

MARTIN LAMPKIN Joins Team DBR...First Tests Inside

# DIRT BIKE RIDER

July '84 85p  
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**SSDT REPORT**  
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**British 500 GP Preview  
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**WILLIE SIMPSON**  
Against The Odds

**DYNO-MIGHT**  
500cc Power Secrets Revealed!

**TESTS**

Suzuki RM250 • Italjet Duo • Kawasaki Tecate



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# Kickin' Up

# A Storm

**THIS year's Suzuki RM250 is kicking up a storm. It's come in for the works treatment and is all the better for it. Team DBR reports from California (well, would you believe a rock hard and dusty Chippenham?)**

If the D designation of the 1983 RM250 stood for Different, then this year's E tag could mean Excellent. Forget about the tricky power curve or frustrating airbox arrangements, this time around the Suzuki comes in stronger in all departments. But that's not to say there aren't areas for improvement.

The most striking thing about the 1984 250 is its bright blue frame. Suzuki claims the frame is a copy of Georges Jobe's '83 model; we'll reserve judgement on that until we get the chance to run a tape over such a device. As it stands, though, they look pretty close, except for the trick lightweight factory alloy components.

Up front a pair of new 43mm forks with compression damping adjustment and air assistance, come with electric blue gaiters. The rear-end has also come in for revision. The Full-Floater system features a reworked and strengthened rocker arm with shorter struts. However, the shock remains as per 1983. There's still four-way compression and rebound adjustment and infinite spring pre-load settings.

The much criticised twin airbox has been dispatched, replaced with a massive single foam item. The cover has positions marked for drilling holes – just like the works teams.

Bodywork has come in for change this year. There is a restyled fuel tank and shrouds for the twin radiators. Any plastic work begins to look tacky after a few soil sampling sessions; the RM's will be no exception.











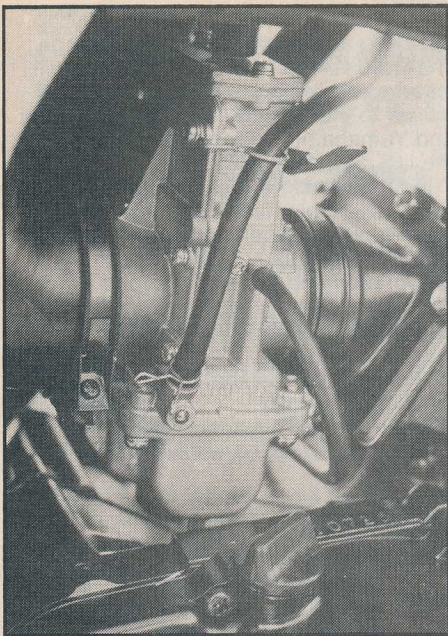
And so to the engine. It's much the same as last year, with porting and head mods and – for a reason that eludes us – a smaller carburettor. It's been downsized from 38mm to 36mm. It's still from the Mikuni family, but this year from the flatslide division. There's a new, re-routed exhaust pipe, that – apart from the header area – is well tucked away. But, despite the new pipe and carburettor – or maybe because of it – the Suzuki still lacks decent low-end punch. Ranged alongside either a Kawasaki or KTM250, it loses out in mid-range, too. Like the serious riders out on the track, we feel the RM could do with a bigger carb – Mikuni or Bing seem to be the preferred alternatives – plus a change of pipe.

The fastest of our testers complained the bike was badly in need of rejetting. He found it hard to rev out, with the riding style being one requiring constant clutch fanning and gear swapping. Against this, he noted the KX would pull a gear higher with just the odd dab required on the clutch.

Nevertheless, the engine is strong, the reed valve 246cc lump poking out

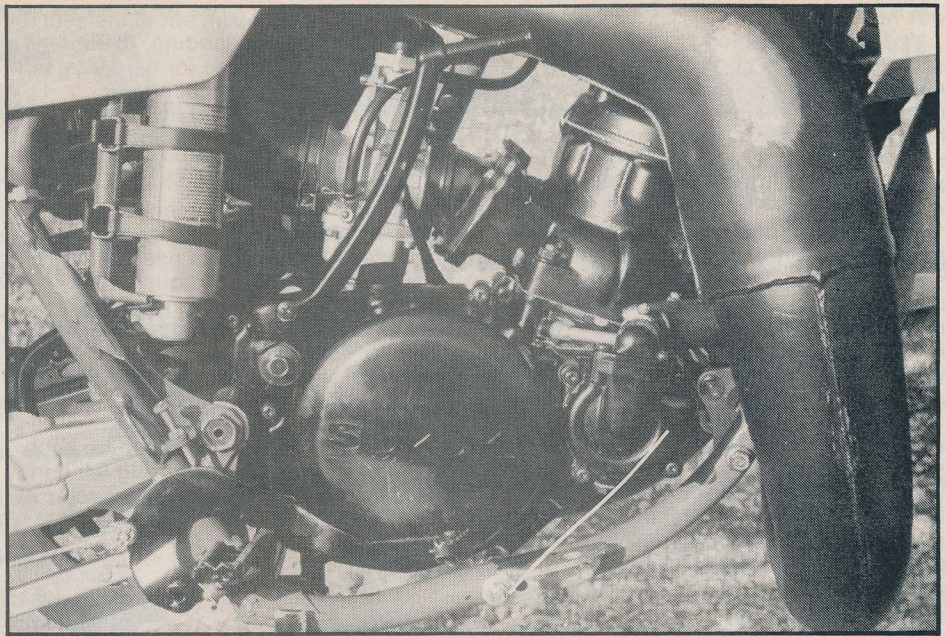






Mikuni carb is downsized this year from 38 to 36mm – a puzzling switch. For '84 it's a downslide component.

