

◀ **DIRT BIKE** editor Wolfman Webb flings the XR big-time. Even with Webb's hearty girth, the XR responded with nary a snivel. With the 22-pound ATK fork springs up front and the Progressive Suspension rear shock, air time is pure joy.



EXTRACTING THE XR'S REAL POTENTIAL

Part I: Low-bucks help

By the DIRT BIKE Staff



Last month *Dirt Bike* tested the new LXR250 and came away favorably impressed. The Honda engineers set out to make a potent Eastern enduro machine that was competitive in stock form. And for the most part, they accomplished that goal. The machine is lightweight, has a semi-healthy power output, and handles better than most

four-strokes have ever dreamed of handling. However, during the course of the test, we became familiar with some glaring faults that kept creeping up—a rear shock rebound factor of zero, fork action that was too mushy, and a motor (although semi-brisk for a four-stroke) that could use a bit more juice.

WHITE BROS., PART I

The three factors that fell short of our expectations—the motor, forks, and shock—weren't hopeless design flaws requiring major surgery to correct. We felt confident that a savvy aftermarket firm could remedy the situation with a low-bucks approach. Dan White of White Bros. fame confirmed our thoughts. Dan told us that he knew some tricks that would instantly enhance the XR, and he agreed to perform them *if* we would allow him to do a Stage Two XR, which would permit him to go full-tilt gonzo on the bike. Dan was so adamant about this Stage One and Stage Two bit, we had no choice but to agree. This month we will concentrate on Stage One, which consists of a low-bucks fix-it program covering the forks, motor and shock.

According to Dan, the best results he had in squeezing more juice out of the stock mill were obtained by performing a combination of tricks resulting in a full two-horsepower increase on the dyno.

THREE EASY STEPS TO MORE POWER

The first modification on the White Bros. agenda was to install the White Bros. meg-alloy silencer kit with a SuperTrapp spark arrester. This isn't a full exhaust system, but a reverse-cone megaphone silencer. Having completed the pipe mods, they turned their attention to the airbox. A K&N air filter replaced the stock Honda unit. The K&N has no backfire screen like the stocker, and it has a thicker foam material. Five one-inch holes were drilled in the top of the airbox to assist in the breathing department. The final modification was to raise the needle jet one clip. Dan told us that they experimented with 32mm and 34mm carbs, but the results weren't sufficient to warrant the price. Therefore, the stock carb is used with the new setting. By performing these three mods, a full two horsepower is gained on the dyno. That's a substantial increase when you consider that no cam, boring, or porting work has been performed.

FORK IT OVER

With the low-bucks engine tricks complete, Dan turned his attention to the forks. For serious trail work, stiffer front boingers are a must. Dan installed a set of 22-pound ATK fork springs with White Power ten-weight fork oil. Along with the ATK springs, he sent a set of Progressive springs for us to evaluate. These springs, rated from 18 to 22 pounds, are designed to allow a softer ride in the first portion of the stroke and then to progressively stiffen. For the Western or desert rider, the staff felt that the 22-pound ATK springs did the trick, and the

