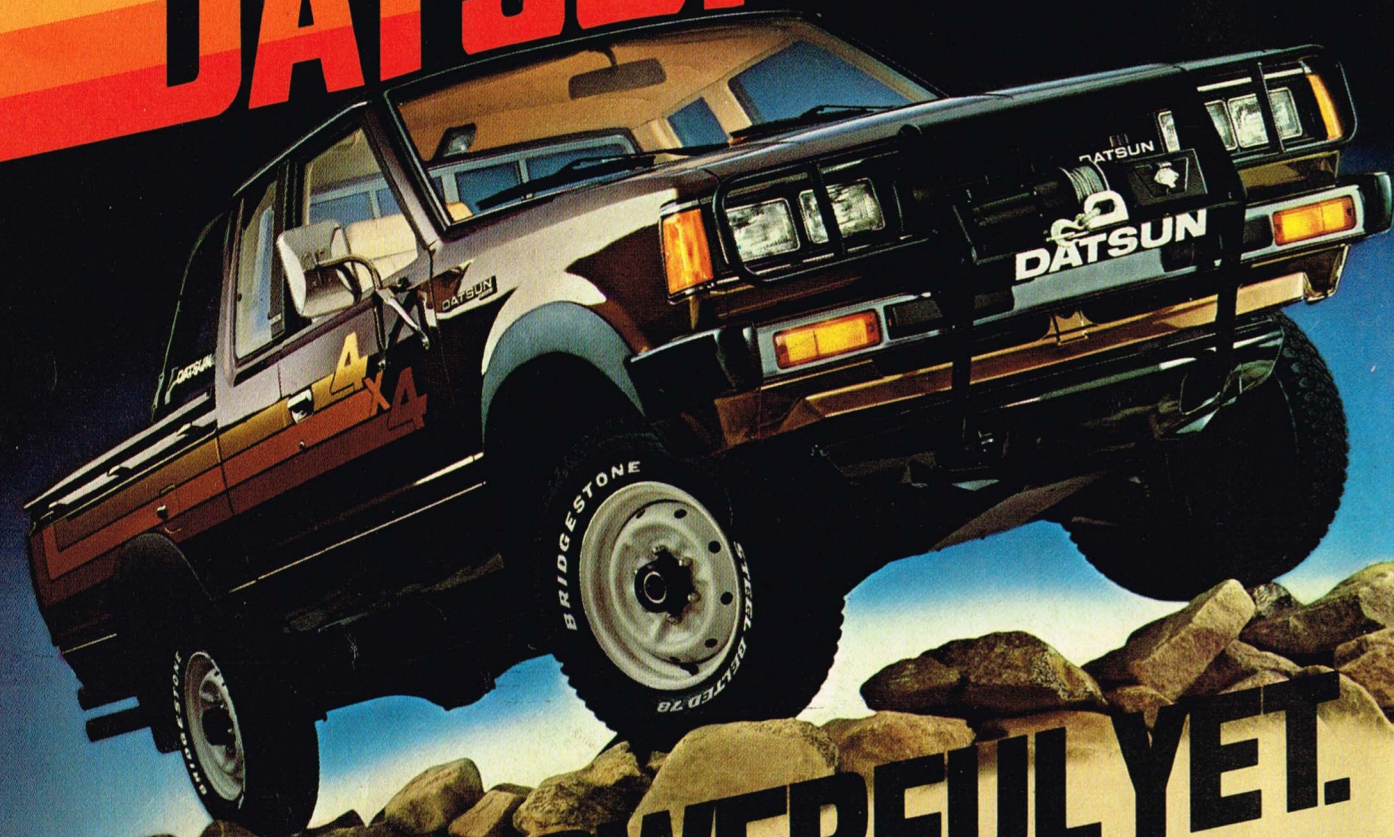


DATSUN **AxA**



MOST POWERFUL YET.

