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ON THE COVER:—The contenders for the tiddler crown pose for the lens of Torquin' Tim as the racing season gets into full swing. Moto Revue captured the Paris to Dakar cavalry charge, and Rick Ryan (10), George Holland (3) and Erik Kehoe (9) are frozen at Gainesville by the Nikon of Eddie "The Eagle" Arnet. Ryan went on to grab the holeshot. Joe (Mama) Kosch snapped the TOC photo of Dave Bertram styling his Suzuki through California's version of trees at the Coalinga Enduro opener. Cover design by Dennis West; color separations by Valley Film.

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TORTURE-TESTING



DIRT BIKE comes up with the winner

By the *DIRT BIKE* Staff

Not everything in this world is cut and dried. Bobby down the street might tell you how fast and furious the latest CYRWX 125 is, and the magazines might claim that the XWRYC 125 is king pin. So you go down to the CYRWX dealer to give the bike the once-over. You throw a leg over the machine, flip it between the legs and snap the throttle a few times. Although you can't pinpoint



THE TIDDLERS

125 COMPARISON:
CR vs. KX vs. RM vs.
WMX vs. YZ

it, the CYRWX doesn't feel quite right. Do you really want this bike? Now it's off to the XWRYC dealer. The salesman gives you the stink eye when you walk through the door, and then turns around and walks into some black hole in the back of the shop for half an hour. Do you really want a bike from this dealer?

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF BIKE BUYING

All of these 125s are winners. It doesn't matter what your buddies tell you, and it doesn't matter what the other mags think. What matters is how you feel when you throw a leg over the bike, how it behaves in



Who makes the best 125 'crosser in 1988? To find out, DIRT BIKE raced and rode the WMX, CR, KX, RM and YZ in desert, enduro and motocross events. We completed the shootout with three full days of testing at Perris Raceway and DeAnza Cycle Park.



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TORTURE



the workshop and what kind of a dent it puts in your budget. *Dirt Bike* would race (and can win) on *any one* of these bikes. Some of the 125s are suited to a larger majority of our testers (over 15) than the others, and some have more potential to be modified. But the bottom line is, get a bike from a dealer who is an enthusiast. The dealer who has a healthy supply of parts and accessories, a great gang of helpful employees and a reasonable price should be one of the deciding factors in determining which bike to buy.

Dirt Bike intends to give a feel for these bikes without you actually throwing a leg over them. Our results are accurate, consistent and proven, but it's still up to you to decide which traits are most important to you. Read the test carefully (study the charts that show what replacement parts cost!) and go shopping. Good luck!

CAGIVA WMX125

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE: The 1988 Cagiva WMX125 feels short, maneuverable and tall (some of the tallness can be attributed to the stiff saddle foam—the Suzuki and Kawasaki are actually taller). Quality components are abundant on the Italian hot rod—Acerbis plastic, Domino levers, Renthal bars, White Power suspension, Twin-Air filter and Takasago Excel rims. The pilot position is distinctly “sit-on” and the transition from seat to tank is smooth. Standing and sitting is comfortable and natural. Overall feel: Good.

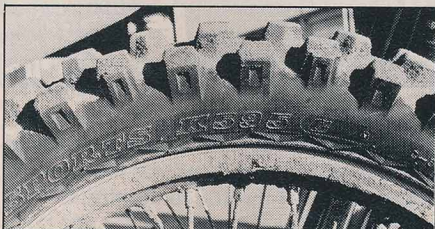
POWER: Explosive! The WMX125 hits hard in the middle of the rpm curve and pulls with a potent thrust. Top-end power is its strong point, and this trait alone might scare away less-experienced riders. A quality transmission (slightly notchy) and great clutch (the release is a bit sudden) allow the Cagiva pilot to row the gearbox and slip the plates to keep the steed pulling in the upper rpm curve. Overall power: Good (very good for skilled tiddler pilots).

HANDLING: Cagiva achieves handling

Two-wheeled Thunderbirds: Formation flying is a gas on the '88 125s, as all contenders have neutral manners in flight and respond well to rider input. Our tiddler top guns rated the Suzuki best on landings, whereas the softly-sprung Cagiva delivered the most impact to the rider.



Cagiva: Pirelli Sandcross rear—excellent intermediate tire. Lagunacross front—excellent sand, mud or tacky terrain tread.



Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha: Dunlop K595 rear and K490 front—excellent hard-pack to intermediate terrain tires.

excellence through a quick-and-responsive chassis. The front wheel has a light, neutral feel to it, and the short wheelbase thrives on sliding. Headshake is minimal, although there is a “lively” (almost nervous) feedback over high-speed, choppy terrain. Overall handling: Very good.

