



APRIL, 1978

\$1.00\*

# two wheels

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**ASPES 125MX**  
**FLIER**

**HOW**  
**TO HOT**  
**XT/TT500**  
**Yams**

**INTERNATIONAL**  
**VINTAGE RALLY**  
**PREVIEW**

**3 BIKES TESTED**

# two wheels

VOLUME 18, No. 2, APRIL 1978

## TESTS

- 8 SUZUKI GS1000 First Test  
10 ASPES 125CRC Hot-shot Italian MXer.  
16 HONDA CB400T The classiest commuter.  
34 YAMAHA IT250D We finally ride the enduro king.

## FEATURES

- 15 BIKES OF THE YEAR The choice approacheth.  
22 INTERNATIONAL RALLY Preview of the big vintage event.  
38 WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DISCS Little known tips.  
66 ALL TORQUE, NO ACTION Hotting the TT/XT500 Yams.

## SPORT

- 42 FLYING SANDGROPPERS WA MX guide for '78.  
50 GUNTER HAD GALL Australian MX titles.

## TOURING

- 58 THE CONQUEST OF KILIMANJARO Part two.

## HISTORY

- 54 OLD GOLD Pics from the past.  
74 THE MARSTON MASTERPIECES The Sunbeam singles.

## DEPARTMENTS

- |                |                      |                  |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 5 FIRST STROKE | 32 THE SOCKET FILE   | 84 VIBES         |
| 6 BEHIND BARS  | 49 JUST CRUISIN'     | 88 CLUB REGISTER |
| 6 ENCOUNTERS   | 65 TARLETON'S CORNER |                  |

## PEOPLE

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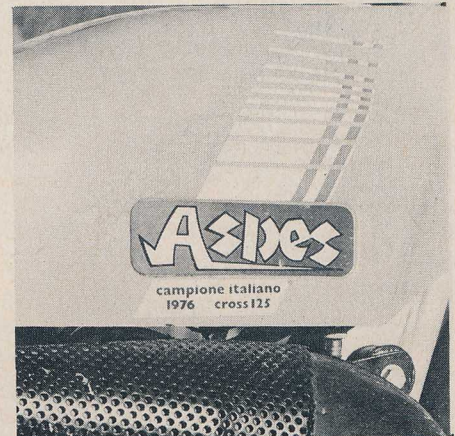
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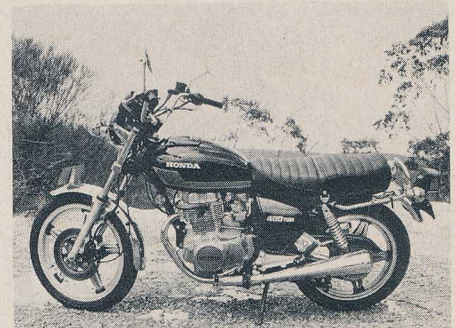
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Page 10



Page 16



Page 42

COVER: The Aspes 125 (test p10) through a crystal stream. Photo by BARRY ROSS.

How to cure the XT-TT500 Yamaha's problem of . . .

# ALL TORQUE NO ACTION!



After a year making a TT500 Yamaha into a competitive motocrosser, WA man RAY RYAN compiled this guide to the big Yamaha single; how to resolve its shortcomings and help it readjust to the realities of life in the dirt!

**I**N THE TT-XT500s, Japan's engineers and marketing machine produced a new breed-old breed motorcycle, designed to satisfy a broad spectrum of dirt riders, so it has inadequacies as a result of many compromises. The TT is a good dirt bike but it can be much better. How much better is determined by one factor: "How fast d'ya wanna *spend*, mate?"

Not all the modifications and improvements we outline here will be the answer for any individual TWO WHEELS thumper freak. You can sort

through them, analyse the cost in relationship to your requirements and then consider creating something that can partially satisfy a few fantasies.

My involvement with the Yamaha was a direct spin-off of an overall love of four-stroke singles for the dirt. I'd owned a BSA 441 Victor Special and B35, a few years ago in Europe and a B50MX in Oz, but I never had the fat chequebook required to put myself behind bars on a \$2600 CCM. The Yamaha TT was a financial compromise but the modifications to which the bike

responds have helped to resolve its shortcomings, as well as pushed it into the CCM price bracket!

Want to shoot big holes in your bank book, lose your woman and still have all your riding friends laugh at you? Read on . . .

## SUSPENSION

If you restrain yourself to the usual weekend-wheelie-king contests with your two-stroking comrades you'll never realise how inadequate the stock Yamaha set-up really is. Start hooking

and you start falling down. It's that simple.

The stock Japanese Dunlop rubber is a prime cause of frequent contact with the ground, particularly the 3.00 x 21" front rim protector which is blessed with sparse and shallow "knobettes" to keep you upright when you're trying hard. A dirt tyre's prime function is to cut dirt! If it doesn't cut you have zero traction and flop. The stockers just don't cut it and a change to anything with more sidewall adhesion, such as the Bridgestone or Yokohama 3.00/3.25 x 21 patterns is essential. Both are good, as are all Metzlers and Trelleborgs. The Bridgestones and Yokohamas also do the job at far lower cost. The stock rear Sports Senior is acceptable but wears far too quickly. Try a swap to either a Metzler 4.60 or one of the latest 5.10 Ten Masters motocross skins from Trelleborg. Neither are cheap, but the results are worth every cent.

