, but pricey for what they are. 500cc version in Greece. **Verdict:** Not as good as the original.  
**TT600E:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve single, e/s. Much higher spec (Ohlins, etc) Belgarda Yamaha-built model using the same old air-cooled XT lump. Grey import only. **Verdict:** Nicer than an XT!  
**TT600:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. Grey import enduro version, with off-road suspension, more power, more basic instrumentation and lighting, and plastic tank. A few around, they make a more suitable serious trail bike than an XT. **Verdict:** Worth looking for at the right price.  
**TT600RE:** (1998-on) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. High spec running gear with a stone-age

SOHC, fuel-injected single. New in 2004, the latest Italian-built XT features a bulky under-frame twin exhaust set-up complete with some extra kilos to lug through the mud. Very little in the way of off-road ability, but the torquey motor is good. Notchy gearbox less so. XT-X supermoto available, and if you're sticking to the blacktop this has to be a better bet. **Verdict:** Regrettably not the all-rounder the old XT6 was...  
**XTZ750 Super Tenere:** (1989-96) w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, DOHC, parallel twin. Yamaha's answer to the Africa Twin. Cheaper build quality makes it a good value, comfortable all-rounder on the road with plenty of touring potential and 200 mile tank range. Engine is strong but lacks a little bit of bottom-end, and gearbox is atrocious to use. Also known to lose second gear. Genuinely fast and not too bad off-road especially in the dry, but the standard exhaust is rather wide (catching on ruts). Decent suspension, but a bit bouncy. **Verdict:** A good try.  
**T0M850:** (1991-on) w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, DOHC, parallel twin. 'New sports' road bike with trail styling developed from the XTZ750 but with much grunter 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much torquey engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox. Much improved from '97 onwards, fresh styling and updates to the gearbox. Updated 900cc version in 2002. Not a true trail bike but no less trailable than the Triumph Tiger... **Verdict:** Good roadster.



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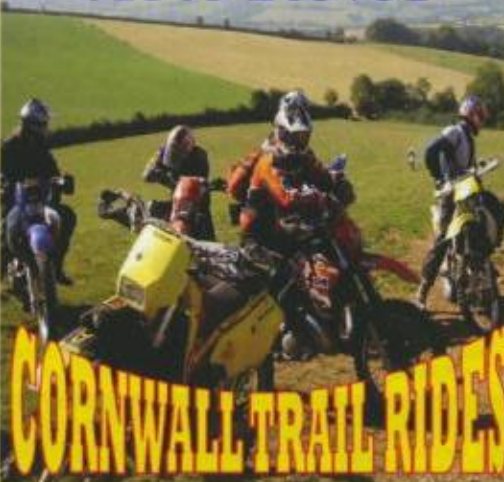
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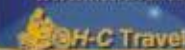
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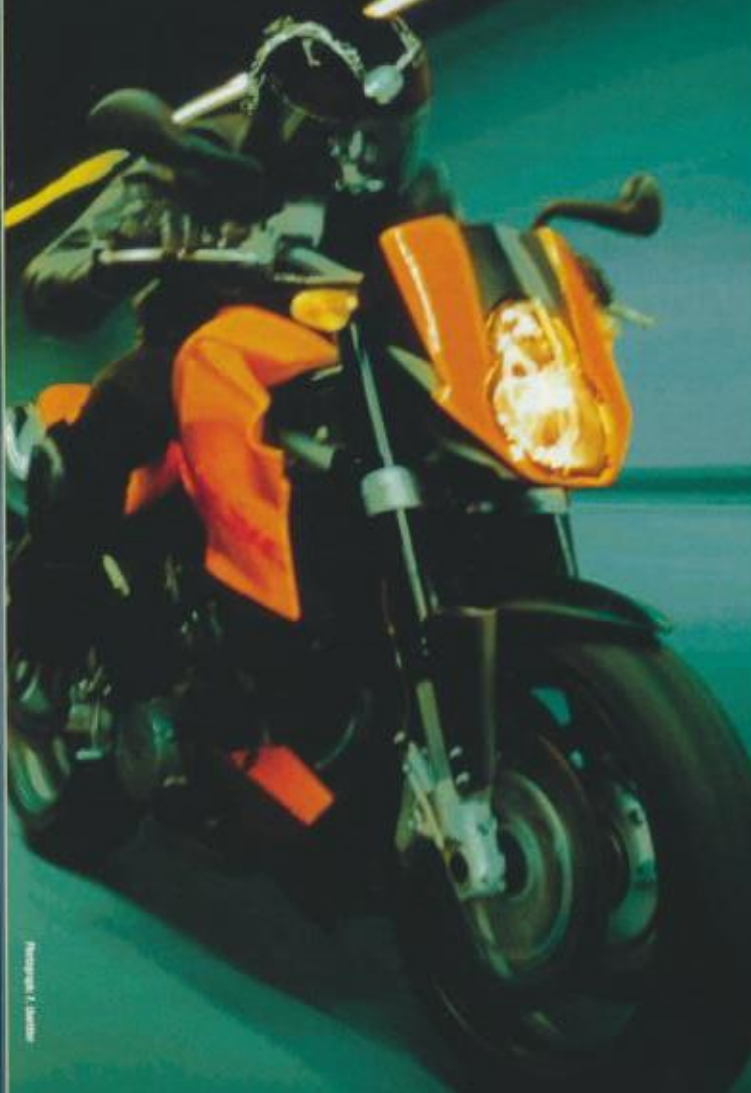
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# VIVA LAS VEGAS

**ENDROCROSS, ORLEANS ARENA, LAS VEGAS 27 NOVEMBER**

For the past five years indoor enduro racing has remained very much a European concept. Held annually in Barcelona, the International Indoor Enduro has grown from humble beginnings into a hugely exciting end-of-season event. But until this year, despite the wishes of both riders and teams alike, the event remained a stand-alone fixture on the European enduro calendar.

Held in the Orleans Arena in downtown Vegas, the first Maxxis Endurocross indoor championship attracted top name riders from both the US and Europe. The invitation-only event saw occasional GNCC racer Ryan Hughes claim the \$10,000 first prize, finishing ahead of WEC regulars David Knight and Mika Ahola.

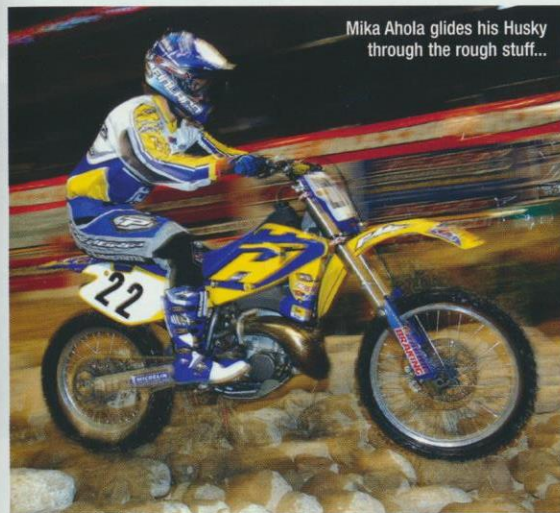
### Not Born In The USA

At a quick glance it seemed as if the course had been lifted from the Palau Sant Jordi in Barcelona and dropped into the Orleans Arena without change. On closer inspection, the track was notably different. Held within a slightly smaller arena meant the course was narrower, tighter and shorter. With the fastest time in Barcelona this year being one minute 17 seconds set by Juha Salminen, Ryan Hughes' qualifying topping time in Vegas was just 50 seconds.

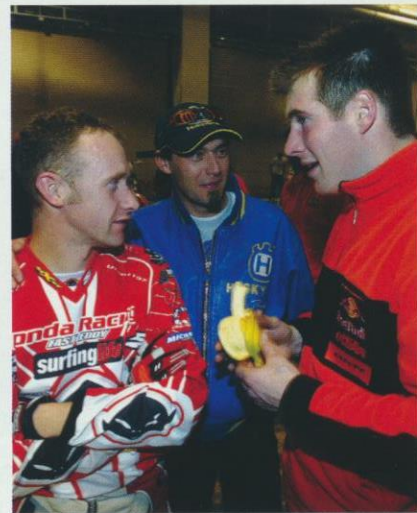
WORDS & PICS: JONTY EDMUNDS



**DAVID KNIGHT: 'I HAD MY SIGHTS SET ON FINISHING FIRST BUT MAKING IT ONTO THE PODIUM AFTER A GREAT RACE IS NO DISAPPOINTMENT. THE TRACK WAS GREAT AND THE RACING HAS BEEN JUST AS GOOD. ALL IN ALL IT WAS A GREAT NIGHT.'**



Mika Ahola glides his Husky through the rough stuff...



**MIKA AHOLA: 'I TRIED TO RIDE LIKE I DID IN BARCELONA BUT IT WASN'T SO EASY FOR ME HERE BECAUSE I WAS RIDING A TWO-STROKE, WHICH I'M NOT REALLY USED TO. I JUST TRIED NOT TO MAKE ANY MISTAKES AND GOT THIRD, WHICH I'M HAPPY WITH.'**

There were also some new and exciting obstacles. Despite having less area on which to play, the log, rock and tyre covered course was also faster and slightly less technical than its Spanish predecessor.

