FIRST FULL-BLOWN '91 TESTS: HONDA • YAMAHA • ATK!

ALL COLOR DIRT BIKE

DIRT BIKE

WPS 34355

ATT'N RETAILER: PLEASE DISPLAY UNTIL OCT. 18

THE #1 DIRT BIKE MAGAZINE FOR OVER 20 YEARS!

OCTOBER 1990 • $2.50
CANADA $3.00
UK £1.60

'91 CR250R FINALLY GETS KILLER SUSPENSION!

ATK's RADICAL NEW 350!

HOLLYWOOD vs. SUPER HUNKY SHOOTOUT: WHO TELLS THE BIGGEST LIES?

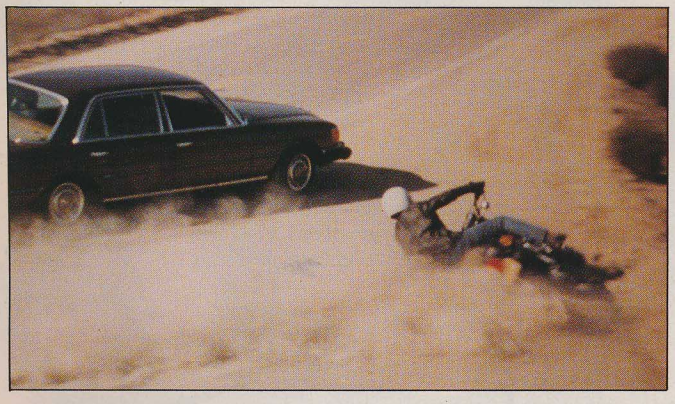
THE COMPLETE BOOT BUYER'S GUIDE:

HOT NEW STYLES & PROTECTION FOR THE TRACK, TRAIL OR PROM!

ISSN 0364-1546

10
0 70989 34355

DIRT BIKE
OCTOBER 1990
VOLUME 20, NO. 10



BIKES

16 FIRST LOOK AT THE KTMs
Major updates for the Mint MXers

26 HONDA CR250R
Works suspension for the 1990 price

38 EYEING THE OFF-ROAD MACHINES
XR, KTM, KDX and YZWR facts and rumors

44 YAMAHA YZ125-B1
Upgrading everything except the midrange

60 ATK 350MX FOUR-STROKE
Leaping ahead of Suzuki's DR350

COMPETITION

56 UNADILLA 250 USGP
Parker's return, Puzar's title, Stanton's show

HOW-TO

30 CHANGE YOUR BIKE'S HANDLING
From high-speed hard-pack to tight trails

72 CHARGE THROUGH THE PACK
Kiedrowski's championship-winning passing tips

FEATURES

17 DES NATIONS TEAM CONTROVERSY
Can we make it ten in a row?

40 DIRT BIKE BOOT BUYERS GUIDE
Are your boots the best in protection?

48 DIRT BIKES ON THE SILVER SCREEN
Hunky's viewing guide—celluloid winners and turkeys

69 DONNY SCHMIT INTERVIEW
From privateer to the new World Champ?

DEPARTMENTS

10 FROM THE SADDLE
16 BITS & PIECES
23 CHECKPOINT
24 RIDERS WRITE
74 RICK'S PITBOARD
76 MR. KNOW-IT-ALL
80 NEW PRODUCTS
82 CRASH & BURN

ON THE COVER: Shane Trittler explodes a L.A. County Raceway berm for the lens of Torquin' Tim, while Christie Martin puts her best leg forward for Pat Carrigan's Nikon. KTM provided the photo of the "Mint Condition" 1991 540DXC. Cover design by Dennis West; color separations by Valley Film.

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. *Dirt Bike* does all of its testing and photography legally on public land, or private land with permission from the owner(s), and we abide by the local laws concerning vehicle registration and muffler/spark arrester requirements. We are not responsible for quality of aftermarket accessories we use.

DIRT BIKE Magazine (ISSN 0364-1546), October '90, is published monthly by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc., with editorial offices at 10600 Sepulveda Boulevard, Mission Hills, California 91345. Subscriptions $15.98 for 12 issues (one year). Canada add $5 per year, and all other foreign add $6 per year for additional postage. Copyright ©1990 by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted in whole or in part, by mimeograph or any other means, without the express permission of the publisher. Contributors: Photographic submissions must be 5×7 or 8×10 glossy black and white, or 35mm and larger color slides. Please mark each photo with owner's name and address. Manuscripts should be typewritten. Unsolicited contributions, manuscripts, photographs and illustrations must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Unless special arrangements are made in advance, all published material becomes the sole property of Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. The publisher does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material. Second class postage paid at San Fernando, California 91340, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *DIRT BIKE* Magazine, P.O. Box 9502, Mission Hills, California 91395-9502. Printed in USA.

