

GOGGLES! GOGGLES! GOGGLES! GOGGLES! GOGGLES!
GOGGLES! GOGGLES! GOGGLES! GOGGLES! GOGGLES!

TOP 40

SPECIAL ISSUE!

DIRT RIDER

YAMAHA IT490L:
Still big, still blue, still serious

SCOTTISH 6-DAY:
Riding the razor's edge!

ALCOHOL PROBLEM:
Buy the wrong gas, seize your bike!



\$1.75
Canada
\$2.25

SEPTEMBER 1984

BIG-BORE BOMBER!

SUZUKI RM500E



SUPERBOWL XIII:
A-WARD
WINNER



KAWASAKI KLT160

01176 CA SAN DIEGO
4814 SPARKS AVE TC
WILLIAM K KELLOGG J DIR
DOKL7A7*H408C193 MAR86



DIRT RIDER

SEPTEMBER 1984, PUBLISHED MONTHLY, ISSUE 22

Tests

Suzuki RM500E36
The frame remains the same, and so does the rest of this '83 rerun. Still, it works pretty well....

Yamaha IT490L52
Japan's best—and only—big-bore enduro bike can handle almost everything Mother Nature can dish out.

Competition

Superbowl XIII: A-Ward Winner16
It took all night to finally beat Glover.

Tangling in the Tangerine Bowl18
Two kids from California duel in the Florida heat.

Scottish Six Days Trial19
A first for Michaud; many firsts for Fantic.

Bel-Ray Grand National Series21
Bailey makes it 9 out of 10.

AMA National Enduro Series21
A case of "Snake" bite worries Hines at Mt. Baker.

AMA Reliability Trials Series22
Troubles in Trask heap pressure on those "Intent" on going to Holland.

SCORE Off-road Series23
For Dan A. and S., it doesn't matter where they hold the race, just hold the race!

Virginia City GP26
A gold rush for modern prospectors.

Burger King/CMC Supercross26
Here's what happens when you put a supercross track inside a hockey arena.

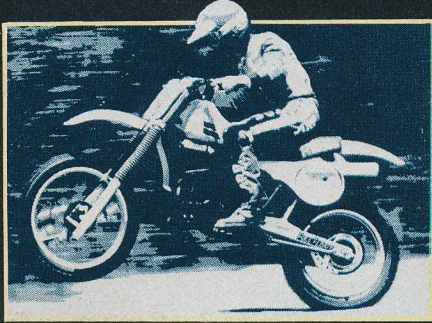
World MX GP29
Malherbe begins to strut his stuff as the leading 500cc GP contender.

Widowmaker Hillclimb29
The latest hillclimb equipment is not a Bultaco Bandito.

Mini Poster30

Competition Calendar31

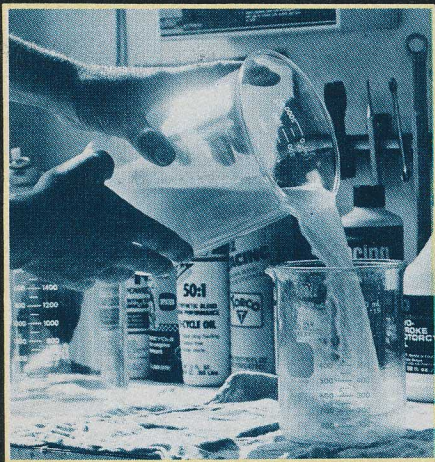
Bob Hannah's Racing Technique31



36



62



75

Features

Brad Lackey's Winning Secrets58
The final installment in Brad's MX lesson.

Special Section: Goggles!62
How can you select the eye protection that's best for you?

Interview

Al Eames44
He's been called everything from "Father of the American Six Days" to "rapist of the environment" during his colorful and productive off-road promotional career. Al Eames, now retired and living in Florida, has many tales to tell...

Departments

Editorial2	Test Wrap34
Letters4	Product Evaluation68
Lackey's Lines8	Ad Index72
Fat Tracks10	Dirt Mart73
Training12	Service Dept.75
Woman's Place14	Gear Bag78
Trail Tips32	Details80



ON THE COVER
Double action: Suzuki's RM500E launches off a SoCal berm and Kawasaki's KLT160 in the dunes. Photos by Rich Cox and Beve Meadville.

