

JUST ENOUGH

Something old, something new,
something borrowed
& a bit of blue

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE



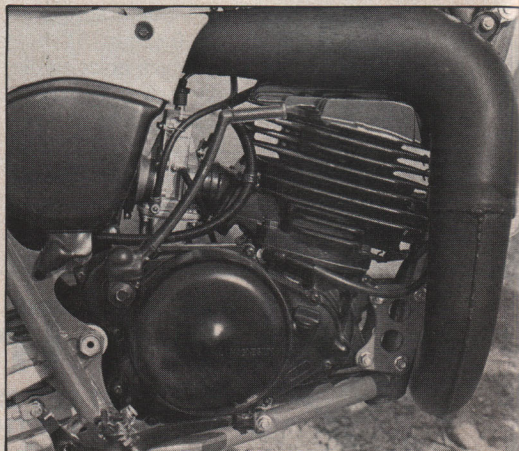
This is one of the strangest MX bikes around. For the last three years, the RM250 has received big-time changes, while the RM500 has been massaged only lightly. It started life as a 465, then got punched to 500cc. While this was going on, the chassis (read: frame) remained the same unit as the 1981 RM465.

Even for 1984, when the RM125 and 250 received new frames and improved single airboxes, the RM500 retained the old tubes and the irritating dual airboxes.

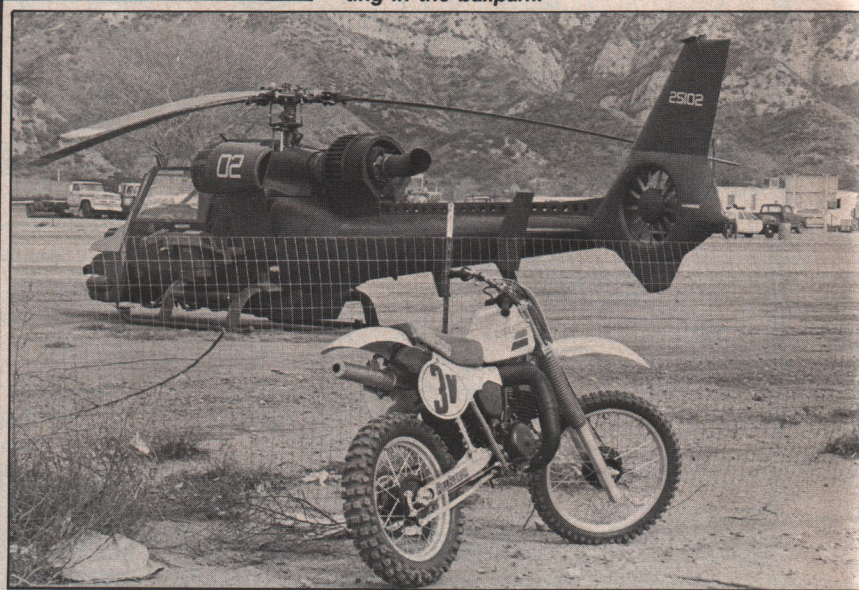
One is tempted to write the bike off. After all, it's only a four-speeder, weighs 237 (!) pounds with no gas in the tank, and seems archaic at first glance.

HOLD IT! RIDE THAT SUCKER FIRST!

After spending a short period of time getting the jetting dialed in for our area and then breaking the RM500 in, we were surprised and pleased to find out that it *is fast*. Not the thundering kind of power delivered by a YZ490 or a KTM 495, but enough low-end power so that you know it's an Open class bike, a healthy mid-range slam in the



Flat-slide Mikuni carb, once jetted, lets the bike start relatively easily and run cleanly from top to bottom revs. Boyesen reeds made for the single biggest improvement in the RM500 once we got jetting in the ballpark.



Ride it like a 250. Scream the engine and make it sing... that's the key to good lap times on the RM500.

Yellow and blue thunder—the Suzuki RM500 is the surprise Open bike of 1984.

gut, and—surprise number two—it revs out like a high-strung 250.