### FORKS

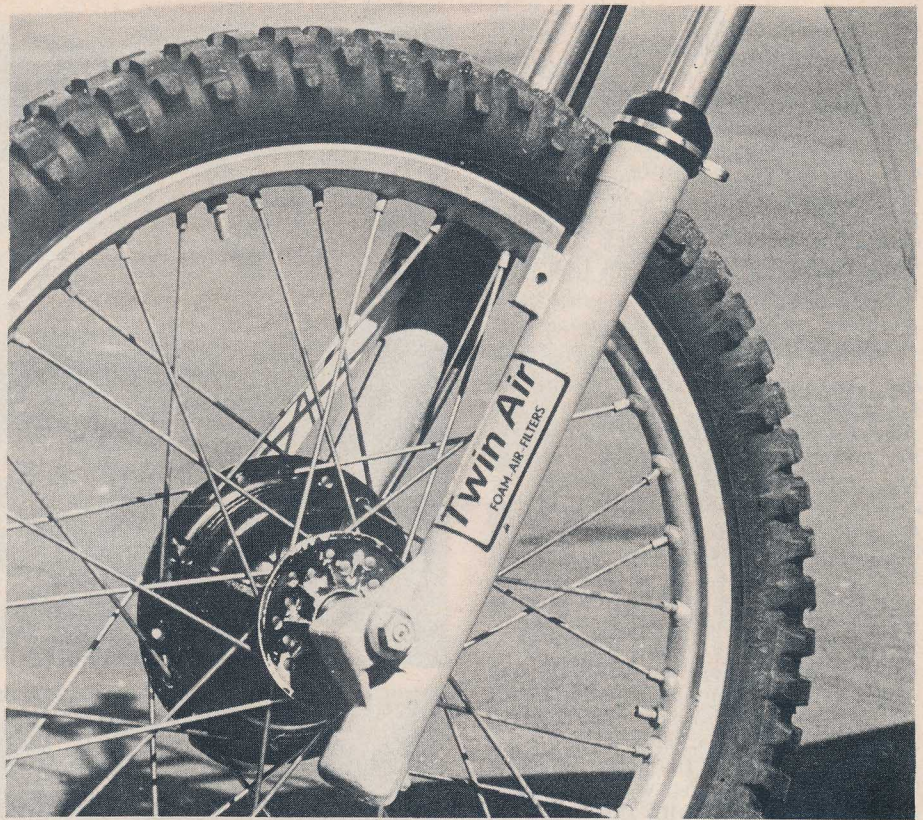
D model TTs have vastly improved front forks over the '75/'76 models. For all but serious motocross there's very little improvement required apart from a change of oil and the addition of a set of accessory "air caps" to help the stock springs when they inevitably begin to sag. A modified steering head incorporated in the D series also helps to improve front end traction and almost eliminates understeer and wheel washout.

The C vintage TT is a whole new ball game. Improvements are limited by two main factors: thin-walled fork tubes and minimal engagement overlap exclude the possibilities of safely extending travel by any great degree, and the poor triple clamp design contributes to incredible fork flex.

In the rough they flex like a CB aerial in a force 10 gale and the overstuff compression damping causes rider fatigue. Sport and Road of Melbourne have stocks of American made "Protec" accessory gear for both C and D models and should be able to supply the stronger, cast alloy triple clamps to suit your XT or TT. The triple clamps help reduce front wheel washout (in conjunction with a better tyre) by pulling back that front end by almost 12 mm, making a machine that will turn without the need for a berm.

Compression damping on the C models can be cured by fitting either a Trickit or S&W fork kit, which includes a completely new damper rod assembly. For anything but motocross use this under-\$50 solution is the way to go, but we suggest you steer clear of any fork extender kits, as they will invariably create even greater tube flexing when fitted to the stock XT/TT-C model front end.

For heavy duty riding such as motocross, there is no really cheap way to go. Italian Marzocchi leading axle forks are the best available, with a choice of either aluminium or



*Right: The Fox rear unit set-up gave about 25mm more travel than the stock freon gas shocks, with less unsprung weight and improved damping.*

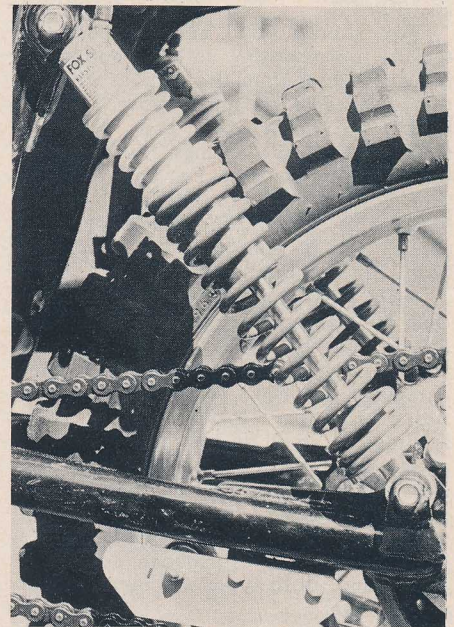
*Left: The Fox rear unit set-up gave about 25mm more travel than the stock freon gas shocks, with less unsprung weight and improved damping.*

magnesium cast legs and travel up to 240mm. They're not cheap (more than \$220 a pair) but are relatively easily adapted to the TT, and are supplied complete with steering stem, handlebar clamps, triple clamps, axle and all hardware.

