

AUSTRALIAN

TRAIL & TRACK

February 1980, \$1

Tests -

SWM's NEWEST 250

Detailed changes make it even better

CR80 MINI

Honda's great little red rocket

KAWA KLX250

Something better than an XL?

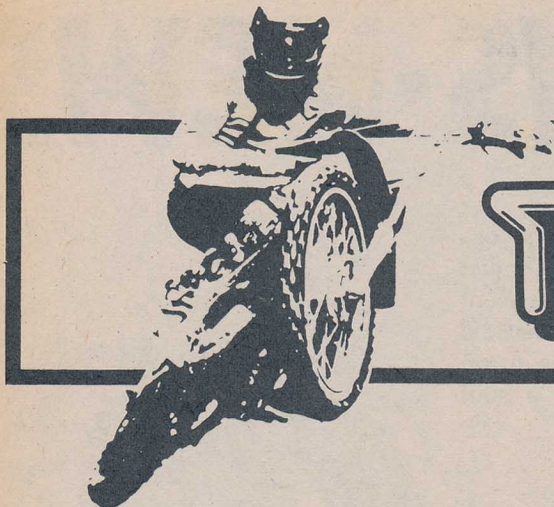
KE175D2

Just how good a street-trailbike?

RM250T

Part 2 - the Yella Terra to beat this year





TRAIL & TRACK

FEBRUARY 1980 - No. 77

Cover shot — S.W.M.250 at Mt. Slide
— photo by the usual Mamiya.

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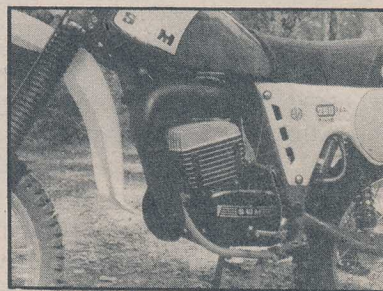
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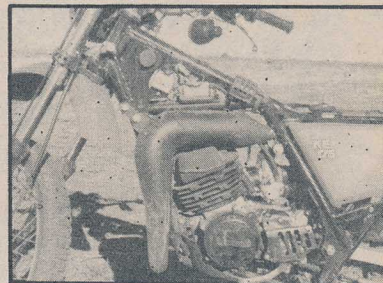
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S.W.M. 250



Kawasaki KE175.



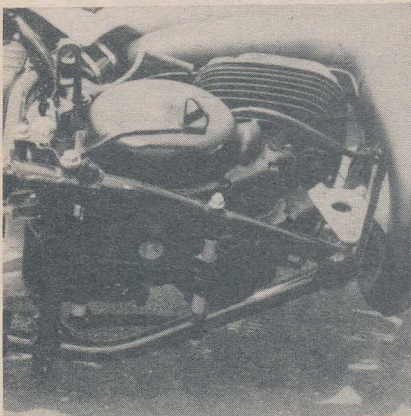
Yamaha IT250G.



Kawasaki KLX250

SUZUKI RM 250 Pt-2

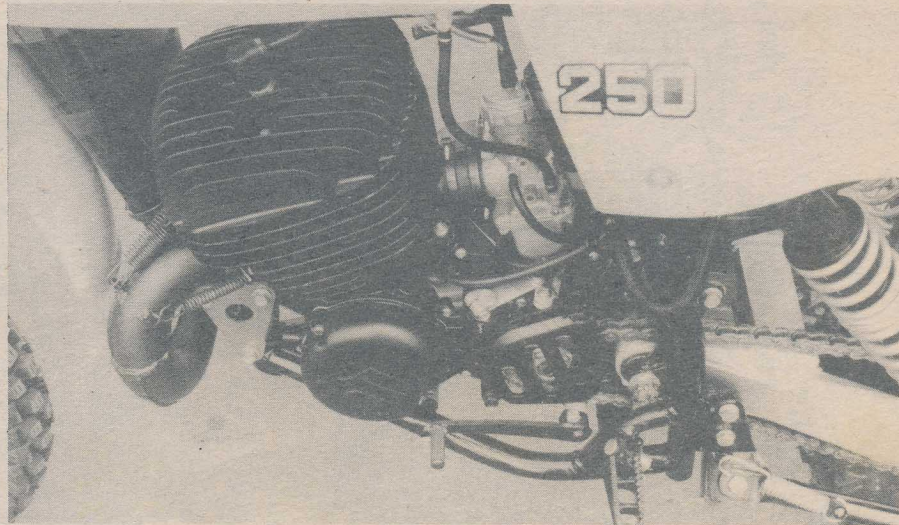
Continuing with the second part of the RM250T article, we look at the riding of the machine first up. From brand new, the machine was jetted a trifle rich, so work on this had to be carried out to get effective results for the test. By dropping the needle one notch in the Mikuni, the bottom end ran cleaner, and with a change from 290 to 280 in the main jet, the mid/top end improved. It was still a bit rich, judging by the plug readings.