DIRT RIDER, (ISSN 0735-4355) Copyright 1984 by PETERSEN PUBLISHING COMPANY

All rights Reserved. Published monthly by Petersen Publishing Company, 8490 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Second-class postage paid at Los Angeles, CA 90052 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription inquiries phone (213) 657-5100. Single Copy \$1.75. Subscription rates: U.S. Possessions, Military Overseas, one year \$11.94. Canada and other countries \$16.94.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Should be mailed to 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. They must be accompanied by return postage and we assume no responsibility for loss or damage thereto. Any material accepted is subject to such revision as is necessary in our sole discretion to meet the requirements of this publication. Upon acceptance, payment will be made at our current rate, which covers the author's and or contributor's right, title and interest in and to the material mailed including but not limited to photos, drawings, charts, and designs, which shall be considered as text. The act of mailing a manuscript and or material shall constitute an express warranty by the contributor that the material is original and in no way an infringement upon the rights of others.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Six weeks' notice is required to change a subscriber's address. Please give both old and new address and label. Mail to P.O. Box 1149, Los Angeles, CA 90078.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Dirt Rider, P.O. Box 1149, Los Angeles, CA 90078



PHOTO: PAUL MARTINEZ



Open class motocross is hard to define this year. Some people have lauded Honda's mega-horsepower CR500R; others have termed it "unridable." Yamaha's YZ490L has been subtly changed over last year's model, and some riders think it's the best big-bore bike available. But many riders still complain about the Yamaha's dished-out seating position, and some pros complain that it needs more power down low in the powerband. Kawasaki's 500cc motocross bike is rarely seen at local races, and dealers aren't exactly trying to push the biggest KX. Kawasaki even hedged when we discussed testing the 1984 Kawasaki KX500. There

Suzuki's new RM500E isn't that much different from Suzuki's old RM500D. Either the small changes that were made were the correct ones, or time truly can heal all wounds. We like it.

Suzuki RM500E

BLACK TO BLUE

THE FRAME REMAINS THE SAME



SUZUKI RM500E

Serial numberFrame:
 JS1RM12A4E2100194
 Engine: M101-102230
 Price\$2499
 Number of dealers (U.S.)1390
 WarrantyNone
 Customer serviceU.S. Suzuki
 Motor Corp.
 3521 E. Imperial Hwy.
 Brea, CA 92621
 714/996-9540

ENGINE

TypeAir-cooled, two-stroke
 single with reed valve
 Displacement492cc
 Bore x stroke88.5 x 80.0mm
 Compression ratio6.2:1
 Horsepower/rpm
 (measured)43.9 @ 7500 rpm
 Torque/rpm
 (measured)33.4 @ 6000 rpm
 CarburetionMikuni VM38SS
 ExhaustSteel, single into
 aluminum silencer
 IgnitionCDI
 LubricationPre-mix
 (20:1 recommended)
 Air filtrationTwin two-stage
 oiled polyurethane
 foam elements

DRIVE TRAIN

TransmissionFour-speed
 Primary drive2.383:1 (gear)
 Final drive3.285:1 (14/46)
 Gear ratios (internal)1st 2.000:1
 2nd 1.555:1
 3rd 1.210:1
 4th 0.954:1

CHASSIS

FrameSingle downtube,
 chrome-moly tubing
 Rake/trail29.8°/4.8 in.
 Front suspensionKYB leading axle
 air/spring fork, 43mm

stanchion tubes, eight-way
 adjustable compression damping,
 10.6 in. travel (measured)
 Rear Suspension ..Full Floater suspension
 with KYB gas/oil remote
 reservoir shock absorber, four-way
 adjustable compression and rebound
 damping, 13.0 in. travel (measured)
 BrakesFront—Double-leading
 shoe drum
 Rear—Single-leading
 shoe drum, full floating
 WheelsFront—1.60-21 Takasago
 Rear—2.50-18 Takasago
 TiresFront—100/80-21 IRC 56M
 Motocross Z Mark III
 Rear—140/80-18 IRC 70M
 Supercross M3B