They aren't a bolt-on fit to any TT though; their fitting necessitates the machining of a small groove on the lower triple clamp and the fabrication of an alloy torque rod for the stock TT front brake. The wheel assembly must be reversed in order to function with the Marzocchi assembly and although tolerances are tight, the finished job can look very professional.

Travel is either 220 or 240 mm, depending on the model forks ordered. We've found the stock Italian springs have a short life. They're too soft for the heavy Yamaha and will sag up to 35mm even with the bike at rest. Fitting a set of air caps such as those supplied by Competition Development in Sydney will solve the problem and give you a front end that can be finely tuned for various track surfaces. The caps aren't cheap either, and will leave very little brass in your hand from a \$20 bill!

Air pressure with the Marzocchis should be between 12-15 psi as a



starting point, with the legs containing 260cm<sup>3</sup> (each) of Bel-Ray 10 weight fork oil. Suzuki RM fork leg protectors can be carved to fit the Marzocchi fork legs to give your machine that final crowning touch of go-get-'em macho imagery. Use Loctite at all times when carrying out this conversion and keep a tube on hand for use on any critical chassis or engine fasteners.

Results with this conversion are faultless, but not really necessary for anything but serious motocross competition. Fork kits and air caps will

get you there happily for enduros, trail riding or weekend playracing.

The TT front guard should be changed with the new Marzocchi forks and we recommend a Preston Petty GP guard as it'll give adequate clearance on any high-level accessory pipe and provide the best rider and engine protection available. YZ style fender extensions don't fit the stock TT guard neatly and will fatigue from flex with constant riding.

#### REAR SUSPENSION

The standard Kyaba gas/oil shocks are acceptable for most forms of low-pressure riding. Lighter riders always find the springs far too heavy, but no alternative, lighter-rating springs are available on the local market to resolve the problem. Accessory shocks are the only way to go, entailing an investment of approximately \$100-\$150 for the better units.

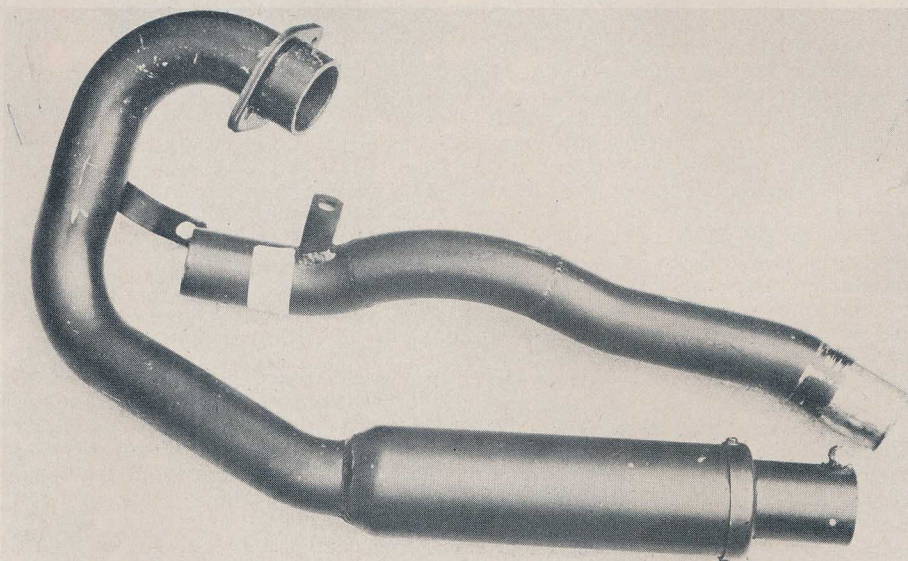
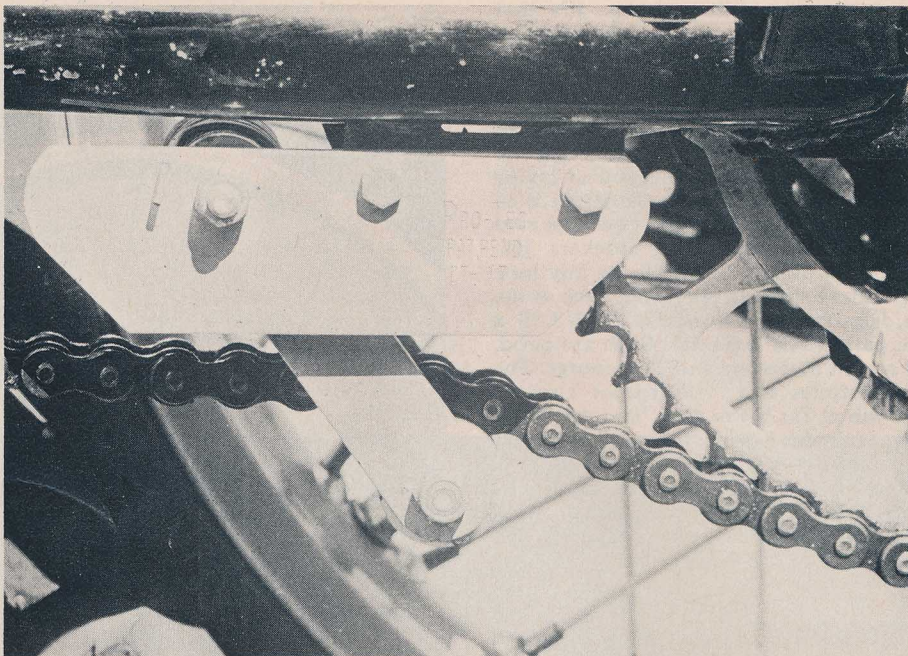
Apart from the springing advantages the fitting of a long-travel gas/oil shock 25mm longer than standard will yield up to 40mm or more of additional rear wheel travel. Damping characteristics are better than those of the Kyabas. Also, most after-market brands are up to half the weight of the heavy stockers. The conversion is well worth the cost and in conjunction with the improved front end can transform the handling of any TT/XT.

