

OWNER'S EXPOSE: IS YOUR BIKE A LEMON?!

DIRT BIKE

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MARK BARNETT
TEAM SUZUKI

MAY 1984

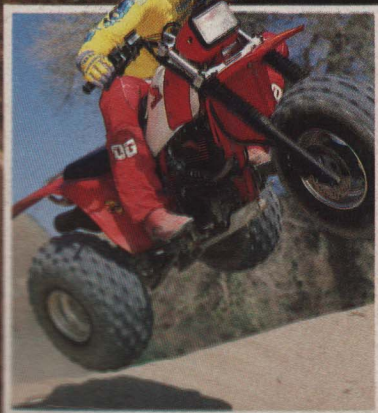
\$1.75
UK £1.25

**BIKE SURVIVAL:
12 CRITICAL
WARNINGS
YOU CAN'T
IGNORE!**

**SUZUKI
RM125E:
BACK & ON
THE ATTACK!**

**YAMAHA IT200:
KDX KILLER?**

**HONDA
ATC200X:
PAINFULLY
PERFECT!**



ISSN0026-4154



SUZUKI RM125E MOTOCROSSER

REV IT TILL IT MELTS... AND KEEP IT THERE!



Just point it and go. All-around good manners and light weight let the rider toss the RM around like a toy. It's a non-tiring bike to race.

It works, as long as you do

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

After a dismal 1983 effort in both performance and sales of the RM125, Suzuki has taken a deep breath and given us a new bike.

No longer is the RM125 the same basic bike as the last three years with different porting each year; instead, it has a new frame, forks, suspension, airbox and, yes... a motor with some horsepower.

The blue frame and fork boots are the clues to what year this machine is. But the real giveaway comes when riding the RM.

RPM SPECIAL

The RM125E revs out far enough to give you second thoughts about melting cranks and whirling parts turning blue. There's not much low end—in fact, not enough to allow for even the most casual of trailriding ses-

sions. But the thing *does* rev.

At first we were disappointed with the softness of the mid-range power, but jetting changes improved the punch. Still, even with the stock jetting, acceleration was amazing, as long as the rider abused the clutch and kept the RM-E screaming its guts out.

On flatter, faster tracks the RM will run lap times with just about any 125. However, on a track with uphills and tight technical turns, the rider will have to work much harder.

Two more teeth on the rear sprocket will help, as will a set of Boyesen reeds. After trying leaner jetting to get improved mid-range, we followed the advice of Victorville Suzuki and went *richer* on the pilot jet. This made a big improvement—still not up to the

mid-range snap of a new KX125, but a much needed gain. The stock pilot is a 40. Try a 45 first, or even a 50. In conjunction with the new reeds and experimenting with needle position, you'll get much more mid-range and the top end will stay impressively strong.

FLOATING THROUGH THE BUMPS

Right up front let's say that the RM125E has the best all-around suspension of any bike we've tested so far this year—even better than the near-magical RM250.

Forks are beefy 43mm items, with the only difference being the spring rate and the chrome finish on the fork tubes. The RM250 has a slightly superior finish.

Still, the action of the forks cannot be faulted. Even heavier riders were able to

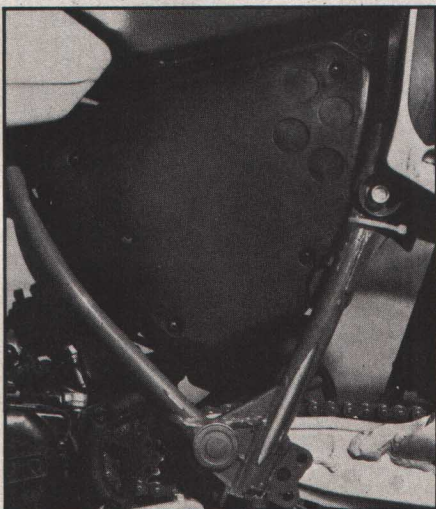
SUZUKI RM125E



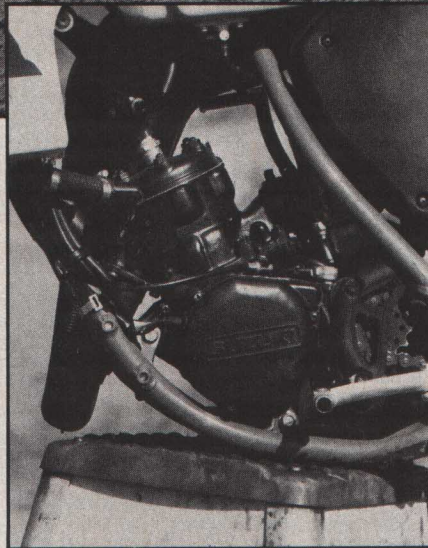
Barnett: One day at the office for the DB lens, at his Alabama test track.

charge hard with the stock springs, as long as the oil level was raised a bit.

