



SUZUKI PE250T

The Suzuki PE250, through no fault of its own, is probably going to be the last 1980 enduro bike we test before the 1981 bikes come out, and it's a shame we can't hold on to it a little longer. Right around this time of the year, all of the '80 bikes are heading out the back door in a hurry, as we get ready for the new crop, and the PE is going to be one we hate to let go. It has all the right power, a decent stock suspension, and the handling is much better than the PEs of the past. There's nothing really earthshaking about the PE, but all the refinements made to the line in the past years seem to be finally coming together to add up to an exceptional machine.

Mechanicals

1980 saw the first year that Suzuki decided to get really serious about their enduro bikes. The 250 follows the same design as the 175 and 400, in that the new frame is a close copy of the RM frame. The swingarm is aluminum, and KYB shocks top out at exactly 10 inches. Forks are 38mm and deliver 9.8 inches, and the triple clamps ride on tapered roller bearings in the steering head.

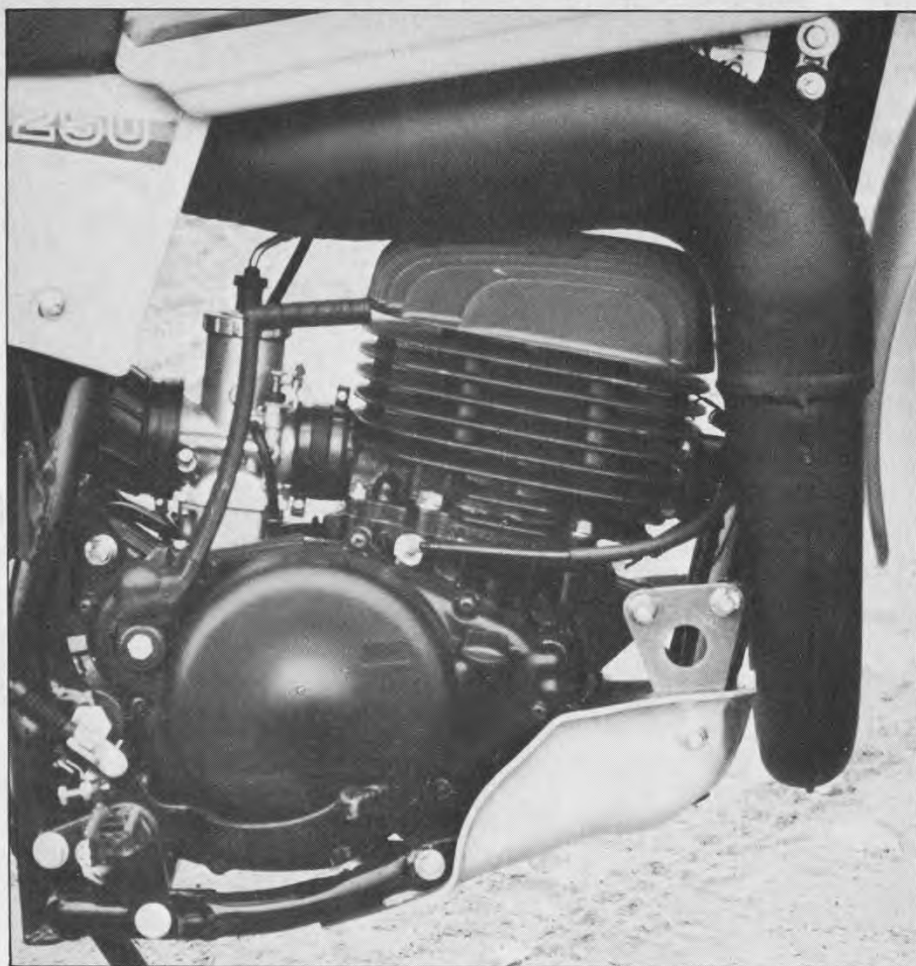
One item we've raved about on the other PEs, but still haven't said enough about, is the rear wheel. A complete idiot can remove the rear wheel in less than a minute, due to the new quick-change design. The brake hub and sprocket remain on the left side of the swingarm, so there's no need to fool with any adjustments when you have to fix a flat. Very pleasant system to work with.