Fox shocks (US) are the best for serious motocrossing and are about 60 percent lighter than the Kyabas with all the advantages outlined above. Cost is heavy, around \$150 a pair including matched dual-rate springs, but they are undoubtedly the best. For enduro work their compression damping is a little too harsh and their thin, hardened steel shafts can be damaged easily in the bush, but for racing they're THE item.

S&W (US) gas/oil shocks are heavier than the Fox models but still 25 percent lighter than the Kyabas. They offer long travel, rugged construction and softer damping, just right for enduro or trail riding thumper lovers. Springs are included at an all up cost of about \$108 a set. They can't be adjusted like the Fox models with their integral "tyre pump" valves, but have proven themselves to be a worthwhile choice based on both performance and value for money. Both types will increase rear wheel travel.

A stock Yamaha swingfork works well with both types of shocks, but there are two minor advantages which can justify the \$150 outlay required for a lightweight alloy type. A square or hexagonal section welded alloy arm will cut unsprung weight by up to two kg and the more rearward mounting of the lower shock bolt gives an additional 30mm of rear wheel travel when used with any stock-plus-25mm accessory long travel gas/oil shocks. This is in addition to the 40mm already gained!

Few alloy arms are available in Australia and those that will trickle

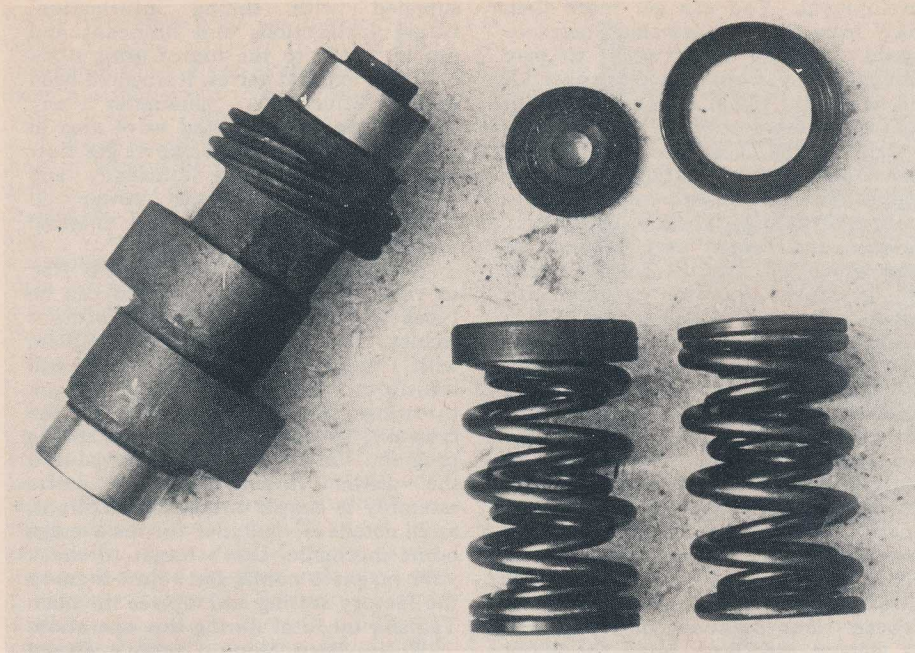


through will be about \$150, with a choice of two model lengths. A shorter (stock-plus-25mm) model is suggested for either enduro or motocross, with an even longer (stock-plus-50mm) desert swingfork also scheduled to hit these shores soon. The longer arm is also suitable for dirt track racing or any other application where maximum high speed stability is required, at the expense of low speed manoeuvrability.

With any modified TT or XT, a chain tensioner is a must. The Malcolm Smith or Trick brands are both worth a mention, particularly the latter which uses a neoprene roller guide instead of the more fragile solid block. The Trick tensioner is rebuildable too, as spare parts are readily available at most bike shops. Both retail for about \$20 and are simply fitted to the TT swingarm pivot,

with all hardware supplied.

Protec's (US) tensioner is doubly effective as it mounts in place of the fragile stock chain guard, directly forward of the rear drive sprocket. Like the Trick tensioner it is re-buildable, as we've proven through nearly 12 months of solid abuse on our own TTs. The Protec is made of tough alloy, and supplied with nyloc nuts; it's slightly more expensive than the MS and Trick items. We like it because it eliminates the stock chain guard most effectively and thereby saves a few more grams, but the choice usually depends upon local availability as all three are imported. No locally-made tensioner is effective on any TT or XT C model and an accessory type is not required on D series 500s which are factory-equipped with their own excellent system.