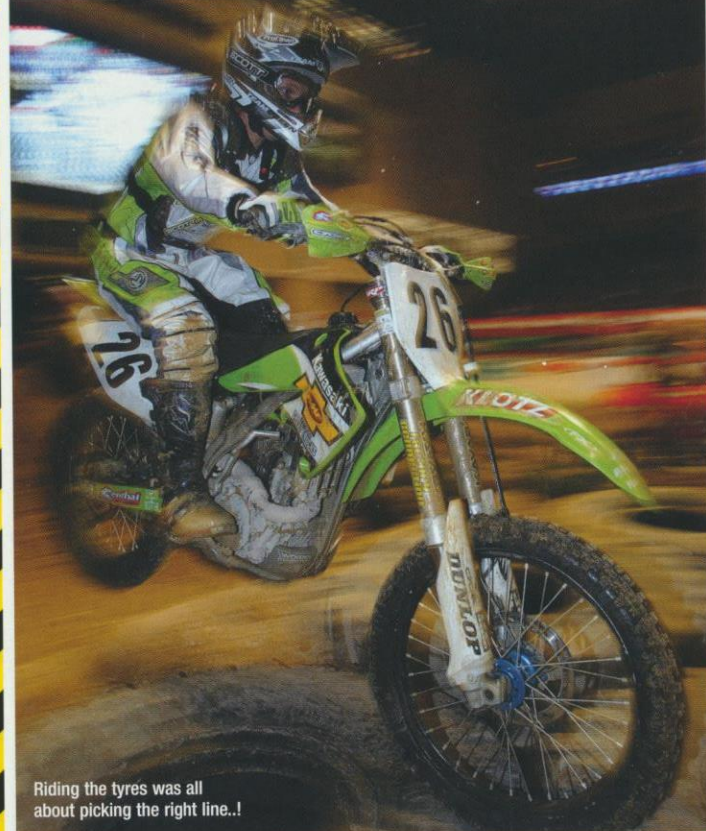
The event's unique obstacles were those made out of the worn-out tyres of earth moving machines. Laying eight six-foot high tyres on their sides, end-to-end, riders had to cross them without dropping their front wheels into the middle of the gaping holes. They then had to scale a row of the tyres that had been placed upright - in much the same way indoor trials riders have to. As if that wasn't enough, the

competitors then had to get back up onto a second section of laid-down tyres and cross them all over again.

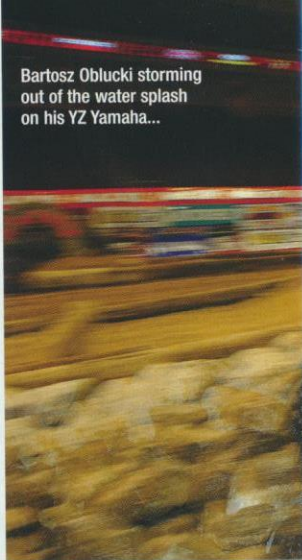
With the Barcelona track offering few places for riders to pass safely (several riders commented that it was a little one-lined), the Vegas track was designed to ensure there were two lines over each obstacle, which made for fairer racing.

Another difference between the two events was the length of the races. With the SuperFinal in Barcelona being four laps - long enough to leave all but a few of the world's best enduro riders physically exhausted - the Endurocross event featured eight-lap heats, semis and finals!

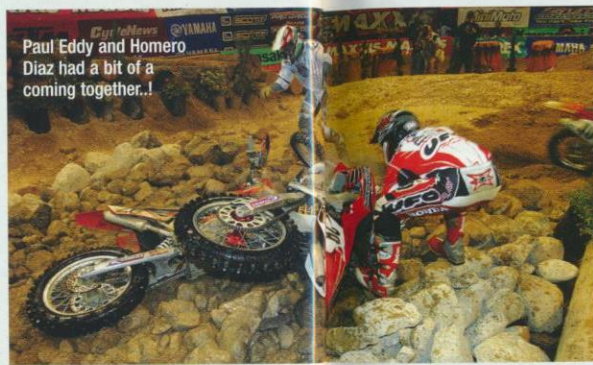
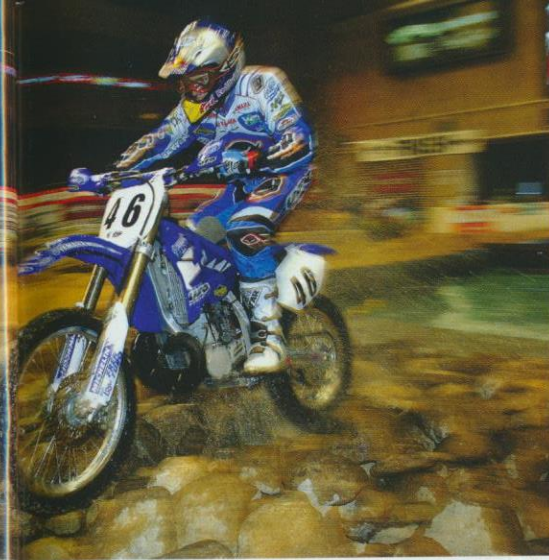




Riding the tyres was all about picking the right line..!



Bartoszl Oblucki storming out of the water splash on his YZ Yamaha...



Paul Eddy and Homero Diaz had a bit of a coming together..!

**DAVE PEARSON: 'I'M USED TO AT LEAST TWO-HOUR RACES SO THESE SHORT EIGHT-LAP EVENTS ARE DIFFERENT BUT I REALLY ENJOYED IT. I HOPED TO CLAIM A PODIUM BUT FINISHING AHEAD OF ERIKSSON IS NO MEAN FEAT.'**

## On Your Marks, Get Set...

The riders that took to the start were a mixture of US off-road racers, little-known Vegas desert racers and some of Europe's best WEC riders. The biggest named US rider was eventual winner 'Ryno' Ryan Hughes.

Alongside Ryno, Steve Hatch and Ty Davies headed the US contingent while David Knight, Mika Ahola, Paul Edmondson, Anders Eriksson, Bartosz Oblucki, Seb Guillaume and Thierry Klutz represented Europe.

Each rider got just one 'sighting lap' and it was soon apparent that the racing was going to be anything but boring. With the Euro riders having learnt that caution rather than aggression is generally the best way to deal with indoor obstacles, most of the US riders seemed to subscribe to the 'hit it hard and hope ya don't crash' theory!

After qualifying - Ryno topped the score sheet by an impressive three-and-a-half seconds - it seemed the European riders might have to re-think their plan of attack as the US riders, while looking wildly out of control, proved fast and remained largely upright, lap after lap.

## Dyno-Ryno

Known to be the type of rider that will ride over a competitor if he can't find any other way past, Ryno showed that he had both the skills and temperament to win from the outset.

As each of the heat and semi races were eight laps long, all of the riders hoped they would place top two in their heat race, ensuring themselves a direct transfer to the final. That, of course, didn't happen. Ryno placed a close second to David Knight in the first heat as the

**RYAN HUGHES: 'I WAS SHOCKED BY JUST HOW DIFFERENT THE TRACK WAS. IT WAS A TOUGH COURSE - EVEN THE BEST RIDERS WERE FALLING ALL OVER THE PLACE. I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MUCH PASSING IN MY LIFE, SOMETIMES TEN PASSES EACH LAP!'**

pair passed straight to the final, but many of the other 'fancied' riders had to do it the hard way.

In the end, there were five US and five European riders that made it through to the final. Ryan Hughes, Dave Pearson, Ty Davies, Nathan Kanney and Brian Garrahan represented the US while David Knight, Mika Ahola, Anders Eriksson, Paul Edmondson and Homero Diaz came through for the European-based WEC.

Out of the gate like a bullet, Ryno exited the first turn cleanly, knowing the best way to win would be to lead from the front and let the other riders trip each other up as they attempted to reel him in.

It soon became clear that only one rider had what it takes to beat Ryno - Knight. Gating third, but soon up to second, David set about closing in on Ryno, putting himself in a position to capitalise on any mistakes the former supercross rider might make. Waiting patiently, on lap four that mistake came. As Ryno bobbed on the log in the water-crossing Knight pulled

## The Man Behind Endurocross

**F**orty-something Frenchman Eric Peronnard arrived in the US as a motorcycle racer back in 1984 thinking the States would be the place to further his riding career. Realising that he was not a 'good rider', Eric had to pay his bills. 'I started working for O'Neil as a promotions manager before moving on to work for Thor,' he recalls. 'That was when I realised I was not made to work for other people. I started my own company and became the agent for hiring US riders for European supercross events.'

'In 1995 I decided I wanted to import European-style racing into the US. I was the Yamaha motorcycle dealer in Las Vegas at the time and kept banging on the door of the MGM Grand hotel and casino for several years until eventually they agreed to let me run a race there.'

'The US Open of Supercross was born in 1998. It was a fantastic success, we had a \$300,000 prize purse and sold out of tickets six months before the event. Clear Channel (US supercross event promoters) sued me for some sort of misuse of the name 'supercross' because the stadium was too small, so I had to settle with them out of court. I sold them the event, they hired me to be the Vice President of international business, and then I became one of the executives of Clear Channel for three years.'

'During those years I put the Endurocross concept onto their desk but they weren't really interested. When I left Clear Channel I joined forces with Tim Clark at Pro-Motions Motorsport.'

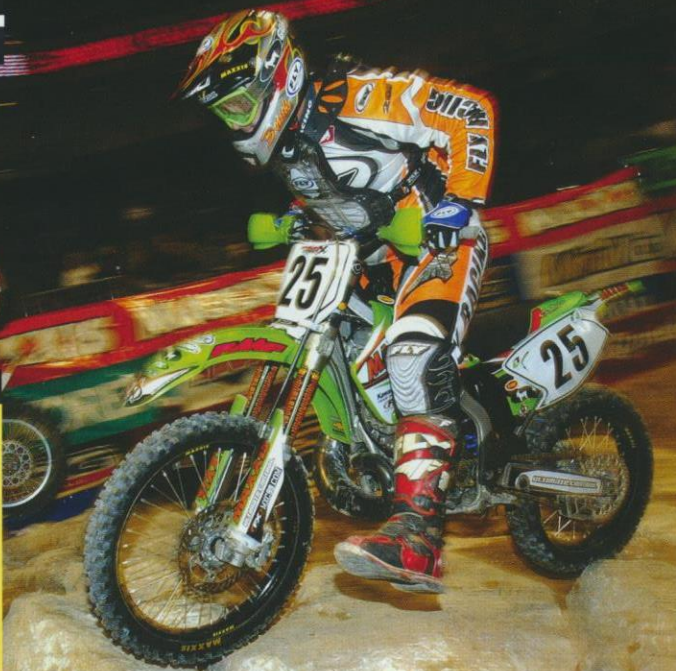
'I took a look at the Barcelona Indoor Enduro and was completely sold on the idea. People in the US were very excited about Endurocross but also very sceptical. But we knew as long as we had some top European riders like Knight, Edmondson and Oblucki, plus media coverage, the event would get talked about. It is a completely new concept here in the US and unless people have seen indoor enduro and know how exciting it is it's very difficult to sell it to them. I want Endurocross to be the biggest small indoor event in the world. That's the dream.'



