

WE RIDE THE YZ300F PLUS PASTRANA'S WORKS RM125

DIRT BIKE

WPS 34355

DIRT BIKE

www.dirtbikemagazine.com

JULY 2001

2002 PREVIEW

HONDA'S TITANIUM 4-STROKE YZ HUNTER

NEW MODELS FROM HONDA & YAMAHA



THE BIKE CARMICHAEL FEARS MOST?



2002 55-HP, 225LB. CRF450R



2002 YZ250F



2002 CR250R



PASTRANA'S #1 RM125

Attn. retailer: Please display until July 12

\$3.99 CANADA \$4.99

GIANT DUAL SPORT ISSUE

ADVENTURES, BIKES & PRODUCTS

ISSN 0364-1546

0 70989 34355 9

PROJECT THUNDER PUPPY

IMS takes the WR on a guided tour through bolt-on land

By the staff of Dirt Bike



We've seen the process before. First a new bike comes out and everyone is in love. It's perfect, the most marvelous bike since the invention of the knobby. But that's all in the honeymoon period. Pretty soon, those little habits that were so endearing at first become annoyances. Then they become problems. After a few months, it's time for serious relationship counseling. About then the aftermarket steps in with tricks and goodies to fix everything, but often it's too late. What could have been a great relationship is forever tarnished, or perhaps even ended.

In the case of the Yamaha WR250F, then entire routine was short-cut. Instead of the usual waiting period of six months to a year, the aftermarket was ready to step in and help right from the start. That's because the Yamaha YZ250F had already been out for months and the WR426/400 for years. The new WR250F was simply a blend of those two bikes, so riders knew exactly what the bike would and wouldn't need before the first one was even sold.

Scott Wright at IMS purchased his brand new WR and before he even rode the bike, it was completely changed. Most of the parts were already in stock at IMS and a few were in the works.

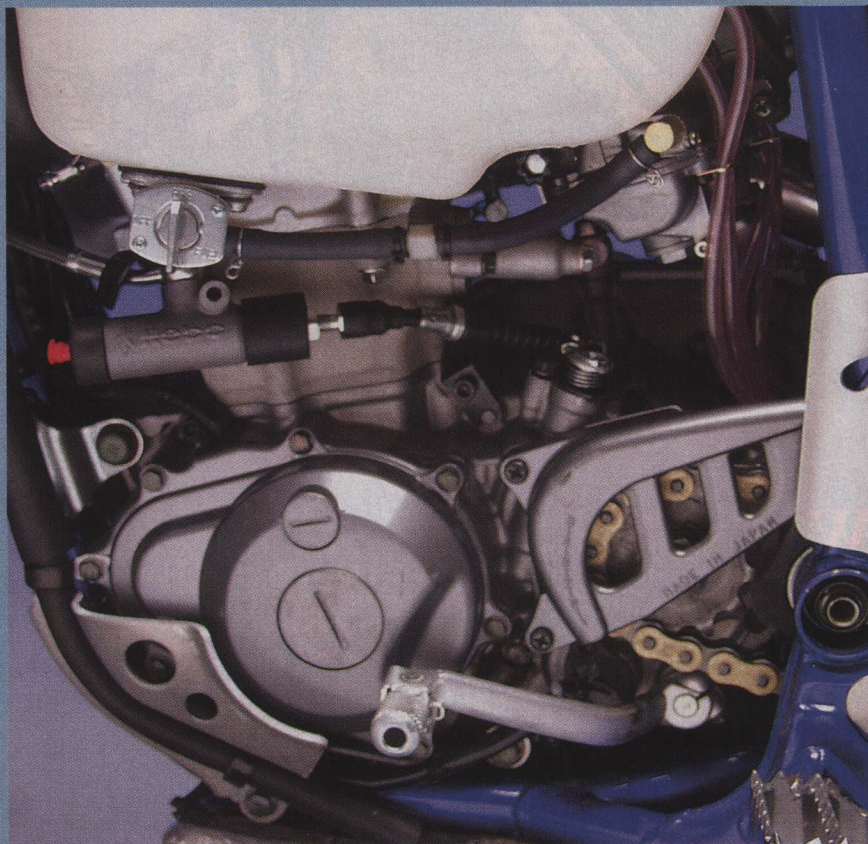
Is it the ultimate desert trail bike? The term "ultimate" might be a stretch, but we will say it's the only 250cc four-stroke that we ever even wanted to ride in the desert.



BOLT-ON MANIA

The single biggest problem with the WR is one that we're all familiar with. It has the exact same big, ugly fuel tank that the WR400 had. The problem is actually the seat; it gives up valuable sitting space to the tank. The result is that you sit too far back and the front end washes out. IMS already had a seat/tank combo for the WR400 that would fit right on. But even better is the Ty Davis seat/tank combo that Ty and IMS built together. Ty's tank is narrower even than a YZ tank, and uses a duplicate of the YZ seat. It creates certain problems, though. You no longer have easy access to the choke and hot-start button. Part of that can be cured with Ty's handlebar-mount hot-start. But the choke is more difficult; you have to reach under the tank and feel around for it blind.