SUSPENSION: Most suspension complaints stemmed from a too-soft mid-to-full-stroke compression. The upside-down forks and shock almost felt stiff on the initial compression travel, but big G-outs would harshly bottom both ends. We upped the oil level in the forks for improved resistance to bottoming. Some riders felt they could live with the standard components, but skilled

riders knew there is more potential in those stout legs and quality shock. Overall suspension: Fair.

SERVICING AND RELIABILITY: This is the best-finished European bike designed to date. Cagiva's attention to detail is very obvious. Filter servicing is good. We've heard reports of crank seizures. Take time to break in the bike. Our shifting improved considerably after five solid hours of running time. The kick-start lever is hard to use and folds under the peg at the bottom of its stroke. Overall service/reliability: Good.

HONDA CR125R

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE: It feels right! The CR125R is the epitome of good ergonomics. Everything falls into place—the levers, bars, pegs, grips. Everything feels perfect. Saddle foam is just the right density. Rider movement is unobstructed and natural. It's very rare that someone complains about the layout of the Honda CR125R. Overall feel: Excellent.

POWER: *Dirt Bike* was astonished by the CR125R's power output. It pulls early with a mellow hit, transfers through a solid mid-range punch and can rev out like the Cagiva. A truly impressive motor that made a few people suspicious about the stock condition of the powerplant. *Dirt Bike* must admit that this bike pulled a good ten percent stronger than our original test unit and never cut out or popped at high revs (as our first '88 test bike did). At the end of the shootout, we asked Honda to pull the CR125R down, which they gladly did to reveal that it truly was a stocker. The lesson here is that production-line tolerances allow some motors to run stronger than others. Roger DeCoster stated that there can be as much as a two-horsepower difference between production-line motors.

Clutch and shift action is superb and can be considered the industry standard. Overall power: Excellent.

HANDLING: You could argue that the CR125R is the best-handling and easiest-to-



Almost: If it weren't for a slightly nervous front end, the 1988 Honda CR125R could be considered one of the finest handling machines made. Cornering and flight maneuverability are phenomenal!



European: The Cagiva WMX 125's rapid-fire motor sits in a no-compromise chassis. A stiff frame/fork combination and smart geometry turns precisely and tracks straight.



Well-rounded: A tall bar placement and heavy-feeling front end takes away from an otherwise correct Yamaha YZ125U chassis. Nervous rear-end suspension (on choppy terrain) overshadows excellent stability.

TORTURE

manipulate piece of iron around, except for one trait—headshake! Experienced 125 pilots thrived on the CR's turning excellence and in-air maneuverability and never worried about the nervous front end. Some beginning riders felt intimidated by the quirky front-end shake. Overall handling: Very good.

SUSPENSION: Again, quality control comes into play here, especially with the front forks. The intricate nature of the new Showa valving allows for production discrepancies that make the difference between good forks and excellent forks. If your forks aren't up to par, have them checked by a reputable service shop. Aggressive

	REPLACEMENT PART PRICE LIST				
	CAGIVA WMX125	HONDA CR125	KAWASAKI KX125	SUZUKI RM125	YAMAHA YZ125
Piston	\$72.35	\$34.68	\$29.00	\$35.24	\$31.90
	<i>(incl. circlips & wristpin)</i>				
Rings	25.42	8.80	11.82	15.35	17.80
Top end bearing	8.72	4.15	4.60	7.61	7.60
Clutch plates:					
Fiber	ea 4.36	ea 6.45	ea 7.52	ea 7.23	ea 9.00
Steel	ea 1.74	ea 5.07	ea 5.40	ea 3.77	ea 5.20
Clutch cover gasket	1.52	1.40	1.79	3.77	2.60
Head gaskets	4.16	4.60	4.80	8.19	3.40
	<i>(inner & outer)</i>			<i>(inner & outer)</i>	
Base gaskets	2.40	1.38	1.25	6.51	2.60
Intake gasket	.76	.40	.89	1.44	.80
Sprockets:					
Countershaft	10.62	11.16	11.82	14.22	10.10
Rear	29.41	52.01	56.05	56.48	38.35
Brake pads:					
Front	44.70	38.32	20.22	27.36	33.10
Rear	40.14	20.40	20.22	19.37	40.25
Clutch cable	9.12	7.42	8.68	16.11	10.30
Throttle cable	15.00	7.00	7.82	14.88	12.60
Exhaust pipe	180.00	83.08	???	135.65	245.00
Main jet	1.98	5.06	3.80	3.05	3.00

(Note: Prices subject to change.)

riders felt at ease with the rear suspension of the Honda, but light and/or less-skilled pilots thought the rear end was too nervous, especially in off-throttle conditions. Overall suspension: Very good.