# SPORT

## RESULTS

1	RYAN HUGHES	HONDA
2	DAVID KNIGHT	D3-RACING KTM
3	MIKA AHOLA	HUSQVARNA
4	DAVE PEARSON	KAWASAKI
5	ANDERS ERIKSSON	HUSQVARNA
6	TY DAVIES	YAMAHA
7	PAUL EDMONDSON	HONDA
8	NATHAN KANNEY	HONDA
9	BRIAN GARRAHAN	KTM
10	HOMERO DIAZ	KTM



**PAUL EDMONDSON: 'I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A RACE WITH AS MANY CRAZY RIDERS IN MY LIFE! THE EVENT WAS GREAT FUN AND THE ORGANISERS HAVE CERTAINLY PUT INDOOR OFF-ROAD RACING ON THE MAP IN A BIG WAY IN THE US.'**

alongside, edged his front wheel ahead and looked to have made the pass.

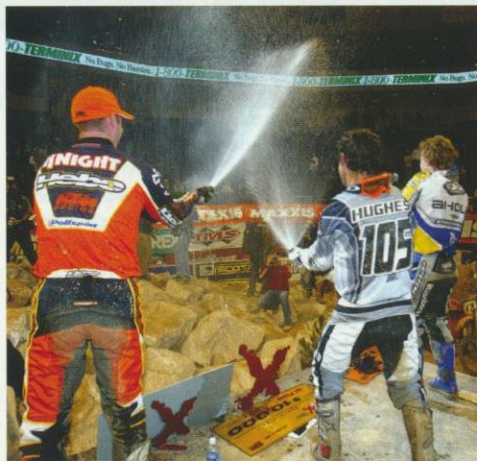
Not shy of a little physical contact, and knowing he held the inside line, Ryno muscled his way back past David in the very next corner and was never troubled again. Having given it everything he had, Knighter dropped back during the fifth and sixth laps of the race as he struggled to hold onto his bike having got mud on his left hand while trying to clear his vision. Far enough ahead of third not to have to worry about being caught, David knew only a mistake by Ryno would see him win, so the KTM rider had to settle for second.

With Ryno and Knighter lapping riders from the third lap of the race onwards it became all but impossible to follow the battles for third and fourth, fifth and sixth. Everywhere you looked riders were desperately trying to find ways of passing the rider in front of them.

Finn Mika Ahola eventually claimed third place, having moved ahead of local favourite Dave Pearson mid-way through. Behind Pearson, Swede Anders Eriksson claimed the top four-

stroke spot in his first-ever indoor enduro, while Ty Davies held on to claim sixth.

Finishing seventh, Edmondson's hopes of a good result were brought to a premature end after a coming together with Homero Diaz left him on the deck early on.



**ANDERS ERIKSSON: 'THIS TYPE OF RACING IS COMPLETELY NEW TO ME. THE HIGHLIGHT WAS WINNING MY SEMI AND FINISHING AS THE FIRST FOUR-STROKE RIDER.'**



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## SPEED

'WATCHING US RIDER AFTER US RIDER CRASH THEIR BRAINS OUT DURING QUALIFYING WAS ONE OF THE FUNNIEST THINGS I'VE SEEN FOR AGES'

W

ith the British enduro scene winding down for its winter break and with the 2004 World Enduro Championship already a bit of a distant memory to me, you might think that I've been sitting at home with my feet up recently - as I hoped I would be doing. You'd be wrong. The reason why I haven't been able to relax and switch off completely from racing is simple - indoor enduros.

Just like motocross riders that have supercross through the winter months, or trials riders who take their sport indoors to fill the gap between their outdoor

### BRITAIN'S TOP ENDURO RIDER WRITES EXCLUSIVELY FOR TBM...

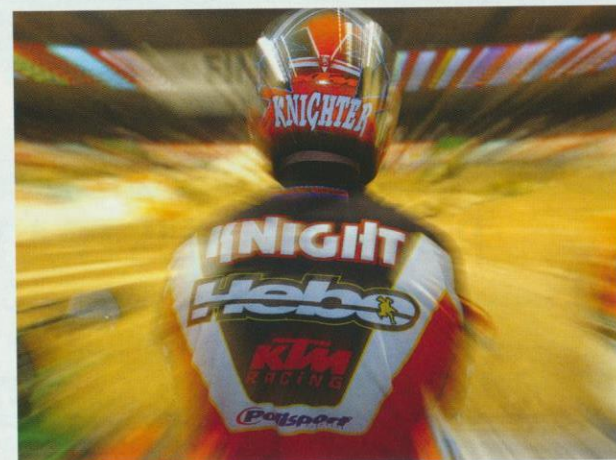
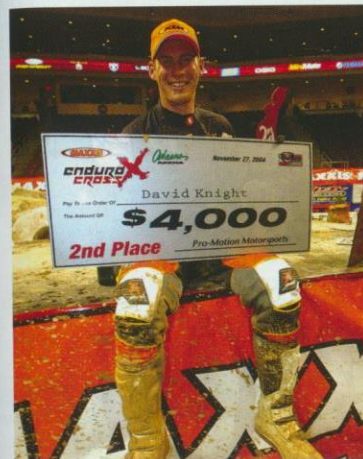
seasons, enduro riders like myself are now able to ply our trade inside, which is great. Okay, so we only have two events to choose from at the moment rather than a calendar of races, but the sport of indoor enduro has grown 100percent in 12 months! The first indoor event most TBM readers will be familiar with - the Barcelona International Indoor Enduro. The second, the new one, is the Endurocross - held in Las Vegas, USA. Having travelled to such glamorous places as St Remy Sur Durolle in France this year (where it snowed), Povazska Bystrica in Slovakia (where it was dull as hell) and Kielce in Poland (where bikes were pinched and riders assaulted), I still can't believe that I went to Vegas... to race an enduro. What a way to sign off the year!

With the two indoor events taking place just two weeks apart it meant that no sooner had the Barcelona event finished than I started packing my bags ready to head to the US. Not that I minded. A little disappointingly the Barcelona event this year wasn't quite as good as in previous years for one simple reason - I didn't win. Seriously, the

organisers tried to make the track a little easier and faster than in previous years, just to see what that would do to the racing. In my opinion it didn't do much for it at all as an easier course, matched to the fact that it was very one-lined, meant that it wasn't quite as good an evening as it was last year, which was a superb race. Changing the format from two-stroke and four-stroke classes to Enduro 1, Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 categories wasn't as successful as it might have been either. What I can't fault the organisers for is trying something new.

To cut a long story short I ended up second in the E3 class and finished as runner-up in the Superfinal. Placing second to Aro in the first of the four E3 races was a steady start, winning race two put me into the lead of the class. Crashing in race three completely screwed things up for me - and it was nobody's fault but my own. Deciding to see how hard the ground was on more than one occasion, I rode like a complete tool during that second race making more mistakes as I pushed hard to make up for my previous errors... And so it went on until the race finished. Instead of settling for a third or fourth place finish I decided I wanted to win the race, which was never going to happen. The result of my eighth place finish, or whatever it was, meant that I needed to win the fourth and final E3 race and have Finn Mika Ahola finish fifth or lower if I was to win the overall. I won, but he finished higher than fifth, and in doing so won the class. I finished second.

The Superfinal was the one that I really wanted to win. Mixing the fastest three riders from each class, as well as being the race the money was on, I knew it would be hard to beat the two-stroke/Juha Salminen combination - and I was right. Gating third I moved past Paul Edmondson on the rocks and closed up on Juha quite quickly. Having won a couple of my E3 races, and having also been forced to try and work my way



forwards after a bad start, I knew how hard it was going to be to pass Juha. I also knew that he would know that I was there and wouldn't know whether to push or relax. By keeping up the pressure I hoped he'd make a mistake - like riders in previous years. But with Juha being Juha and the course being a bit easier, he didn't. I didn't see any point in getting physical and forcing my way past and, well, I got second, which on a big thumper I don't think is too bad. Although I didn't win the event, it was good practice for the biggy - the Vegas Endurocross.

For those who've never been to Vegas I simply say this, it's unbelievable. Of all the places in the world to have an indoor enduro event, Sin City would be the last place you'd expect. But it was, as the Yanks say, awesome.

I'll be honest, I had my reservations about the event. I had visions of the course being little more than an arenacross/supercross style track with a few logs and rocks dropped on it. How wrong I was. The track was incredible. Taking all the best bits from Barcelona Indoor '03, the organisers added a few of their own ideas and came up with the best indoor enduro course so far. What made it so good was the fact that there was between two and four lines over each and every obstacle. Not something that's easy to do.

Arriving and seeing the track half-built made me realise just how much work goes into constructing an indoor circuit. Being told that the races would be 16 laps, with an 18 lap final, was a bit of a shock as Barcelona has always been just four, which is certainly physical enough. I'd heard that Ryan Hughes - a veteran of the US supercross and motocross scene - was going to be racing in Vegas so figured the track would be like a supercross track. But discovering that in fact it was a full-on indoor enduro course I felt pretty confident that I'd get the better of him. Until timed qualifying that was.

Watching US rider after US rider crash their brains

out during qualifying was one of the funniest things I've seen for ages. Attacking rock and wood obstacles as if they were piles of soft soil, all the US competitors had exactly the same aggressive 'do or die' attitude. For the not so good riders it resulted in crashes, for the good riders it resulted in bloody fast qualifying laps. That's when I realised that Hughes was going to take some beating.

I knew that I needed to finish top two in the Qualifying race, which I did as I won it, because if not I'd have had to endure another million laps before reaching the final. As it happens that might not have been a bad thing because I had to stand around for two hours waiting for the final, without riding my bike once.

A good start in the final certainly made things easier for me, but Hughes lead the race, which meant that I had my work cut out. Reeling him in was one thing, getting alongside him was another, and passing him was gonna' be something very different. On lap two I did manage to get right behind him, forcing him to make a small mistake. Managing to get a wheel ahead on a couple of occasions we also made contact a few times, but I couldn't quite get past. Then getting a little bit of arm pump and some crud on my gloves meant that he managed to get away. My only hope was that he'd relax, lose a little concentration, and make a mistake. But just like Juha in Barcelona, he didn't. And I got second again.

Not winning was a little disappointing but what was great about the trip was realising that the sport of indoor enduro appeals to the US public as much as it does European spectators. We may only have two indoor events at the moment but they are both excellent - fun to compete in and helping to get the sport of enduro seen by people who wouldn't go stand in a forest all day. As far as I see it, that has got to be a good thing for our sport. I've just gotta' make sure that I win one of them next year...

Happy New Year!