*Above: A Protec or Webcam camshaft gives a strong increase in overall power. Stronger S&W valve springs and retainers are necessary with all modified cams.*

*Above left: Protec's chain tensioner is rebuildable and an essential part of any modified rear suspension.*

*Left: Many pipes are available between 86-92cm tuned length range. A super Trapp muffler is the best choice for the XT-TT.*

*Right: Stock TT plug cap contains a current-limiting ceramic insert which may be replaced with copper wire. A new cap is another alternative.*



#### MINOR MUSCLE: STAGE ONE TUNING

A stock TT-500 develops about 20kW with a broad, useable torque curve that's suited to trail riding or family-level enduros. They aren't built for racing and will quickly run out of huff in the mid to upper rev ranges. A small 34mm carb and highly restrictive exhaust system are the main culprits and the two items which are easily improved on any TT for an outlay of no more than \$150. Power will increase by about 1.5kW with a larger carb and the more efficient scavenging effect of a tuned-length, large diameter pipe will yield about the same again.

Before fitting any carburettor it's best to discard the restrictive snorkel fitted to the TT/XT airbox and drill a few 25mm holes in the plastic airbox cover to increase air flow. The snorkel

isn't needed and the modification doesn't affect waterproofing.

The stock TT plug cap has a 10mm long ceramic insert which can be removed to improve sparking power, or the unit can be swapped for a Suzuki RM or Champion all-metal-contact plug cover. Both modifications are simple, cheap and very effective.

The Mikuni VM-38 carburettor (similar to that of the old SC-500) is a bolt-on fit to any TT/XT. Mikunis are available from most bike accessory shops but we suggest that you purchase a carb which has been pre-jetted for the four-stroke motor. Most sold are fitted with a cutaway and metering system designed for two-strokes and obtaining the right bits and pieces for a Mikuni rebuild can be both time consuming and costly. The stock TT throttle can be

adapted to the new carb, but the simplest set-up entails a straight swap to a Suzuki RM250/370 throttle and cable assembly.

Jetting on the Sudco (US)-prepared 38mm Mikunis is spot-on and any final tuning can be done on the actual needle clip. A Mikuni conversion will cost up to \$50, excluding the cost of a new throttle assembly. Stock manifolding and airbox hoses can be used but it will be necessary to remove the carb almost completely to jiggle with the jetting. A B9EV plug can be used for optimum performance and slightly improved power.

The Mikuni conversion is efficient and gives easy starting as well as greater power, but the high location of the carb often necessitates a swap to a more compact fuel tap. The stock TT item places the fuel line at a strange angle and will cause kinking in the line and consequent decreased fuel flow. Check this carefully and trim the line to suit or swap to a large Triumph type fuel tap.

Although nowhere near as common or inexpensive as the popular Mikuni conversion, the new Lectron carburettor is proving a winner with many 500 owners. The American-made Lectron is a pumper style unit (similar to the Walbro pumper fitted on the TWO WHEELS Project 360 Yamaha a few seasons back) and offers almost foolproof ease of tuning and adjustment. There is no need to remove the carb for jetting. The Lectron is supplied as a kit, complete with twist grip, cable, manifold and K&N gauze air filter. It's a genuine bolt-on conversion giving a claimed three kW increase. Cost is about \$140.

Many modified pipes are available for both C and D models, including one excellent locally-made item from Pascoe in Melbourne. Most include an optional street-legal silencer as well as an inbuilt competition muffler and all are supplied with fitting hardware and brackets.

The optimum tuned length for peak power must be about 86-92cm, with a longer pipe preferable for increased torque. A high pipe is best for any serious riding and we've achieved excellent performance from a US-made Torque competition pipe on our TT C models. The thing is a hopeless fit and must be modified to adapt to any TT. For an XT the Torque pipe is completely out of the question as it's far too loud even for enduro use. On the road it'll earn you a yellow sticker; don't even consider it for blacktop riding!

PK, Bassani and J&R systems all work well and are acceptably silenced for highway use and enduros. The Torque is best for racing, but we'd still prefer to see them fitted with a more effective snuffer, such as a Super Trapp.

It's easy to build your own exhaust and fit it with a Super Trapp, if you can't find a suitable system or if the \$50-\$70 pricetags give you a scare. Use tubing of at least 42mm diameter and

make sure you Loctite both manifold nuts, as vibration will loosen them under hard riding. By itself, an aftermarket exhaust system is only a marginal improvement and does more to satisfy the ego than to win drag races in the dirt. When used with the big carb conversion, however, it's most effective and gives a worthwhile power boost.

The standard C model low-pipe can be cut, just behind the swingfork pivot and fitted with a suitable muffler, but ground clearance is not improved and the new silencer becomes vulnerable over the rough or when powering through deep whoop-de-dos. Whatever system you use will give some improvement, but keep silencing in mind before you pay out your dollars. Keep it quiet!