SERVICING AND RELIABILITY: Perfect! Everything on this bike can be taken apart and put together easily and without any headaches. Reliability is outstanding, as long as time is taken to seal the intake manifold (*Dirt Bike*, April '88). The only nagging feature of the CR125R is airbox service—it's fair at best (the filter securing bolt is a pain). Overall service/reliability: Excellent.

KAWASAKI KX125F

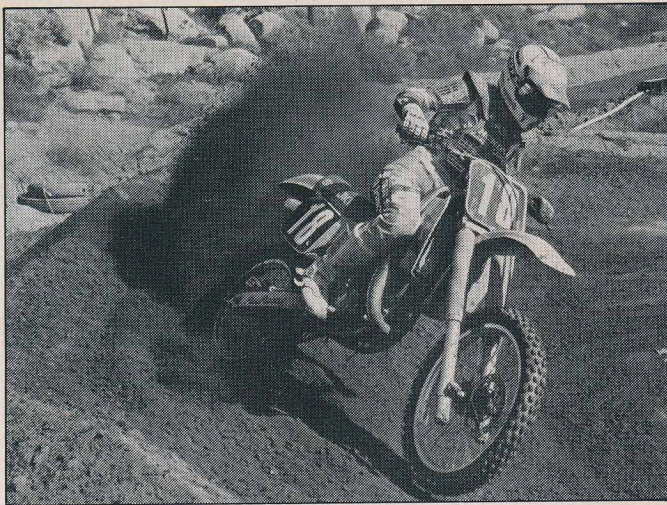
WHAT IT FEELS LIKE: Long! The 1988 KX125F isn't a bike everyone can just jump on and feel at home with. Most riders need some time to become familiar with the 250 feel of the chassis. The seat is on the soft side, the midsection is thick, and the front end feels awkward at first (put on Honda-bend bars!). Once settled into the chassis, riders began to appreciate the roomy

cockpit. The KX controls are on a par with the Honda's, although some complained about the thick-feeling lever blades. Overall feel: Good.

POWER: All bottom to mid-range with a flat run-out. The power hits with a nice, responsive surge (very controllable) and pulls quickly through a short mid-range hook that's made for the ultimate beginner to novice tiddler mill. Fast intermediates and experts mentioned that the power trailed off too fast when revved. This can't be considered a horsepower motor, but rather a rideable lap-time performer.

Shifting movement is more deliberate than the Honda, and the clutch is grabby (it pulsates when hot). Overall power: Very good (good for skilled tiddler pilots).

HANDLING: The head angle feels steep and far away, giving you the sensation that the front end "turns" excessively when cornering. Once a rider has adapted to the Kawasaki chassis, everything falls into place and the very neutral nature of the geometry is evident. Handling commands are



Attack: Suzuki's RM125J favored the hang-out-the-rear, smash-the-berm and don't-let-off-the-throttle approach. Dial rear suspension sag and fork settings to control front-end pushing on flat turns.



Mr. Stretch: Kawasaki's long and roomy KX125 chassis required a bit of initiation time before some riders felt comfortable on it. First-rate stability doesn't affect turning qualities.

AVERAGE LAP TIMES

MACHINE	VET INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	NOVICE	PRO
PERRIS RACEWAY (Flat with coarse sand and hard-pack sections)				
CAGIVA WMX125	1:31.10	1:20.33	1:30.26	1:20.13
HONDA CR125R	1:29.91	1:20.50	1:28.63	1:19.46
KAWASAKI KX125F	1:28.31	1:22.04	1:28.58	1:18.28
SUZUKI RM125J	1:29.86	1:20.46	1:28.50	1:18.50
YAMAHA YZ125U	1:27.73	1:22.34	1:28.18	1:19.58
DeANZA RACEWAY (Hilly with hard-pack terrain)				
CAGIVA WMX 125	1:31.60	1:29.53	1:38.51	1:25.96
HONDA CR125R	1:29.25	1:27.62	1:37.97	1:25.65
KAWASAKI KX125F	1:30.12	1:27.59	1:35.93	1:25.45
SUZUKI RM125J	DNF	1:28.23	1:36.51	1:28.09
YAMAHA YZ125U	1:30.45	1:28.86	1:35.54	1:25.47

Note: It must be taken into consideration that lap times are not the most accurate indication of performance. On-track variables and rider error all play a part in the final results.

responded to with a *no-frills* response. Stability is the Kawasaki KX125F's trademark; it takes little effort to keep the KX in a straight line. Overall handling: Very good.