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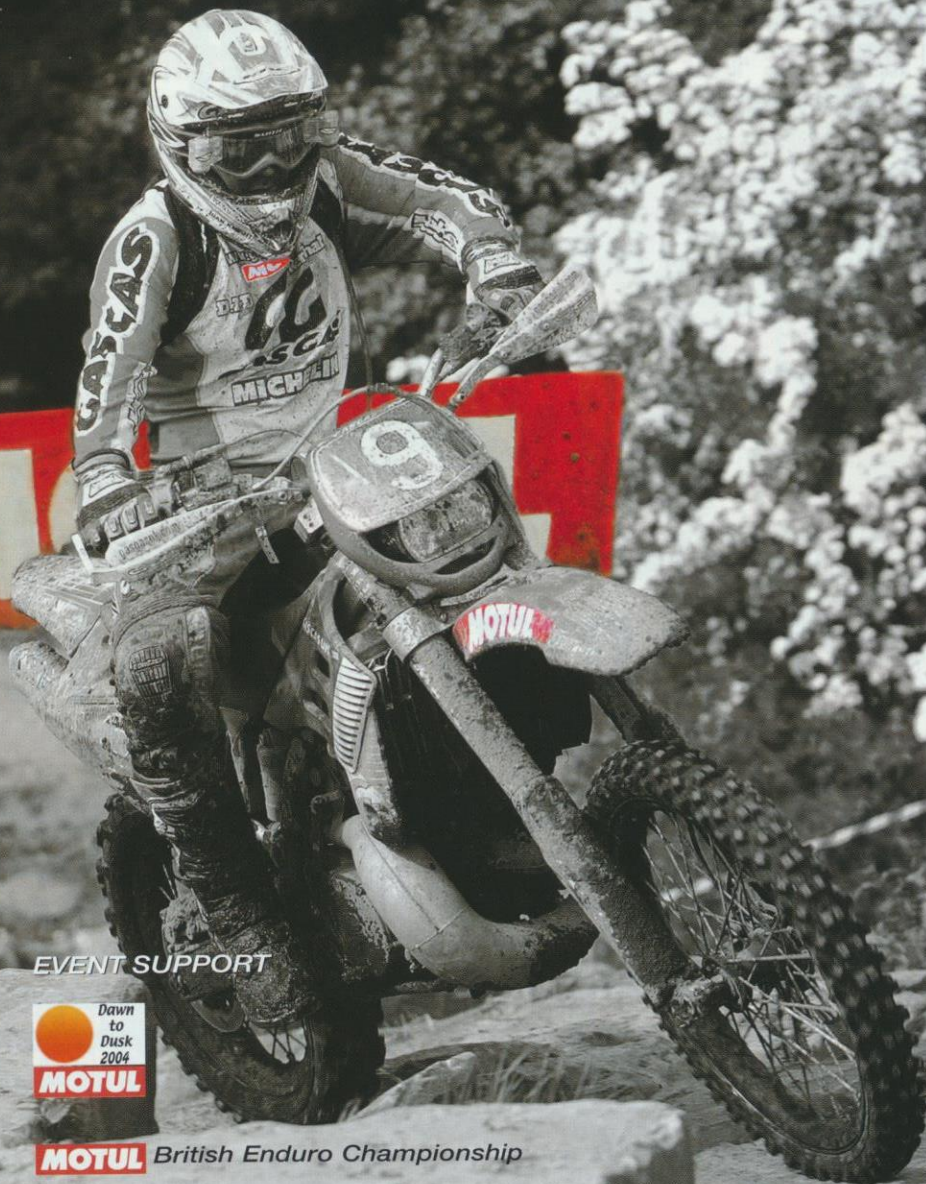


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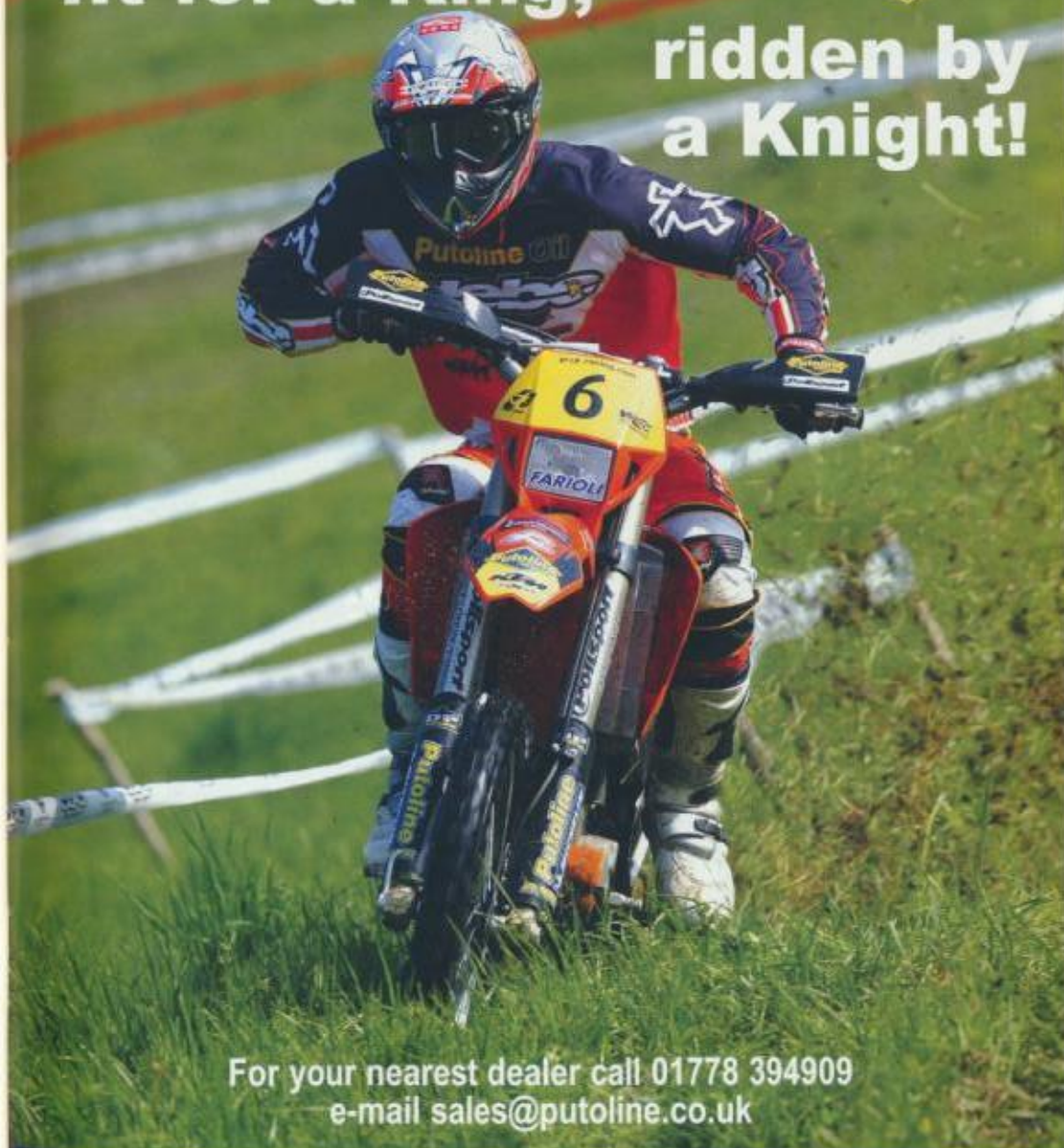
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# The Heavy BRIGADE

**Mark Williams tells  
the story of the  
Matchless G80CS**

**F**our-stroke singles are pretty much the engine of choice for today's serious, or even not-so-serious dirtbiker. In the past we've cited bikes like BSA's B40/B44 as the granddaddy of 'em all, however that ignores the achievements, both technical and competitive, of several other big bangers - most notably from long forgotten British factories like Associated Motor Cycles (AMC) and Ariel.

AMC's Matchless G80CS was every bit as successful in its day as BSA's 440 and 500cc singles. And although this machine went out of production in 1966 and owed its engine design to 1930s technology, I well remember a guy called Chris Cosserrat turning up on the doorstep of the fledgling Bike magazine in 1972 claiming that his G80CS was the equal of anything the British, or even the Japs, could throw at the mud. And although I only rode it briefly, and on some very undemanding terrain, I had to admit that Chris's bike had a certain charm and as much competence as I could then probably exploit off-road.

And this was largely down to its 497cc OHV push-rod engine which, just like today's high-revving successors, was over-square (ie the bore measurement was larger than that of the stroke), and produced a tidal wave of torque from as low as 1000rpm and a decent enough - for the time - max output of 33bhp

at 6500rpm. However a little history of AMC is in order before I wade into any more detail because, like the better known and more enduring BSA, Triumph and Norton, AMC was a cornerstone of the Great British motorcycle industry in the pre- and post-war years.

In fact it was the Matchless brand, founded by brothers Charlie and Harry Collier and their father, Harold Snr, that led the way with a series of racing bikes powered by JAP V-twins in the first decade of the last century. The brothers

themselves raced these bikes with considerable success, but come the First World War they, like most other manufacturers, were producing munitions rather than motorcycles at their factory in Woolwich. But after hostilities ended they never re-kindled their racing ambitions and concentrated on a range of quite sophisticated roadsters using the Swiss Motosacoche V-twins rather than the home-brewed JAPs, and their own 350cc side-valve single. Other single and twin-pot engines followed and the name Matchless more

or less lived up to its meaning in the motorcycling public's esteem and purchasing choices.

By 1931 the Colliers were on a roll with a technically impressive 600cc V-four, the Silver Hawk, and the wherewithal to buy one of their competitors, AJ Stevens Ltd, better known as AJS. Within a few years several AJS and Matchless models were starting to share essentially the same engine, the 'G' series 350 and 500cc long-stroke single, the only real difference being that the magneto - which for





Dave Curtis aboard his works G80CS in 1957. What a bloody hero..!

## The Heavy BRIGADE



those of tender years was the thing that produced the current for the spark - was mounted in front of the cylinder of the Ajay, and behind it on the Matchless. And it was that engine, first introduced in 1936, which was the direct forebear of what we're looking at today.