MEASUREMENTS

Weight (wet, no fuel)238 lbs.
 Weight (wet, tank full)253 lbs.
 Weight distribution113/125 lbs.
 (47/53%)(Fr/rr, wet no fuel)
 Weight distribution122/131 lbs.
 (48/52%)(Fr/rr, wet, tank full)
 Wheelbase58.5 in.
 Fuel capacity2.5 gal.
 Reserve capacityNo reserve
 Sound test104 dbA
 Ground clearance15.1 in.
 Seat height38.5 in.
 Swingarm length22.6 in.
 Swingarm pivot to
 center of countershaft2.8 in.

PARTS/COST

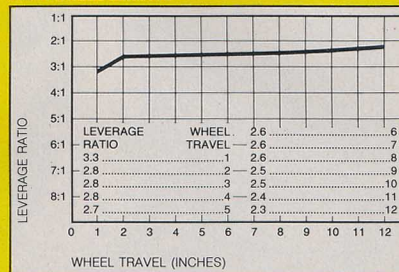
Maintenance manual\$4.99
 Carburetor jetsMain—\$2.32
 Pilot jet—\$2.32
 Needle jet—\$5.63
 Jet needle—\$3.89
 SprocketsFront—\$14.50
 Rear—\$37.82
 Handlebar levers\$7.54 ea.
 Shift lever\$24.07
 Piston kit (complete)\$59.26

Rings only\$11.60
 Cylinder\$174.89
 Head\$96.14
 Clutch platesFriction (8)—\$8.12 ea.
 Steel (7)—\$4.23 ea.
 Air filter\$12.99
 Brake shoesFront—\$10.06
 Rear—\$9.92
 Chain\$56.21
 Seat\$89.14
 FendersFront—\$37.12
 Rear—\$32.48
 Fuel tank\$162.13
 CablesClutch—\$8.96
 Throttle—\$9.28
 Front brake—\$9.46