As a conclusion to stage one, fitting a Protec oil line kit, for between \$11-\$15 is a good move because it completely redirects the oil flow, enabling the hotter exhaust valve to be lubed first.

This is the opposite of the factory system and the rugged kit (complete with line and banjo fittings) is another simple bolt-on goodie. Longer camshaft and bearing life is guaranteed with the conversion, which is essential prior to any Big Power modifications.

#### STAGE TWO AND BEYOND

Availability of imported gear and high costs are the only restriction to

development. You can get more than 35kW from the ohc Yamaha. Stage two should give you about 30kW to play with and only a big bore or stroker kit will take you much beyond that with any tractability.

Cam timing is hopelessly mild on both C and D models, although the later engine develops slightly more power because of its slightly wilder bumpstick. Webcam and Protec have a range of cams which will give the desired higher lift or longer duration required for higher rpm running and when used in conjunction with a higher compression ratio, big carb and suitable pipe will yield up to 22kW in a tractable and useable way. The Protec cam most suited for motocross or enduro is the 440 model, with an even wilder 480 available to satisfy the power lusts of dirt trackers and other fringe element lunatics. We like the 480 ourselves and have found that it can be used for MXing with an experienced rider aboard, but would suggest either the Webcam (long duration) or Protec 440 for general use. Both retail for about \$80 and must be fitted with stronger S&W or Protec valve springs to prevent valve float at high revs.

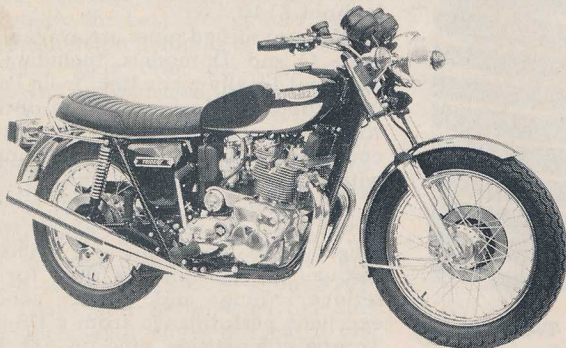
All cams raise the powerband of the TT/XT motor giving it increased mid-range to top end performance, without any greatly adverse effect on bottom end performance. All cams are

supplied with timing information, fitting instructions and lubricant and can be fitted to the motor using stock inlet and exhaust valves. Restricted head space effectively eliminates any possibilities of increasing valve area in the Yamaha single, but expert gas flow porting will increase efficiency and produce a bit more power in conjunction with these internal modifications.

A Protec 10:1 or 11:1 piston is used to raise compression ratio and can be fitted to both C and D models without hassles. The piston kits are complete with rings and circlips and will transform your slugger into a rock throwing beast when used as the crowning touch of this stage two tuning program. Valve cutouts are relieved into the piston crowns and the entire assembly is simple and straightforward, as all details are included for the average home mechanic. Don't forget to check your magneto points and adjust them to the factory setting and replace the main Yamaha oil filter during this operation.

We've been using Castrol's Grand Prix oil in our own modified thumpers and have nothing but praise for its performance. After a full season of racing and general dirt riding we found negligible wear on the stock piston and camshaft and feel confident that the new components will fare equally as well.

## WRECKING



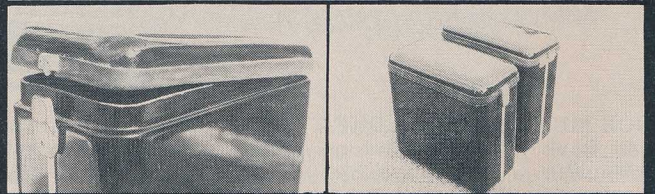
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They will fit any motorcycle and provide plenty of luggage space at a very economic price.

Their design (see picture) guarantees absolute rain and dust proofing, high quality alloy lock neoprene rubber weather strip and double hinges are standard.

Each bag measures 15 x 15 x 7.5" (38 x 38 x 19 cm) and weighs 4.5 lbs (2.1 kgs). Capacity of a pair is over 10 gallons (48 litres) bags available in black or white. You can see or obtain them from the following shops.