SUSPENSION: Most complaints centered around the rear end. Mid-stroke compression is harsh, and rebound is light—a Kawasaki trait this year (125, 250 and 500). It's a rideable rear suspension package that gets away with a lot due to the light weight of 125s. The cartridge forks are good, although fast riders find that the front end dives excessively when cornering, which compounds the quick-rebounding rear end. Installing heavier fork springs calls for slower rebound damping. Overall suspension: Good.

SERVICING AND RELIABILITY: The airbox is an excellent design, with an easy-to-remove-and-install air filter (very secure sealing). Working on the bike is almost as simple as working on the Honda. We've heard reports of broken clutch hub tabs. More than likely, the front disc brake hydraulic system will require servicing (drain completely and use DOT 5 fluid). The plastic is a joke—it's extremely brittle and doesn't take much of an impact to crack. Overall service/reliability: Very good (without counting the brittle plastic).

SUZUKI RM125J

HOW IT FEELS: Suzuki's RM125J has a small feel to it. The seat is sparsely padded (especially toward the back), and the tank junction is awkward. Tall riders feel cramped in the chassis, although they can become accustomed to the layout. The standing transition isn't as natural as it could be. Riders felt that the narrow grips and awkward lever shape took too much initiation time. Everyone had some complaint about the front fender. Overall feel: Fair.

POWER: Again, quality control is a factor with the RM125J. Our test unit ran respectably, but we've heard reports of sluggish bikes. The power has a nice snap to it (it comes on the pipe later than the Honda's) and will rev (although peak power is in the upper mid-range). The Suzuki doesn't seem to build revs as quickly as the competition and lends itself toward an attack riding style. Keep the crank spinning, and the rpm up; don't work the motor in the lower edge of its curve, and it will be competitive.

Shifting is light and easy. Mis-shifts are pretty common (it seems that riders with large feet can accidentally knock the bike out of gear). Clutch response is sluggish—the lever could have a more instantaneous release/engagement point. Overall power: Good.

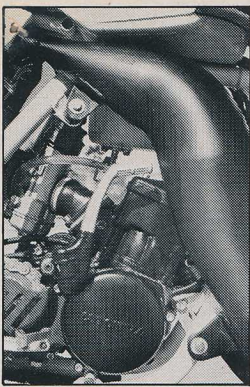
HANDLING: The Suzuki handles but seems to require a bit more rider attention than the other 125s. Sliding is natural, almost too natural, as the rear end will drift unexpectedly in flat corners. Front-end pushing is also noticed in corners, yet it's just a bad habit, not a crash-inducing trait. Riders felt that the low, short and light feel of the RM gives it a friendly attitude that's slightly overshadowed by its demand for pilot attention. Overall handling: Good.

SUSPENSION: It's the best! The completely adjustable forks (rebound and compression) and shock are delivered with excellent settings that pleased most riders in stock trim. Neither end is what you would call plush, but both are responsive enough to small hits and so good on big impacts that they were given rave reviews. Overall suspension: Excellent.

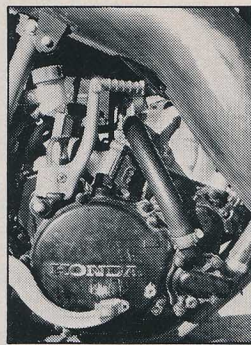
SERVICING AND RELIABILITY: Our RM125J blew up! Suzuki pulled it apart and found that the rings had stuck on the exhaust port side. We've heard reports of seizures caused by tight rod spacing and dragging clutch hub rivets (on the idler gear). Clutch reliability is also suspect. Ours began slipping after three hours of use. Airbox service is fair. It's difficult to get the filter and securing bolt back into the box. There are too many washers and other hardware that must be attended to when pulling the RM down. However, Suzuki has made a huge improvement over last year's model (hex-head 6mm bolts on lever assemblies). Nuts and bolts are still only of "average" quality. Overall service/reliability: Good.

YAMAHA YZ125U

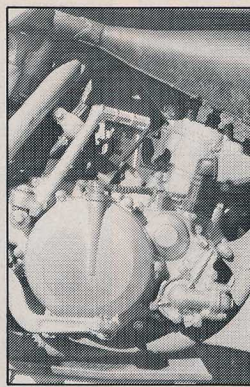
HOW IT FEELS: Yamaha could have the ultimate layout, except for one trait—the bars (top triple clamp) are placed high in the chassis. This takes away from the excellent narrow midsection and perfect seat/tank transition. The high bar placement takes some time to become accustomed to. Levers have an average shape (not enough finger room on the clutch side), and the grips are good. Yamaha YZ125s make extremely comfortable long-distance racers (they feel comfortable and handle well in the sitting posi-



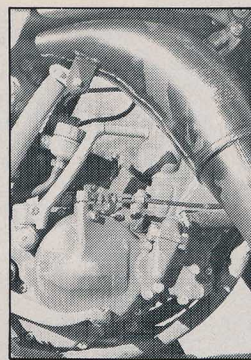
Cagiva: Strengths—mid to top-end power. Weaknesses—late RPM hit intimidates some novices. Holeshot ability—very good.