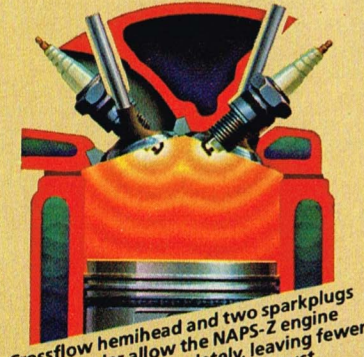
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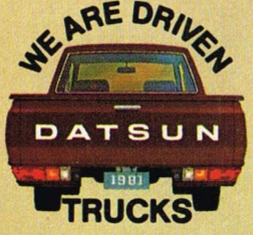
Crossflow hemihead and two sparkplugs per cylinder allow the NAPS-Z engine to burn fuel more completely, leaving fewer unburned wastes in the exhaust.

21 EST. MPG. **29** EST. HWY. *EPA estimates for comparison with standard 5-speed. Actual mileage may differ depending on speed, trip length and weather. Highway mileage will probably be less. California estimates: **20** 28.

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Race testing the King Floater:
SUZUKI RM465X

HONDA XR250R:
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PIKE'S PEAK:
1981 race to the clouds
SUPERBOWL TEN:
Barnett's Bowl Burner

ISSN0064-1546



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HONDA CR450R



PROJECT XR500 — PART III



RM125X TRICKS



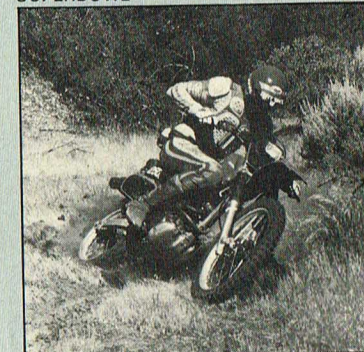
PIKE'S PEAK



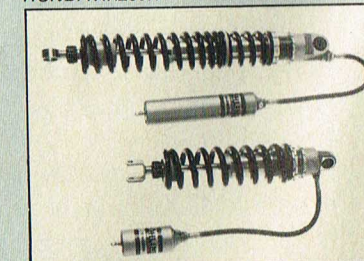
SUZUKI RM465X



SUPERBOWL



HONDA XR250R



THE SUPER SHOCKS

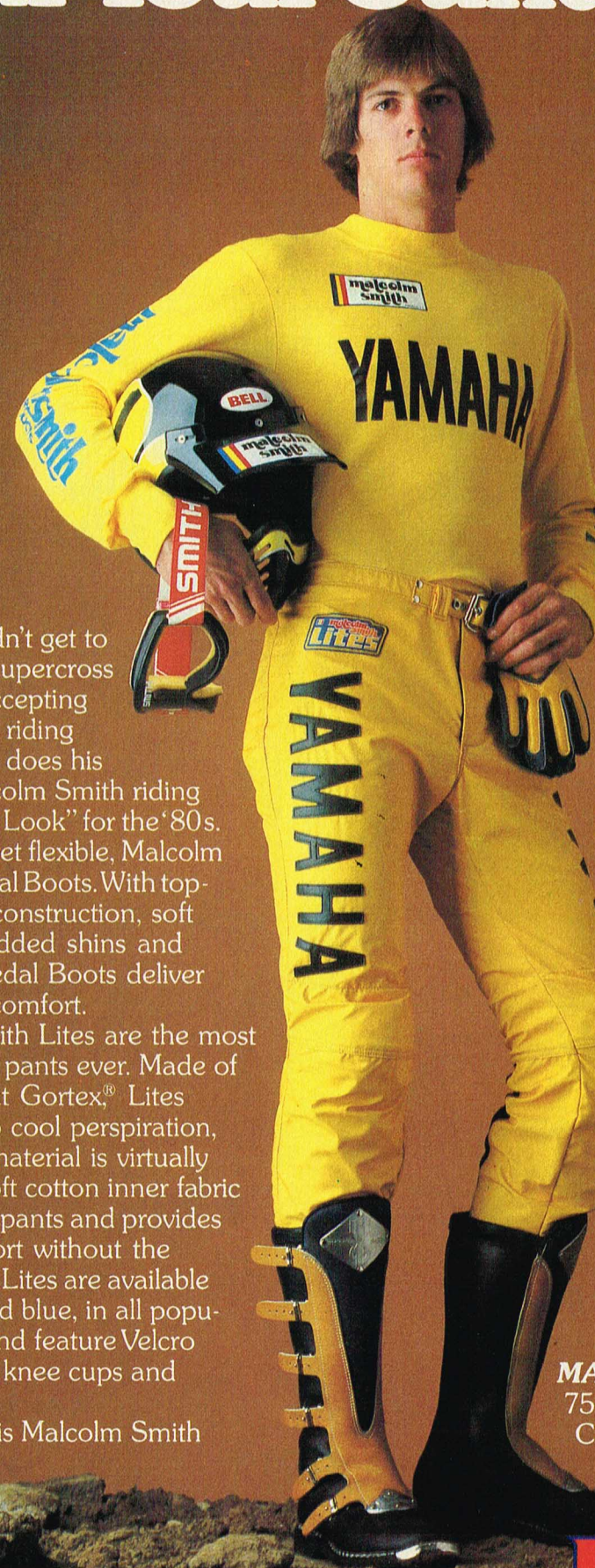
On the cover: Jon Miller, a close, old friend of the entire *Dirt Bike* staff, came out of his forced retirement to drag handlebars with us for a few days. Jon enjoyed it; the RM465 said it was good for him, too. Photo by Tom Webb.