Okay, the 82.5x93mm internals of the original, iron-barrelled design, produced a goodly amount of low-end urge, but maxed out at 5500rpm when an alleged 26bhp found its way to the back wheel. By the mid-Fifties, AMC had opted for the slightly oversquare design, an alloy barrel and shaved some metal off the still massive flywheel, and in its well-regarded AJS and Matchless roadsters they were capable of 100mph in brave hands. The clutch was famously bullet-proof, the crank rested in a trio of roller bearings, lubrication was by a highly efficient two-way pump and the hair-pin valve springs offered more precise closure and longer tensile life than the conventional sleeve variety, all of which aided the G-series engine's reputation for reliability. And although AMC decided not to campaign G80 bikes in road-racing - for that they had the 7R/G50 motor - they cannily realised that its power

characteristics and durability were ideal for use in off-road competition.

Up until 1955 rigid framed bikes were de rigeur for both trial and scrambles, primarily because they weighed less than full-sprung chassis, and with works riders Hugh Viney, the Ratcliffe brothers and Basil Hall, they proved successful in both disciplines. After the war, however, nimbler, never mind faster machinery was required and in 1952 the first G80CS made its appearance with a swinging arm held in place by the infamous 'Jampot' shocks - so called because they had short, squat upper oil reservoirs. Initially

produced in both 350 and 500cc modes, the CS - standing for 'Competition Special' - looked pretty good too, with a cobby alloy fuel tank, painted red or not at all, and a neat underslung exhaust pipe with a shortish, slightly upswept silencer available as part of a 'road-legal' kit along with horn and lights.

Primarily designed to fulfil an American appetite for desert racing, the bikes proved highly successful in both the virtually identical AJS and Matchless guise and once the alloy-barrelled, short stroke version was announced in 1956, there was little to touch them in the Californian desert - including the slightly heavier and less reliable BSA and Triumph twins.

By this time of course the big single was already long in the tooth if not in the stroke, and although AMC steadily developed these bikes, they could really have done with a wholesale makeover in the same way that other makers updated their big twins in the early Sixties, not least because the gearbox was housed separately rather than in unit with the engine, like the newer designs from BSA and Triumph.

In the mid-Fifties the company instead chose to spend its money on buying yet another ailing

marque - Norton - although this did at least provide some benefits, mainly in the shape of Norton-developed Girling rear shocks which were lighter than the Jampots and didn't have the propensity for leakage. Later on, in 1964 to be precise, Norton also contributed their oil-pump.

By the end of the Fifties AMC, largely under pressure from the American Berliner Corporation who imported the bikes into its prime export market, had further developed the G80CS to keep it winning not only desert races, but the new 'enduro' events that were then in their infancy in the States. A better sealed alloy chaincase replaced the leaky, 'pressed-tin' item that linked engine and gearbox and a racing 1-3/8in Amal GP carb (which lacked an idling screw) replaced the same manufacturer's less temperamental 1-3/16in Monobloc model. The new carb breathed through a long cylindrical air-filter designed very much with Californian desert conditions in mind, which necessitated moving the oil tank to the left-hand side.

The biggest single change was to a stronger duplex, as opposed to single downtube frame. Still using a cast headstock with brazed lugs all over the shop, this was a very heavy chassis by any standards and helped raise the G80CS's overall weight to a whopping 375lb, or 170kg in today's money, which makes modern 400-450cc four-strokes - even with their liquid cooling - seem like flyweights. By now AMC were selling the almost identical Ajay model 18CS alongside the G80CS and boasted in their 1962 catalogue that it now had 'works-type' front suspension - in reality, superior heat treatment of the stanchions and springs - and a 40bhp engine.

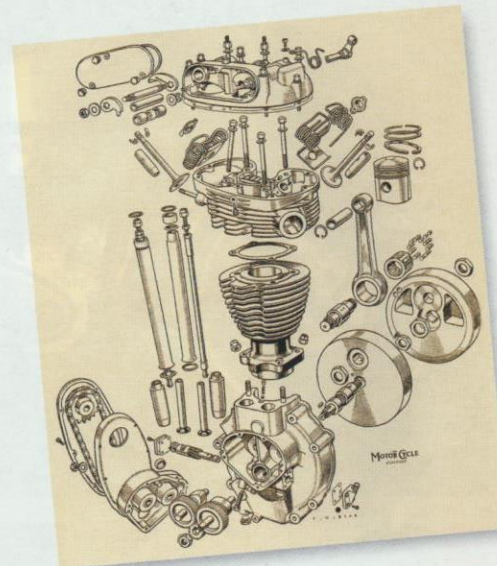
The extra power was achieved mainly via re-profiled cams and the GP carb, but with a weight penalty of some 15-25lbs to Triumph's new, unit construction 500/650cc twins, and even more against BSA's B44/50 singles which were putting out similar power in competition form, the writing was clearly on the wall for the G80CS.

However in terms of competition success, the bikes were still on the money, both in scrambles and ISDT events. Works rider Dave Curtis achieved some heroic wins on his admittedly 'warmed over' machine with gold medals in both the 1956 and 1958 ISDTs, the latter based in Garmisch, West Germany where Matchless-mounted riders won a total of three golds.

'The ISDT bikes were far heavier than they should've been: you certainly didn't want to drop them!' he somewhat ruefully recalls. 'And apart



Tim Roberts' pristine 1961 model...



from 7R flywheels (from the AJS roadracer) and the usual doubling up of cables and the like, they were the standard scrambles models. But they were reliable and if you rode them steadily they wouldn't let you down.'

Curtis, certainly the company's most talented post-war rider, began his run of G80CS wins in 1954, although as a privateer he had success on the older, rigid-framed versions, too. And by dint of his determined, 'full-on' style, he beat any number of riders on lighter, faster machinery to win the 1968 British GP. Yet in 1961 he decided to retire and run the family haulage business because 'it had stopped being fun anymore.'

And by the turn of the decade, even Triumph's 'works spec' four-stroke twins were finding it hard to compete against faster, lighter and more reliable two- and four-stroke machines from the continent and to a lesser



## FAKE BUT FUNKY

The G80CS was a basic, yet pretty looking bike...

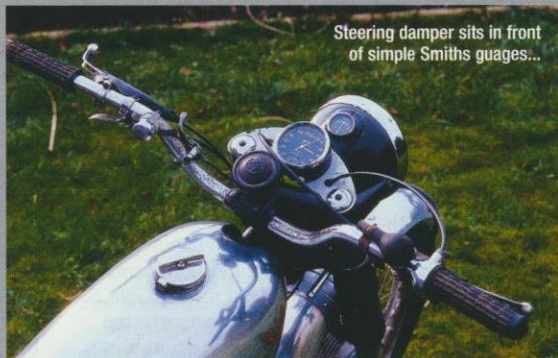
The Heavy  
**BRIGADE**



**S**id Meredith is the first to admit that his 1956 'ISDT' Matchless G80CS isn't actually the real thing. In fact close inspection of the frame clearly shows lugs for bolting on a sidecar - common enough practice in those days - and the engine lacks the pukka competition air filter normally fitted to these models.

Sid bought the bike from a local rider more than a decade ago and apart from maintenance and the wear and tear of age, it's pretty much as he bought it, indeed pretty much as it would have left the factory save for the non-standard air-filter and the lighting set that one of its previous four owners decided to stick on it in a bid for ISDT credibility.

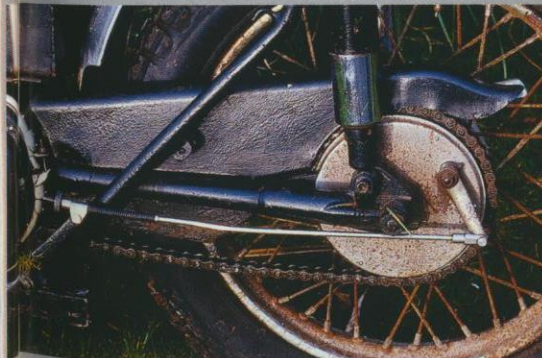
The ultra-wide handlebars and comfy seat were, however, necessary fixtures for anyone doing any serious off-roading, although it's a little hard to imagine how the bike would cope against the deep ruts, glutinous mud and rocky



Steering damper sits in front of simple Smiths gauges...

ascents of mid-Wales where Sid lives, given the limited suspension travel and ground clearance. And the pressed steel chaincase doesn't look like it would survive long if it got dropped on some serious rockery.

Far better suited to today's conditions would be the tasty Rickman Metisse that Sid also has



lurking in his Aladdin's Cave of a garage. And as a die-hard AMC man, it's naturally fitted with a late model G80CS engine complete with alloy primary drive case and a couple more inches between it and the earth. Sid has no plans to sell either of these machines, although he admits that the G80CS 'could do with a bit of restoration.'

It's 1964, and Chris Horsefield muscled his G80 around a scrambles course...



extent, smaller British factories such as Greeves, while the big AMC singles were simply becoming out-gunned. But for the really serious, albeit well-heeled competitor on the scrambles circuit, an alternative was at last available, courtesy of Derek and Don Rickman.

Able riders both, the Rickman brothers used their off-road racing experience to create a lightweight, but immensely strong chassis using bronze welded, Reynolds 531 chrome-moly tubing. Tagged the 'Metisse', the French word for 'mongrel', these beautifully finished, lugless frames were fitted with alloy wheels and high-quality glass-fibre tanks and bodywork. And after AMC unwisely turned down their offer to buy the design, the Rickman's decided to simply build and sell the rolling chassis themselves and allow the punter's choice of AJS, Matchless or Triumph powerplant.

In fact as AMC reached the end of their commercial tether in the mid-Sixties, they began selling engines direct to the Rickmans for fitting into the Metisses that were then sold as complete, competition-ready machines. Not that this was quite the end of the line for what was by then an ancient engine, for in '66 the company launched the G85CS. This used an even more highly tuned 42bhp version of the engine in an all-new Reynolds 531 frame shamelessly cribbed from the Metisse, using the same oil-bearing type design and weighing in at just 300lbs. Although competitive against the 500cc BSA Gold Stars that often dominated 500cc motocross, the G85CS really had no future against the far lighter,





## The Heavy BRIGADE

higher-revving B44-based racers that appeared in the mid-Sixties. And when Manganese Bronze Holdings bought out AMC in 1967 and decided to concentrate on developing the 750cc Norton twins that would eventually augur the Commando, the G80CS's game was truly up.

But at least its legacy lingered on,

### Matchless 500cc. Model G80CS "MARKSMAN"



for the newly developed frame and Matchless/AJS forks, rear suspension and wheel hubs provided the chassis for the legendary, if short-lived Norton P11, which was powered by the latter company's Atlas 745cc twin and at least looked much like the AMC desert racers, although it was sold as a 'street scrambler'.