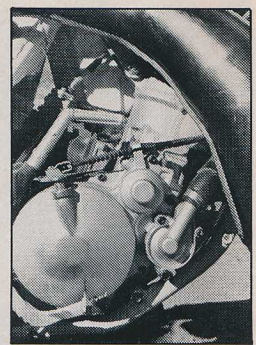
Honda: Strengths—wide and usable power-band. Transmission will accept full throttle shifts. Weaknesses—mediocre mid-range punch. Holeshot ability—very good.



Kawasaki: Strengths—low to mid-range power. Weaknesses—lack of top-end pull. Holeshot ability—good.



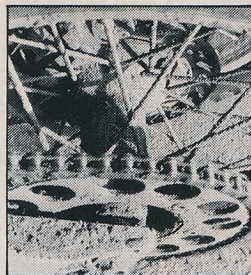
Suzuki: Strengths—mid to top-end power and easy-to-shift transmission. Weaknesses—lack of lower mid-range pull. Holeshot ability—good.



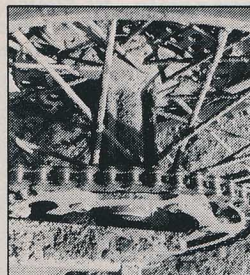
Yamaha: Strengths—mid-range power. Weaknesses—rapid drop off the pipe (peaky), mediocre top-end pull and stubborn shifting. Holeshot ability—good.



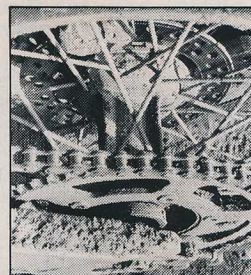
Cagiva: A rear drum brake provides adequate stopping power. The Brembo front disc components worked surprisingly well. Overall rating—good.



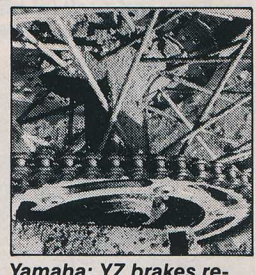
Honda: CR disc brakes are easy to modulate and very reliable. The composite front brake hose gives a spongy feel. Overall rating—excellent.



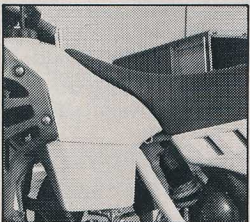
Kawasaki: The KX front disc system might require servicing before full braking potential is achieved. Overall rating—very good.



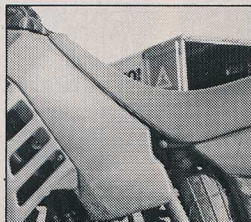
Suzuki: Minor updates to the RM front disc components and the new rear disc provide superb braking. Overall rating—very good.



Yamaha: YZ brakes require more finger and foot pressure than the CR, KX and RM. Clean the discs with oil-free solvent before breaking in a new bike. Overall rating—very good.



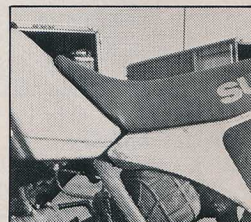
Cagiva: Layout—flat seat/tank junction and narrow midsection. Seat foam is too stiff. Rating—very good.



Honda: Layout—comfortable foam and natural seat/tank junction. Rating—excellent.



Kawasaki: Layout—soft seat foam and wide seat/tank junction. Rating—good.



Suzuki: Sparsely padded seat foam and wide-feeling seat/tank junction. Rating—fair.



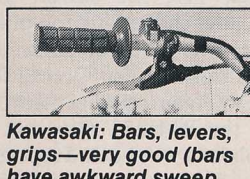
Yamaha: Comfortable seat foam and natural seat/tank junction. Very narrow midsection. Rating—excellent.



Cagiva: Bars, levers, grips—excellent. Clutch—good (grabby).



Honda: Bars, levers, grips—excellent. Clutch—excellent.



Kawasaki: Bars, levers, grips—very good (bars have awkward sweep and levers are brittle). Clutch—good (grabby and pulsates).



Suzuki: Bars, levers, grips—good (narrow grips and brittle levers). Clutch—good (spongy feel).



Yamaha: Bars, levers, grips—very good (clutch lever needs more finger room). Clutch—fair (overheats and pulsates).

TORTURE

tion). Overall feel: Very good.