Next item out of the goodie box was the IMS/Hebo hydraulic clutch. Clutch pull isn't an issue with the WR250. Clutch fade is. The motor is pipey and difficult to keep singing. So when you point the bike up a tough hill, you inevitably abuse the clutch. Soon, the plates swell up and you temporarily lose the clutch. It's just a fact of life on the little WR. A hydraulic clutch defeats this by gulping more fluid and adjusting itself every time it is pulled. Free play never changes.



IMS now sells the same Hebo clutch that Gas Gas uses. Hebo is the company that invented hydraulic clutches, at least on dirt bikes.

PROJECT THUNDER PUPPY

At last count we knew of about five different hydraulic clutches available. The Hebo has automatic credibility because of its connection to the trials business. Gas Gas had the first production hydraulic clutch on a trials bike almost 10 years ago, and Hebo is somehow entwined with Gas Gas. We noticed right away that the already light WR clutch pull is lighter yet. We also noticed that the clutch arm on the cases doesn't throw as far as stock. That caused some concern that the clutch might drag. That turned out to be no big deal. Most master cylinders are available in several different piston sizes; the bigger the piston, the more fluid it pushes through the line, resulting in more throw at the other end and a stiffer pull at the lever. The Hebo came with a 9.5 master cylinder. If you

want to start the bike in gear or have some other reason to get maximum travel out of the clutch, the 10.0 off a KTM might work, too.

The only other engine modification was a Big Gun exhaust. The stock pipe is heavier and more restrictive, even with the plug removed.

BUILT FOR SPEED

It sounds kind of strange to set up a 250cc four-stroke for the desert, but the WR is a rule-breaker right from the start. On top, it goes fast enough to hang with a 250cc two-stroke. To make it go good and straight at that kind of speed, IMS decided to go with a GPR Stabilizer. For a long time, the GPR was regarded as a budget Scott's clone. More recently, the GPR has become more and more sophisticated. The major difference used to be the fact that the Scott's only provided damping as the handlebar was moved away from center, then a bleed circuit would allow it to move freely back to center; The GPR provided resistance

Paul Krause test rode the Thunder Puppy in a high-desert hail storm for us. We shouted directions and shot photos from the truck.



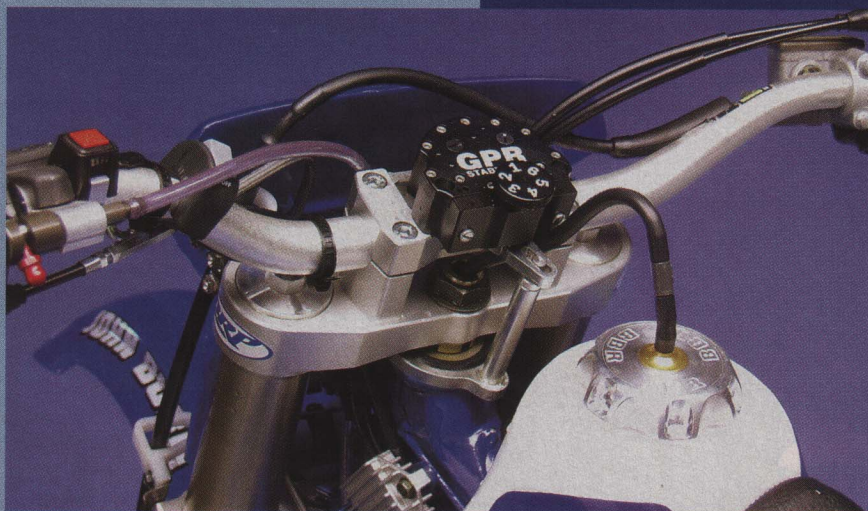
If you do anything to your WR250F, replace the tank and seat. IMS makes a kit that's narrower, puts you farther forward and holds more fuel. Just get used to digging for the choke knob.

PROJECT THUNDER PUPPY

in both directions. Now the GPR provides greatly reduced damping as the bars return to center. As the front end gets closer and closer to dead-straight, that resistance gradually increases.

In order to mount the GPR system, a BRP top clamp was used. That, combined with Pro Taper bars, has the side benefit of moving the handlebar forward for more room in the rider's compartment.

Yamaha 250 thumpers respond well to a 20-inch wheel conversion. We have heard that supercross riders don't like them in whoops because of the extra weight, so we intend to avoid any supercross tracks that we find laying in the desert.