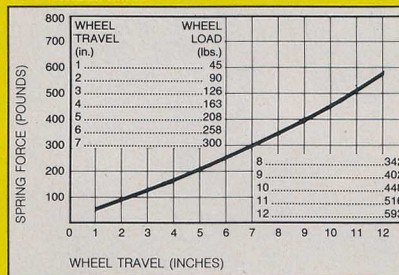
OPTIONS

None

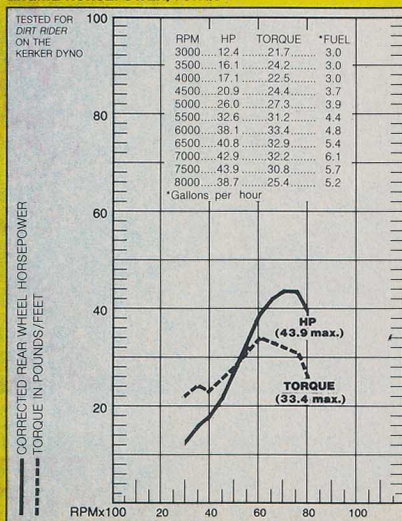
REAR WHEEL LINKAGE



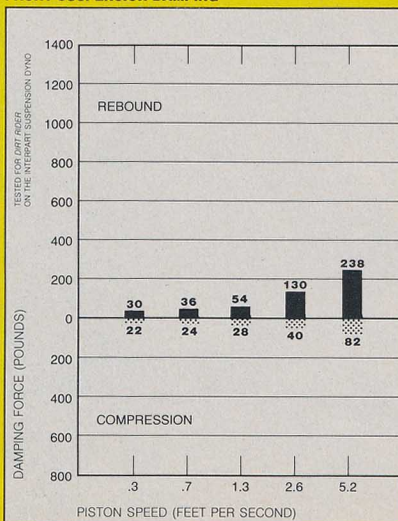
REAR WHEEL LOAD



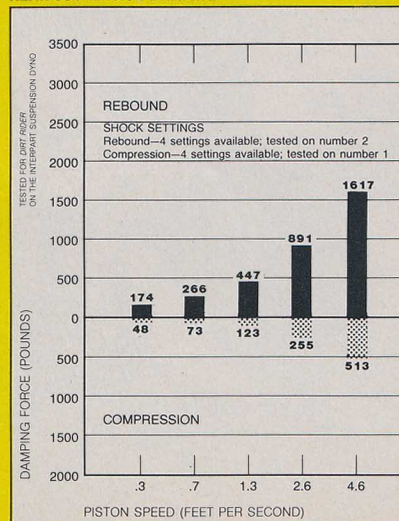
ENGINE HORSEPOWER/TORQUE

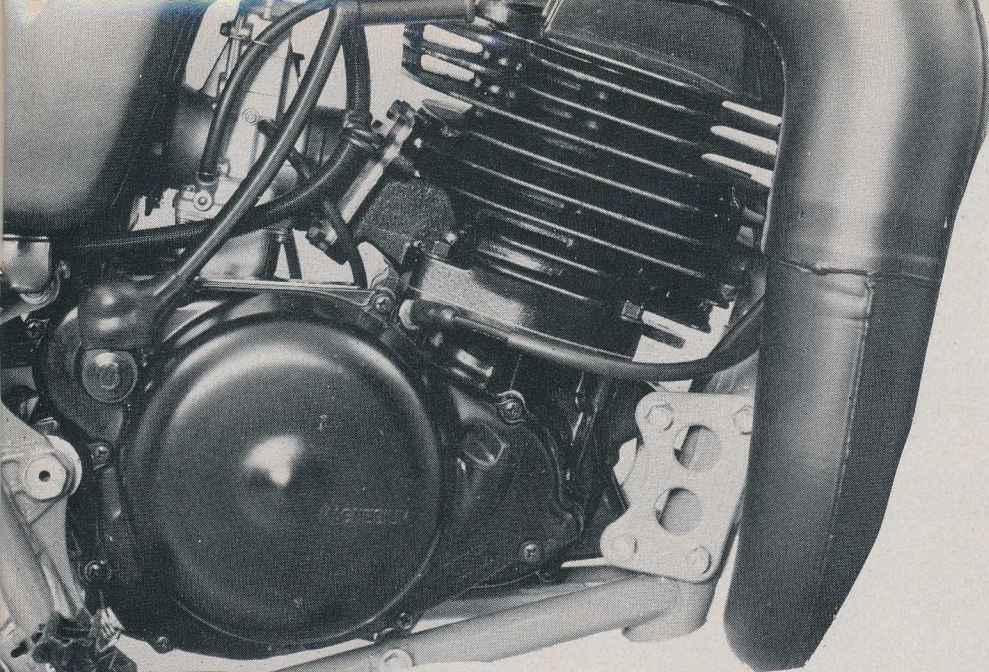


FRONT SUSPENSION DAMPING

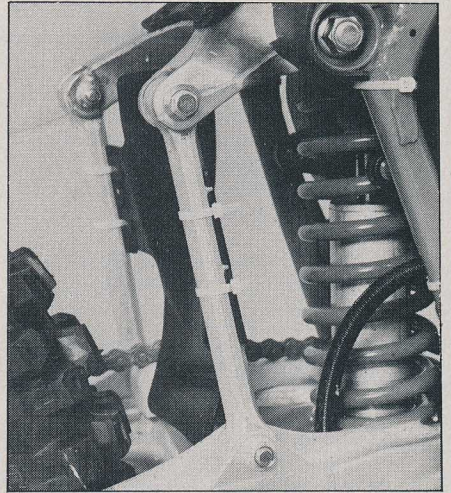


REAR SUSPENSION DAMPING

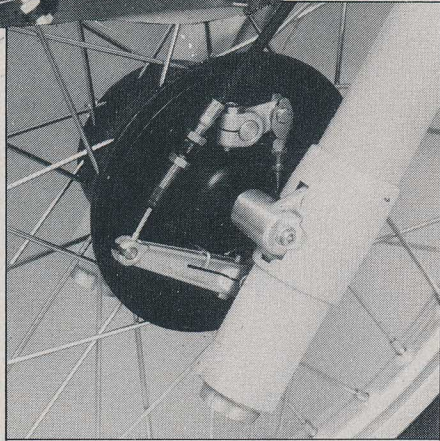




The RM500E definitely has a midrange engine. Top-end power isn't impressive.