POWER: The YZ125U has the most potent feel (when it hits). A strong, low mid-range punch sends the cranks spinning rapidly through an upper mid-range surge that flattens out quickly—too quickly. Also, the YZ tends to drastically fall off the pipe when rpm dip below the curve. Picture this:

You're jamming into a tight, tacky corner after a medium-length straight. The shifter is stabbed down once, and you dive into the turn. All of a sudden the tacky terrain bogs the motor. Most bikes require a simple slip of the plates in these conditions, but the Yamaha falls flat off the pipe, requiring one or two more downshifts. The successful YZ pilot is a quick-shifting rider.

The peaky nature of the case-reed YZ mill is abusive to an already weak clutch design. It doesn't take much to overheat the clutch,

which will pulsate (pull at the lever) when thrashed. Shifting is too notchy and refuses to select cogs under heavy throttle. Overall power: Good.

HANDLING: Once a rider is at home with the high bar placement, the YZ125U is a fantastic handler. Stability is great (the rear suspension is nervous—not the chassis), and cornering is good. It feels as though the YZ doesn't want to flop over in corners; it almost fights the rider through bends by trying to straighten out the front wheel.



	CAGIVA WMX125	HONDA CR125R	KAWASAKI KX125F1	SUZUKI RM125J	YAMAHA YZ125U
Displacement	124.6cc	124.8cc	124cc	123cc	123cc
Bore and stroke	56.0mm×50.6mm	54.0mm×54.5mm	56mm×50.6mm	54mm×54mm	56mm×50mm
Fuel tank capacity	2.1 gals. (7.95L)	1.7 gals. (6.4L)	2.28 gals. (8.6L)	1.8 gal. (6.9 L)	1.98 gals. (7.5L)
Wheelbase	56.7 in. (1440mm)	57.1 in. (1450.3mm)	57.7 in. (1465mm)	56.9 in. (1445mm)	57.1 in. (1450mm)
Ground clearance	13.9 in. (353mm)	14 in. (355.6mm)	15.0 in. (380mm)	14.2 in. (360mm)	13.8 in. (350mm)
Seat height	36.4 in. (925mm)	36.4 in. (924.5mm)	37.4 in. (950mm)	37.4 in. (950mm)	36.8 in. (935mm)
Claimed dry weight	194 lbs (88kg)	192.9 lbs (87.7kg)	190.7 lbs. (86.5 kg)	201 lbs. (90.5 kg)	192 lbs. (87 kg)
Suggested retail price	\$2944	\$2598	\$2399	\$2499	\$2499

TORTURE

Suspension settings are crucial to the YZ's handling traits. Overall handling: Very good.

SUSPENSION: The forks and shock are good—a major improvement on the '88 YZ. Most riders will be pleased with the forks in stock trim, although they do bottom a tad hard on major G-outs. Rear suspension could be a bit more supple but thrives on aggressive charging. Riders mentioned that they could make the rear bottom hard on big landings. Overall suspension: Very good.

SERVICING AND RELIABILITY: Hard riders will need to replace clutch plates often for optimum performance. Airbox servicing is easy and straightforward. Removing the rear shock is a hassle. Reliability is a YZ strength; that's why you see so many Yamaha 125s racing off-road. Overall service/reliability: Very good.

WHICH BIKE IS NUMBER ONE?

There's one bike that is incredibly reliable, handles very well and features a great powerplant. This bike is easy to modify. In fact, there are an abundance of hop-up shops and accessory parts for it. It's the 1988 Honda CR125R, and it's the bike *Dirt Bike* picks as the king tiddler of '88. The motor pleases beginner and experts alike, and the chassis is a more well-rounded handler than the other competitors. Keep on top of the servicing routine and you'll have one of the most reliable bikes (making it a great off-roader) ever made (a 125 at that!).

Kawasaki's KX125F slides narrowly behind for second place. The motor is the most user-friendly. The roomy chassis provides a secure, confident feeling that attracts first-time riders. Hop-up potential appears to be excellent, and this is backed by Kawasaki's sweep of the 125 Supercross events this year. Remember, Kawasaki is experimenting with wide-ratio trannies and lighting kits that should be offered to the public. Kawasaki's off-road push might



Tear-down: A few riders thought the Honda CR125R was a bit too fast. Honda's Eric Crippa was asked to tear down the motor to reveal the stock internals. Only jetting changes (see factory recommendations) were made to the engine.

make it the bike to pick for enduro, hare scrambles and desert work.

Things start to get tough from here. Many riders labeled the Suzuki's suspension and acceptable handling/motor traits as strong enough features to give it a third-place showing, but the seizure reports are alarming. The YZ125 is reliable but hard to ride. What about the Cagiva? It is somewhat demanding to ride (top-end motor). The suspension isn't quite as dialed as on the other four, but it sure is fast! But you want results, so we'll give the YZ third place due to its reliability strengths, good suspension and great handling.