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SUZUKI RM465X MOTOCROSSER

KING OF THE FLOATERS

Making the big one work is just a matter of knowing what to do

No doubt about it, the Suzuki Floaters have made the most impact of the year in the motocross game. Everyone else is scrambling to play catch-up. Still, the owners of those yellow flyers are not sitting smugly back with nothing to do. In particular, the racers

who bought new RM465s are spending a great deal of time asking each other about what jetting works best. At the track, you'll see them standing around in little groups, talking thusly:

"Well, I dropped two on the pilot and cut a notch in my slide. That really

made it come alive."

"I went the other way. A guy who knew somebody over at the shop said to go with a 3.5 slide and richen the needle jet and leave everything else alone."

"You guys are off base. I simply

filed 2mm off the vaporizer end and leaned the main way down. Of course, I have to run 80 to one to get rid of the detonation, but it runs like an ape now."

After the first moto, you can see this same small group gathered around, re-

hashing their original conversation: "Hey, mine ran good and strong until it got hot, then I got a terrible mid-range detonation."

"Yeh? Well, mine stalled in every third corner. I just can't understand it."

"I don't know. I *just* don't know. Here I go and pull a holeshot, then right around the third lap, the rpm starts surging and dropping, then it blubbers down low and pings on top. I'm sooo confused!"

And so it goes.

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SUZUKI RM465X

Probably more BS has been passed around about properly jetting the RM465 than any other bike this year, with the possible exception of Bing carburetors.

You want to know the real bottom line? The inside secret? You came to the right magazine, sport. The big trick is to not even touch the jetting until you get rid of the stock air box and put in a Twin Air box and filter. Some riders have successfully modified their boxes by liberal drilling, but they end up with marginal dust and water resistance and the filters clog up early and easy.

Marty Moates and Rex Staten both campaign basically standard RM465s and they both swear by the Twin Air box. Moates told us that it made the engine come alive and felt like it dragged a good five additional horsepower out of nowhere. Once the good air box is installed, jetting becomes a great deal easier and more consistent. The needle jet and needle can be left alone (stock) and no tampering with the slide will be required. You'll still have to lean the pilot down a bit, perhaps one or two sizes, but that's it. Some riders are running the stock main, while others drop one or two there, also. And that's it. No filing needed, or magic parts to search for.

Idle talk

The most common complaint we heard, other than the jetting, was how easily the bike would stall on a tight and twisty track. One time a rider would slow down for a corner and the engine would hesitate and cough, the next time it would sigh and die. The third time through, it would surge and straighten the bike up, causing the rider to overshoot the turn.