True, in suitably modified form it won some desert races, but unlike the G80 and for that matter the G85CS, the P11 never had the potential to win scrambles or ISDT-type events. Which is why the big Matchless single was the last of its line, and arguably the last of the breed...

**Special thanks to Dave Minton, Gordon Francis, Rowena Hoseason, Frank Westworth, Tim Roberts, Steve Wilson and Dave Curtis for helping in compiling this article.**

## MATCHLESS G80CS

<b>Price (1959):</b>	£278 12s 10d
<b>Value now:</b>	£1000-£3500
<b>Engine:</b>	OHV air-cooled, 2-valve 4-stroke single
<b>Bore &amp; stroke:</b>	86x85.5mm
<b>Displacement:</b>	497cc
<b>Comp ratio:</b>	8.5:1 (10:1 see text)
<b>Max power:</b>	33hp @ 6200rpm (claimed)
<b>Transmission:</b>	4-speed (separate unit)
<b>Chassis:</b>	Cast, brazed and welded, duplex down-tube
<b>Front susp:</b>	'Teledraulic' forks
<b>Rear susp:</b>	Fully hydraulic shocks, swinging-arm
<b>Brakes:</b>	7-inch diameter, SLS, front and rear
<b>Wheels:</b>	Front 3.00x19in (optional 21in), Rear 4.00x19in
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	55.5in
<b>Seat height:</b>	33.5in
<b>Ground clear:</b>	7in
<b>Fuel capacity:</b>	2.4gal
<b>Dry weight:</b>	375lbs



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Yamaha WR426E, 02-reg, Renthals, barkbusters, CRD pipe, exc cond, £3095 ono. Tel (mobile) 07766 916637 or 01539 823948 (Cumbria)

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Yamaha XT225 Serow, 1992, white/green, T&T, elec start, elderly owner, original cond, £1100. Tel 01275 839677 (Bristol)

Vertemati 400 AT, 2000, road reg'd, supplied by Colin Hill Racing, engine rebuild, good cond, £1850 ono. Tel 01303 870772 (Kent)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 53-reg, 2500 miles, mostly commuter/some green lane use, Renthals etc, phone for details. Tel (mobile) 07905 383210 or 020 8407 2639 (Surrey)

Yamaha WR450E, 2004, many extras, £2800 ono. Tel 07880 612163 (Shrops)

Gas Gas EC450FSE, Sept 2003, trail version with 50mm lower seat, taxed, 500 green lane miles, all original parts, superb cond. Tel 07970 716613 (Manchester)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, elec start, 2003 model, 1500 miles, hardly used, DEP pipe, bashplate, beautiful cond, £2900 ono. Tel (mobile) 07713 765197 or 01282 839616 (Lincs)

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Yamaha WR400E, 1998, T&T, new black wheels, polished hubs, wave discs, recently serviced, great green laner, vgc, £2100 ono. Tel (mobile) 07958 471548 or 01277 627229 (Essex)

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KTM 200EXC, 2002, road reg'd, new plastics/tyres, engine rebuild, vgc, ready to race, £2395. Tel 01926 843914 (Warks)

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Yamaha WR480E, 2003 model, very little use, exc cond, spend your xmas money, £3795 ovno. Tel 07770 375821 (Cambs)

Suzuki DR-Z400SK2, yellow, 2700 miles, well maintained, Comp 4s, bashplate, frameguards, Ohlino wide pegs, mint cond, £2750 ono. Tel 01264 356654 (Hants)

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CCM 604E, 2001, MoT, one owner, heated grips, Scottolier, vgc, £2200 ono. Tel 01782 334796 (Staffs)

KTM 360EXC, 1998, T&T, Ohlins shock etc, FMF pipe, spare plastics, little use, very reluctant sale, vgc, top tool, £1800. Tel 01462 638427 (Herts)

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Suzuki DR350, S-reg, T&T, 6600 miles, new tyres, engine well cared for, plastics scuffed, perfect green laner, £1450. Tel 01420 542556 (Hants)

CCM 604SM, 2001, WP set-up at factory, race and standard pipes, handguards, pillion pegs, vgc, £2296 ovno, could meet. Tel 01978 844325 (N Wales)

Yamaha TY2250 trials, 1997, little use since professional overhaul, call for full details, £1350 ono. Tel 01942 879588 (Manchester)

Husaberg FE501e, 2002, high spec, fully maintained, looks, sound and goes like new, £2900 or consider exchange for similar cond/age DR-Z400E. Tel 01942 879585 (Manchester)

Honda XR400R, 52-reg, taxed, only 6000km, Wers graphics, Acerbis handguards, Dasker Renthals, loads more extras, exc cond, £3000. Tel (mobile) 07973 206079 or 01495 971738 (Gwent)

Honda XR400R, 1999, T&T, Renthals, CRD exhaust, sumpguard, barkbusters, new clutch/tyres, well maintained from new, ultra reliable green laner, £2500. Tel 01455 273202 (Lincs)

Honda XR400R, Nov 2002, taxed, Acerbis handguards, sumpguard, new c+s, green lane use only, £2900 ono. Tel (mobile) 07807 524051 or 01623 742233 (Notts)

Kawasaki 175 B2 trail bike, 1977, T&T, restored to original, blue tank, good runner, really nice, £675. Tel 01495 200359 (Gwent)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 1999, green/white, T&T, 14000km, Scottolier, carrier, not used off-road, new tyres, like new, £2600. Tel 01495 200359 (Gwent)

Suzuki DR250, elec start, USD forks, new tyres/battery, starts first time, no T&T, currently SORN, £880. Tel 07765 146571 (London)

VOR EN400, 2003, 03-reg, 1800 miles, green lane use only, Renthals, barkbusters, usual VOR enhancements, exc cond, £3200. Tel 07977 701189 (Cheshire)

TM 250E 4T, 2003 model, elec start, road reg'd, raced, just had full engine service, Ohlins suspension, Good cond, £3000. Tel (mobile) 07715 013534 or 0161 474 0773 (Cheshire)

Yamaha WR450E, 2004, road reg'd, taxed, enduro spec, new c+s, KB Racing suspension, spare DEP pipe, exc cond, £4050. Tel 07801 014505 (Oxon)

Yamaha PW80, well maintained, exc cond, £395. Tel 07770 761793 (Midlands)

Gas Gas EC250, 2002, recent piston/rings, frame/brushguards, trail use, some spares, good cond, £2650 ono. Tel 02380 905285 (Hants)

Yamaha XT550, overland Acerbis tank, alloy panniers, top box, Scottolier, stainless exhaust, HD wheels, loads of spares inc CDI, wheels, piston, cables and tank, £1100. Tel 01736 796857 (Cornwall)

KTM LC4 Adventure, 2004, very low miles, KTM panniers, as new, £5000 ono. Tel 01524 222538 (Lincs)

Husaberg FE450e, 2004 model, fully road legal, elec start, trail use only, well maintained, exc original cond, £2900. Tel 01229 887834 (Cumbria)

Honda CR250R, 1988, road reg'd, MoT, trail use only, Talon clutch basket, new tyres/c+s, £1850. Tel 07956 308808 (London)

KTM 200EXC/GS, 2001, autubush, bashplate, handguards, Rental Twinwalls, new c+s, very tidy bike, £2200. Tel 07899 958373 (Warks)

Gas Gas EC200, 2004, road reg'd, new tyres/sprockets, handguards, well maintained, some spares, little use, £3200 ono. Tel 07796 944248 (Essex)

Honda CRM250 mklIII, T&T, DEP system, Fatbars, bashplate, brushguards, new c+s/tyres, exc cond, £2295. Tel (eves) (mobile) 07903 245505 or 01246 569005 (Derby)

Gas Gas EC200, road reg'd, FMF front pipe, recent top-end rebuild, new graphics, maintained regardless of cost, very clean, £3295. Tel 07734 801066 (Essex)

Yamaha WR250E, June 2003, road reg'd, FMF Q-pipe, Acerbis handguards, Renthals, green lane use only, vgc, £3795. Tel 07770 801711 (Lincs)

KTM 400EXC, '05 model, 04-reg, 10 hours' road/green lane use, factory sump/handguards, absolutely immaculate, as new, £4850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07765 241128 or 01249 650067 (Wills)

Kawasaki KDX220, V-reg, USD forks, Fatbars, gripper seat, FMF system, rear suspension just serviced, £1900 ono. Tel 01452 795577 (Gloucs)

Suzuki RM250, 2003, enduro spec, 15L tank, lights, Rental c+s etc, FMF pipe, clocks, lovingly looked after, new bike forces sale, want £2700 ono. Tel 02476 502735 (W Mids)

Yamaha XT600E, 1997, T&T, only 1800 miles, never been off-road, all original, Datatag, P&H, as new cond, £2250. Tel (mobile) 07973 833964 or 01282 815473 (Lincs)

Suzuki DR350SEW, 1998, T&T, very clean, well maintained example, call for more details, £1350 ono. Tel 01932 617940 (Shrops)

Honda XR400R, '97, taxed, 7500km, hand/sump/frameguards, FP silencer, Wers graphics, DH41 light, plus all original parts, £2050



# FREE CLASSIFIEDS

ono. Tel 020 8462 2797 (Kent)

**Honda XR650R**, 2004, road reg'd, only 250 miles, as new, helmet, boots, jacket, pants, £2895. Tel 01942 521426 (Lancs)

**Gas Gas EC200**, 2002, taxed, owned from new, handguards, bashplate, £2200. Tel (mobile) 07974 083006 or 0118 966 7812 (Berks)

**Yamaha DT125R**, 2003, black/white, taxed, 500 miles, vgc, £2100 ono. Tel 07977 130214 (Herts)

**KTM 300EXC**, 2002, hand/sumpguard, clutches/avcr, complete engine rebuilt, hundreds spent, vgc, £2500 ono or swap/px XR400R/TR600. Tel 07970 706281 (Shrops)

**Honda XR400R**, 2000, X-reg, T&T, hand/frame/sumpguards, Renthals, Talon sprockets, good tyres, exc cond, £2250 ono. Tel (mobile) 07791 277325 or 01255 430567 (Essex)