Suzuki captures fourth. Excellent suspension, good handling and a competitive motor are held back by diminutive size and reported failures.

Cagiva is fifth but not last. How is that? Cagiva has to prove its dealer network (there are many excellent Cagiva dealers) to earn the trust of the American marketplace. If the suspension had more appealing settings, the Cagiva could have easily slid into second place, only held back by Honda's hard-to-beat attention to detail and natural ergonomics.

RATINGS

CATEGORY	WMX125	CR125	KX125	RM125	YZ125
POWER	8	9	7	7	8
POWERBAND	7	10	8	7	6
CLUTCH	8	10	8	7	6
TRANNY	7	10	9	8	6
FORKS	6	9	8	9	8
SHOCK	6	8	8	10	8
FRONT BRAKE	8	10	9	9	8
REAR BRAKE	7	10	9	9	8
ERGONOMICS	8	10	8	7	9
TURNING	9	10	8	7	8
STABILITY	8	7	10	8	9
O.A. HANDLING	8	9	9	7	8
RELIABILITY	7	10	8	6	9
DETAILING	8	10	9	8	8
SERVICING	8	10	10	8	8

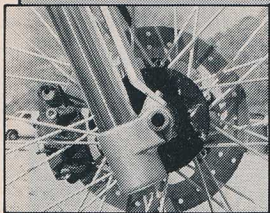
Numerical rating of specific categories only. This is not meant to be an accumulative rating chart.

A WORD ON OFF-ROADING

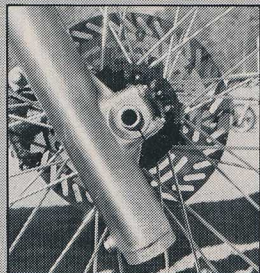
Let's face it, 125 off-roaders are a weird bunch. These hyperactive enthusiasts thrive on high revs, light weight and maneuverability. Actually, play riding on a small-bore can be a sensational experience, especially due to the recent improvement in reliability most manufacturers have accomplished since the early days of six-packs of pistons, disintegrating cranks and exploding gear boxes. Depending on how hard you ride and what the terrain conditions are (tacky or hilly), don't expect more than 35 to 45 miles of range on a tank (Honda has the smallest tank, Kawasaki the biggest). Most 125s need to be geared up for wide-open Hare-and-Hound-style riding but should be left stock (or geared down) for enduro competition. And remember, these babies are loud, so use a quality muffler (or keep the stocker packed) along with a spark arrester where required.

That's it. *Dirt Bike* spent a lot of time on these bikes, and we love all of them. It's important that you, the guy who's dishing out hard-earned cash, take some time studying our results before deciding on the right 125. Happy shopping!

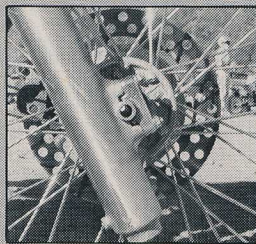
FACTORY RECOMMENDATIONS



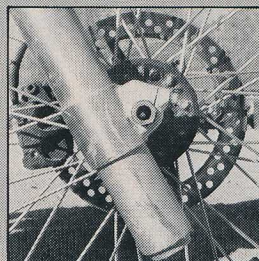
Cagiva: Complaints—mid-stroke harshness and bottoming on hard, flat landings. Factory recommendations—stock settings. Riders over 160 pounds can raise oil level from 150mm to 140mm.



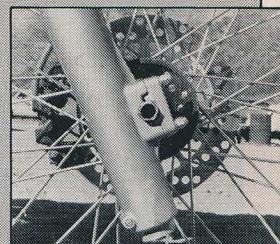
Honda: Complaints—none. Factory recommendations—standard oil level (125mm) and nine clicks out on compression.



Kawasaki: Complaints—soft springs for heavy and/or aggressive riders. Factory recommendations—set oil level at 130mm (5w oil) and ten clicks out on compression.



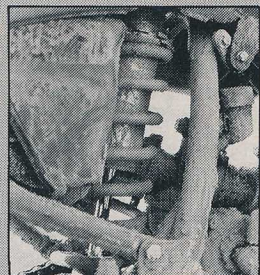
Suzuki: Complaints—none. Factory recommendations—standard oil level (125mm), eight clicks out on compression and ten clicks out on rebound.



Yamaha: Complaints—bottoming on hard, flat landings. Factory recommendations—set oil level at 140mm (Yamaha 01 fork oil) and 14 clicks out on compression.



