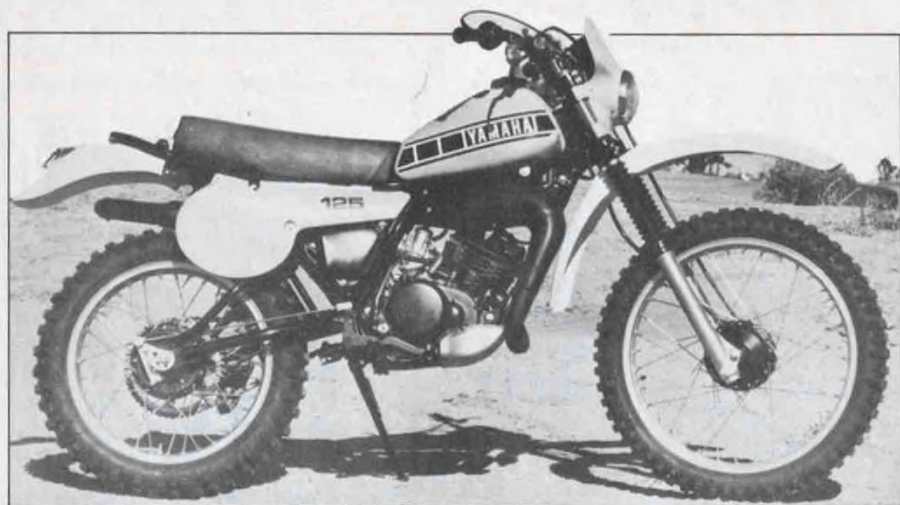


YAMAHA IT125G

LIGHT BLUE

Playbike or winner?

By Gary Woodling, DB Enduro Editor



In 1975, Honda was the only Japanese firm serious enough to offer a lightweight enduro racer. The MR175 was good for its time, but European hardware was still the hot ticket.

Since then, Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki have joined the ballgame and put some heavy-duty development into smaller lightweight enduro bikes. Gad, look at their latest 175/200cc lineup: aluminum swingarms, offset forks, moved-up, laid-down, upside inverted hidden shocks. They've come a long way since the cautious MR175.

Now, Yamaha has taken the role as innovator with the introduction of the IT125. It has all the basic equipment and is cosmetically similar to its bigger brothers. In fact, side by side with a 175, the longer suspension and aluminum swingarm of the bigger guy is the only clue of a difference.

In the woods, the 125 brings back the joy of why lightweights exist. At 215 pounds (fully gassed), the IT could hardly be called porky. However, along with the light weight of a 125, the rider must learn to live with the power of a 125. To some people, the transition is an easy one. To others, it is an impossibility that can only be cured with cubic horsepower.

Fortunately, Yamaha foresaw this difference in riding characteristics and designed the powerband to suit almost anyone. The low end is fair and will get

the job done. Once on the pipe, things get lively. The powerband is identical to their 175, only a little less power, wherever you look. Remember, it's only a 125.

Suspenders

The chassis, forks and mono appear quite similar to Yamaha's proven YZ100 components. The 125 enduro/racer market is small (now) and the production costs of a YZ125/IT125 hybrid too high to warrant a 125 super-racer. For that reason, Yamaha chose to produce the 125 as a trailbike with the workable basics of a class champion. The forks were rather small at 32mm, but decent if you look at them from a trailbike view. For a 125, they work fair and exhibit surprisingly good damping during their seven-inch stroke.

My 175-pound torso repeatedly bottomed them at serious racing speeds, but a 130-pound pilot will find them quite enjoyable.

The rear end was a little stiffer and almost adequate for my higher weight. Lighter riders may want to lighten the shock preload at first.

Compression damping was a little stiff at first, but settled down into a mellow state after break-in. The familiar adjustment found on larger ITs under the tank is not there. Nitrogen pressure changes are the only provision, but any Yamaha dealer can

change it for you.

The steel tubular swingarm looks sturdy and pivots very close to the countershaft sprocket. For normal riding, it'll work fine, but a serious competitor might shop for an aluminum replacement in the neighborhood of two inches longer. The 53.7-inch wheelbase is a little shy for high-speed riding.

Odds and ends

New white fenders designate the ends, and the rear has a built-in taillight. Nifty. The 2.2-gallon tank should be good for 55+ hard miles, or 70 if you're into cruising. Speedo, headlight, handlebars and Bridgestone tires came out of the IT250/425 parts bin. Good stuff.