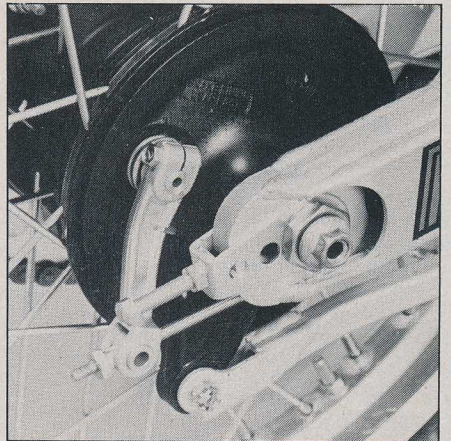
The RM500 didn't get the updated rear suspension with a lower center of gravity.



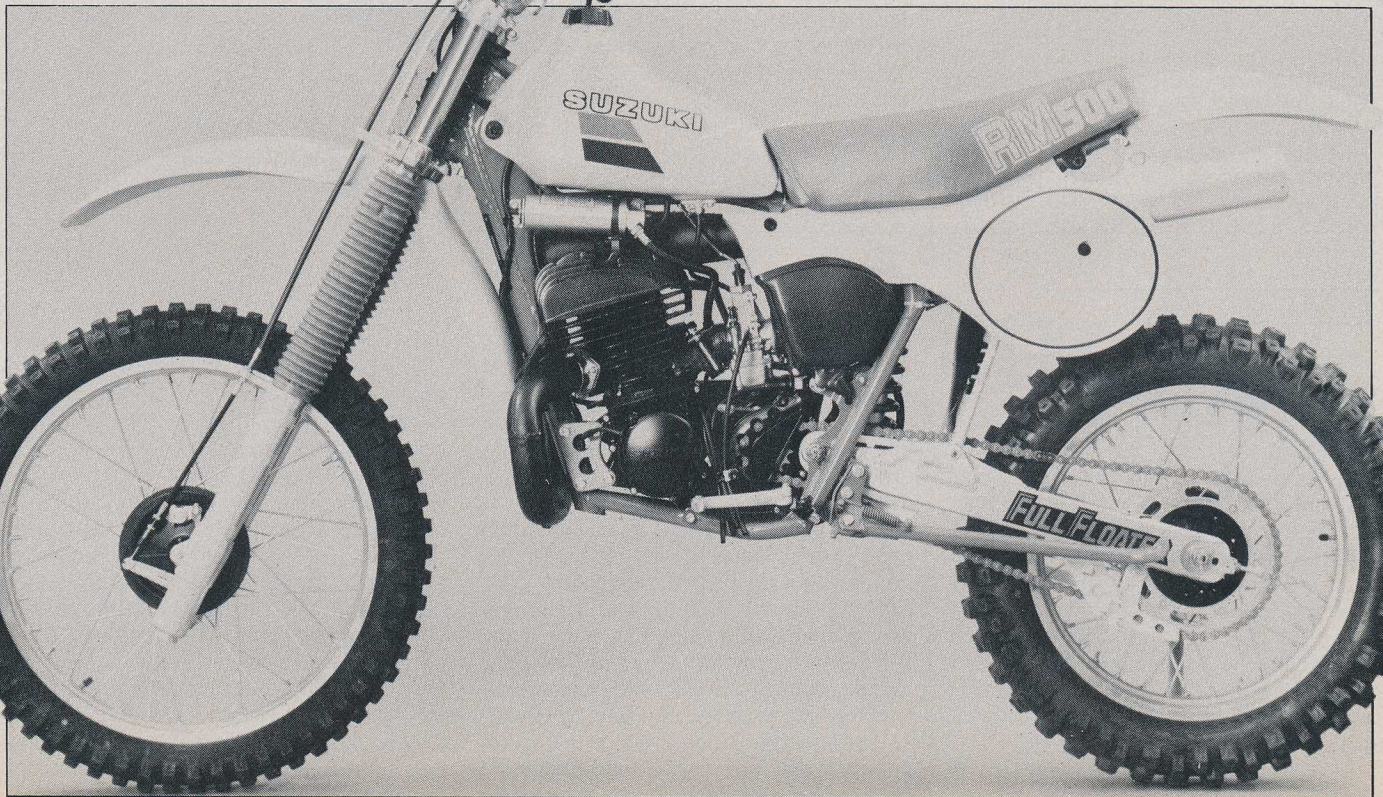
Double-leading shoe front brake is plenty strong for our tastes.