Fibreglass (A'sia), 150 Mowbray Rd, Willoughby 02-953767

Omodei Pty. Ltd., 475 Pitt St., Sydney. 02-2110085

Allparts Trading 99 Regent St., Chippendale. 02-6981900

Newtown Motorcycles, 540 King St., Newtown. 02-5191853

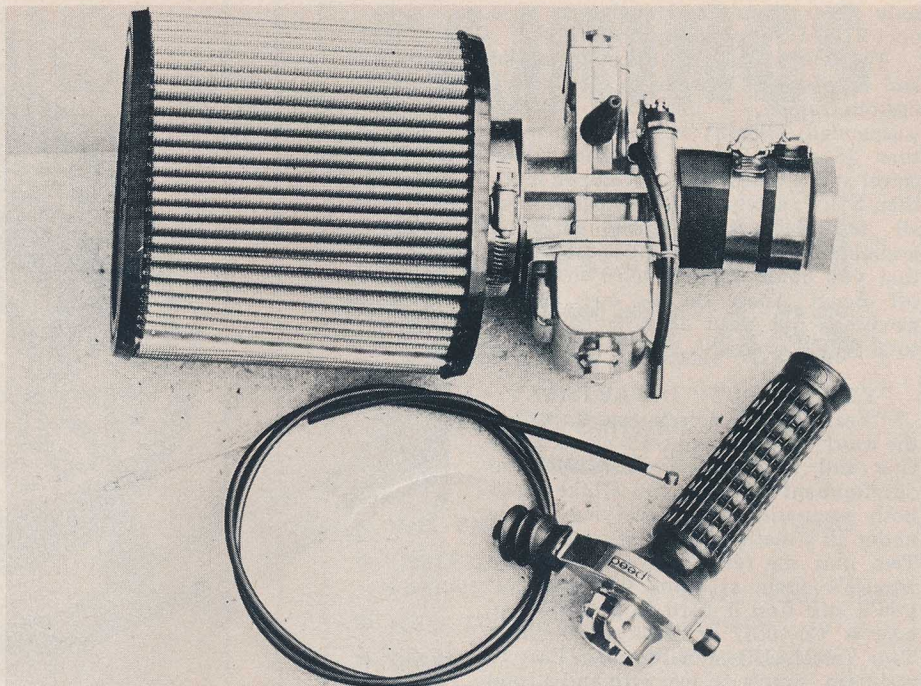
manufactured in Australia and distributed by:

**"JAYGRO" Box 371, Ashfield, NSW, 2131**

By this stage you are looking at a 30kW Yamaha, a far cry from the mild mannered Clark Kent of the dirt you've been hustling about to date. Ride it and you'll love it. Power is always on tap and the bike can pull cleanly from the line in second or third gear without a hint of hesitation. Up top it'll pull like a freight train with torque that can still dig trenches. With well-sorted suspension the bike is easier to ride than ever and the extra muscle only compliments the previous handling improvements.

#### TO HELL WITH THE BANK ACCOUNT!

Entering the realm of the ridiculous entails a major import venture from the land of the Stars 'n Stripes. Little if any stage three gear is currently available on these shores and you'll need to personally import all of these exotic items. Included in this category are four-valve heads, a Powroll 541cm<sup>3</sup> stroker kit and even a 605cm<sup>3</sup> conversion from the same people. Oil cooler kits (about US\$50) and a full range of custom frames are also sold Stateside, enabling you to build a TT that's spot on for anything from the ISDT to a mile short track. Ken Roberts' KR frames are one of the best



About \$150 will buy this complete Lectron carb conversion, with throttle assembly and K&N air filter. Mikuni yields slightly less power for about a third of the Lectron's cost.

#### THE XT-TT ADDICT'S WHERE TO GET IT GUIDE

##### WA:

JOHN AND COLINS HONDA SHOP, 114 Cambridge Street, Leederville. Tel: 81-6992. Most Protec gear, Lectron carbs, pipes, Super Trapp mufflers.

CULLY'S MOTORCYCLE CENTRE, 69 Hector Street, Osborne Park. Tel: 446-9044. Trelleborg 5.10" tyres, Magura equipment.

PERFORMANCE MOTORCYCLES OF WA, 558 Albany Highway, Victoria Park. Tel: 62-2612. Bel-Ray oils, full range of tyres.

##### VIC:

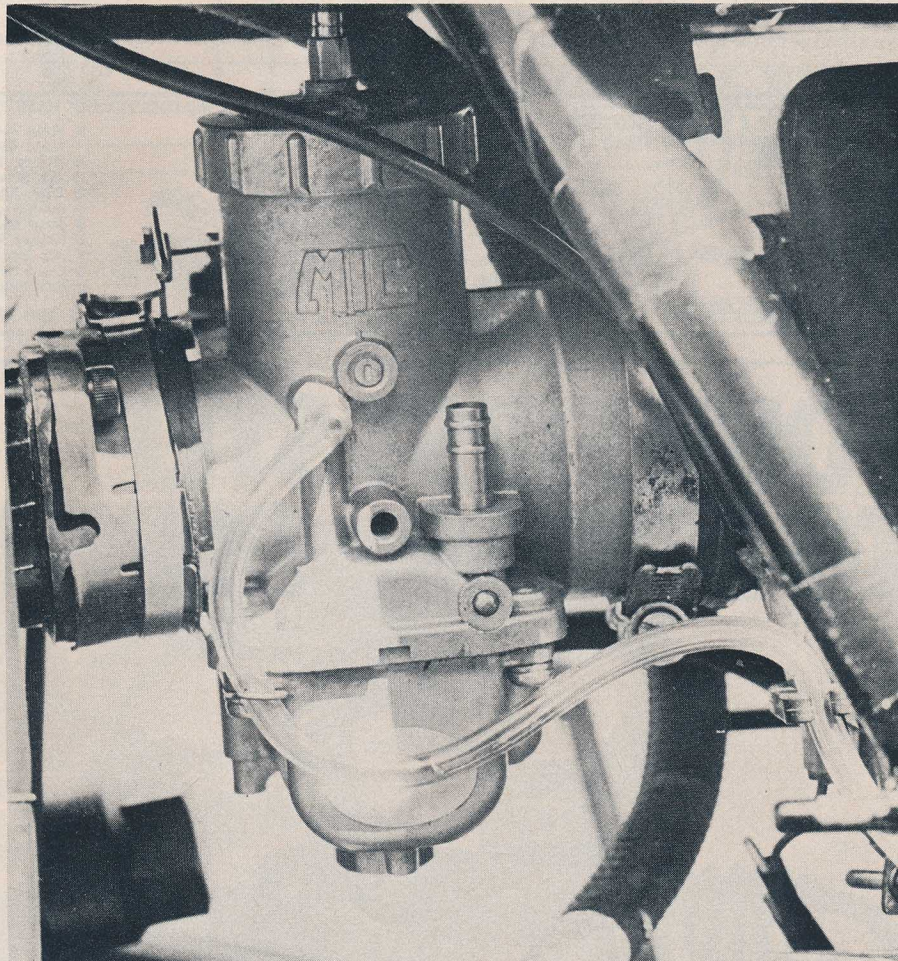
SPORT & ROAD, 705 Springvale Rd, Mulgrave, Victoria 3170. Tel: 560-7288. The lot.