At the rear, the 125 Floater assembly is better in action than the 250's. The lever ratios are slightly different, we're told by Suzuki reps. Preload selection is critical, depending on the rider's weight. Use four inches as a base (100mm to 105mm). For high-speed tracks or cross-country use, more sag will eliminate steering headshake. For tighter, twistier MX tracks, less sag will make the bike turn sharper, with a slight loss in straight-line stability. Forks can also be raised about 10mm in the triple clamps for ultra-tight turning manners.



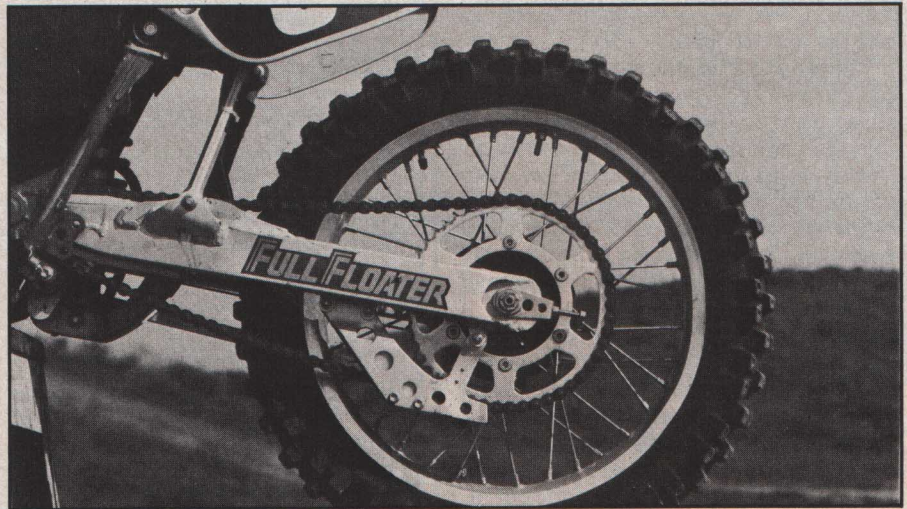
Huge single airbox is welcome. Filter is a two-stage deal. Service is a snap.



Tiny engine puts out most of its power in the upper-rpm range. At the bottom end, there's a large vacuum.



Gigantic (for a 125) 43mm KYB forks rate right up at the top in action. Even though they don't have the trick chromed finish of the 250, they are plush.



Quite possibly the best rear suspension we've tested to date can be found on the 125 Floater.

The ability of the Floater to take bumps is still the best in the industry. You can see a sharp rut, brace for it and leave the gas on. The RM125E will suck it up and spit it out behind you.

HANDLING HABITS

The strong suit of the RM125 is stability at high speeds over rough ground. It turns well enough to get the job done, but will not carve a line under a Honda CR125. On sandy tracks the rider will find the unpredictable steering an asset. On a hard-packed track there's a small price to pay in the S-turns.

Air time is a delight on the latest RM. The bike jumps straight and true and lands without jolting the rider. It feels light in the air and is slim enough to let the rider move around freely.

GOODIES

Shifting is deluxe once the gearbox gets about five to six hours on it and a few oil changes. Neutral is still sneaky and hides from the toe. Shifts can be made under full power, and there's no notchiness, up or down.

SUZUKI RM125E



Barnett stuffs the RM into a loose turn and abuses the clutch to get a powerful exit.

The new, giant, single-filter airbox is easy to work on. Four screws hold the plastic cover in place over the double-stage filter. The foam seems very thin and flimsy. Consider an accessory filter.

Clutch action is light, and all controls are placed naturally.

Plastic is much improved this year, and finally the fenders do not look like a pelican's beak.

A slimmer swingarm and aluminum up-rights are nice touches. The shock reservoir no longer has a long hose to wrap around everything. The reservoir is tucked neatly on the right side of the frame rail.

