

## WIN TESTED

Four and a half weeks ago we took delivery of the most dynamite bike to come out of Japan since the 125 Elsinore.

Just take a long look at our test 400 Monocross. Rolling your eyes over it will tell you that it has most of the stuff you'd expect to find on a good European unit. A little closer look, and you'll find some things that'll make you wonder why the components weren't made this way all along.

During our first day of testing, Bryar Holcomb and Jim Connolly came along with us to help give it a thorough run through the wringer. George put 20 minutes on it and decided that it was worthy of a dual 40-minute moto race test at Saddleback on Saturday. Here's what happened.

### RACE ONE MOTO 1

Over the gate and gassin' it. A...C...CELERATION!!! Whooa! Into fourth now, headed for the first turn. John DeSoto and Bruce Baron are there first. George tucks in behind Baron and prepares for some initial hot laps.

Track surface was all you could ask for, moist to tacky, with holes already started from practice.

Through the glen and into the big uphill switchbacks. He's still hanging in there, about 15 meters back. But,



(Tom Corley photo)

**BIG, BAAAD AND 8 FOR 8**

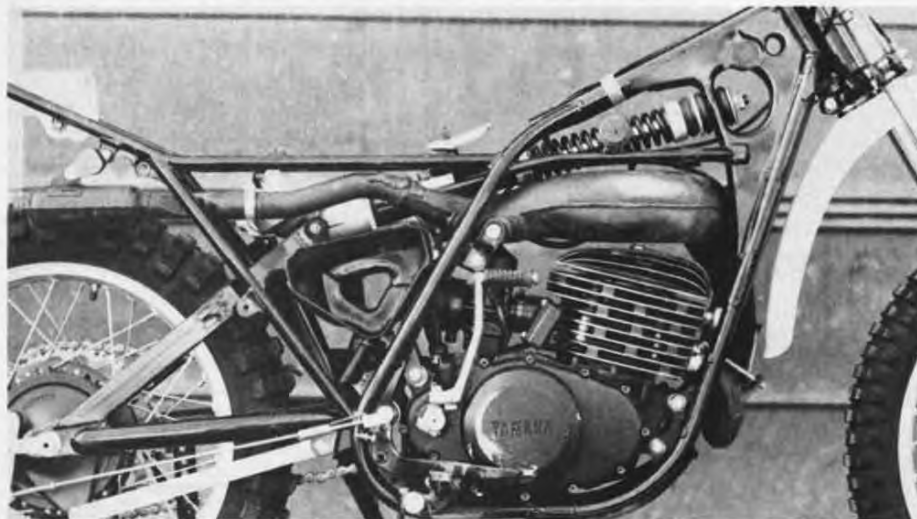
# YAMAHA 400 MX

**by the Staff  
of DIRT BIKE**

there's no one behind them. Look at that thing turn! Just like a Maico. Flick the bars and gassit. Front wheel roosts and all! Maybe it'll be different when the track dries out a little.

With four laps down, DeSoto and Baron start pulling away. Unchallenged, George had the track virtually to himself for several laps. That Monocross is the loudest thing on the track.

It accelerates from corner to corner as quick as the leading experts. Once into the turns, how-



Bare naked . . . Note: Kinky chain, dynamite dual-drain air box, leg burner (mounted above head), and remains of rear tank mount.







**Bryar Holcomb had some fun and helped us sand test the chain.**

ever, their skill proved who was going to make the quickest lap times.

Roughly 30 minutes into the first go-round, the leaders lapped our test Yamaha. Couldn't stay with them like he could in the beginning. Forty minutes and the checkered flag. First Amateur!

#### BETWEEN MOTOS

George rolled up to our truck yelling things like: What a rocket! This thing's so quick! It even turns!! Almost turns too good in that dirt. Did you see that start? Wheelied all the way up. Yea, we saw it. Needless to say, but we'll say it: George was excited about the bike. Wrenches started clanging as he proceeded to, as he put it, make sure it didn't get a chance to harm him.