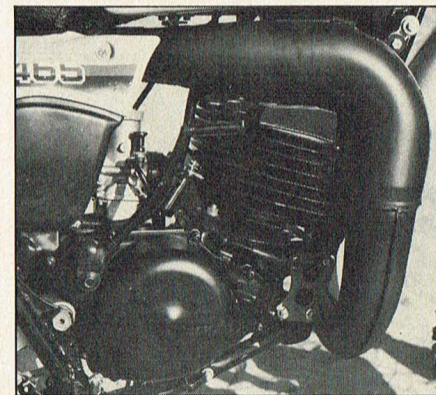
White Bros. sells an idle screw kit for the RMs that's worth its weight in titanium. The RM465 Mikuni carb does not come with an idle screw and the body must be drilled and tapped to accept the WB kit. Team *Dirt Bike* raced the 465 several times and stalled the machine repeatedly, ruining some perfectly good starts and wasting a lot of time in restarting. So, we have two *must* changes that have to be made to the RM before it can be raced with any degree of confidence. Admittedly, they are small changes, but, we feel, important ones. With the idle screw installed and the jetting changes made, the RM became much easier to ride aggressively and stalling became an oc-

casional thing, rather than a cursed habit.

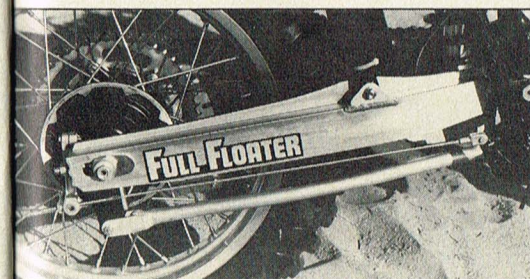
Front and rear

Once the engine is dialed, attention can be turned to the suspension. At the rear, dialing in the Floater takes little more than common sense and a good feel for what is happening. Rebound damping can be adjusted by turning a clicker knob on the shock and plenty of pre-load adjustment is available. You'll find that steering is greatly dependant upon the amount of pre-load, so don't be tempted to run the rear end too soft, or you'll experience some front end washout.

More demanding riders will replace the reservoir with a bladder-type and will relocate the reservoir to a spot under the rear seat frame rail on the right side. This gets it away from all that engine and exhaust pipe heat. The standard reservoir is a piston/O-ring deal that is not as responsive as it could be. Moates told us that he runs a White Power shock on his bike and that it works so good that he can barely ride his stock practice bike any more. This is rather astounding, as the rear end is



Kickstarter is located high and far forward, making starting a real chore. More often than not, it took a half-dozen kicks to get things spinning. Keep an eye on those front motor mount bolts, as they tend to loosen easily.



Everything is neatly tucked in under the swingarm, but the Full Floater torque arm can get bent upward easily. It took quite a while to get used to the overly touchy rear brakes.

probably the best available on any production bike right now. Any dramatic improvement surely borders on pure magic.



Biggest of the Floaters, the RM465 can be honed into a National level machine without a great deal of money spent. In stock trim, it's a good bike for the local wars once the jetting and forks are dialed in.



Probably the finest, strongest hub/wheel combination to be found is the all new straight spoke item on all of the RM models. Very little wrench turning is required.

We spent a considerable amount of time diddling with the forks in an attempt to get them right. Our first race was with standard oil level and the action of the forks was harsh enough to bloody the knuckles on both thumbs at the tough Sunrise Cycle Park track.

Eventually, we ended up with five-weight Kal-Gard fork oil, five and one-half inches from the top of the forks

(forks compressed, springs out) and used no air whatsoever. This gave us an all-around satisfactory feel. Not perfect, but acceptable. Further improvement was realized by slipping in a set of White Power fork springs. These are considerably longer than the stockers and work better. With these simple changes, our RM had a completely different personality and worked a whole lot better.

On the track

Properly set up, the RM has good, but not overwhelming, power. A Maico 490 will beat it to the first turn. The 465X will run just about neck and neck with a YZ465 in a drag race. However, the RM does not beat the rider, as the power delivery is not of the arm wrenching variety. You ride the bike almost like a 250, but shift earlier.

Second gear starts are the norm, but third gear is too chancy, even on dry

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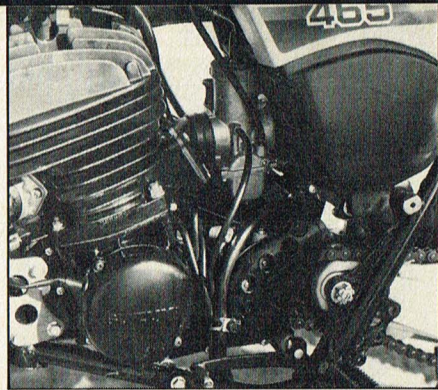
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SUZUKI RM465X

and hard-packed ground. It takes quite a while to clean out the engine before it will pull cleanly through the gears. Don't just fire it up and head for the starting line until you've run through the gears at least a half dozen times, or the engine will blubber and puke for a quarter of a lap. This holds true even when the engine is jetted right on the button. It's just the nature of the beast.