Continuing design and development in framing.

Pulling away from a standing start, in the first few hundred revs direct response was lacking even though the air screw was out as far as practical. This indicated the pilot jet was too big, and should be replaced with a down-size. Satisfied the tune was close, we took it for a preliminary run, to find the front forks not as we like them. It had the progressive response of the damping a little too slow on rebound, and in corners the front washed out somewhat making corner steering difficult.

The cure is simple - speed of the rebound stroke is directly related to oil weight and capacity for the first five or six inches. Using a lighter oil, it flows easier through the orifices in the damping rod. Thus, a greater amount of oil is used to retain the



The heart of the thing — a friendly powerplant.

original damping forces, without there will be severe bottoming.

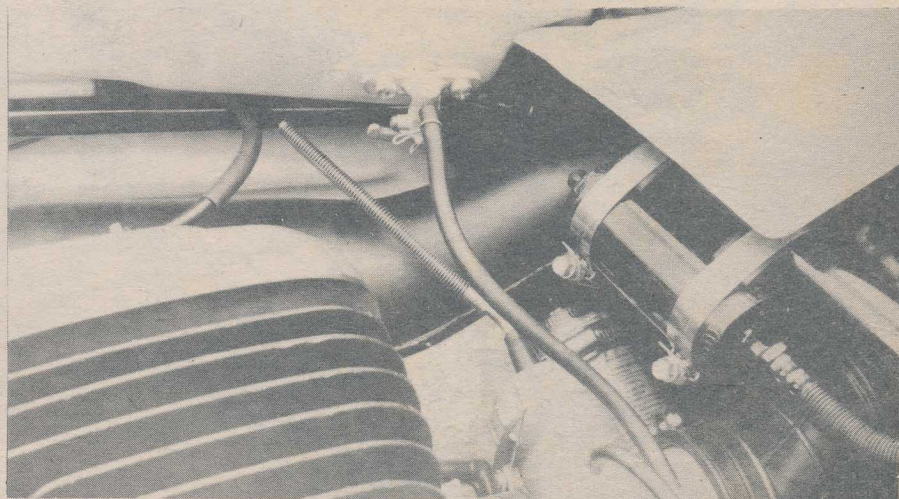
We used two-weight hydraulic fluid, 410cc capacity, 7-8psi. The stock setting is 400cc, five-weight, 11.4psi.

