

SEPT.-OCT. 1983 \$1.50 (\$2 NZ)

Reg'd by Aust. Post publication No. VBP 1542

trails & track

tests:

HONDA XLX 250

XL - 'ncy grows a carb

XT 600 YAMAHA

"Bowser drainer"

600 MX YAMAHA

"Rac'in thumper"

IT175 L / COOLED

Aussie waterbottle

MR MOTO-CROSS

Qld and NSW rounds





CONTENTS

No. 118. SEPT.-OCT. '83 \$1.50 [\$2 NZ]

tests

- 25 HONDA XLX: To stay top of the chart again?
- 30 YAMAHA 600 TENERE: Long tripper without stopping
- 34 MX600 YAMAHA: Sounds of 4-strokes forever
- 66 IT 175 WATERCOOLED: A do-it-yourself that fly's

features

- 16 NEW MODELS: Who said '84 was next year (pics of next models now)
- 40 MR MOTOCROSS R-3 & 4: Gall to win yet again
- 20 U.S. CONNECTION: From the land of where it all happens
- 52 ENDURO'S: Ace race reports from all over
- 64 U.S. PULSES: ATV scene both there and here

regulars

- 5 NEWS
- 15 LETTERS
- 46 WANT SOME HELP
- 19 PRODUCTS
- 12 OFF THE TOP
- 61 TRIALS TORQUE
- 57 MINIS
- 70 ENDO

COVER: The XLX250 under test — will it continue to be a sales winner? Race insert: Leisk and Willoughby hard at it in Qld. Mick Nicol lands the big MX600 Yamaha on test day.

Yamaha

XT600 TÉNÉRÉ

Across the board, bike sales are very low, however, recently Yamaha's demise has been eased slightly by the introduction of the new XT 600 Tenere. It is neither unusual nor impractical that Yamaha should release such a bike in Australia since we do have most of our roads in underdeveloped conditions and there are long distances to be covered between fuel stops.

The 30 litre fuel tank offers around 500 to 700 kilometers range depending on conditions; the big 600 motor offers road type performance and the suspension soaks up a lot more than a road bike, but don't get the idea that this is a good off road machine. It's not. There are too many limiting factors.

Weight has to be a major one. So many items are up high, with the most obvious being the fuel. But then there's the oil tank (bike has a dry sump) which although not as high as some bikes is still higher than a wet sump bike. And even the tools are placed up high and at the back of the bike rather than lower in some more central position. All these things help to make the machine top heavy.

I agree with the inclusion of the disc front brake on this bike as most of its dirt work will be in softer going rather than rocks etc which always make me sceptical about the vulnerability factor of a disc. Other factors that decree a disc is the go, are the weight necessary to pull up and the speed that this bike will be travelling. To this end it works well when the tyres can get some grip on the surface.

On the subject of tyres, the standard ones are only suitable for the bitumen and even then they're not great. On the dirt they are down right dangerous, especially if it happens to be wet.

Mounted in front of the bars are the usual speedo and tacho along with the trip meter and ignition. To the right on the bars come the dual cable throttle, kill switch, brake lever and mirror and the master cylinder. To the left is the multi-switch, clutch and choke. Both sides are fitted with hand protectors which are very handy because even a small twig can make you smart when you hit it at speed.

There is no manual decompressor. I believe this is a mistake on a motor of this size as it makes starting harder, especially bump starting or roll starting on hills. The rear wheel just locks up and you're back to kicking it again. One item you will be happy with is the headlight. It is very good and shows a good wide and long beam. In contrast to this the front mudguard is very poor. Apart from being too short in the front, it is similar to the Hondas in that it gives absolutely no protection to the motor or rider at the rear. If you intend to ride on wet dirt roads throw it and get something decent.

For average type terrain the front suspension is not bad. Being air assisted certainly helps and allows you to adjust the pressure depending on just how



Bulbous tank will empty bowser and your wallet . . .

much fuel you will be carrying in the tank. A full tank places a lot of weight on the forks but you will find when only a small amount of fuel is carried that less pressure will give a softer ride.

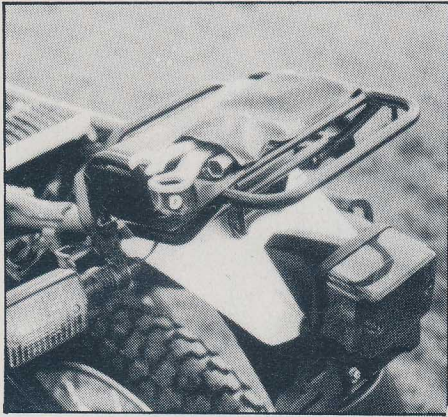
Obviously the single most noticeable feature of the bike is the huge tank. There is no better way to carry fuel than in the tank position, however Yamaha have not fitted the tank as close as they could have to the frame and other areas could have been expanded also to keep the weight lower than it is. Of course, being made of metal doesn't help at all. In side the

tank to stop fuel surge are metal baffles which work well. The chances of not denting the tank are about a million to one. I believe with the superb plastics that are available today that this would have been a more practical material to make the tank out of, even allowing for the large capacity. I have been using a plastic Don Vesco tank now for many years and found them to be excellent. Most others are not much chop.

