

YAMAHA'S NEW YZ125: HARDEST HITTING 125 IN '87

WPS
34355
**DIRT
BIKE**

DIRT BIKE

**KAWASAKI'S INCREDIBLE KX250:
IF YOU CAN'T WIN ON
THIS...GIVE UP!**



\$2.00
UK £1.60

MARCH
1987

**HOW DO
YOU RATE
ASA
RIDER?
TAKE THE
TEST,
PAGE 22**

**PROJECT
IT200:
THE MASTERPIECE
IS COMPLETE!**



**TESTING
THE MOST
POPULAR
DIRT BIKE
EVER MADE!!**

**BARSTOW TO VEGAS
MASSACRE: LOCAL UNKNOWN
BEATING THE FACTORY
STARS!**

**'87 CR250 LO
MUSCLE MO...**

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WM OSTR0M #
14808 AZTEC ST 14808 #
SYLMAR CA 91342 91342 #

**HONDA'S
NEW 250X 4-TRAX:
AN XR250 WITH 2 MORE WHEELS?**



ISSN 0863-1546

DIRT BIKE

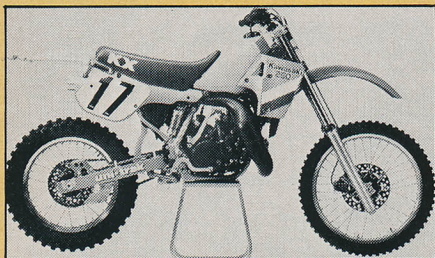
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HUSKY 430 CROSS COUNTRY



YAMAHA IT200 HOP-UP



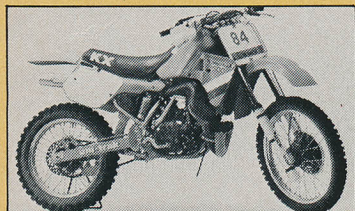
KAWASAKI KX250



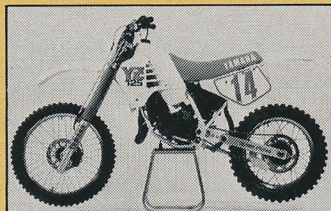
HONDA XR80



HONDA 4-TRAX 250X



BARSTOW TO VEGAS



YAMAHA YZ125

WARNING: Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.

Lee Waldie Craig Scott Chris Koira

ON THE COVER:—Steve Schmitz and Lance Johnson split the newest *Dirt Bike* cover aboard the latest rockets from Kawasaki and Yamaha. Schmitz (top), obliterates a corner on the potent KX250, and Johnson lofts the front end on the quick YZ125. Both photos were captured by "Fearless" Fran Kuhn. DeWest tastefully laid out the design, and Valley Film did the color separations.

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MAIDEN VOYAGE

Getting started with Honda's most popular dirt bike

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE



tial has changed. The powerplant is a very simple design: a single-cylinder, air-cooled four-stroke that's as reliable as a claw hammer. This basic engine has been around for more than a dozen years and remains an ideal choice for beginner and young riders. That's not to say it's slow—it'll carry a young rider over almost anything he's likely to encounter, but it is *very* controllable. Good news for novice motorcycling parents. The powerband is torquey, with no holes or peaks across the spread. The engine is also user friendly when it comes to starting. Firing up on cold mornings requires the use of the choke, but once warm, the engine lights without any mixture manipulation. Kick-lever pressure is minimal, allowing smaller kids to get the motor going.

The engine breathes through an easy-access standard foam filter element that's also easy to clean. Once the fuel is mixed in the 20mm Keihin carb, it passes through a traditional two-valve head, into the exhaust, and exits through an exceptionally quiet muffler.

Depending on your tastes, the 1987 Honda XR80 is either a relic or a dream come true. For riders who've been around the sport for awhile, the bike looks much the same now as it did back in the late 1970s, with the exception of a few new cosmetic items. On the other hand, a kid who's getting his feet wet in motorcycling will see the machine in a much different light.

The vets may have a point; the machine really isn't very different from the way it was in the old days, but with good reason. Why change something that works so well and is doing what it was designed to do? Sure, Honda could add five inches of suspension travel and a dozen horsepower, but that would wreck the bike for a lot of kids—kids who need a bike that lets them learn the ropes without a high intimidation factor. Not surprisingly, that's what the XR80 does best, and that's part of the reason it's Honda's best-selling dirt bike.