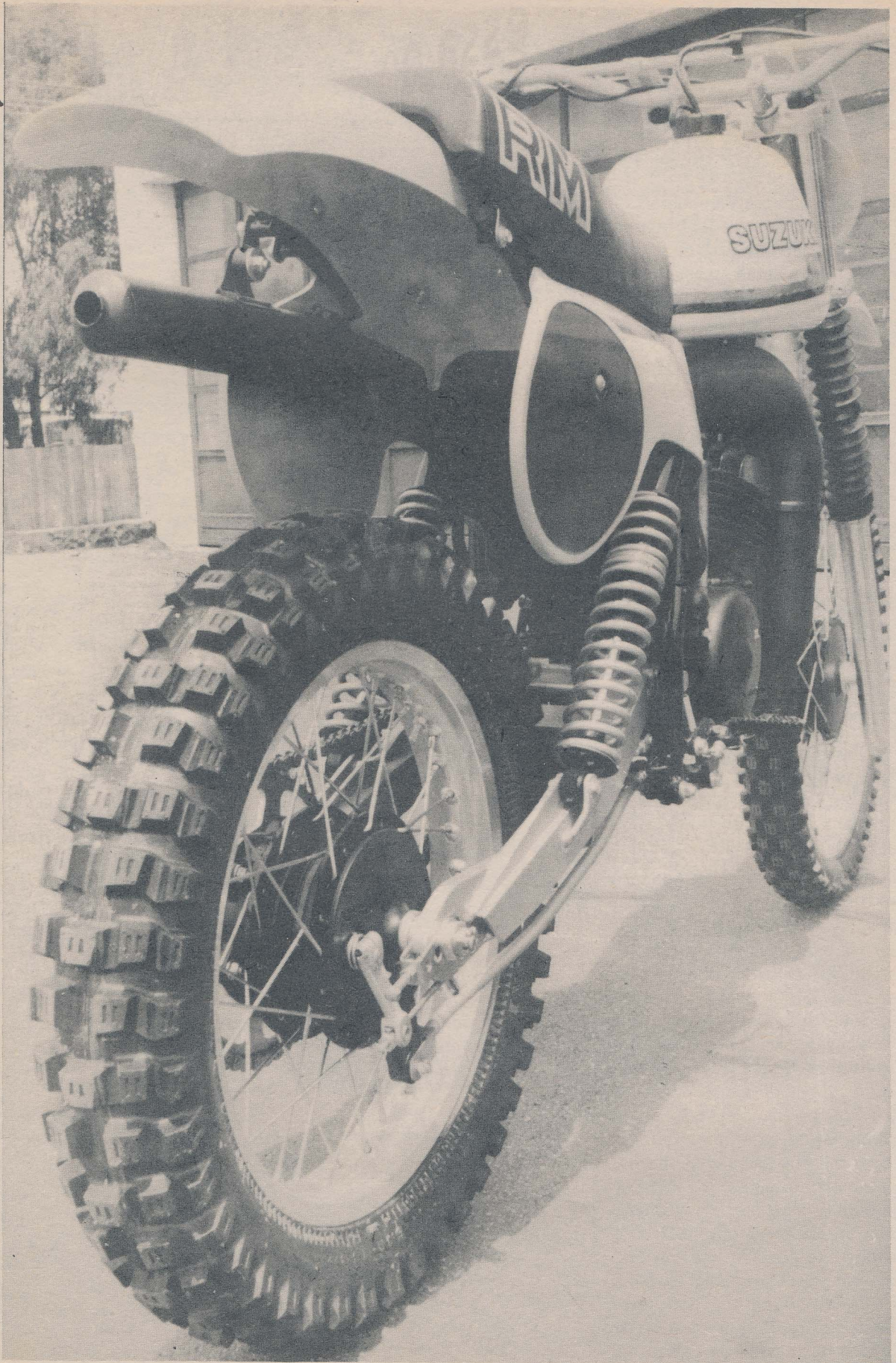
The beauty of these forks is their ability to be set up in so many different and personally-tailored ways. Generally we prefer the softest damping possible, providing a soft comfortable ride, using the lightest oil we can find. The heavier oil deteriorates more quickly as it gets hotter.