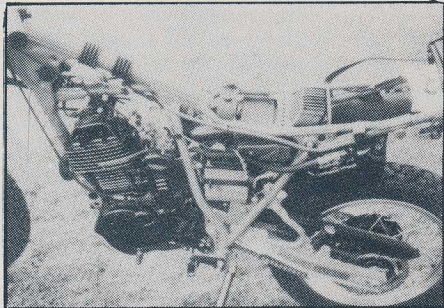
In the seating department we have a decidedly road item rather than off-road, however even for the



. . . but doesn't hinder rider all that much



Tool kit is easy to get at and had the usual array inside



Oil tank is mounted just under seat instead of frame back bone in the past



Disc is perfect for road, tyres let the full use of bike down

road it becomes pretty hard and does require some more padding unless your own seat is of the extra padded type. For short periods in the saddle it is quite comfortable. As far as off road work goes it is too wide for any comfort and rubs badly on the legs when you stand up for any length of time. If you are very tall, then this problem is not as acute, but being shorter it was like riding with a barrel

between your legs. This is caused by the flaring out of the base of the seat, side covers and tank. On the road you can tuck in behind the tank and the position feels good; just like a road bike. Behind the seat is a handy pack rack under which resides the plastic tool box. Most of the mud seems to be collected by the rear guard and its extension has a reasonable sized taillight while fitted are the usual Yamaha rubber mounted blinkers. At the rear RHS is the huge muffler while in the LHS is the oil tank.

The swing arm on this bike is very strong alloy but it has been made so that the tyre tread sits right up extremely close to the cross brace and as there is little adjustment you are extremely limited in your choice of tyres that can be fitted. An extension on the arm would not go astray. Being very long, the alloy brake shaft arm hangs down low enough to cop a few wacks from passing nasties. On this model, the snail cam chain adjusters have been placed on the inside of the swing arm instead of on the outside. While this gets them out of the way it does make them harder to operate as one has to move them with the hand instead as often is required, by the foot, when they become difficult to shift.

The chain guard is quite good at the rear, but like many, lacks enough protection at the front where dirt is thrown directly onto the chain. Below the swing arm, the plastic chain guide does a good job of keeping the chain in line on the 39 tooth rear sprocket.

Pillion pegs are supplied on an A La KTM style which has good up and down strength but little sideways strength. Both gear and brake foot levers have fold back tips which is just as well as they don't have any protection from the bash plate. A wider plate would not go astray to give better motor protection but a lot of the falls are going to be taken on the tank which will give some extra protection to the side cases. One area that didn't seem that strong was the foot pegs which are made from thin

metal and subject to bending.

The rear unit is the usual bare mono cross system without much provision for fine adjustment. A rubber boot keeps the dirt out of the bottom section which along with the preload adjustment, is subject to much dirt and water.

For what the bike will be used for the air filter and box seems quite good and is easy to remove and replace.

This new 600 motor is basically a bigger bore of the 550cc and has like the 550 BULK power. an air cooler helps keep the temperature down and the five speed box uses that power well. Also as with the 550, the dual carby set up gives good fuel economy and lots of extra power as it comes in. On the road you can expect to get 68 to 78 mpg while on dirt tracks, around 50 mpg.

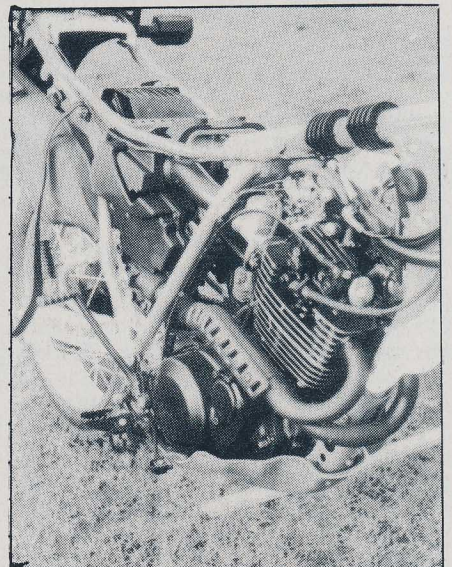
To start this machine you must get the piston just over T.D.C. when it will only require a reasonable kick to burst it into life. But to just kick it without this technique you will need the legs of Tarzan and then some more. Even with the decompressor (auto) it can be difficult to find the right spot and starting on a hill; well forget it. Obviously for a taller person it is easier. In fact if you want to go on the dirt at all it is really only suitable for a tall rider. The weight combined with the high seat height make it unsuitable for short riders except on the road.

In the Alpine areas, especially if it is wet, forget it, period, forget it. The tyres and the weight will see you on your ear more than on the bike whether you be short or tall. It is just too tall in the gearing for log hopping, the front dives badly on jumps and the tank is just too expensive to smash. The good news is that where you can get traction, the motor will pull up hills like they weren't even there, or you can just clutch it in difficult situations quite easily.