The brakes work well—almost too well—but are easily adjusted to. The seat is low-cut, but formed from a high-density foam. This allows even mid-gets to plant both feet and palms on the ground. An inch lower and knees and elbows would drag.

No tool bag is mounted as in previous ITs. This is really a shame, because now the rider is deprived of experiencing the self-destruction of those infamous tool bags and the loss of \$37 worth of hand tools. A Hi-Point or Malcolm Smith tank bag is the only way to go.

The bike does come with the usual tools and a complete service manual. A great manual, by the way.

FIM side number plates add a touch of class. So do DID aluminum rims and 520 sprockets and chain. No dollar shortcutting here.

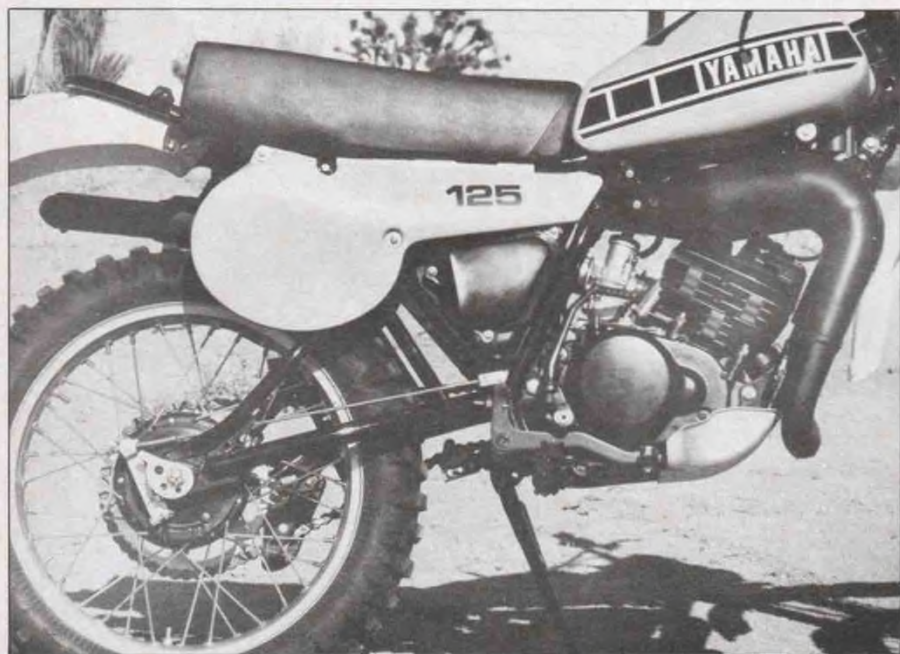
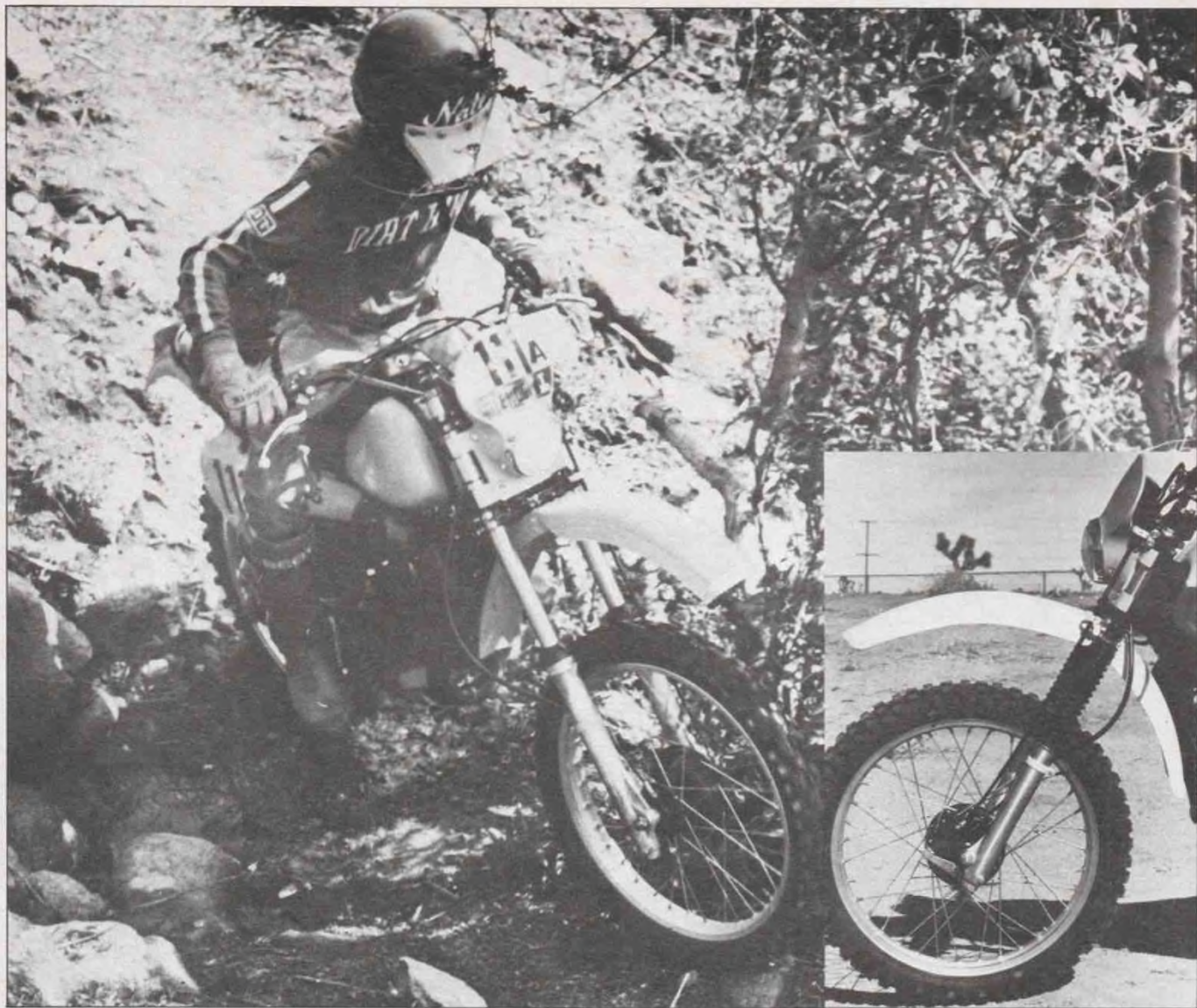
The ride