Super details include a brake pedal guard and a slim-line aluminum muffler.

Travel is up at both ends. Damping adjustments are limited to compression-only in the forks and both compression and rebound in the KYB shock.

A blue safety-style seat forms cleanly to the tank.

Starting is a one-kick deal, hot or cold.

GLITCHES

The pipe still rattles around too much, and mung and spoo will exit the headpipe and the muffler joint.

The too short throttle should have been canned years ago, and the throttle side grip replacement on the stock housing requires filing and grinding. Just slap on a Gunnar Gasser, which is longer, and use any kind of grip you want.

The kill button still (after oh so many years) has a long screw bolt hanging down to stab you in the thigh. Cut it short and file it smooth.

The front brake works well for a while, then starts to lose effectiveness as it glazes up. The rear brake will wear quickly. Chain and sprocket life is poor. We slipped a Side-winder on the rear, and it's giving us at least twice the life span of a stocker. We also used some RK chain and got good life out of it.

The stock Dunlop tires were average or

less fresh and poor when the edges rounded. We tried a new 4.10 x 18 Metz on the rear and liked it.

Getting to the shock for preload adjustments is a pain, but not as awkward as on a KX125.

The spiffy-looking levers snap like dried twigs when the bike is dropped. Magura controls bend and then can be bent back.

THE VERDICT

This is a dynamite bike. The superb suspension overrides any lack of mid-range power. Plus, we feel that it is much easier and cheaper to extract more power out of a bike than it is to shape up shocks and forks.

After a dull 1983 effort, the new "E" model deserves an E-ticket ride. A great bike with Pro-level potential as delivered. □



SUZUKI RM125E

Engine type	Water-cooled, 2-stroke, single
Bore and stroke	54mm x 54mm
Displacement	123cc
Carburetion	32mm flat-slide Mikuni
Factory recommended jetting:	
Main jet	270
Needle jet	R-2
Jet needle	6EPO5
Pilot jet	45
Slide number	4.0
Recommended gasoline	Premium
Fuel tank capacity	7 L (1.5 gals.)
Fuel tank material	Plastic
Lubrication	Oil in gas, pre-mix
Recommended oil	Suzuki CCI at 20:1
Oil capacity, gearbox	800 ml (.70 qt.)
Air filtration	Oiled foam, 2 stage
Clutch type	Wet, multi-plate
Transmission	6-speed
Gearbox ratios:	
1	2.066 (31/15)
2	1.705 (29/17)
3	1.411 (24/17)
4	1.190 (25/21)
5	1.045 (23/22)
6	0.956 (22/23)
Gearing, front/rear	12/51
Ignition	PEI
Primary kick system?	Yes
Recommended spark plug	NGK B9EGV or ND W27ES-GU
Silencer/spark arrester	Aluminum silencer only
Exhaust system	High-pipe, right side
Frame, type	Single downtube, split cradle
Wheelbase	1475mm (58.1 in.)
Ground clearance	320mm (12.6 in.)
Seat height	940mm (37.0 in.)
Steering head angle (rake)	28.5°
Trail	123mm (4.84 in.)

Wet weight, no fuel, no side stand	198 lbs.
Rim material	Aluminum alloy
Tire size and type:	
Front	90/80 x 21 4 PR Bridgestone
Rear	120/80 x 18 4 PR Bridgestone
Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	43mm KYB telescopics, air/oil, adj. comp. damping, 300mm (11.8 in.)
Rear	Single-shock Full Floater, adj. comp. & rebound damping, 320mm (12.7 in.) travel
Intended use	Motocross
Country of origin	Japan
Retail price, approx.	\$1859
Distributor:	
U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.	
3251 E. Imperial Hwy.	
Brea, CA 92621	
Parts prices, high-wear items:	
Piston assembly, complete	\$49.05
Piston rings only	16.82
Cylinder	125.86
Shift lever	20.67
Brake pedal	17.98
Front sprocket	11.60
Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use of machine in mind:	
Handling	Excellent
Front suspension	Excellent
Rear suspension	Excellent
Power	Very good
Cost	Very good
Attention to detail	Very good
Effectiveness, stone stock	Excellent

This rating system is included to aid in comparison of bikes in the same displacement and intended-use categories. Comparing the ratings of two dissimilar machines (four-stroke vs. MXer, 175 enduro vs. 80cc mini) is a meaningless exercise in futility.