I found the brakes both front and back became extremely hot after only a short time of riding in the bush or tight desert country, which didn't appeal to me much, and the rear one locks up very easily which is pretty traditionally Yamaha. A change of tyres would help this somewhat.



Bike will handle when forced



Twin carbs and twin headers grace the large engine



For lengthy off-road use the seat will need more padding



Correct carby set up is critical and they are not easy to work on so don't drop your bike in any water or you could be in trouble.

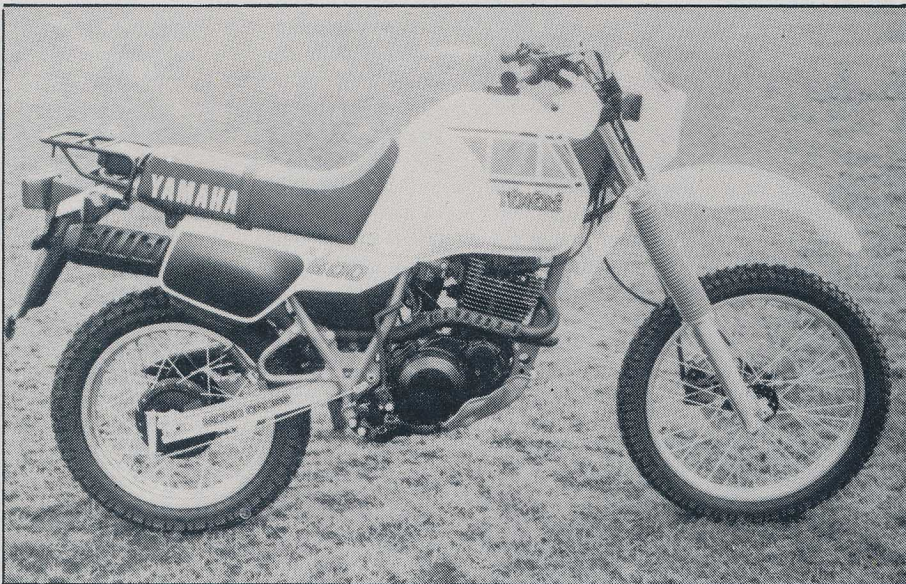
Since it is a desert type bike I rode it for two days on one of my safaris. The bike was fitted with appropriate knobbies and one tooth down on the front sprocket. The steep steering angle got it around the tight sections quite well but the key word for the day was "exhaustion" which set in very quickly. The motor displayed good torque and would pull from around two thousand revs. In fact you could use it like an automatic and come into a corner without changing down and just accelerate away in the same gear. While others about are grabbing for gears, the XT takes it all in its stride. There is very little vibration at all and the motor is silky smooth right through the range.

The suspension caused the bike to wallow under the weight in the rough stuff but in average going, handled it quite well.

You are travelling at 100 k's when the motor is only doing 4000 revs and it will cruise at 140 k's. While it red lines at 160 K's it will reach up to around the 170 mark. It is difficult not to compare this bike with the XL 600 Honda, where one finds quite marked differences. The Yamie has much more slug down low making it a little better in slow conditions. The Honda kills the Yamie up higher in the rev range. Personally I prefer the Honda because both bikes are going to be used due to weight and size etc. in the open going situation and the low down slug of the Yamie is really wasted in this situation. The Honda power comes on quicker in the ranges that I believe it will be mostly used. As a long distance tourer the Yamie has the advantage of the larger capacity tank but it is also heavier and the Honda is an easier bike to operate generally. I think for practical purposes the large tank on the Yamie would be very handy in central australia, while the Honda may be better for shorter distance work. Which ever way you go you will get a good bike.

So there you have it. A change of tyres, front mud guard and bigger bashplate and a six foot rider will find he has a very good Tourer indeed. Selling at around \$2700 mark it represents pretty good value. if you're heading into the Alice, if not, it's a lot of bike to commute on.

Murray Crawford



Ideal for long distance easy going off-road riding

SPEC'S

ENGINE:

Type 4-stroke, SOHC, 4-valve, single
 Displacement 595 cc
 Bore and stroke 95.0 x 84.0 mm
 Compression ratio 8.5:1
 Max. power (DIN) 43.0 PS (31.6 kW)
 at 6,500 rpm
 Max. torque (DIN) 5.0 kg-m (49.0 Nm)
 at 5,500 rpm
 Lubrication Dry sump
 Carburation Y27PV
 Ignition CDI
 Starter system Kick
 Fuel tank capacity 30.0 l
 Oil capacity 1.6 l
 Transmission 5-speed

CHASSIS:

Overall length 2,210 mm
 Overall width 880 mm
 Overall height 1,230 mm
 Seat height 890 mm
 Wheelbase 1,430 mm
 Ground clearance 265 mm
 Dry weight 138 kg
 Suspension
 Front Telescopic forks
 Rear Monocross suspension
 Brakes
 Front Hydraulic disc
 Rear Drum
 Tyres
 Front 3.00S 21-4PR
 Rear 4.60S 18-4PR

Many thanks to Craig Hope for loan of machine and time