**KTM 400EXC**, Jan '02, road reg'd, little use, regularly serviced, mature owner, many extras, vgc, £3450 ono. Tel 01386 438553 (Glouce)

**Honda XR400R**, 2002, red, taxed, 12000km, exc original cond, looks and rides like it's two weeks old, £2950. Tel 01604 810617 (Northants)

**Suzuki DR350SE**, 1998, white, T&T, 8600 miles, elec start, new Bridgestones for road use, sensible extras, exc cond, £1850 ono. Tel 01604 810617 (Northants)

**Honda XR250R**, 2000 model, T&T, low miles, green lined only, bashplate, Acerbis guards, vgc, £1900. Tel (mobile) 07929 838301 or 01829 740148 (Cheshire)

**Yamaha TR1250 Open Enduro**, 1998, elec start model, T&T, good tyres, handguards, Renthals, stainless exhaust, extras available, £1750 ono. Tel 020 8579 7960 (Middlex)

**Honda CRM250 mkiII**, M-reg, low miles, very light use, many new parts, £1700. Tel 01262 424199 (Yorkes)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2003 reg'd, yellow, taxed, 2600 miles, handguards, exc cond, £3000. Tel 07970 046123 (Warke)

**BMW R1100GS**, 1998, R-reg, T&T, FSH, ABS, Goodridges, K&N, hugger, panniers, heated grips, race car, power chip, new discs, £3999 ono. Tel 01708 852387 (Essex)

**CCM R30**, 2004, burgundy, 760 dry miles, £350 worth of alarm/imobiliser, pillion pegs, professionally padded seat, fantastic fun, immaculate cond, £4000 ono. Tel 01273 842493 (W Sussex)

**Yamaha WR426E**, 2002, new graphics/tyres/cvs, maintained to a high standard, field use only, exc cond, £2995 ono. Tel 0114 247 1567 (S Yorks)

**Honda XR400R**, 1997, road legal, very well maintained, handguards, bashplate, Renthals, wave discs, stainless spokes, exc example, must be seen, £1950 ono. Tel (eves) 0151 339 0543 (Cheshire)

**Honda CRF150**, 2005, bomb-proof mini-thumper, just in from USA, £2150. Tel 07831 543363 (Berks)

**Husaberg FE450e**, 2004, 30 hours' use, sump/waterpump-guard, Enduro Engineering handguards, Acerbis rear light, loads of extras, vgc, £3750. Tel 07841 714272 (Berks)

**KTM GS250 twin-shock enduro**, 1980, T&T, restored, enduro tank, paddock stand, spare tyres, exc cond, £1250. Tel 01983 618744 (IOW)

**Honda XR400R**, 2003, 750cc, taxed, Acerbis multi-adjustable bars, MX plus trail tyres, handguards, as new cond, must be seen, £1395 ono. Tel 07702 517346 (Norfolk)

**Triumph Tiger**, 1999, V-reg, 18000 miles, service history, Datatag, hugger, Scottolier, Baglux cover, good cond, £3250 or would p/x for 2004 Tiger. Tel 01282 870059 (Lancs)

**Honda XLR125**, red/black, T&T, 3500 miles, elec start, light green line use, xlr1 learner bike, vgc. Tel (mobile) 07973 372863 or 01273 299132 (E Sussex)

**KTM 250EXC 4T**, reg'd 2002, green lane use only, £3000. Tel 01872 553622 (Cornwall)

**Classic Yamahas**, XT600Z, kickstart only, red/white, vgc, £1450. IT175, 1982, £900. IT250 project with lots of parts, £550. Tel 07849 642096 (S Yorks)

**Gas Gas EC200**, 2002, yellow, light use only, exc cond, £2600 ono. Tel 01993 771844 (Oxon)

**Kawasaki KLR600**, 1987, D-reg, red, T&T, 35000km, elec start, new battery/ignition, workshop manual, good cond, £700. Tel 07702 018520 (Hants)

**Yamaha WR400E**, 2000, MoT, well maintained, full lighting kit, spare parts, new bike forces sale, phone for details, £2150 ono. Tel 07764 180158 (S Yorks)

**Yamaha WR400E**, 2000, W-reg, blue/white, T&T, under 3000 miles, some green lane use, new tyres, clean bike, £2875. Tel (mobile) 07941 169037 or 01203 256290 (Dorset)

**KTM 450EXC**, 2004, one of the last 04 models, 54-reg, little use, new tyres/cvs, clutches/avcr, sump/handguards, high seat, £4300. Tel 01923 265852 (Herts)

**BMW R100GS**, 1991, red, MoT, stainless exhaust, £2500. Tel 01536 201755 (Northants)

**KTM 400EXC**, 2002, full maintenance history, sump/handguards, good cond, £3200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07768 045084 or 01691 690794 (Shrops)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2003, 53-reg, yellow/white, 1000 road miles, barkbusters, sump/frameguards, as new, bargain at £3250. Tel (mobile) 07778 434929 or 01444 247737 (W Sussex)

**Suzuki DR-Z400**, Nov 2003, road reg'd, handguards, as new, little use, £3200. Tel 07860 228881 (Lincs)

**Moto Morini Kangaro 350**, V-twin, A-reg, new tyres/chain etc, as featured in TBM, ideal green laner, £1250 ono. Tel 07968 873733 (Worce)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2004, 04-reg, under 600 miles, bought as second bike, no time to use, showroom cond, re-advertised due to time-waster, £3200 ono. Tel 01206 540594 (Essex)

**Yamaha WR250E**, 2002, CRD pipe, Acerbis handguards, Renthals, frameguards, new Michelins, Factory Effix graphics, just serviced, maintained regardless of cost. Tel 01387 375433 (Roxburghshire)

**CCM 604E DS**, T&T, 3200 miles, good cond, £2850 ono. Tel 01524 792091 (Lancs)

**KTM 450EXC**, 04-reg, regularly serviced, new plastics/graphics/seat cover/pads/tyres, all guards, lots of spares, exc cond, £4200. Tel 07739 006652 (Essex)

**Honda CRM250 mkiII**, 1996, T&T, DEP pipe, new cvs/clutch, well maintained. Tel 07769 541393 (Surrey)

**Honda XL600R**, F-reg, MoT, loads of new parts, great fun, exc cond, £950 ono. Tel 01264 358431 (Hants)

**KTM 200EXC**, 04-reg, very little use, brushguards, full spares kit, new sticker kit in bag, immaculate cond, 5000. Tel 00 35 346 955 1148 (Ireland)

**KTM 400EXC**, six months old, 600 miles, run-in on green lanes/road only, many extras, mint cond, £4450. Tel (mobile) 07929 930740 or 01530 459644 (Leics)

**KTM LC4 640 enduro**, 2002, steel frame, only 2500km, £3250 ono. Tel 01620 810725 (E Lothian)

**Suzuki DR-Z400EK4**, 2004, 04-reg, 337 road miles only, UK road legal enduro bike, absolutely mint, illness forces sale. Tel (mobile) 07860 185062 or 01772 877408 (Lancs)

**Yamaha WR400E**, 2000 model, MoT, new cvs, vgc, phone for details, too much to list, £2600. Tel (mobile) 07879 054379 or 01905 452315 (Worce)

**Honda CRM250R mkiII**, 1993, MoT, chromed DEP system, off-road tyres, Renthals, good cond, £1495. Tel 01728 663718 (Suffolk)

**Honda XR650R**, 2002, T&T, 3300 miles, UK full power bike, overlaid prepred, inc standard gear vgc, can deliver, £3100. Tel 01253 875717 (Lancs)

**KTM 450EXC**, 2003, only 39 green lane hours, Carmichael Fatbars, new FIM Michelins, road kit, mags, spares cvs, £3750 ono. Tel 02476 343598 (Warke)

**KTM 450EXC**, 2003 model, 02-reg, 1600 miles, new tyres, exc original cond, £2600. Tel 01284 850991 (Suffolk)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2000, MoT, 600 miles, trail use only, Renthals, barkbusters, CRD plus original pipe, £2350. Tel (mobile) 07971 186768 or 01420 561371 (Hants)

**Honda XLR125R**, four-stroke, red/white/black, disc front brake, field bike, £850 ono. Tel 01578 740323 (Scotland)

**CCM 404E**, 2004, black, 1500 mainly road miles, bashplate, handguards, race and original can, £3300 ono. Tel (mobile) 07799 133883 or 01565 607577 (Cheshire)

**Yamaha WR400E**, 1999, T&T, well maintained, CRD pipe, many extras, exc cond, £2400. Tel 01782 265313 (Staffs)

**KTM 450EXC**, 2004 model, one owner, Fatbars, brushguards, regularly serviced, green lane use only, exc cond, £4295. Tel 0161 494 6004 (Cheshire)

**Cagiva Elefant 650 Lucky Explorer**, 1987, MoT, low miles, Ohlins, suede seat, Baines serviced, great trails, vgc, £900. Tel 07710 133888 (Northants)

**KTM 525EXC**, 2003, UK bike, taxed, only 180 miles, alloy sump-guard, handguards, TI exhaust, as new, £3950. Tel 01189 789773 (Berks)

**Yamaha XT225 Serow**, F-reg, T&T, elec start, £1050. Tel 07711 222700 (Powys)

**Honda CR250**, 2001, field use only, 2C Racing pipe, carbon reeds, brand new clutch, mint cond, £2290. Tel 01663 719565 (Stockport)

**KTM 525EXC**, April 2003, little use, hand/sumpguards, some spares, shop serviced, vgc, £4100. Tel 01273 846459 (W Sussex)

**Beta Zero 250 trials bike**, new rear tyre, good cond, exc runner, ready to trial, £900. Tel 01395 442291 (Devon)

**Yamaha TT600R**, 2000, T&T, 5000km, brushguards, gaiters, green lane/road use only, immaculate cond, £2000 ono. Tel 01691 839162 (Powys)

**Yamaha XT225 Serow**, T&T, elec start, new cvs/battery etc,

hand/sumpguards, good cond, £1195 ono. Tel (mobile) 07770 623662 or 01672 871106 (Berks)

**BSA Metisse rolling chassis**, new, takes any BSA unit motor, gorgeous British trail bike, reg'd with V5, unused, top spec. Tel 01874 730364 (Powys)

**Yamaha WR400E**, 2000, YZ tank/seat, light green lane use only, professional mods, supermoto wheels available, £2200. Tel Paul on (mobile) 07850 744377 or (days) 01924 274887 (Wakefield)