"The frame remains the same" could aptly describe the new blue paint job.



Swingarm design makes chain tightening a nightmare unless you have a huge wrench.



REDLINE REPORT

Our seat-of-the-pants observations were right—the Suzuki RM500E is down on power when compared to the other Open class motocrossers available. With a peak horsepower rating of 43.9, the RM500E is down 2.1 horses over last year's RM500D and down 5.9 horsepower from Yamaha's YZ490L.

We haven't tested a Honda CR500R, but we have looked at a dyno chart of one that was run on the same Kerker dyno we use,

and it put out about 49 horsepower. So the RM500E definitely *is* down on peak horsepower compared to the other bikes, but low-end response and acceleration is a lot better than they were in 1983.

After looking at the dyno results, our fastest testers said they'd still like more peak horsepower from the RM, but only if they could keep the nice, usable powerband. Maybe Suzuki will do that for them with their 1985 RM500.

OPINIONS

Considering that everybody thought the Suzuki RM500E was going to be a yawner, I'm pretty impressed. Although the bike has barely changed since last year, the worst comment I heard from a tester was "not bad." Two of our local pro motocrossers actually were fighting over who was going to get to race the RM over the weekend. They shared.

The front end sticks so well on the 500E that it helps make the bike feel less like an Open classer. The narrow tank/seat junction works in a similar fashion toward making the RM feel small. The wheelbase feels short, although it isn't extremely so.

Just a little better seems to be just enough.

—Bob Carpenter

Age/Ht./Wt.: 24/5'9"/185 lbs.
Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:
Honda XR500R, Suzuki RM500E
Riding ability: Pro motocrosser

I like this RM500E. I liked last year's RM500D, too, but this one has enough tiny changes to make me say I'd like to race it.

The powerband is great for coming out of turns that don't have a lot of traction. On a sandy track or a horsepower track, though, the RM500E is going to need some more ponies in order to stay up with the leaders.

I like the way this bike handles and turns,

and I can't complain about the suspension much. At least it's more predictable than my Honda.

—John Drury

Age/Ht./Wt.: 23/5'10"/145 lbs.
Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:
Honda CR250R
Riding ability: Junior pro motocrosser

All I want to know is if I can have this bike for the weekend. See, there's this big race on Friday night, and I know I can win the Open Pro class on the RM500E.

I'm really surprised at how much I like it, since I didn't think it was changed all that much over last year's bike.

The front end sticks great on the RM and it makes turning a snap. Inside lines are the ticket, handling-wise. But I'd like more power to really rocket out of the turns. You can't have everything, I guess, but I promise to bring it back clean.

—Willy Simons

Age/Ht./Wt.: 22/5'7½"/150 lbs.
Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:
Yamaha YZ250L
Riding ability: Expert pro motocrosser



S U Z U K I RM500E

may be enough problems with the bike that make them feel no exposure is better than bad exposure.

Three of the big four Japanese motorcycle manufacturers have made a lot of changes to their Open class machinery, which left Suzuki tagging along behind with a virtually unchanged RM500 (with the addition of a new blue paint job) to astound no one and create no shock waves among potential customers.

Too bad it appears that way. The RM500E has seen some minor changes,

and it *has* been improved over what was offered last year. Everyone's been complaining all year about how mediocre the Open class bikes are, but they've been ignoring the RM500E because they figured it was the same as last year. It isn't.