##### NSW:

COMPETITION DEVELOPMENT, PO Box 228, Eastwood, NSW, 2122. J&R pipes, Sudco-Mikuni conversions, Webcam camshafts, valve springs and sprockets.

CYCLEPLOYS, PO Box 182, Cammeray, NSW, 2062. Marzocchi forks, Protec gear.

BLAIR HARLEY MOTORCYCLES, 286 Victoria Rd, Gladesville, NSW. Tel: 896-2005. Unifilter air filters.



A Sudco-prepared 38mm Mikuni gives muscle with easy starting. New throttle cable is from Suzuki RM250/370. Fuel lines are a hassle with stock TT-XT fuel tap.

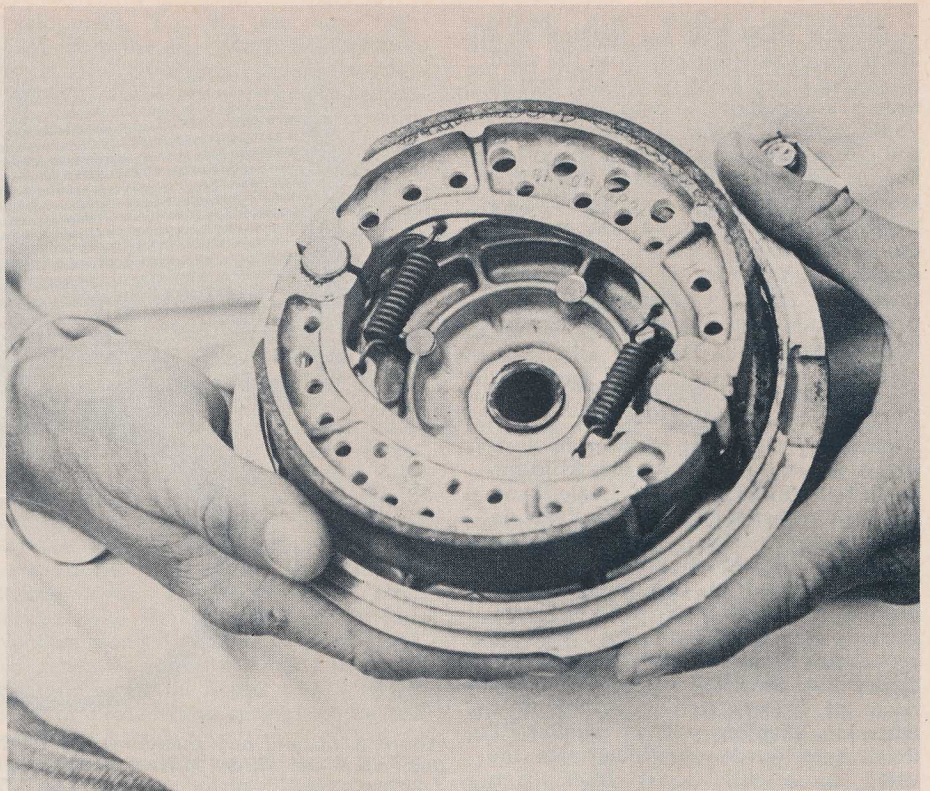


and cheapest with the custom-order-only items from C&J ranging up to a cool \$700 US — plus shipping costs!

The possibilities are almost unlimited and it would be feasible to construct a custom-framed, Simons Forks-suspended, 605cm<sup>3</sup> version with more than 250mm of front and rear wheel travel and a motor that developed more than 37kW; solely by the integration of all the best gear that's currently available for the Yamaha 500. After that you could try and blow the socks off Bengt Aberg on his own similar machine, but your investment would total \$3000 or more!

**"YEAH . . . BUT!" DEPARTMENT**

"Yeah. But I didn't want to go all the way!" you say and we'll agree. Stage One and the basic chassis/suspension development will give you a bike that's both competitive and satisfying to ride under all situations short of trials. Stage Two plus the rest will put you in the winner's circle at some meetings but you'll still find it hard to pull the lead over a YZ-400D or Husky 390. Stage Two Yamahas are a ball to own. Easy to maintain, simple to live with and a total buzz to take out in the dirt; that makes them our type of bike. The list of suppliers below will help you in your search for the ultimate. The rest is up to your ego and your bank manager. May the stronger one win! \*



*Brake shoes can be swiss-cheesed for a 140g weight saving, but you're probably better off having a light meal the night before the race!*

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