How did the rear suspension work? In his condition, we were almost afraid to ask. He reported that it was the best rear end he had ridden so

far. Could be better, though. Slightly oversprung, of course, in the Yamaha tradition. Entering the downhill right-hander at the bottom of Webco hill, he had trouble keeping the rear end in line. It was hopping all over, from side to side. Had to keep his weight to the maximum rearward position to keep it headed in the right direction. Not so bad in a way, because it made him tend to want to keep the gas on longer. As long as the gas was turned on, it was fantastic. That can't hurt your lap times much, unless you do something silly like going off.

Hmm. We quickly found that the rattling he heard on the starting line was the super-lightweight alloy tank vibrating against its large rear mount which once held it to the frame. Luckily the front edge of the seat held it in place. Nothing like a belt or a strap to hold on a tank. Looks trickier too. A bungee cord

will have to do.

Spokes loosened up enough to require attention after 55 minutes of riding. After the first day of testing, they were loose as a goose. Not nearly as bad now. Steering head bearings appeared to be the only other thing to loosen up.

#### MOTO 2

This time the experts used the gate and the intermediates were flagged off about eight seconds later.

Up the start hill, on the rear wheel most of the way again, and the first turn belonged to the German rider/Japanese bike combination. No competition. He pulled out a very comfortable lead.

Twenty minutes into it, in the exit of the downhill left into the glen, he turned a little too sharp and it spit him off. No big deal. He remounted and continued without losing a position. Again, after about 30



Saddleback sod. (Paul Boudreau photo)

minutes, the few fastest experts motored by. A few laps later, the checked and another win.

In the pits, he hopped off and started stroking the front and rear suspenders to see what was left of the dampening. The rear didn't feel too bad in the final laps, nor was it too far from what he started with when checking it now. Forks left a little to be desired. They probably had the standard fish oil in them and weren't the hottest things going. Steering changed some as the track dried up a little, but still the geometry seemed very close to what you needed.

Not bad at all. Even the harder-rubber copies of Oury grips weren't bad enough to need changing. Without Tibblin gloves, maybe. One o'clock, we headed home. Ah yes, two 40s at Saddleback on Saturday.

George was content with two firsts the first time out on the bike. Little did he suspect that this was just the beginning of one of the most memorable days of his life.

#### DYNO DAY

Removing the number plates to clean the air filter, we found that the only thing holding the bolt in place that the top of the swingarm and shock pivot on was the outer air box cover. Strange. You'd think those crafty Yamaha designers would have drilled and cotter pinned such an important part. A new nut was fitted with plenty of Loctite.

The air box is beautiful. It's made of very thick polyethylene-type plastic. There are no bolts to be sucked in if things come loose. A plastic X-section, of similar material,

has two 6mm bolts imbedded in each end. This passes through the center duct of the box to hold the outer covers in place, sandwiching the two filters in place. Ingenious. Looks vibration-proof, too. Makes the original YZ part look like trash.

Back to the dyno . . . 37.8 of the most usable horsepower ever to come out of Japan. The power curve looks very nice on paper and felt even better on the track. Quite a combination, with power like that, and suspension that can get it all to the ground.

#### RACE TWO MOTO 1

The flag moved and they were gone. George made a slight error getting over the gate. Into the first turn a slick guy on a 450 Maico shut



Big bore blow mind . . . short shifter, box blower.



Holes in the holes!



turn, sent him into a full-lock brake slide for easily 13 meters. Nearing the end of the slide, he rolled on the gas and swooped by for the lead before turn two. He pulled away and caught the experts on the same lap. No contest. First.

Later he was heard to comment: Does this thing have handles, or what? Slides! It does most everything right. Bars are a few centimeters too wide, he clipped a couple of course markers.

### RACE THREE

#### MOTO 1

190.5cc of Bel-Ray 20-weight in the forks, 2.1 cm above the crowns, a full 2-1/2 hours sleep.

Holeshot. Wire to wire.

When you gassit, it seems to straighten itself up out of a slide, coming out of a turn. Forks worked much better for a 75 kilo rider with the good oil. Decent. You don't really think about the brakes. They're there when you need them. Front is smooth and predictable. Rear is least sticky of any Yamaha we've ridden lately. Once in a while, you're bound to get a good one.

#### MOTO 2

Holeshot. Wire to wire. That's six out of six 40-minute motos, open intermediate class.