This ability to rev out helps make up for the oddly spaced four-speed gearbox. Unlike most Open bikes, where you ride 'em best by short-shifting, the RM works best if you scream its guts out like a 250! We know it sounds odd, but once you ride the big RM you understand that it begs to be revved.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

The most heard comment about the power of the RM500 was, "It's enough to get the job done," or, "You just don't need any more power than it has."

On hard-packed tracks, the grunt off the bottom is enough to get the bike moving smartly without abusing the clutch. Second gear works just about right, even on tight hairpin turns, as long as the clutch is tickled a bit.

Third gear revs way out and is all you'll need on the average MX track. The jump to fourth gear is wide and you'll need a long straight to justify engaging top gear. For all practical purposes, you have a two-speed

gearbox in the RM500. You start in second for almost all conditions and going to low is a waste of time. You rarely have to use fourth. It doesn't take a math genius to figure out that you're in second or third just about all of the time.

This makes for less shifting and a relatively easy bike to ride/race. Oddly enough, the top speed of the RM500 is a bit less than that of a stock RM250 of the same year with stock gearing. For cross-country or Grand Prix work, you'd be hating life with the RM500. It will make for a fun trail bike as long as the require speeds are not too high. Gearing up the 500 is a hassle. You can find one bigger on the countershaft, but getting a smaller rear sprocket is seemingly impossible. If any bike ever needed a five-speed gearbox, this one does.

HANDLING, SUSPENSION AND OVERALL FEEL

Both ends feel a bit on the stiff side, but the rear shock will prove to be undersprung after break-in time. Even medium-weight riders will bottom it out. Forks are the latest

43mm KYBs and are similar to the RM250 units, except that they do not have the super-slippery finish on the fork tubes that the 250 does. Overall action of the forks is good. You'll like the feel of the rear end over small and medium bumps, but bigger, slow-speed whoops will simply drive the Full Floater nuts.

If you set the shock up too firm to try to lessen the bottoming, the RM500 will shake its head like a banshee and make your heart flutter as you come down from speed over rough ground.

Set it up too loose, and steering accuracy suffers and the front end gets fuzzy. You'll have to change it from track to track for best handling.

You don't seem to feel the weight of the RM500 when cornering, but you do feel the height. The entire bike seems to sit perched up in the air more than the RM250. Also, the older style saddle is bulky and poorly shaped. We trimmed ours down and were able to move around much easier on the bike. Still, plan on occasionally pinching your thigh meat between the seat and the tank. The Suzie is also a bit wider than need be at knee level, but not objectionably so. Bars, controls and general layout were pretty much normal, but shorter riders did not seem much at home on the bike.

BITS AND PIECES

Shifting was good and clutch action was just fine.

We liked the rear brake and wished for more front brake. The double-leading shoe unit is just not enough on this big bike.

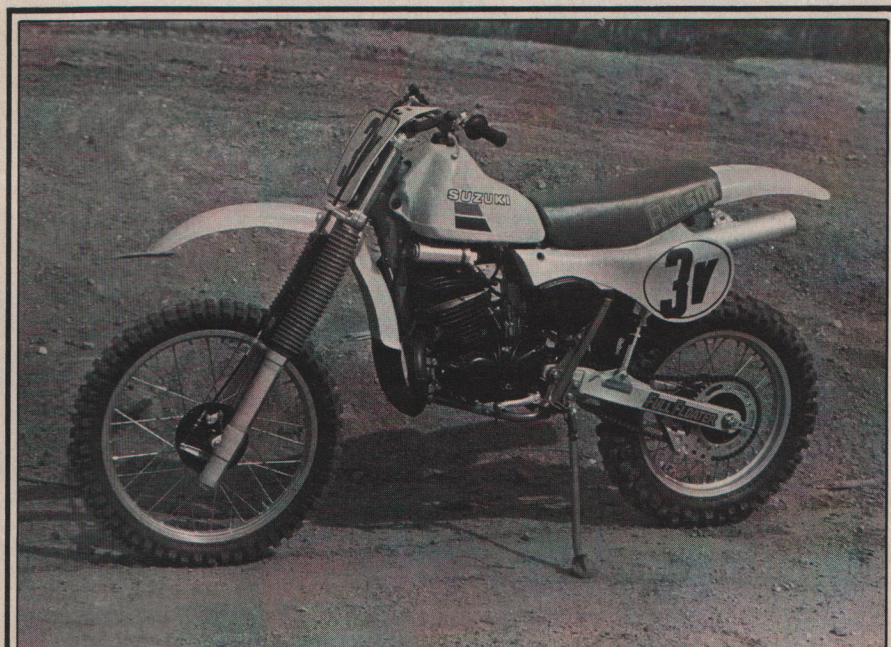
By and large, the Suzie was an easy-starting bike, except for the odd time when it would take a dozen or more boots to get the fire lit.