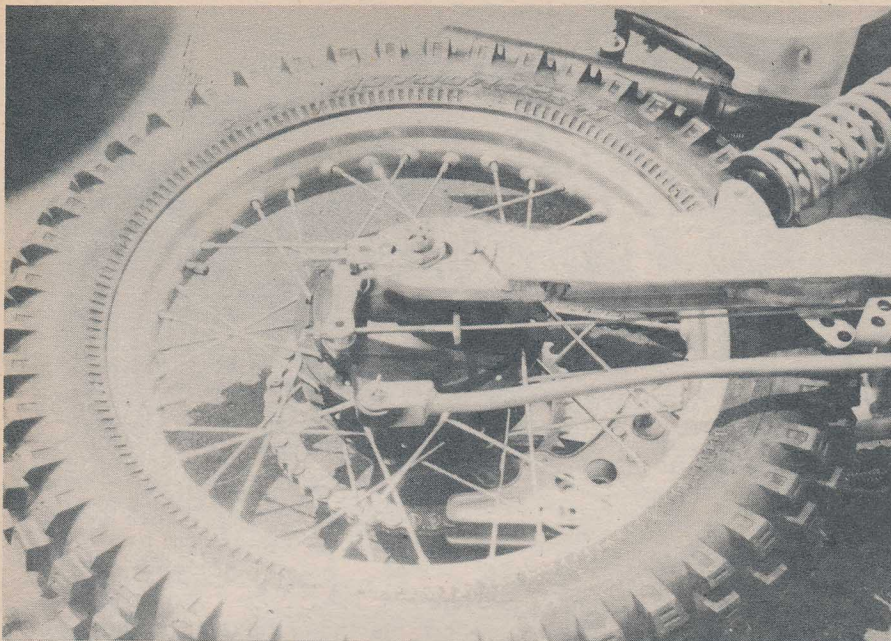
Being satisfied after adjusting bits, the riding began in earnest. The success of this bike as an Enduro mount was a side point, so it went through some demanding trails as well as the normal MX track riding.

As a MX machine it is already proven, being very close to the N model. The T hasn't made the N inferior, in this case it has rather made the power delivery smoother, thus it is an easier bike to ride for the average rider. The factory quotes BHP at the crankshaft as 36 at

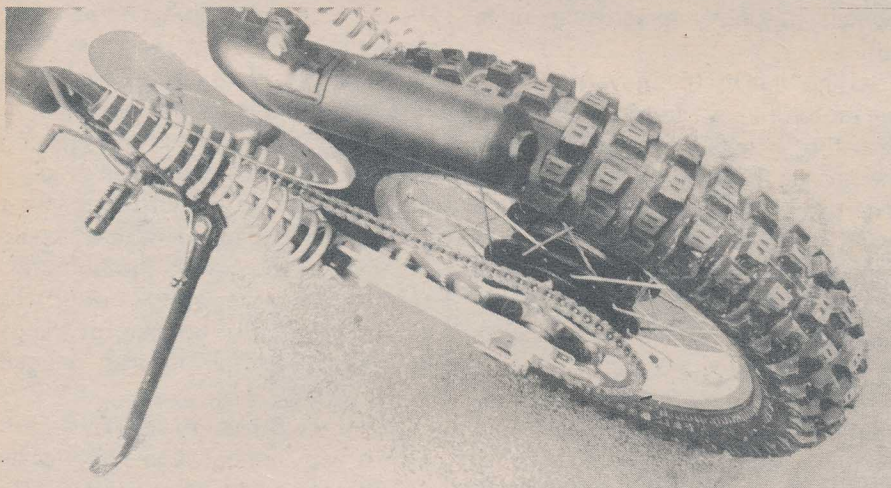
Remote air-oil shock reservoir.