#### TRICK-OUT TIME

Orange County Cycles had sponsored Mike Gillman to ride the support class throughout this past Trans-AMA. Both sides learned as

the door on him. Following for a lap and a half, he saw his chance and took the lead. They pulled far ahead of the pack. Two laps later, the Maico with the squeaky brakes regained the lead. One lap later George got it back and pulled away. A couple of laps later the pipe broke in two, just behind the stinger.

#### BETWEEN MOTOS

He was stoked again. With only two hours sleep the night before, this was the only bike to ride. He could sit in places and rest where you wouldn't normally want to. One hose clamp held the pipe together till we could weld it. A couple of the berms were so deep that they cleaned your feet off the pegs if you left them there. The hot setup was to either keep your feet off the bike

completely, or rest one on the engine cases. Pegs didn't work so good with clods of mud on them.

We had moved the forks down in the crowns so that they were now 1.5 cm above the top edge. For the first race, they were at about 3.4 cm. Better now. Same oil though. George said that he was much too busy living during the week to play with things like fish oil.

#### MOTO 2

It appeared that he had the holeshot until the final few meters before turn one. Some dude slipped in front just as they had reached the shut-down area. George had overcooked it quite a bit. The sight of someone going 20 miles per hour slower, directly in front of him, and the thought of overshooting the

## 400 YAMAHA MONOCROSS

PRICE (retail, approx.) ..... \$1486  
 ENGINE TYPE ..... Two-stroke single  
 DISPLACEMENT ..... 397cc  
 BORE & STROKE ..... 85mm x 70mm  
 COMPRESSION RATIO ..... 7.57:1  
 CARBURETION ..... 38mm Mikuni  
 HP at RPM ..... 37.8 at 7500  
 CLUTCH ..... Wet, multiple disc  
 PRIMARY DRIVE ..... Helical gear - 2.667  
 TRANSMISSION RATIOS:  
 1) ..... 2.250:1  
 2) ..... 1.684:1  
 3) ..... 1.260:1  
 4) ..... 1.000:1  
 5) ..... 0.793:1

### FINAL DRIVE:

14-tooth countershaft DK520  
 50-tooth rear sprocket

AIR FILTRATION ..... Oiled foam  
 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM ..... CDI magneto  
 LUBRICATION ..... Pre-mix 20:1  
 ..... (Bel-Ray 50:1)

RECOMMENDED FUEL ..... Premium

RECOMMENDED OIL ..... None

FUEL CAPACITY ..... 8 liters (2.1 gallons)

FRAME ..... Double cradle

SUSPENSION ..... 17 cm travel (6.7 inches)

..... 16.6 cm travel (6.5 inches);

..... measured at the rear axle

Seat Height ..... 87.1 cm (34.3 inches)

Handlebar Width ..... 90.1 cm (35.5 inches)

Weight ..... 108.1 kg (238 pounds);

..... weighed with oil and one gallon of gas

..... 44.1 percent on front wheel

..... 55.9 percent on rear wheel

WHEELS & SPOKES ..... DID (new type)

..... steel

### TIRES:

..... Dunlop, 3.00x21

..... Dunlop, 4.60x18

### DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase ..... 141.5 cm (56.18 inches)

Clearance ..... 24.1 cm (9.5 inches)

### BRAKES:

Front ..... Conical, cable-operated drum

Rear ..... Conical, rod-operated drum

INSTRUMENTS ..... None

LIGHTS ..... None

SILENCER ..... Yes

SPARK ARRESTOR ..... No

PRIMARY KICK ..... Yes

WARRANTY ..... No

### PARTS PRICES:

Piston Assembly ..... \$20.22

Rings ..... \$8.00

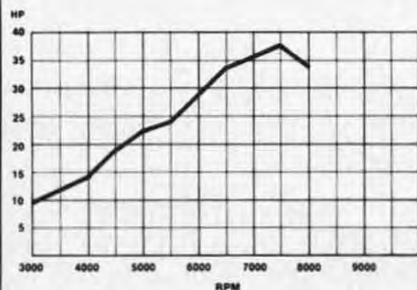
Clutch Cable ..... \$4.54

Cylinder ..... \$107.20

Shift Lever ..... \$6.00

Brake Pedal ..... \$7.50 (approx.)