9
AIK
MADE IN USA
SPORT

1991 ATK 350MX

AMERICA'S ANSWER TO THE DR350

Starting easier & going faster than Suzukis

By the DIRT BIKE Staff

The ATK people got their start in the motorcycle manufacturing industry building lightweight frames for XR600s, and producing their own Rotax-powered 560s. The bikes were lighter than most big thumpers and went like stink. People snapped up the ATK 560s and, later, 604s as fast as ATK could roll them off the assembly line. The big thumper business was booming, with Husqvarna, KTM and a new player, Husaberg, gearing up to topple ATK from its throne.

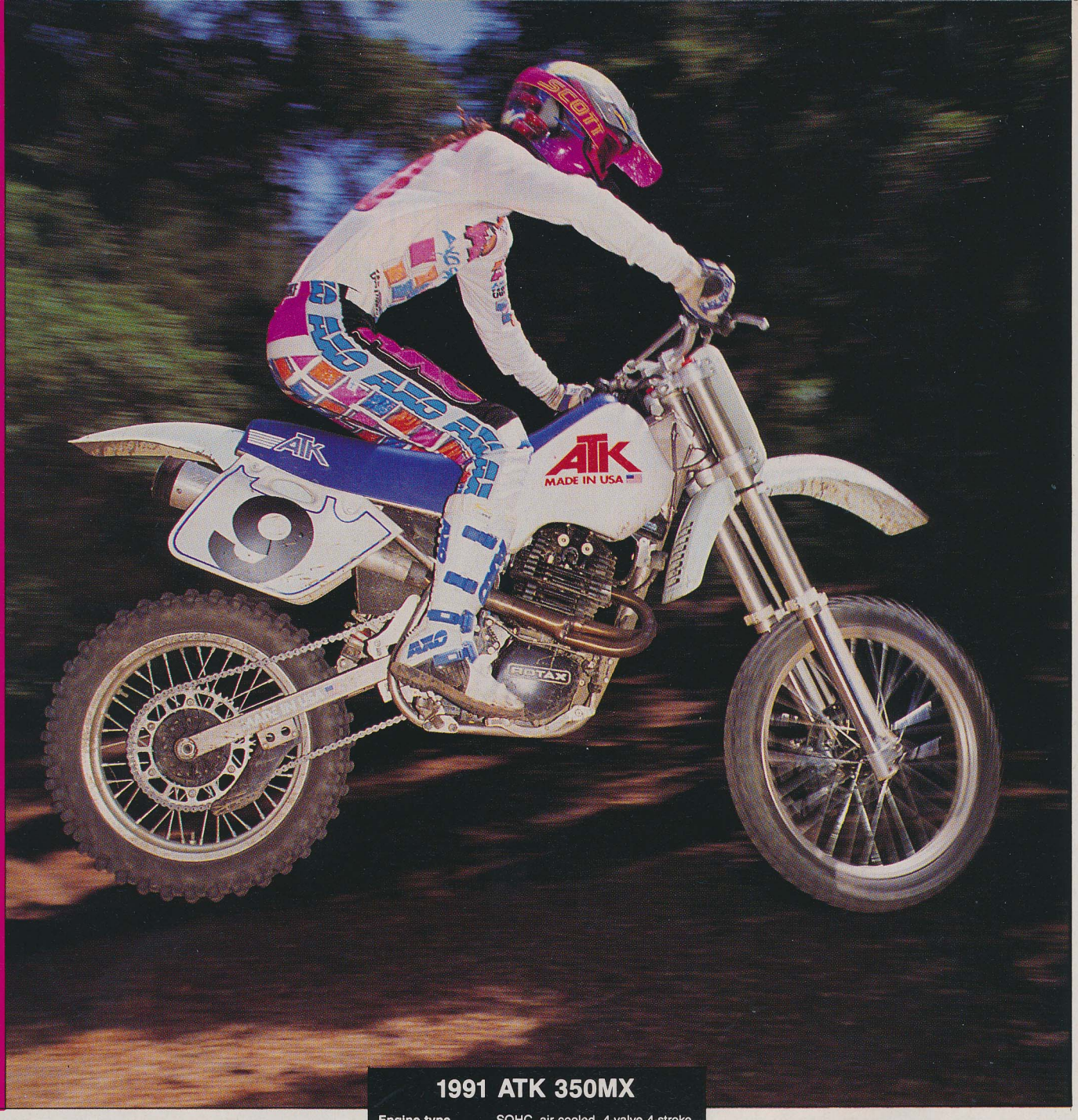
Then Suzuki rocked the thumper world with their DR350s and 250s and the buying public went absolutely ape. There hadn't been a decent midsized four-stroke since Honda dropped the phenomenal XR350, and off-roaders cleaned the bikes off showroom floors as fast as Suzuki could stock them. This opened the eyes of other manufacturers. Many started scrambling to come up with a DR-beating midsized thumper.