As you punch it off the line, you'll notice that the RM does not tend to wheelie. This is due in part to the rather low front end and the shortish forks. Also, the saddle swoops down a bit near the tank, letting the rider sit in a forward pocket of sorts. At first, the bars feel too low and oddly shaped. We cut an inch off each end and quickly adapted to the bike. If you've just hopped off of any other big bike and onto the Zuke, it'll feel very strange for the first four or five laps, then you will settle into the mannerisms of the RM and learn to trust it.

You'll find that deep whoops and bumps can be taken at full throttle without any of the serious impact jarring you. It's positively amazing! Only



Spare hoses? A rat's nest of rubber tubing dangles under the engine. When mud gathers on the ends, it looks like a grape arbor on two wheels. Old-style shift lever should immediately be replaced with a folder.

one thing: don't back off the throttle while doing this, or a head shake will immediately set in. The RM must be considered a "power-on" handler.

When you dive into a chattery corner with the brakes on, the rear end will tend to skip and lift a bit. Savvy Suzuki riders learn to get their weight well back and compensate for this. With the stock oil and settings, those forks will pack down and aggravate this condition. That's why the lighter fork oil is a must before the bike is raced.

You'll find that the Suzuki is a decent turning bike, but not great. It's much happier when the front wheel can push up against a lip, or a berm, when working a corner. We slipped a nice new nylon Metzeler up front and gained some additional bite, but there was still a trace of washout. Not bad, but enough so you had to pay attention to business. It was an absolute *must* to keep your weight well forward and to load the outside peg heavily to get the front end to stick. The slower the cornering speeds, the greater the tendency for the front end to plow. In high speed sweepers, where the power can be kept on, the RM is extremely stable.

Bits and pieces

The saddle tore on our test bike right at the back rear section. This makes the third RM in a row that's split the saddle in the same spot... and not from crashing, either. Just from the normal pressure of sitting on the bike and riding it.

You'll find an old-fashioned, very short throttle assembly on the bars. Unless you have tiny hands, you'll be constantly banging your inside thumb joint on the housing. We slipped on a



An odd sight to be sure; a pair of RM465s punch it off the line at Saddleback Park. On the left, is aging J. Weisel of Motocross Action. To his right and slightly ahead, is R. Sieman, a brash young newcomer, riding for Team Dirt Bike.

Gunnar Gasser to solve the problem.

Motor mount bolts on the RM are a bit too small for the holes. As with past RMs, it's a good idea to drill out the holes and install the next larger size American bolt you can get. Just make sure it's aircraft quality. The moment any of those mounting bolts gets loose, engine vibration gets fierce.

This is the only RM with 43mm fork tubes. Both the 250 and the 125 have smaller legs. These are KYB units, which means that Yamaha parts will interchange, so if you like the damping characteristics of a YZ better than an RM, you can slip in the whole damper assembly and adjust from there.

Some additional snap can be gained at the bottom end of the rpm scale with a switch to the Boyesen dual-stage reeds.

The hose for the reservoir is run behind the barrel and next to the exhaust pipe. You can relocate it on the seat rail and should, even if you have to trim a bit of plastic.

We blasted across a handy stream a few times to check the waterproofing. No problem with the stock airbox.

With the addition of a larger tank, a PE skid plate and taller gearing, the RM465 would work well in cross country or desert racing. For successful use in Eastern Hare Scrambles, you'd more than likely have to go to a smaller carb and drop the gearing one tooth up front. The standard tank won't take you quite a full hour at racing speeds.

The RM465 is very sensitive to changes in the gas/oil ratio, with Suzuki recommending 20 to one. If you use

one of the 50 or 60 to one oils, be prepared to start jetting hassles all over again. It's *that* critical. We found that we could run no leaner than 32 to one without having to reject the entire carb.