Clutch Lever ..... \$3.20



secrets were shared. Guess who was anxious to get the lowdown on the monoshock rebuild job?

Tom White at O.C.C. has rebuilt more monoshock units than he cares to recall. National number 80 expert, circle dirt track freak. He's done a lot of experimenting and has come up with the right setup for both motocross and desert.

Their own valve replaces the stock unit, rotated on the main shock shaft 180 degrees from its original position. A standard, off the shelf, rebuild kit, the light instead of medium Yamaha spring, Bel-Ray LT-300 and a few personal tricks complete the hot shock assembly. They'll do the whole thing to yours for just \$30. Seems like a deal if you know the procedure required with bleeding, nitrogen gas and all. If you buy the bike there, it's done before you roll it out. When he's done, it'll feel a lot more like a shock. More rebound damping, virtually no loss of damping, and the



Automatic compression release was a joy.

annoying clunk when the shock tops out will be eliminated.

#### RACE FOUR

##### MOTO 1

Third to first turn, second by turn two, lead by lap six. George broke his old record. He could only find time to close his eyes for 40 minutes the night before. He also broke third gear on lap nine. Second, fourth and that power were all he needed. By the way, the seat base is made of that polyethylene unbreakable-type stuff as well, and is very comfortable for those who find it necessary to use it. Everyone should use that stuff for seats and air boxes.

##### MOTO 2

Holeshot. First gear for the start, second and fourth thereafter. Wire to wire. Eight out of eight. Forty minutes sleep? Dynamite!



Triple-clamp bolts were made of clay.

#### SNIVELS, SNORTS . . .

Maybe soon they'll even have the suspension completely sorted out on the showroom floor. Still, you can win on it.

If you have a van, it will reek of gasoline as soon as you slip the bike in, if your petcock drools as bad as our test unit's did. Filler cap seated against the hump in the tank, calling for the use of a second cork gasket to make the correct seal. Bars are, as we said, a hair too wide for most everyone. Pegs don't work on muddy tracks. Spokes must be checked after every moto. In the desert, you had better think about Loctite on them.

The gearbox may have been George's fault, maybe not. A CZ

rider, you know, never remembers to use the clutch. Shifter should be longer for sure.

Your leg can get a quick fry job by the belly of the expansion chamber, which is located against your right knee. A heat shield might be in order. The way Connolly rides, he needs heat shields on both sides.

The tank mount and pipe breaking after such a short period of time seems a little strange.

#### . . . AND HOORAYS

One hell of a bike. If you didn't know what you were riding, it

almost seems to handle like a European machine. You could probably have won a world championship with this bike two years ago if your name was Roger, Joel, Jaroslav or Heikki. Not to mention Hakan.

At 108+ kilos, it's not the lightest open class bike for sure. But, with that combination of easy to use power and suspension that can be relatively inexpensively dialed, you've got a hell of a deal and the best open class mount to come out of Japan so far.

Can't wait to try the 125.



## Wiseco's New 'FMX' Specials — Forged Pistons With New SuperStrength Rings

If you think 'FMX' stands for 'Forged for Motocross' — you're right!

And, if you think Wiseco's 'FMX' Special pistons do things other pistons don't, and can't, you're right again. That's why 'FMX' Special pistons should be part of your arsenal.

They're designed for performance. They're stronger, yet lighter, than ordinary pistons, so they run longer. They run cooler, with better heat transfer. They give you an increase in rpm's and horsepower throughout the power band.

And how about those SuperStrength rings? They're made of ductile iron for high tensile strength and flexibility. They're moly-filled for long life, and to prevent scuffing. And, they provide an excellent seal for increased compression. So, they're best for MX.

And, of course, the pistons and rings are Wiseco. That's all you need to know about the precision and care that go into their design, engineering, and manufacturing.

The time is now. Your secret weapons are here. Go out and do it!



Wiseco Piston, Inc. 7220 Industrial Park Boulevard, Mentor, OH 44060

The Switch Is On—To WISECO  
Send for Free 1975 Cycle Piston Brochure