Husqvarna and Husaberg already had downsized versions of their 500s in Europe, and Honda and Yamaha are playing their cards close to the chest, but we've heard rumors of a new-generation midsized TT and new models coming from Honda. A new-generation XR400, perhaps? ATK beat the other players to the punch with their new 350, which is powered by a de-bored and de-stroked 560-based Rotax mill. Everything else is the same, so all they had to do was import a batch of 350 powerplants, dial carburetion, and go looking for heavier, slower DR350s to roost.

ATK got its first 350 motor just in time to burn the midnight oil and get a prototype assembled the night before the White Bros. World Four-Stroke Championships. Greg Zitterkopf and the ATK went head-to-head

◄ A steeper head angle and super-slim tank/seat make the '91 ATK 350MX a rocket in the turns. It'll slide, pivot or rail with little effort, but the bike sometimes falls on its face coming out of corners, due to over-carburetion.

Like its 604 big brother, the 350 is tuned for an insane top-end at the expense of some low-end smoothness. It will launch out of turns much harder than a DR350, but not with the authority of the 604, Husky 510 or Husaberg 501. ►



with Craig Davis on a White Bros. DR441. The new ATK suffered from teething problems (jetting) but showed it was capable, stock, of running with a fully modified 441cc DR. We could barely contain ourselves as the first magazine test bike rolled off the assembly line and into our calloused hands.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

We requested the kickstart model because a 350 is easier to kick, and we're planning to use the ATK in a shootout with the other midsized offerings later in the year. The electric starter and battery add a good 15 pounds of heft and $1000 to the price tag. The cases are identical to the 604 cases, but the 350 has a six-speed transmission in place of the bigger bike's five-speed box. Cylinder bore is 79.5mm, as opposed to the 604's 94mm diameter. Stroke is 70.4mm, compared to the 604's 81mm stroke. ATK takes the standard Rotax mill and massages the four-valve head, then slips the motor into the nickel-plated frame.

WRAPPED AROUND THE SWINGARM

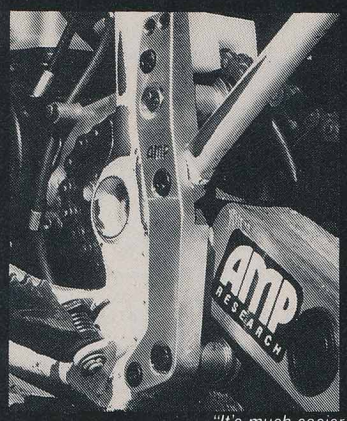
Our MX version has a 1.5-degree steeper head angle that the 350XC, plus the fuel tank is much more narrow and holds only 2.3 gallons of high-test gas. The XC tank holds 4.7 gallons and is considerably wider and taller. The MX tank is so narrow that some test riders didn't like the feel. They could get so far forward on the seat that the pegs felt like road racer rear sets. A chromoly swingarm provides 13 inches of wheel travel via a White Power Super-Adjuster shock and A-Trak chain-torque elimination system. White Power Multi-Adjuster forks mate the frame with a KTM front wheel. Brakes are by Grimeca.

1991 ATK 350MX

Engine type	SOHC, air-cooled, 4-valve 4-stroke
Displacement	349.5cc
Bore and stroke	79.5mm×70.4mm
Carburetion	38mm TMX Mikuni
Fuel tank capacity	2.3 gal. (XC 4.7 gal.)
Gearing	15/50
Lighting coil	Yes
Spark arrester	Yes
Green sticker legal in stock trim	Yes
Running weight w/no fuel	248 lbs.
Wheelbase	57 in. (1448mm)
Rake/trail	27°/4.6 in.
Ground clearance	13.5 in. (343mm)
Seat height	37.5 in. (950mm)
Tire size and type:	
Front	90/90×21 Pirelli Lagunacross
Rear	100/100×18 Pirelli Lagunacross
Suspension:	
Front	Inverted WP aluminum piggyback, comp./reb., 11.8 in. (300mm) travel
Rear	A-Trak, WP aluminum piggyback, adj. comp./reb./prel., 13 in. (330mm) travel
Country of origin	U.S.A.
Suggested retail price	$4995
Distributor/Manufacturer:	ATK Motorcycles, USA 5430 Union Pacific Ave. City of Commerce, CA 90022 (213) 722-8880

BE FAST FASTER

Call for FREE Magazine reprints and suspension manual.



The AMP LINK - The hottest new product on the race circuit. Tested by Team Honda, Cycle World Magazine, Dirt Bike and Motocross Action. Easy 10 min. bolt-on device with no other modifications. Available for Honda CR 125, 250, 500; Kawasaki KX 125, 250, 500 and KDX 200.