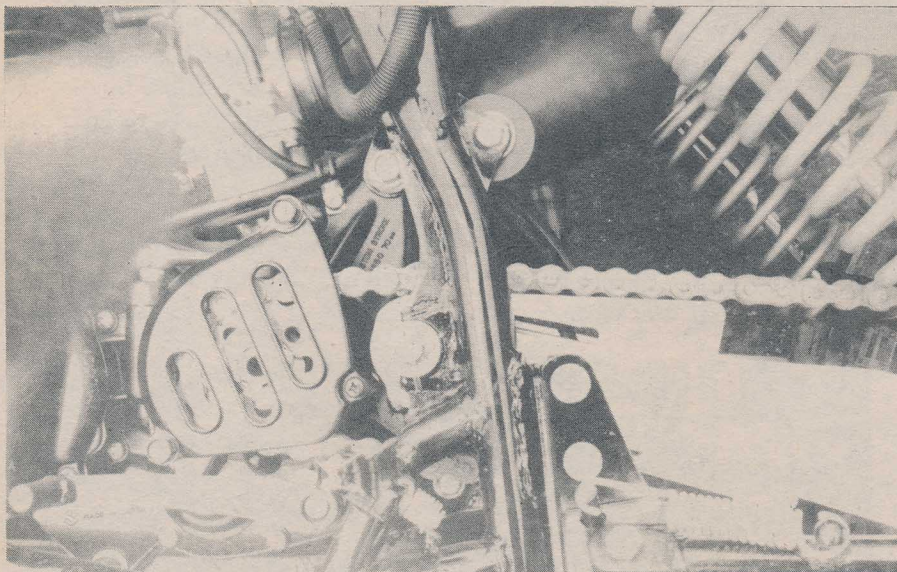




Fully-floating rear brake.



Chain is left side, well guarded and without tensioner.



7500rpm, a figure to impress those not up with facts and figures in engines. The power where it counts is at the rear wheel, ie., what gets to the ground. Losses occur across the transmission, by chains and cogs, as high as 15 per cent in some cases.

The power output is identical with the older N model. The real difference between the models is the greater torque peak now 500rpm earlier with the T. This alters the rev limit in gears, so unlike last model this one does not need so much of a handful of throttle; this is particularly evident in the lower gears of the five-speed machine.

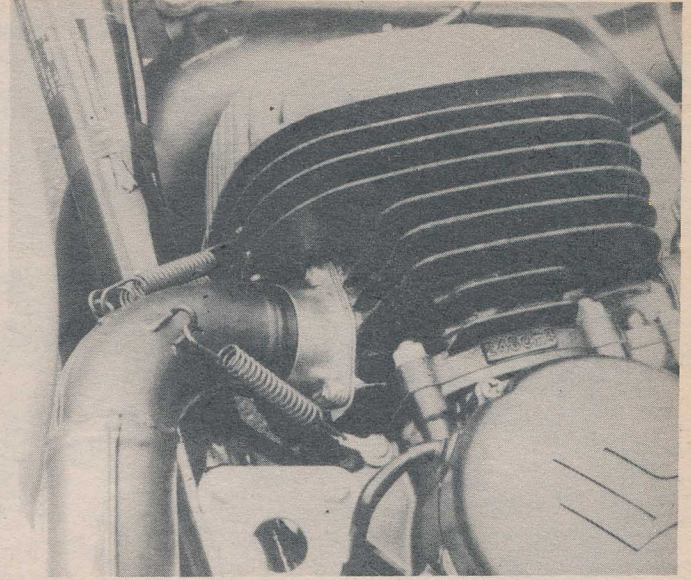
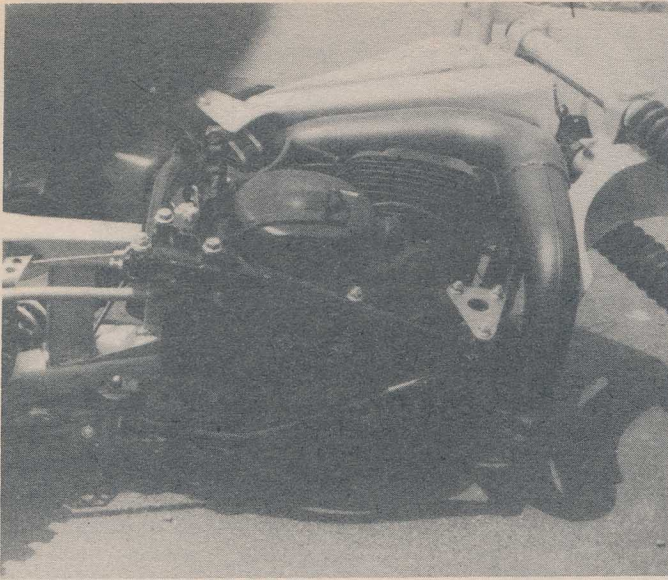
This power peak shift is achieved by a heavier flywheel and slightly larger cranks, allowing the bike to stay on power longer through the gears.