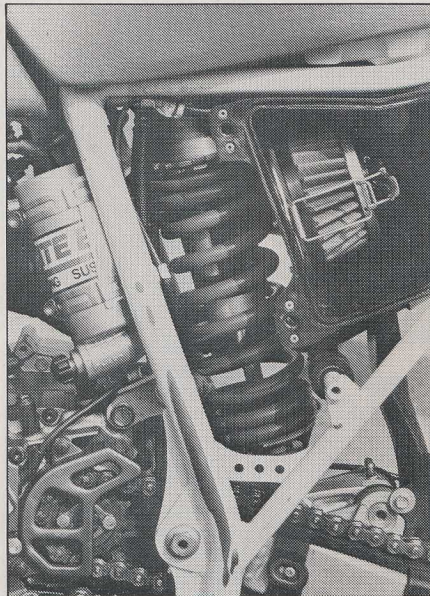
PROJECT XR250



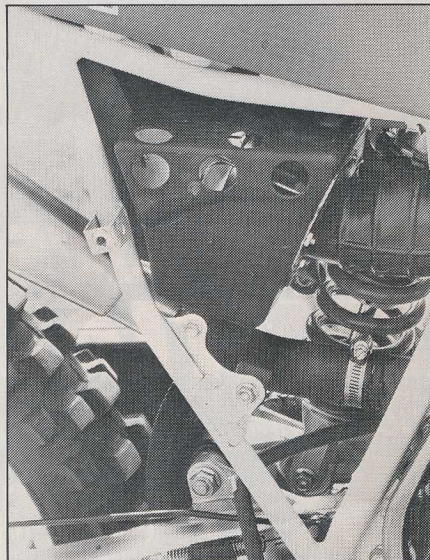
Lightweight with good four-stroke power, and now competitively suspended, the XR has been transformed into one of the most desired machines in the DIRT BIKE stable. Stay tuned for Part Two of our hop-up and see how we go for the ultimate in 250 four-stroke muscle.



White Bros. spelled relief for the front suspension by using ten-weight White Power oil and the trick 22-pound ATK fork springs. The action of the forks improved dramatically, and it is a must for the serious trail rider.



◀The stock damper has zilch rebound damping and comes with a light spring. Once the heavy Progressive spring is installed, the body rewelded, remachined and revalved, the motorcycle will respond instantly to terrain changes. It goes from the fun bike category to a serious machine, in one fell swoop. The use of the K&N air filter allowed the Honda to breathe. It is a more reliable filter system than the stock unit.



Progressive units fit the bill for the serious Eastern enduro rider.

GET OUT THE BACK, JACK

The stock rear suspension of the XR is the weakest link in our test bike. In stock form the non-rebounding qualities of the shock border on the dangerous side in high-speed situations. Progressive Suspension parts helped cure the backyard dilemma. First, the stock spring (with a rating of 505 pounds) was replaced by the Progressive Suspension spring (with a rating of 620 pounds). Then the rebound damping problem was solved by welding and remachining the shock to obtain the needed gain in rebound damping. The results of this modification are significant. The "ride 'em, Bronco" effect vanished, and a controlled, well-mannered rear suspension took its place.

END RESULT

Riding our reworked XR proved to be an enjoyable experience. The motor responded with a shade more fire. Although it's still no missile, it now has the additional grunt to keep the pilot chugging along happily, and with the simple addition of the silencer package and airbox tricks, there should be no more reliability problems. The response of the heavy-duty fork springs was just what the doctor ordered. The fear of attacking obstacles with the stock forks was replaced by a carefree attitude that let the rider push the XR to its limit. Once again, the biggest single improvement (in our opinion) was the rear shock action. This modification moved the XR from the fun-bike category to the serious-trail-machine category.

Well, Project XR, Part I is now complete. Stay tuned for Part II, when the White Bros. have their way with the Honda XR250 in a no-holds-barred modification program, and produce a mega-machine. □

Dan White's airbox tricks include drilling five holes in the top of the airbox, and the addition of the K&N filter. When done in conjunction with adding the silencer kit, the results were a full two-horsepower increase over stock.



White Bros. megalloy silencer kit, with the SuperTrapp spark arrester is the only hardware mod that was made on the XR for Part One of our XR hop-up. Big weight savings are attained, and top-end power has been slightly increased with the bolt-on kit. Part Two of our story will extract the big ponies from the Honda mill.

1986 XR250 HONDA MODIFICATIONS

White Bros. megalloy	
silencer kit	\$109.95
K&N air filter	28.89
ATK fork springs	49.95
Progressive Suspension	
fork springs	49.95
Progressive shock spring	59.95
White Bros. shock service and rebuilding	75.00
The White Bros., 11750 Seaboard Circle, Stanton, CA 90680; (714)895-1991	