The bike is small. Short and low. Beginning riders like the powerband and security not found on other 125 MX bikes. Beginning riders also learn faster on this bike than on a typical 125 dual-purpose foo-foo machine.

But the serious guys can get radical on this IT if they want to. The powerband is highly accommodating for both beginners and racers. A thoroughly thought-out engine.

The six-speed box has a super-low





Airbox is easy to service. Pipe is well tucked in. FIM-style side panels are flashy, but of little use in the real world. Good skiplate protects smallish engine.

Stock, the forks are decent for a light-weight trail rider. For competition, a Terry kit does the job, or serious riders can slip on IT175/250 forks. White fenders set off the nifty-looking bike.

granny for the rock fields and will propel the bike an honest 60 mph-plus on the pavement. Try to get a 125 MXer with that kind of versatility.

The steering rake was reduced another half-degree to 28½ degrees compared to their '79 100. This makes for a super turner and trail machine. High-speed desert stuff requires a watchful eye. You can't have the best of both worlds.

The position of pegs, bars and seat was enjoyed by all; even my six-foot structure felt at home. As mentioned, the seat is low-cut, but very comfortable. A 100-mile local enduro proved that fact.

The bottom line

She does everything she was intended to do, and then some. Yamaha's entry into the 125 enduro/racer market is a new venture from the Japanese. It

is the first such "cc" bike of its type from across the Pacific. This is new and unexplored territory for Yamaha, and they came very well prepared.

As a wife/kids/beginner playbike, it passes with flying colors. As a Six Days class champion, it is within reach with minimal preparation. If one weighs the differences between making this bike raceable and making a YZ125 enduro-able, the IT125 is the wiser route. Yamaha doesn't claim that their IT125 will win a National enduro, but you can sure as heck try.