Handling is hidden in the talents of the rider. That is, the faster you can ride the T, the better it handles. Much below midrange, the tall seat height and long wheelbase make it slightly awkward through tight corners. If you keep the power on, and force the front wheel to track, corners disappear with amazing ease.

Extra pull in gears makes tearing through corners even easier; add to this the rake at the headstem at a steep 29 degrees, and the front suspension is less than the back. The rider on one of these should have the quickest times through corners, if he learns to ride it as it should be ridden - fast.

Helping with handling quality is suspension quality - Kayaba, unaltered from last year, other than the rear shockers are now rebuildable. They also have 4-position damping instead of 3-way.

One thing which cannot be taken from a spec sheet about the suspension components and seen in print is their superb nature. Both ends are softly damped in compression and rebound to adapt to different riding styles. Loose-footed seat-huggers won't complain of backaches and kidney trouble, and flexed knee-standers won't have their feet flying off the pegs.



Specifically the front has 11.2" with 36mm fork tubes, the rear has 11.8", and the reason the rear has more travel is to allow the front to steer easier.

Carburetion is still by a 36mm Mikuni, breathing through a polyurethane foam element, reached by removal of the seat and splash cover. This splash cover is restrictive, and needs either removal or more holes in it to allow easier breathing.

On the braking side, things are the same in the levers, but the rear is actuated by cable instead of rod; this isn't a bad idea if you consider how easy it is to bend a rod, and at least this slack cable shouldn't get damaged as much. A significant change is in the chain-tensioning system - no tensioner... Now it is a simple nylon pad on the swing-arm and a plastic roller. At the rear cog is a flimsy-looking guide, fitting slightly over the sprocket; this might give trouble at a track in mud as there does not seem much room inside the confines.

Although Suzuki engineers have fine-tooth-combed this machine there is still a problem with the engine-mounting bolts. They're too small diameter for the hole, and need replacing with correct size bolts to fit the hole or some serious problems may result. Engine cases are bolted together with Phillips-headed bolts, these stripped when the clutch-cover

was to be removed. Pity Allen-head capscrews weren't fitted. This is dismal, making maintenance more difficult.

Riding again, the new nature of the motor makes the bike feel slower than the N model, it doesn't require the revs as the older N did. One thing is certain - there is little effort to get it going and keep it there when hills and corners come up. Overall the feel of this bike is neutral and light, allowing vastly different styles of riding, unlike perhaps the latest YZ250G.

An annoying matter is the bulging sidecovers, they hit the boots in the standing position.

As an Enduro mount over trails, it has good points. On one particular track winding up a hill we found how truly light the bike did feel; on the other hand sometimes this can be a disadvantage, as in crossing large rocks when the back can be thrown about a bit. This problem is similar to that on the last model Husky 250WR. In this kind of environment the stock gearing was pretty hopeless if we got caught in rutted tracks and tight

spots, the clutch had to be worked a lot. Getting up speed was difficult, the conditions should have been shot through hard and fast as the suspension soaked up anything from ruts to pot holes to massive logs.

At the slower speeds the steering became a bit of a handful, it requires quick reflexes to match the steering speed. An experienced rider could manoeuvre his way through this terrain, experienced enough to plough through or bounce off things and just keep the throttle pegged wide.

So, in the Suzuki RM250T we have a bike with enough versatility to be considered for Enduro work, especially now with the tamer power. We feel it will eat the PE's with the right rider up, and still make a big impression at the local MX competition. After all, it's a proven product, bullet-proof, and if the Suzuki engineers thought so much of the last years model, they could have left it alone for the opposition to catch up.....It suits us to a T.

John Mirabile.