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Just because the frame is painted blue doesn't mean the RM500E has an all-new frame like its smaller counterparts, the RM125E and the RM250E. No, this frame hasn't changed. In fact, this is basically the same frame that adorned the 1982 model RM465Z. Suzuki must be happy with the way it works. The rear Full Floater system has been changed a little, though. Last year, they added aluminum struts and moved them farther forward on

the swingarm. Well, those struts are still aluminum and they're still in the same place, but the rocker arm and the struts have been changed a bit to help the suspension's action over smaller bumps.

The gas/oil KYB shock features four-way adjustable compression damping and four-way adjustable rebound damping. The aluminum remote reservoir helps to keep the shock temperature under control, while a bladder in the reservoir promotes more oil-to-reservoir contact and, presumably, better cooling of the oil. The compression damping adjustment knob is located at the rear end of the shock reservoir, within easy reach under the gas tank. The rebound damping adjustment knob is on the top of the



shock, underneath the seat. It isn't exactly easily accessible. We ran the Suzuki with both settings on the number two position. The spring rate has been increased for 1984, from 261 lbs./in. to 288 lbs./in. with much less preload. The move from 182 pounds of preload to 60 pounds follows most of the current suspension experts' thinking for better feel on small bumps.

The leading-axle KYB fork uses 43mm stanchion tubes, with the bottom of each leg painted yellow again this year. A compression damping adjustment resides at the bottom of each leg underneath a protective rubber plug. There aren't any clicks to count—you have to count the number of turns out from fully bottomed.

There are eight turns available for adjustment; the standard setting is right in the middle at four full turns out. Turn the adjustment in for more damping, turn it out for less.

The front brake is the same double-leading shoe design used on last year's RM500, but the cable is no longer exposed for the last 14 to 15 inches. Everybody who saw that the cable on last year's bike was wide open to bushes, other bikes, etc., was rightly concerned for their safety. Now the cable casing runs all the way to the backing plate to alleviate any remaining fears.

ON THE GAS

While the changes that Suzuki made to the RM500E all seem well thought out,

we still didn't count on having test riders fight over who got to ride the newest RM500.

That's right, our test riders were actually scheming on how they could get the RM away from the other guy for a few days, maybe even the weekend. Our two resident local pros, Willy Simons and John Drury, each tried to outdo the other's scamming techniques to get the Suzuki in his respective garage for an extended visit.

The RM500E probably has the best steering of any bike in its class. The weight feels like it's right over the front end; that helps to make it stick extremely well on dry, hard-packed ground, though it's still an asset on loose, loamy or sandy courses. The sticky front end makes the RM turn like it's on a rail, and you might as well be. The Suzuki's wheelbase is very short for an Open class bike. This helps account for the turning expertise. At 57.9 inches, the RM500E is shorter than Yamaha's YZ490L (58.1 in.), Honda's 1983 CR480R (59.3 in.), and it's even shorter than Honda's 1984 CR250R (58.1 in.). The RM500E is only 0.4 inches longer than the RM250E.

Let's just say the bike can turn better than just about any Open class motocrosser, any model, any year.

Suspension action up front was never a cause for complaint and actually seemed to go unnoticed most of the time. In other words: If it works, don't screw with it. Our pro testers didn't even feel that the oil level or viscosity needed to be changed. Our intermediate testers didn't complain about the fork either.

Since the rear suspension didn't receive the more radical changes that the RM250E did, we expected some complaints from our test riders. The 250 rear suspension for 1984 was changed radically, with a much lower center of gravity being the main attraction. Yet, while the RM500E's rear end hasn't been changed as much, it *has* improved. Riders complained much less this year about harshness on small stutter bumps. This isn't to say that they didn't complain at *all*. The Honda and Yamaha big-bore motocrossers do have a more supple rear suspension for the first inch or two; this becomes apparent when you aren't on the gas. That's why braking bumps affect the RM500E more than the other bikes. But it isn't as much a problem as last year.