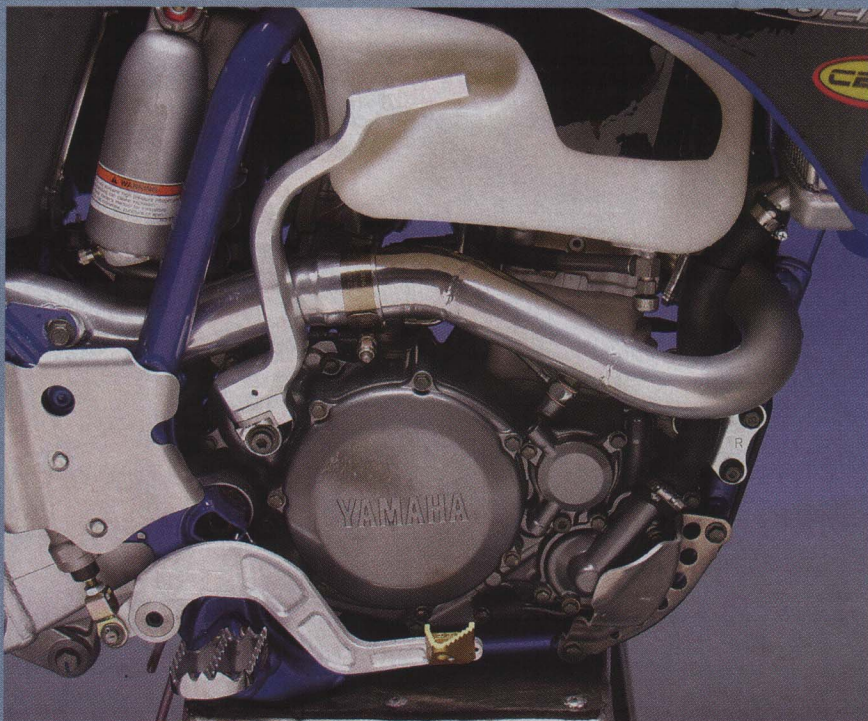


GPR steering dampers have come a long way since they were called GP dampers. Now they are much more sophisticated and have lifetime service and update warranties. Look for a full test of the damper next month.

Big Gun makes both quiet pipes and loud pipes for the WR. Bring your ear plugs or go for the quiet version.

Wheels are a constant source of problems out west. Unfortunately, the WR doesn't get the YZ's Excel rims. Excel is now in the business of manufacturing whole wheels. Pro Series Modular Racing wheels are designed to be interchangeable from one model to another. So if you have a Honda and a Yamaha in the garage, all it takes is an adapter kit to make the same set of wheels fit either one.

Last, it was just a matter of throwing trick parts at the bike to see what would stick. From BBR came the kickstarter, the gas cap and the brake lever, Works Connection made the frame guards, IMS made the footpegs, the disc fin and the graphics, and Ty Davis made the chain blocks.



PARTS AND PRICES

BRP clamps w/stabilizer mount ..	\$329.99
GPR stabilizer	395.00
Pro Taper handlebars	99.00
Hebo hydraulic clutch	199.95
IMS graphics	69.95
IMS YZ seat	125.00
Ty Davis fuel tank.....	249.95
Ty Davis hot start.....	85.00
Ty Davis chain adjusters	65.00
IMS disc fin	85.00
IMS footpegs	96.00
BBR kickstarter	159.95
BBR brake lever	159.95
BBR gas cap.....	71.95
Big Gun exhaust system.....	449.95
IMS.....	(909) 653-7720

LITTLE THUNDER

Of all the goodies, parts and changes, the fuel tank/seat combo is the most important. That's what you'll be most thankful for when you climb forward for a turn and discover that, well, you *can*. The repositioned bars help there, too.

At the opposite end of the speed spectrum, we were surprisingly pleased with the GPR stabilizer. The YZ is already a pretty stable bike, but in the desert, you have to have a stabilizer to be competitive. Now, at least there's another one to choose from. But getting up to speed still takes a long time on the little WR. As we've pointed out, a stock WR is a lot sleepier than a YZ250F. The Big Gun pipe closes that gap somewhat, with a rather painful increase in noise. There's still a gap, though, simply because the YZ revs higher than the WR. That makes the jump between gears in the wide ratio gear box seem disproportionately big. You have to rev the machine out to make it go. A 125 two-stroke rider will know how to do it, but it's a struggle to keep up with a 250.

Still, what do you expect from a 250cc four-stroke in the desert? It's a heap of fun, and it's only a matter of time before there's a 250cc four-stroke class to race it in. Our advice is to build your WR and go have fun by yourself in the meantime. All the pieces are out there; you just have to bolt them on. □

Keep her singing. If you want to loaf along in a tall gear, go shopping at your XR650R dealer. If you like screaming and stirring things up, we have your bike.



Life-blood for Your Chain!

Long lasting lubrication and anti-wear protection for chain and sprockets.

ABSOLUTELY
will NOT Fling Off!



Bel-Ray introduces the latest innovation in chain lube technology
New Bel-Ray Super Clean Chain Lube.

repels: dirt, sand, water, and grit.

Tremendous film strength and anti-wear properties to protect roller and 'O' ring chains.



visit www.belray.com

Bel-Ray Company, Inc., P.O. Box 628, Farmington, NJ 07721
Phone (732) 938-2421 • Fax (732) 938-4232
©2001 Bel-Ray Company, Inc.

www.dirtbikemagazine.com

FOR WEB AD INFO CONTACT: SEAN McCOY

smccoy@hi-torque.com

661-367-2136