**Kawasaki KLR600**, 1988, green, MoT, vgc, 6850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07789 400040 or 0121 707 7416 (W Mids)

**KTM 300EXC**, light green lane use only, OTR, maintained regardless of cost, amazing bike, extras available, £3700 ono. Tel Paul on (mobile) 07850 744377 or (days) 01924 274887 (Wakefield)

**Suzuki LT400Z quad**, ridden once, twist-grip conversion, White Bros nuff bumpers, virtually brand new, cost £5900, sell for £4150 ono. Tel Paul on (mobile) 07850 744377 or (days) 01924 274887 (Wakefield)

**KTM LC4 640E**, 2003/4, orange, taxed, 1500 miles, brushguards, rear rack, never been off-road, mint cond, £4700 ono. Tel 07973 661632 (London)

**Honda CRF250X**, over 40s use for seven months only, sump/handguards, airbox mod, otherwise excellent standard condition, £4000. Tel 01235 867352 (Oxon)

**Kawasaki KMX200**, 1990, many new parts, will deliver for free within 100 miles of Wensleydale, phone for more details. Tel 01969 663341 (N Yorks)

**KTM 250EXC Racing**, 4T, 2003 model, 03-reg, fully serviced, hardly used, includes all road equipment and soft seat, exc cond, £3250. Tel 01423 888940 (N Yorks)

**Honda XR650R**, 51-reg, MoT, usual green lane use, wants for nothing, extras available, knee operation forces sale, £3050. Tel 01795 661911 (Kent)

**Yamaha XT225 Serow**, 1996, white/red, T&T, graphite frame, gold wheels, road and green lane use only, genuine original bike, exc cond. Tel 01768 88348 (Cumbria)

**Suzuki PE250X**, Y-reg, T&T, very clean standard bike, £1200 ono. Tel 07821 918172 (Noths)

**Honda XR600R**, 2000, T&T, green lane use only, £2300 ono. Tel 07971 809164 (Noths)

**KTM 250EXC 4T**, 2004, six months use only, handguards, bashplate, exc cond, £3400. Tel 01638 510922 (Suffolk)

## WANTED

**Wanted workshop/parts manual for Kawasaki KLR600**, any info plus carb and cylinder head. Tel 01978 821519 (Wrexham)

**Wanted Honda CRM250 mkiII or mkiII**, plus spares, cash waiting for sound bike. Tel 07732 767331 (Warke)

**Wanted supermoto wheels to fit 1998 Honda XR600**, with discs, sprockets etc. Tel (mobile) 07860 375058 or 01375 382773 (Essex)

**Wanted spark arrester for Kawasaki KLR600/300**. Tel 020 8806 1769 (Essex)

**Wanted pair of wheels for Honda XR400R**. Tel 01474 560409 (Kent)

**Wanted silencer for 2003 WR250E**, standard or aftermarket. Tel 07718 908063 (Lincs)

**Wanted for CCM 64E**, complete off-road wheels, Also headlight for CCM R30, complete, cash waiting. Tel 07984 537734 (Cumbria)

**Wanted rear wheel for Yamaha YZ426E**, or hub only. Tel (mobile) 07850 054149 or (eves) 01323 488083 (Sussex)

**Wanted Yamaha WR/YZ426E cylinder-head**, or complete engine. Tel 01827 383401 (Staffs)

**Wanted for Suzuki TS250C**, 21" front wheel with 6" hub. Tel 01865 373500 (Oxon)

**Wanted Corbin seat and aftermarket system for TDM850**, 1996-on, or consider just cans. Tel 01482 448976 (E Yorks)

**Wanted CRM AR or mkiII**, must be in mint cond, cash waiting. Tel 01642 784818 (N Yorks)

**Wanted genuine parts for Honda TL125S**, toolbox, front fender, sidepanels, sprocket cover, 1/h engine cans, handbook, factory workshop manual. Tel 01904 490764 (Yorks)

## SPARES

**Honda XR Baja twin lamps**, fit all XR/XL250-600, bolts straight on using standard loom, 70w high/low, £100 plus pdp. Tel 07979 960578 (Scotland)

**Breaking Husavarna TT610**, 2000 model, no frame, SM front wheel. Tel (mobile) 07815 089742 or 01484 866942 (W Yorks)

**Gold wheels and hubs for XT600 4E**, £50. XT600 forks and yokes, £40. KL250 plastic coated front/swingarm, forks and yokes, £30.

**Genuine Honda manuals for XL125S**, £15. Tel 01246 435297 (Aerby)

**18in rear wheel for CRF450/CR250**, mint-cond, will swap for mint 19in wheel. Tel 07739 805818 (Cheshire)

**Talon 18in rear wheel for Yamaha YZ250**, 2000 model, gold hub, like new, £350. Also large tank, inc rad shrouds, £100. Tel 01202 841229 (Dorset)

**CRM mkiII parts**, wheels, brakes, ECU, barrel, head etc, lots of parts available, phone for details. Tel 07712 778558 (Bristol)

**DEP exhaust for Yamaha WR250E**, 2003/4, hardly used, perfect cond, £119. Tel Chris on 07960 311581 (Lancs)

**KRM250 plastics**, red front and rear fenders, white sidepanels, £50 the lot. Tel 07785 574966 (W Yorks)

**Touratech pannier frame for KTM 640 Adventure**, plus tank and fender bag, £100. Tel 07729 187500 (London)

**Scotts stabilizer kit for XR650R**, with top yoke, still boxed, £350. CRD alloy sumpguard, good cond, £50. Tel (mobile) 07801 629680 or 01255 431651 (Essex)

**Arai Demon helmet**, used twice, £50. Frank Thomas weather trousers, 34in waist, 32in leg, used, £30. Lewis Leathers gloves, good cond, £10. Tel 01256 861759 (Hants)

**Alpinestars Tech 3 MX boots**, red, size 8, as new, £100 ono. DR-Z400 air filter, sprockets, CD ROM manual, £50. Tel (mobile) 07971 864668 or 01438 216056 (Herts)

**Breaking Suzuki DR350**, 1997 model, elec start, complete bike for spares. Tel 07866 714499 (Noths)

**Frank Thomas two-piece leather**, silver/grey, 42in chest, 34in waist, 32in leg, armour, vgc, £100 ono. Tel John on 07971 864668 (Herts)

**CRD exhaust system for CRF250X**, stainless steel, only ten hours' use, £200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07770 575030 or 01565 652400 (Cheshire)

**Dave Cooper two-bike trailer**, vgc, cost £260 new, accept £160 ono. Tel 07717 730871 (Northants)

**FMF exhaust for KTM 530EXC**, Power Core stainless header, Q-series silencer, increase power, great cond. Tel 07816 604132 (S Wales)

**Thor Phase MX pants**, orange/grey, size 34, worn twice, as new, £40. Tel 01600 715883 (Gwent)

**Clarke 13L tank for 2002 CRF450R**, white, £100. Tel 01327 858148 (Northants)

**Hebo X2 MX pants**, 32in waist, Hebo MX shirt, orange, size XL, same as David Knight's kit, brand new, unused, £100 ono. Tel 01600 715883 (Gwent)

**Kliponoff two-bike trailer**, approx one year old, fully galvanised, fitted lights, lockable HD hitch, spare wheel, built-in ramp, best around, £400. Tel 07919 521800 (Anglesey)

**UFO Scorpion body armour jacket**, size large, little use, cost £120, accept £60. Tel 07812 716146 (Bucks)

**Remus Evolution exhaust for R1150GS**, Adventure screen, engine bars, Touratech rack extension, all as new, photo available, £610 or will split. Tel 0802 925609 (Northumberland)

**Supermoto wheels to suit Yamaha**, brand new Talon nickel hubs, Excel Titan rims, Bridgestones, cvs, cost £1195, accept £880. Tel Paul on (mobile) 07850 744377 or (eves) 01924 271043 (Wakefield)

**Yellow plastic for CCM 604**, inc tank, sidepanels and rear fender, £100 the lot. Tel 07876 152807 (Lincs)

**KTM 28L fuel tank to fit 2004 450/525**, includes all brackets, fuel pump and seal, easy to fit for rallies. Tel Steve on 01543 481629 (Staffs)

**Supermoto wheels for CCM 604E**, gold Morad rims, discs, spacers, stand etc, good tyres, £450 ono. Tel 01942 879585 (Manchester)

**Kawasaki KDX200 E-series engine**, with carb, ignition, CDI etc, £110 ono buyer collects. Tel (mobile) 07817 414638 or 01235 815037 (Oxon)

**IMS 13L tank for 2002 Gas Gas EC200**, £120. Tel (mobile) 07974 083006 or 0118 966 7812 (Berks)

**Honda XR400 top-end gasket set**, 1999-2000, £20. Tel (mobile) 07974 083006 or 0118 966 7812 (Berks)

**Givi topbox E460 backpack**, universal adapter, £80. Magura universal hydraulic clutch, unused, £90. Tel 01296 630001 (Bucks)

**Supermoto wheels for Husavarna SMR/TE**, only done 100 miles, mint cond, £350. Tel (mobile) 07880 787210 or 01474 746131 (Kent)

**Modified seat for DR-Z400**, sculpted and recovered to suit shorter-legged rider, £30. Tel Martin on 07818 266521 (W Yorks)

**Haynes manuals**, DT125R, 1988-95, £7. KMX125/200, 1986-96, £7. Clymer manual for Suzuki DR250/350, £10. Tel 07818 266521 (W Yorks)

**Lazer helmet**, blue/white, medium 57/58, £25. GAR trail boots, size 43, £50. All used just three times. Tel 01353 666406 (Cambs)

**Fox Forma Comp boots**, blue, size 9, £40. Shox MXR boots, blue, size 43, £40. Fox 360 pants, blue, 34in waist, 30in leg, £35. Tel 01256 861759 (Hants)

**Airoh helmet**, silver/red, size small, unused, comes with a visor but can be used with goggles, £25. Tel 07785 574966 (W Yorks)

**CRF450 spares**, auto-clutch, £200. Good forks, £200. 20mm off-set triple clamps, £190. E-marked silencer, ex-Husaberg, £160. Tel 01491 682171 (Oxon)

**Bridgestone Trailing tyres**, 21in front, 18in rear, good tread left, great dual purpose tyres, £25 the pair. Tel 07785 574966 (W Yorks)