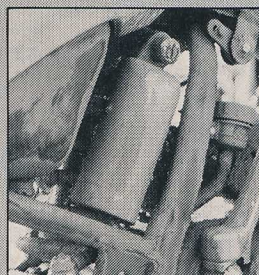
Cagiva: Complaints—packing (slow low-speed rebound). Factory recommendations—personalized valving.



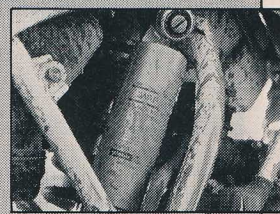
Honda: Complaints—kicks on braking bumps, heavy compression damping for light and/or less-skilled riders. Factory recommendations—100mm sag, 15 clicks out on compression and ten clicks out on rebound.



Kawasaki: Complaints—harsh mid-stroke compression and quick rebound, especially for light riders. Factory recommendations—100 to 105mm sag, ten clicks out on compression and ten clicks out on rebound.



Suzuki: Complaints—none. Factory recommendations—95mm sag, and service shock oil and linkage at intervals specified in owner's manual.



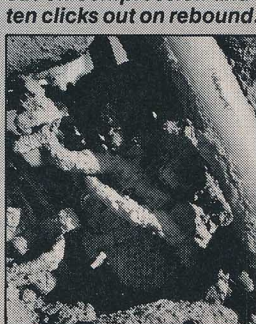
Yamaha: Complaints—nervous in off-throttle situations. Factory recommendations—100mm sag, 13 clicks out on compression and 17 clicks out on rebound. Pack all linkage and pivot bearings with a good quality waterproof grease.



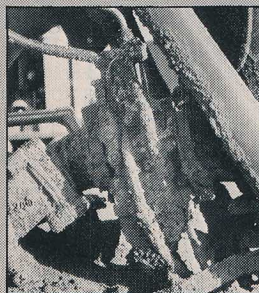
Cagiva: 37mm flat-slide Dellorto. Factory recommendations—50 pilot, 35 slide, K49 needle in fourth clip position, 264 DQ needle jet and 205 main.



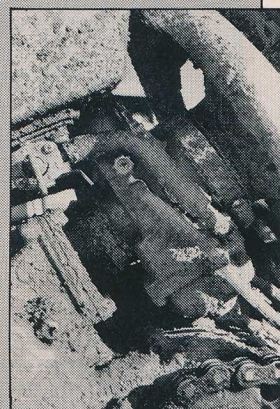
Honda: 34mm oval-slide Keihin. Factory recommendations—60 pilot, two-turns out on air screw, needle in middle or fourth clip position and 162 main.



Kawasaki: 35mm crescent-slide Keihin. Factory recommendations—65 pilot, 1-1/2 turns out on air screw, cut 2.5mm off choke tower (DIRT BIKE, April '88), 6.0 slide, needle in third clip position and 150 main.



Suzuki: 34mm blade-slide Mikuni. Factory recommendations—winter conditions—20 pilot, 3/4 turns out on air screw, 15mm float level, 6EN11-53 needle in second clip position and 360 main. Summer conditions—same settings except drop to a 350 main.



Yamaha: 34mm flat-slide Mikuni. Factory recommendations—standard settings are fine. Check float height and set at 11mm.

CAGIVA WMX125

Gearing: Use a 53 (52 stock) rear sprocket on tight motocross tracks. Loctite: Engine bolts, shock linkage, seat bolts and side panel screws.

Note: A soft foam kit will be available for the stock seat through Cagiva Pro Products.

HONDA CR125R

Loctite: All bolts attaching plastic. Use an anti-seize-type product to prevent radiator shroud bolts from locking in place.

KAWASAKI KX125F

Gearing: Supercross-style tracks may re-

quire that you use a 48-tooth rear sprocket (47 is stock).

Loctite: All motor mounts and the head stay, subframe bolts, the rear fender, air-box (mounts), front fender, left-side footpeg bracket (where it bolts to the frame), chain guide, chain rollers and rear sprocket bolts.

SUZUKI RM125J

Brakes: Check after muddy races for wear, and replace as required. **Exhaust:** A Pro Circuit pipe and silencer increases power throughout the curve. **Loctite:** All nuts and bolts.

YAMAHA YZ125U

Brakes: Make sure there's a proper amount of free play in the front brake lever and rear pedal (see manual). This will prevent excessive brake drag. **Exhaust:** Check pipe brackets for stress vibration. Add an extra exhaust flange (manifold) O-ring to reduce vibration. **Clutch:** Only adjust clutch when the engine is cold. Make sure there's at least two to three millimeters of free play at the lever to prevent clutch failure. **Loctite:** Both bolts on the front swingarm chain buffer. □