sufficient power to put it within striking distance of the current class leader, the Honda CR250. According to our sources, the engine requires very little work internally to make it just that bit better; cleaning up the ports works wonders. However, the big differences in overall performance will come with a carb and pipe change. Our advice: go for a pipe which offers increased mid-range boost.



Note the rerouted exhaust pipe for '84. It's more tucked away. The engine however remains much the same as '83. It remains strong with acceptable power output.

Fortunately the clutch, although a bit on the heavy side, is strong. We had no problems with it. Likewise the five-speed gearbox. We gave it a thorough pounding and can report not a missed shift all day.

If there is one area of the Suzuki which is hard to fault it is the suspension. For some time now the Full-Floater system has been a yardstick by which others are judged. This year is no exception.

Although we found the test bike a little on the soft side – time was against us going into full setting-up session – we have few complaints. The Chippenham test track, with its deep sand and hard base is always a challenge. The 250 came through with flying colours. It tracked the variety of terrain in confidence inspiring style, and even after an extended session of hard riding there

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was no shock fade.

Up front, the new forks can truthfully be said to match the performance of the rear-end. With adjustable compression damping at the base of each fork, they require the minimum of setting up. Ten weight oil is probably the best bet – the amount depending on rider's style and weight – with air pressure run at zero.

With such a good set-up at either end, the Suzuki is right up there in the steering stakes. We found a vast improvement over previous RM250s, no doubt due in part to a steeper head angle. The E will hold a line in the loose and actually go where it is pointed; and that is with a standard Dunlop front tyre.

Controls are all pretty much as expected, but the standard Suzuki throttle should be replaced with a Gunnar Gasser unit. It remains the best around and will give a crisper feel. Particularly if carb and pipe changes are carried out.

Brakes are good, with a redesigned front twin leading shoe this year. They've got the power to halt the bike, but the writing could be on the wall; disc brakes, especially that on the Kawasaki, take some beating.

If we had a complaint about the seat it would be its lack of padding. At 955mm, seat height is about par for the class, but the seat is too soft. We found our backsides being bruised from the crossbrace on landing off big jumps. More padding and denser foam is the answer.

Although vast improvement on last year, the Suzuki RM250's power characteristics are still in need of revision. The move in the quarter litre class is towards a wider power spread – the Yamaha YZ250L being a perfect example. For the present the Suzuki remains a peaky performer; easy to ride, but more difficult to race – especially against its 250 class rivals.

Like a 125, the RM250 has to be kept on the gas. You'll need a strong left hand and quick reflexes to work the clutch.

Likewise for your left foot. Obviously Suzuki is aware of the need for change. The word is next year's yellow bikes will feature variable port timing – a system similar to that already adopted by Honda and Yamaha. It is already being run on the U.S. Suzuki works bikes.

In the meantime, make the best of what's available. We hope to get the opportunity to experiment with the RM250, particularly in the area of carburation and accessory pipes. When it all comes together, we'll be reporting back. Without doubt, the Suzuki is a good motorcycle. It's just that the factory hasn't finished the job it started.



● Test machine from Suzuki, GB, 46-62 Gatwick Rd., Crawley, West Sussex.

## SPECIFICATION

Price (incl. VAT)	£1799.75
Engine	Single cyl 2-str, liquid-cooled reed valve.
Bore x stroke	70mm x 64mm
Capacity	246cc
Carburation	Mikuni VM36
Ignition	PEI
Max power (claimed)	N/A
Max torque (claimed)	N/A
Gears	five speed

## CYCLE PARTS

Tyres	Dunlop
Front	100/80 x 21
Rear	130/80 x 18
Brakes	
Front	TLS drum
Rear	SLS drum
Suspension	
Front	telescopic, air assist, adj. comp. damping.
Rear	Full-Floater, four-way comp and rebound damping; fully adj spring pre-load

## DIMENSIONS

Weight (dry)	97kg
Wheelbase	1475mm
Seat height	955mm
Fuel capacity	9 litres

## SPARE PARTS (excl. VAT)

Air filter	£9.84
Piston kit	£33.93
Rings only	£6.11
Head gasket	£4.29
Rear sprocket	£24.36
Exhaust pipe	£90.47
Muffler	£34.95
Rear mudguard	£12.51
Radiator (left)	£93.90
(right)	£92.19