INSIDE LITTLE RED

The last real changes to the XR80 package came in 1985 when Honda added a single-shock Pro-Link rear suspension system to the machine. Since then, nothing substan-

▲ **Legal eagle:** Honda equipped the littlest XR with a Forest Service-approved spark arrester/muffler that keeps the noise level low and the bike trail-legal. It's one of the quietest off-road machines around.

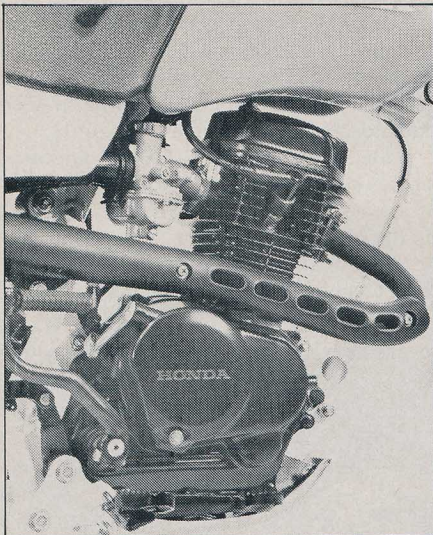
Just like the big bikes: The XR sports a single-shock Pro-Link rear suspension. It's action is perfect for light-to-medium trailwork. ►



1987 HONDA XR80



Because the XR's power is so easily managed, most kids won't feel intimidated, even on their first ride. Scaled to size, the XR needs only a nudge from its small pilot to thread through the corners.



Smooth and controllable, the Honda's engine is perfect for getting started, and there's enough grunt on tap to keep more experienced riders happy. Starting is easy, even for lightweights.

The transmission is a five-speed unit, the cogs are evenly spaced and well suited to the machine's power output. Shifting is also good, though the 80 is much like the bigger XR's in its resistance to shifting under full power. The shift lever is positioned a little low, but most beginners probably won't mind. It does, on occasion, hang up in a rut or snag a rock. Since there's no folding tip, this means a bent lever in most cases. The clutch requires a moderately strong pull, and the levers are a shade too big for the smallest hands to easily grab. The XR should have less than full-sized controls for the youngest riders.

THE WRAPAROUND

Honda's typically close attention to detail is evident in the XR80's running gear. The seat is comfortable and sized right. The tank is large enough for hours of uninterrupted

riding, but small enough to fit the rider. Both brakes are strong and have very gradual engagements. The footpegs, like the shifter, are a shade low, but well cleated and very strong.

DOWN TO EARTH

Both front and rear suspension units deliver what could be considered the ideal compromise between travel and ride height. With 5.5 inches up front and 4.3 inches in the rear, there's enough movement to handle most obstacles a kid rides over, while keeping the overall height down to a reason-

able level. Being able to get your feet on the ground is reassuring, especially when you're a beginner. The ride quality is also fine for most riders. Compared with the Taco minibikes kids used to plonk around on years ago, the Honda rides like a Cadillac.

NOT FOR BEGINNERS ONLY

Although the XR80 is an ideal beginner's machine, it's definitely not for new riders only. With a more experienced pilot aboard, the little machine is capable of covering truly ugly track and trail. That's one of the best aspects of the Honda—it's a bike a kid can learn with, then, as his ability improves, it becomes one he can grow with. It's also rugged enough to last more than a few seasons—it's not unusual to see a ten-year-old XR cruising the pits at a local race or sitting in the corner of someone's garage. The little XR's are easy to hop up. Companies such as Powroll make a bunch of go-fast hardware for the 80, and the modified machines are surprisingly quick.

THE FUN FACTOR

Even if Honda never makes another change to the XR80, it'll continue to be a popular machine. How can that be? Won't there ever come a time when it must be revised to survive? Maybe, but not necessarily. At any rate, we're not sure the XR needs more technology than it already has. As long as there are beginners, or riders who want a healthy dose of fun in a small, reliable package, the XR will be around. □



1987 HONDA XR80R

Engine type	Single-cylinder, air-cooled, 4-stroke
Bore and stroke	47.5mm x 45.0mm
Displacement	79.7cc
Carburetion	20mm Keihin
Transmission	5-speed
Fuel tank capacity	1.7 gals. w/2 gal. reserve
Wheelbase	47 in.
Seat height	28.5 in.
Ground clearance	8.3 in.
Claimed weight, dry	140.8 lbs.

Suspension:

Front 27mm telescopic fork, 5.5 in. travel
Rear Pro-Link, single shock, 4.3 in. travel

Intended use Off-road/recreation

Country of origin Japan

Suggested retail price \$998

Distributor/Manufacturer:

American Honda Motor Corp.
100 W. Alondra Blvd.
Gardena, CA 90247