



SMOOTH OPTION

CAGIVA RX125

Cagiva's RX125 is the latest Italian enduro to hit these shores. Rick Kemp had a short burst on it. Photos by Tim Leighton-Boyce.

125 enduro bikes used to be pretty thin on the ground, but in the last 18 months or so their number has risen to no less than six, four of them being Italian. With this wider choice of machines available, we could well find the 125 enduro class becoming more popular.

We've already tested the 250 enduro and the 125 motocrosser, so we're well-acquainted with this new Cagiva's heritage. The marque certainly has come a long way with its off-road bikes since Harley-Davidson days. The RX is a purposeful-looking machine — handsome, even, in its red and white livery — and stands up well to closer scrutiny. The chrome molybdenum steel frame is well-crafted with no unsightly welds and the semi duplex design is well gusseted at the steering head. The swing arm pivot bracing looks rather slight, though. There's no bash plate but the folding gearchange lever is tucked in tight and the folding rear brake lever benefits from a bolt-on protection bar. The full seat loop supports the silencer and doubles as a lifting rail. There are also lugs for strapping things onto the mudguard behind the seat, like spare tubes. The enduro headlight is held on the fork with rubbers, giving

it a good degree of flexibility in the event of a spill.

As standard, the bike comes with full lighting switchgear. The engine kill switch is mounted on the front of the console and could be difficult to get at in a hurry. Handlebar controls are all Magura-made, the throttle action is good but the levers, though cranked, are slightly too far from the bars for optimum comfort. The seat and tank shape are good for sliding around, but unfortunately there's a hard leather toolcase bolted to the tank that could give you a nasty shock if you slid onto it. The tool bag is useful — but somewhere else, please.

Front forks are Marzocchi with some very good gaiters. Wheel movement was smooth and well-damped, even considering the lack of mileage on the test bike. The front wheel has a separate bolt-on torque arm which also carries the cable, so there's an extra bolt to undo when removing the wheel. At the back end there's a tubular swing arm, also in chrome moly, with the latest piggyback Corte Cosso gas/air shocks. We don't have any actual figures for wheel movement but, as Rolls-Royce says, it's adequate. Apart from not having a single shock rear end, the Cagiva's suspension is in

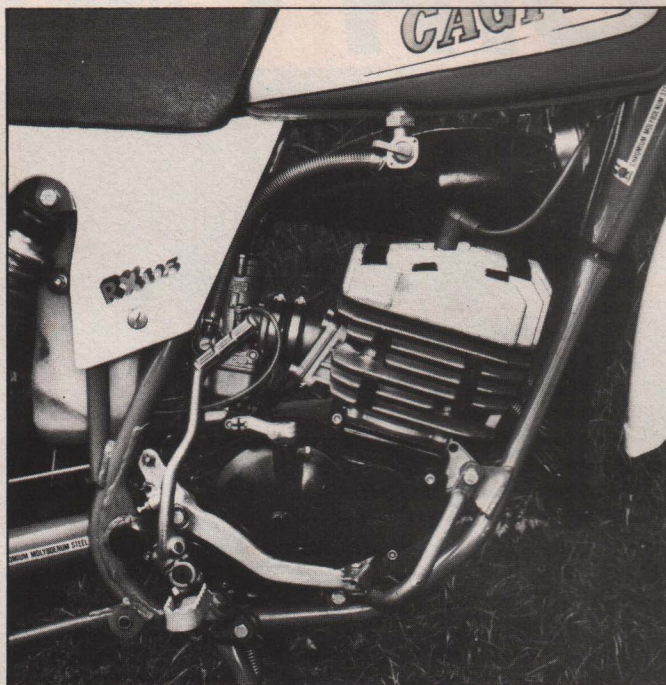


SMOOTH OPTION

keeping with current enduro trends, though with a little less movement than the very long motocross-type suspension popular a couple of years ago. The latest factory 125 MXer does have a monoshock rear end, so Cagiva isn't standing still in this area.

The motor, as you'd expect, is very similar to the motocross unit, except that it's air-cooled. The bore and stroke is 56 x 50.6mm and the actual capacity is 124.6cc. The piston runs in a Nikasil bore, allowing tighter tolerances and hopefully giving longer life. The motor is fed by a 34mm Delorto carb via a reed valve. Ignition is by a 6V Motoplat flywheel magneto on the left side of the crankshaft. Primary gears and a wet multiplate clutch get the power to the six-speed box, and a 428 rear chain does the rest. The chain itself adopts what seems to be the standard run these days — top and bottom rollers and a swing arm slipper. There's a guide in front of the rear sprocket to stop the chain getting knocked off. Final contact between the power and the dirt is made through a 4.00 x 18 Pirelli MT16.

Persuading the motor to burst into life is done with the aid of a flick-up choke and it's an easy task. Like most Italian two-stroke singles, this engine is mechanically noisy, even though the exhaust note is fairly low. Riding position is good and the 37in high seat is manageable, once the suspen-



The reed valve motor has a great power delivery. Note folding rear brake lever and protection bar.