All of the rear suspension links and pins should be cleaned and greased on a regular basis. We like to use Bel Ray Anti-Seize on the pins, then apply a layer of wheel bearing grease over that. It would be nice if the RMs came with zerk fittings... maybe next year?

Those stock Bridgestones worked reasonably well for the first two races, then, as the edges started to round, they got very slippery.

Adjusting the pre-load on the shock is grim, but a Suzuki steering head adjusting tool makes the job a whole lot easier. You can slip it in behind the shock through the rubber splash shields. It sure beats removing the shock each time for a simple pre-load adjustment.

We didn't care for the filter arrangement. You'll need two different kinds of screwdrivers just to get to the foam.

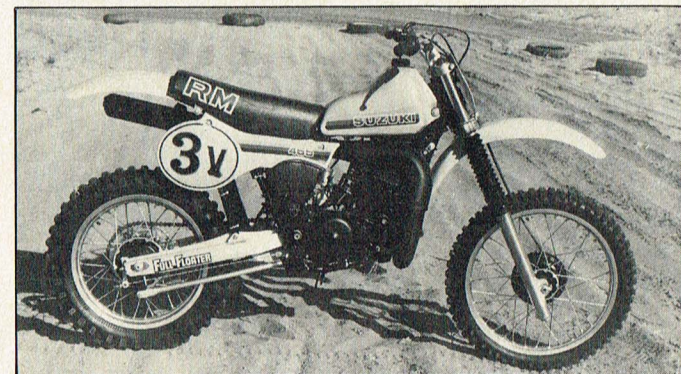
Change the gearbox oil regularly. There have been reports of gearbox breakage on the 465s, but we changed our oil after each and every ride and had no problems. In fact, as the box got more and more time on it, it loosened up considerably and became a joy to shift. Oil is cheap... gears ain't.

Proper gas is critical with the big RM, as with most of the 1981 racers we have tested. We got in the habit of carrying around a few cans of Klotz octane booster with us. Whenever we couldn't find leaded premium, we'd mix half unleaded premium, half regular and a few ounces of octane booster. The few times we ran unleaded premium without any booster, detonation and ping were severe. Serious racers are using aviation gasoline with a 95 to 105 octane rating. Others are using 115 to 145 octane, which doesn't help any at all, but probably makes them feel good inside.

Last glance

It's clear that the RM465 is a marvelous machine, but one that will work best only when it's dialed in and set up properly. If you insist on riding and racing the 465 without careful jetting and suspension tuning, chances are you'll get mediocre results.

But, if you take the time to shape this machine before you enter it in competition, it'll run with anything else on the track and it'll take the bumps better than any other production bike made. □



SUZUKI RM465X

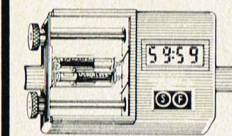
NAME AND MODEL	Suzuki RM465X
ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, single, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE86mmx80mm
DISPLACEMENT	464cc
HORSEPOWER	42.6 at 7000 rpm
CARBURETION38mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET310
NEEDLE JET	R-8
JET NEEDLE	6FJ37-3
PILOT JET50
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE90 plus octane rating
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	9.0 liters (2.4 gallons)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Oil in gas, pre-mix
RECOMMENDED OIL	Suzuki CCI at 20:1
OIL CAPACITY	N/A
AIR FILTRATION	Dual oiled foam filters
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed, constant mesh, left side
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1.....	2.000:1
2.....	1.625:1

3.....	1.263:1
4.....	1.000:1
5.....	0.869:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	14/49
IGNITION	CDI, pointless
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B9EV
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	No spark arrestor, good silencer
EXHAUST SYSTEM	High-pipe, left side
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube, split cradle
WHEELBASE	1460mm (57.5 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	370mm (14.6 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT	965mm (38.0 inches)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	29.6 degrees
TRAIL	122mm (4.8 inches)
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	239.7 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	3.00x21 Bridgestone knobby
REAR	5.10x18 Bridgestone knobby
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	Telescopic, air/oil, 11.2 inches of travel

REAR	Single-shock, Full Floater, 12.7 inches of travel
INTENDED USE	Motocross
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
Retail price, approx.	\$2169
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