The typically short Suzuki throttle assembly was irritating and is long due for retirement.

Tires are IRC 140/80 x 18 70M at the rear and IRC Z Mark III up front. Both are amazingly bad under just about any conditions you might care to conjure up. A 4.50 x 18 Metz at the rear was a big improvement.

Speaking of improvements, other than cleaning up the jetting on the flat-slide Mikuni carb a bit, the most impressive gain we got was with the installation of Boyesen reeds. The change was dramatic!

(continued on page 70)



SUZUKI RM500E

Engine type Single cylinder, air-cooled, 2-stroke
 Bore and stroke 88.5mm x 80.0mm
 Displacement 492cc
 Carburetion 38mm flat-slide Mikuni
 Factory jetting Our jetting
 Main jet 300 280
 Needle jet R4 R-0
 Jet needle 6FM46 6FM46
 Pilot jet 50 40 or 45
 Slide number 2.0
 Fuel tank capacity 9.0 L (2.0 gals.)
 Lubrication Oil in gas/pre-mix

Gearbox ratios:

1 2.000:1
 2 1.555:1
 3 1.210:1
 4 0.954:1
 Gearing, front/rear 14/46
 Ignition PEI
 Recommended spark plug NGK B8EGV
 Silencer/spark arrestor Aluminum silencer only
 Wheelbase 1475mm (58.1 in.)
 Ground clearance 370mm (14.6 in.)
 Seat height 970mm (38.2 in.)
 Rake/trail 29° 6 min./123mm (4.84 in.)
 Wet weight, no fuel 237 lbs.

Tire size and type:

Front 100/80 x 21 Bridgestone
 Rear 140/80 x 18 Bridgestone

Suspension, type and travel:

Front 43mm KYB air/oil, adj. comp. & damp., 300mm (11.8 in.)
 Rear Single shock, Full Floater, adj. comp. & rebound damp., 322mm (12.7 in.)

Intended use Motocross

Country of origin Japan

Retail price, approx. \$2499

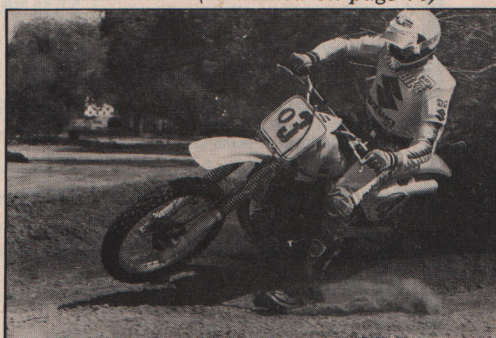
Distributor:

U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.
 3251 E. Imperial Hwy.
 Brea, CA 92621

Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use in mind:

Handling Very good
 Front suspension Very good
 Rear suspension Good
 Power Very good
 Cost Very good
 Attention to detail Average
 Effectiveness, stone stock Very good

This rating system is included to aid in comparison of bikes in the same displacement and intended-use categories. Comparing the ratings of two dissimilar machines is a meaningless exercise in futility.



The optional heavy rear shock spring is a must for an aggressive rider. Stock, the rear end is supple but wallows too much under power.

SUZUKI RM500E

(continued from page 63)

Many folks think this is the same engine as last year. Wrong. There's been a change in the angle of the back transfers, and the boost ports are considerably bigger. A 1984 RM500 feels much stronger everywhere than a 1983 version. You'll find the old-style shock on the 500—the one with the long hose that meanders over the engine fins. Boo.