Engine performance has been improved somewhat by the new cylinder and exhaust pipe, but it seems the new jetting is the biggest asset. The pilot jet on the 1983 bike was a 50; this year Suzuki has brought it all the way down to a 40. Low-end response has picked up immeasurably over what last year's bike had to offer. The '83 Zook was said to have drowned in its own gasoline enough times to get the attention of the L.A. homicide division. The main jet has been left at 300, but you might want to go up a size

Switch to Seer

FOR A FULL LINE OF GOGGLES



MODEL #503 GRADIENT TINT GOGGLE

SEER'S COMPLETE LINE OF GOGGLES INCLUDE:

- ECONOMY
- JUNIOR
- ADULT
- OVER-THE-GLASSES
- OPEN VENT
- ANTI-SCRATCH
- ANTI-FOG
- GRADIENT TINT
- FACEMASKS
- TEAROFFS

FOR A CATALOG OF OUR GOGGLES, FACESHIELDS, AND TOURING HELMETS WRITE:
SUPER SEER CORPORATION • P.O. BOX 700, EVERGREEN, CO 80439 • 303-674-6663

S U Z U K I

RM500E

to a 310 if your track or riding skill allows you to ride the bike wide open for longer than a few quick seconds.

You also might want to consider some engine work or a different pipe if you're a pro level racer. The RM500E doesn't rev out as far as it might, and with a few extra rpm might come a few extra horsepower. The Suzuki needs them. Although the power down low is blessedly tractable, when it comes right down to a horsepower race the RM500E doesn't exactly possess an overabundance of high-rpm mega-horsepower. All the pro testers who rode the bike commented that it wasn't as hairy in the power department as the Honda CR500R, or as awesome as the Yamaha YZ490L's power peak, but they thought they could live with that in exchange for the precision and control gained by a super-tractable powerband. Two of the pros, though, said they would have someone look at the motor for a way to gain peak power without losing anything down low or in the middle.

The engine is sweet. It won't scare you like the Honda, and it won't give you quite the rush of the Yamaha, but it *will* go very fast and do it predictably without putting you on your head and leaving you trying to figure out what you did wrong. It's so easy to ride, even your kid brother could get the thing to go around a track fast...well, maybe not *that* easy.

One thing everybody noticed about the RM is its comfortable feel when you sit on it. The seat/tank junction is a bit more abrupt than bikes with a "safety seat" extension, but the junction is very narrow and certainly doesn't hamper the rider in any way.

The exhaust pipe doesn't toast your leg the way other Japanese two-strokes do. In fact, the entire motorcycle is laid out so that nothing catches or rubs your body in a disturbing way. The seat foam is comfortable, and the handlebar bend seems fine for most.

Brake feel on the RM500E is on par with the other bikes in its class. The double-leading shoe front brake is not exactly overpowering, but it brings the Suzuki down to a safe speed with a good tug on the standard Suzuki lever. The rear brakes weren't touted as the best ever by our testers, either, but they didn't exactly fail any stopping tests. Both brakes are progressive enough and are sensitive to rider input.

"Sensitive to rider input." That statement sums up the RM500E's best trait. This motorcycle is not overbearing like some of the other monocrossers, and it will do what *you* want it to do—not the other way around.

It's a real sweet bike.

DR

SHOCKS THAT INCREASE YOUR BIKE'S HORSEPOWER...

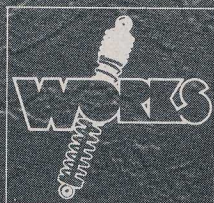
...TO THE GROUND. No matter how much power your bike has, if it's not putting it to the ground, you're not getting all the performance you paid for. Put that power down into the ground with Works Performance Shocks.

Works Performance Gassers, like all Works Performance Shocks, are tough, completely rebuildable and infinitely adjustable.* And with the exclusive Works Performance Progressive Valving System, your machine responds precisely to all kinds of terrain.

For smooth riding comfort and a machine that hooks up with everything it's got, you need Works Performance.

Works Performance. More than just a name. It's what our shocks deliver.

WORKS PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS
8730 Shirley Ave.
Northridge, CA 91324
(213) 701-1010



HOOK UP WITH
WORKS PERFORMANCE.

*Disassembly required.

See your local dealer or call Works Performance direct.

Gassers: \$247.50 pr. w/triple-rate springs. Also available w/dual-rate or single-rate springs. Remote reservoirs \$75.00 pr. Ca residents add 6 1/2% tax.