New 7075 AMP Link $129.95

Works Spring Kit with Preload Adjuster $69.95 for all USD & 43mm forks.

"It's much easier to ride so you can go faster." -Dirt Bike

AMP RESEARCH

VISA MasterCard or COD

1855 Laguna Canyon Rd. • Laguna Beach, CA 92651 • Tel: 714/497-7525 • Fax: 714/497-0284

FREEflo

NEON GAS CAP VENT HOSE

Yellow, Pink, Green, Red, Aqua, White, Blue.

Send $1.95 + $1.05 S&H With color wanted to: CYCLE EXPRESS 14071 S. Carus Rd., Oregon City, OR 97045

BAJA EXPEDITIONS

Off-road motorcycle tours of Baja California, Mexico. Honda XRs provided along with full accommodations. Dual-sport rides also available. Please call or write for details: P.O. Box 4258, San Clemente, CA 92674; (714) 661-8879.

SUNSHINE CYCLE

COME VISIT OUR STORES
NOTHING SOLD AT SUGGESTED RETAIL

18350 BEACH BLVD.
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA
714-847-[illegible]300
FAX: 847-2726

TWO RETAIL LOCATIONS

OPEN 7 DAYS
Mon.-Fri. 10:00-7; Sat. 10:00-6:00;
Sun. 10:00-4:00 — California Time

529 S. STATE COLLEGE
ANAHEIM, CA
714-772-0800

1-800-654-2507
ORDER TOLL FREE

CLOSE-OUTS

GLOVES
Sinisalo SCD Gloves 22.88
Sinisalo Sport Gloves 16.88
Sinisalo SCD-2 Gloves 26.88

JERSEYS
Sinisalo Sport Jersey 14.88
Sinisalo World Jersey 19.88
Sinisalo World GP Jersey 24.88

RIDING JACKETS
Sinisalo Enduro Jacket 99.88
Sinisalo Brick Jacket 89.88

CLOSE-OUT BOOTS

AXO Turbo Plus
AXO Turbo Granite
Oneal Ultralite
Oneal Kids
Thor Boots
Alpinestar Tech 2

CLOSE-OUT PANTS

SERIES 125 PANTS
SINISALO JET
SERIES 95
HALLMAN VIKING
AXO SERIES 135
ONEAL
JT DYMONDBACK
SINISALO SCD

RIDING THE MIDSIZED MONSTER

Starting the ATK 350 is easier than the DR350 or old XR350. Simply choke it and kick. If it's warm, forget the choke. Clutch pull is heavy, compared to a J-model, but not obscenely so. Shifting is positive but not very smooth. We never missed a shift, but it takes more toe pressure than the '90 DR350.

Power is phenomenal on top-end, but the bike will sometimes load up and try to die when wicked out of a slow corner. This is due to the 38mm flatslide Mikuni, which is the same carb as the 604 uses, and it's simply too much carb for a 350. We'd like to see a 35mm or 36mm Keihin, which would give the 350 a ton of low-end and still provide a decent top-end. Mind you, this is the first production model, so there may be some changes in the later production bikes. As is, the bike will run with a 250 two-stroke on top-end but must be ridden like a 125 in tight sections.

Handling is awesome. The bike feels as light as the Husaberg 501 in the air and on the trail (whereas the '90 DR350 feels like a Honda XR600R). The 350MX brakeslides, powerslides, rails or squares corners with almost criminal ease, due to the light weight and centralized mass. It's stable on choppy sweepers and doesn't do anything to startle the pilot. Some testers did need some initiation time to get used to the lack of chain torque, though.

Suspension action is plush throughout the stroke at both ends. We liked the forks best at #4 compression and #6 rebound. This provided a solid cornering stance and just a hint of bottoming on bigger jumps. With these settings, the forks deliver a plush ride on the small stutter bumps, roots and rocks. Adjusting the compression on the shock is a pain. There's a little hole you stick a screwdriver through and coax the knurled knob to the next setting. We left it at #3, and the rebound clicker on #8 with 2.5 inches of sag. For more high-speed work, we liked three inches of sag better. The action was excellent—plush and smooth throughout the travel. We only bottomed the shock on insane leaps.

START OF A WHOLE NEW GENERATION

Clearly, the ATK outshines the Suzuki DR350. For 1600 extra clams, it better provide better power, suspension, handling, starting and ease of riding than the $3300 DR. If ATK drops carb size to provide cleaner throttle response, they'll have an awesome package. How it stacks up to the all-new Husqvarna and Husaberg, the '91 DR350, and the yet-unseen Yamaha and Honda mystery bikes is anyone's guess at this point. ATK, being a cottage industry, has the advantage of being able to make changes throughout their production run to meet challenges, so competition in the 400 four-stroke class is going to be hot and heavy for 1991. □