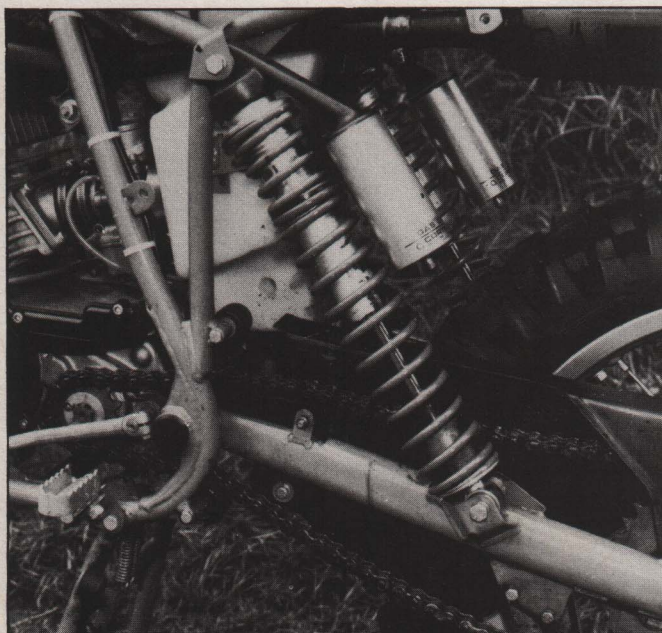
sion has settled with the rider's weight. After a few minutes' warm-up, the motor runs smoothly through the rev range and you can start playing with the power. No power figures are available but bhp must be in the mid-20s. The reed valve makes for a smooth power delivery and, as 125s go, the Cagiva isn't too peaky. Sure, the power comes in quickly, but it isn't all or nothing; it's much more tractable than the Fantic, for example.

Gear ratios are about right with no uncomfortable jumps; our only complaint here is that the overall gearing is perhaps too high. Getting stuck

in deep mud needs a lot of revs and clutch-slipping in first to get the rear tyre rolling, but perhaps this is the price you pay for the extra grip afforded by the Pirelli MT16. The gearbox works well, all changes being positive up or down the box.

We got the RX through some pretty deep water with no ill effects on the electrics or carburation. Only snag we found here was that the brakes take a long time to dry out. The steering geometry seems better suited to straight line stability than lock-to-lock stuff through the trees. In fact we were very impressed with the high-speed

handling altogether. The bike will slide well and going flat-out in fifth down the straight bits the front wheel would float over most things; correction was easy if you *did* get knocked slightly off-course.



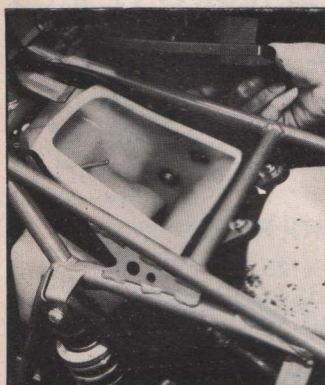
Corte Cosso piggyback shocks handle the swing arm and rollers keep the chain in check.



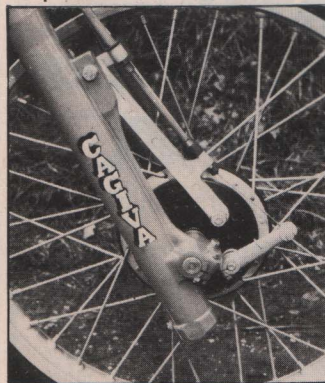
Full switchgear comes as standard but levers are a bit of a stretch; tool bag is useful but could be painful.



The Cagiva is well put together and what it might lack in top end power it makes up for in tractability – very rideable for a 125.



Air filter lid has a large lip to keep water out.



Front brake has separate torque arm.



Modest expansion chamber gives an indication of tractability; stepped ignition cover keeps gear lever tucked in.

We didn't find the suspension lacking, either. The Corte Cosso units at the back are well up to the job and the damping is perfect. Even though the Marzocchi forks aren't air-assisted, they still reacted quickly enough to not cause any problems.

The RX125 is well-finished and if the 250 is anything to go by it should be a stayer – two 250s finished last year's ISDT. In its class the Cagiva is a lot more rideable than most, though possibly not as quick at the top end. Apart from the handlebar controls, the only other major niggle is in the centre stand – it's not quite long enough for easy wheel removal and could be vulnerable in some situations. At £1,399 it's not a cheap 125, but in our opinion it's worth the money – tractability and rideability count for a lot in enduros. **WB?**

Model: CAGIVA RX125

Price inc VAT: £1399

Warranty:

ENGINE

Type: Reed valve two-stroke single
Capacity: 124cc
Lubrication: Premix
Comp. ratio: 15.7 to 1
Carburation: 34mm Delorto
Ignition: Motoplat fly-wheel magneto

Max. power: na

Max. torque: na

TRANSMISSION

Primary drive: Gear
Clutch: Wet multiplate
Gearbox: Six-speed
Final drive: Chain

ELECTRICS

Power source: Flywheel magneto
Headlamp: 6V 25/25W

CHASSIS

Frame: Semi double cradle
Suspension, front: Marzocchi leading axle
rear: Swing arm with piggyback Corte & Corso units
Brakes: 4.9in drum f&r
Tyres: Pirelli MT16 2.75 x 21 (f) 4.00 x 18 (r)

CAPACITIES

Fuel tank: 1.8gal

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase: 57.4in
Seat height: 37.4in
Handlebar width: 32in
Grnd clnnee: 13.3in
Rake/trail: na
Dry weight: 215lb

Importer/Manufacturer: Mick Walker Motorcycles, Norwich Rd, Wisbech, Cambs.