An aluminum muffler hangs on the end of the long, slender pipe.

Blue paint and fork boots help dress up an otherwise plain-Jane-looking bike. The styling of the RM500 is uninspired, at best.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This is a better bike than it would seem on paper and certainly is much better in performance than in appearance. It's easy to ride and can be used much in the manner of a muscular 250.

When you consider the rather limp overall offerings in the Open class this year (with a few exceptions), the RM500 suddenly looks more appealing. It *can* be had for a bargain price, we hear, and the performance is enough to get the job done.

It's a simple, decent, straightforward bike that works as well or better than most other 500cc bikes, in spite of being a three-year-old design.

In fact, we rate it slightly better than the 500 Honda but not quite as good as the YZ490. And, dollar for dollar, it might be the best buy of 1984 in the big-bike class. □

BITS & PIECES

(continued from page 13)

forks, and the Austrian GP was the first time they were revealed to the public

□ □ □

Husqvarna has decided to recall its four-strokes after complaints were registered concerning starting problems, clutch slippage and oil leakage. As a direct result of these customer complaints, Husky will install an "update kit," which they say will solve the problems permanently. All four-stroke owners should contact their local dealer and make arrangements to have the kits installed, even if they've had none of the problems mentioned.

□ □ □

The third round of the AMA's version of the Supercross series, the San Jose round, has been canceled. It seems that a suitable location could not be found, so the event got the ax. No other race will replace the canceled date.

□ □ □

Husqvarna will send any new CR-model owner to the Tony D. Motocross School, run by none other than Tony D. himself. On a lighter note, anyone who buys a brand-new square-barrel Maico can finance his own trip to a Super Hunky MX School. The class itself is free, but interested owners will have to keep the Hunk fed with Twinkies and wine coolers. □

THE STARS COME OUT AT NIGHT

At a recent lavish gathering of well-to-do celebrities in Beverly Hills, Hollywood starlet and party goer Savage Sue stepped out of her Ferrari styling the latest in fashion. She quickly topped Mr. Blackwell's list as she modeled the designer Motocross & Trophee des Nations garment. Savage Sue feels that Team USA will be World Champions again in '84. That's why she ordered a couple extra for her friends, Nancy Reagan and Jane Fonda.

You too can be as stylish as Sue by ordering your own MX & Trophee des Nations full-color T-shirt. Your \$10 donation will help ensure the American athletes another victory in Europe. Mail to: **MX & Trophee des Nations T-shirt**, P.O. Box 141, Westerville, OH 43081, Attn: Carol Hall. Include your name, address, quantity, size (S, M, L, XL) and \$10 per shirt. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.



YOU CAN JUDGE THIS BOOK BY ITS COVER

Just open an issue of *BMX PLUS!* and you can see for yourself that this is one book you can judge by its cover:

The same excitement and drama on the cover are carried through inside.

ALL THIS AND MONEY TOO? SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE BIG BUCKS!

For a mere \$14.98, you can have *BMX PLUS!* delivered to your door every month for a FULL YEAR!

Sure, you can get it at the newsstand (if they're not sold out). But you'll end up paying \$24 for the same 12 issues!

Play it smart. **Subscribe today** and get in on this book that you *can* judge by its dynamite cover!

Just fill in your subscription order below and mail it with your check, money order or charge account information to:

BMX PLUS! Subscription Department
Post Office Box 9502
Mission Hills, California 91345-9502

I'm playing it smart this year. Please enter my subscription as follows:

Two-Year Subscription—\$25.95* (regularly \$48.00 at the newsstand)

One-Year Subscription—\$14.98* (regularly \$24.00 at the newsstand)

I am a new subscriber

Please extend my current subscription

My check or money order is enclosed

Please charge to my: VISA MasterCard

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

*Canadian subscribers please add \$4 for one-year subscription and \$8 for two year subscription additional postage and handling.

*Foreign subscribers please add \$5 for one-year subscription and \$10 for two-year subscription additional postage and handling.

*All Foreign and Canadian please use international money order in U.S. funds only. THANK YOU!

DB7-4