In fact, we plan to do just that. □

YAMAHA IT125G Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Yamaha IT125G
ENGINE TYPE	Air-cooled, two-stroke, reed valve, single
BORE AND STROKE	56x50mm
DISPLACEMENT	123cc
HORSEPOWER	18.1 at 8600 rpm
CARBURETOR	Mikuni 30mm
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	#200

NEEDLE JET	P-4
JET NEEDLE	6DP19
PILOT JET	35
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR)	Yamalube
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	8.5 liters (2.2 gallons)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
GAS/OIL RATIO	32:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Foam element
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed, constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	3.09
2	2.06
3	1.50
4	1.19
5	1.00
6	0.84
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/46
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG:	Champion N-2G
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	Yes/yes/fairly quiet
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Upswept, expansion chamber pipe
FRAME, TYPE	Chrome moly single-downtube, split cradle
WHEELBASE	1365mm (53.7 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	284mm (11.2 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	846mm (33.3 inches)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	28.5 degrees
TRAIL	120mm (4.72 inches)

WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	99.0 kg (215 pounds)
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy DID
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	3.00x21 Bridgestone knobby
REAR	4.10x18 Bridgestone knobby
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Leading axle telescopic fork, 180mm (7.09 inches)
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Nitrogen monoshock, 200mm (7.9 inches)
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Off-road, enduro competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$1169
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$30.38
RINGS ONLY	\$9.34
CYLINDER	\$95.28
SHIFT LEVER	\$4.00
BRAKE PEDAL	\$4.58
FRONT SPROCKET	\$5.50
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Yamaha Motor Corp. USA	
6555 Katella Ave.	
Cypress, California 90630	
OVERALL RATING, FROM 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:	
HANDLING	92
SUSPENSION	84
POWER	96
COST	95
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	92
EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK	88 (modified, 96)

MAKING THE IT125 WORK

By
Gary Woodling



The stock engine is good. Very good. Just enough bottom end to pull out of a premature shift with a good, wide spread of power. It would be hard to gain any more beans on the top without a bottom loss. So, we concentrated on searching for more mid-range. A White Bros. reed spacer kit was the hot tip, and it worked. There are port jobs and custom pipes in the works as of this writing, but they may create a powerband that's unrideable in the woods. Be careful.

The wheelbase is short, but no extended swingarms were available. Get one when they are.

The mono is basically a YZ100 unit. White Bros. is one of the few (if only) places that can modify the unit to a full 10 inches with precision damping characteristics. It's hard to believe there's that much difference between a stocker and a trick shock, until you ride one. A reservoir is a must with the increased travel.

Unfortunately, the forks were un-

raceable for my weight and had to be replaced. White Bros. carry a kit (for the stock forks) which increases travel to eight inches. If you go that route, the rear should match, so be conservative on your mono mod: nine inches maximum.

We installed a pair of 1979 IT175 forks and triple clamps. The installation was rather simple, requiring the 175 lower and upper crowns, stem, and a lower crown bearing race (used as a spacer) for an '80 IT125. Use the 125 bearings and remember to grease them. You'll also need a 175 wheel.

Before mounting, the forks were treated to a Terry fork kit (10-inch travel) and Goki air caps. Bel Ray 10-weight oil and five to seven pounds of air were used for 170-pound riders. Reduce the pressure to two to three pounds, or no air at all for the 135-pound crew.

Scott Petty fenders were mounted (MX front, IT rear) in blue. The stockers work well, but will be required in new condition at resell

time. The rest of the plastic hardware was left stock.

Gearing is great for anything; leave it alone. Waterproofing is very good and LPS-1 will take care of most troubles on wet days.

The bike really shines in the tight sections. You can throw it around like a Frisbee, without getting a double hernia.

We made all of the changes to the IT125 in one evening and entered the bike in the 100-mile Prospectors Gold Rush Enduro. The results backed up our initial impressions: The IT125 won the 125 A class and placed well up in the top ten overall. In fact, the bike could have been in the top three overall, but we burned one check with a lapse of attention.

We plan to enter the IT125 into a few National enduros soon, and, if the first try is any indication, we hope to see a class win there, too.

Make no mistake about it... the 125 IT is more than a casual playbike. With a few bucks wisely invested, it's a real woods weapon. □

IT125 Competition Preps

Reed spacer	\$13.50
Mono mod:	
10-inch kit	\$40.00
Reservoir kit	\$80.00
Labor	\$35.00
Oil and nitrogen	\$5.00
Fork kit	\$40.00
Air caps	\$15.00
IT175 forks and wheel	\$250.00 (approx.)

White Bros.
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