TOP BANANA

What Else Would You Call A Yellow Bike That Skins the Competition Alive?

By the Dirt Bike Staff





250 engine is good for the right kind of power in any throttle position, our jetting was spot-on.



Rear end features quick-change hub assembly, strong aluminum swingarm, and so-so shocks. Spring rate is improved for this year.



Forks have air caps and work reasonably well. Front end tracks well on hard surfaces, is unpredictable and scary in sand.

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The left side rear brake is actuated by a long crossover cable, and even though it looks a little dubious, we experienced good feel and plenty of stopping power, and had no trouble throughout the test. The front wheel is straight off the RM—nice and light, with a good

sized brake drum. One of the most appealing traits of the PE brakes is that they work just as well, wet or dry. A thorough drenching is needed before they fade just a little, and then after they've been dragged a few feet, they're as good as new.

The PE's motor is the same general powerplant of the past, with slightly refined porting. It is a 246cc unit with a

bore and stroke of 67x70mm and a six-speed transmission. Our test bike shifted a little stiffly at first, but after a few break-in miles and an oil change it smoothed up nicely. The shift lever still doesn't have a folding tip (neither does the brake pedal), but there are plenty of nice accessory manufacturers who will be more than happy to sell you a folder when the stocker is pretzeled.

Our carburetion was spot-on for medium altitude riding, and we had no problems with loading up or dinging, but experienced a minor hesitation whenever we tried to lug first under a load. This is due to the rather tall first gear, which made it necessary to allow the engine to rev a little for smooth starts. It's not a serious problem, and shouldn't be noticeable unless you plan to do a lot of hillclimbing. The oiled foam air cleaner is well protected from splashing, and air is drawn in from under the seat.

Riding Impressions

As soon as we slung a leg over the PE, it was obvious we were going to be riding tall in the saddle. Almost 38 inches tall, as it turns out. Right off, it's necessary to accept the fact that you won't spend too much time dragging your feet, and thankfully the PE doesn't make this necessary too often.

Choke on, and a couple of kicks gets the metal churning. After a little bit of warm-up, we're off! The shifter throw is short and crisp, and the clutch is as light and smooth as anything Suzuki builds. A few blasts back and forth on level ground heats everything up, and although the PE is without a speedometer, we'd estimate top speed to be right around 70mph. The gears are spaced relatively close for an enduro bike, and as a result there are no annoying gaps in the shifting sequence.

The first series of hills we ran up confirmed our thoughts on the gearbox, and it seemed that there was a ratio to fit every situation. Even in our typical dry, no-traction summer California conditions, we had no trouble getting power to the ground, no doubt due in part to the massive 5.10x18 rubber. After the first half mile we had to sit a little further forward on the saddle to help keep the front end down. The PE likes to bite deep and spend a lot of time on its rear wheel.

In most of our hilly riding areas there are plenty of obstacles to avoid on the way up (and down), and the Suzuki handled quick direction changes with a minimum of fuss. It's kind of difficult to accurately describe the front end feel

of the PE. It doesn't wash out violently as the old models did, but on the other hand, it doesn't stick as well as a KDX. Like power steering in a car—you turn the wheel and it goes, but there's not much in the way of feedback from the front tire. Perhaps this feeling would go away with a different tire installed, or with a few less pounds of air in the forks. But it's something we've noticed with all of the late-model PEs.

In the rough stuff, our PE handled itself well. The front end would soak up small rocks and whoops easily, but occasionally a square-edged hole would send a jolt through our arms. Damping is good however, and medium-high-speed runs through rocky stream beds were no sweat; the PE skipped right through.

The shocks seem a little stiff at first, but once the Suzuki is up to speed, everything comes into focus. The bike never took a bad side hop, or showed any sign of pogoing through the whoops, and no matter what we've said about those shocks in the past, they worked well on the 250. Most casual riders will never have a need to replace them, and serious enduro riders should give them a couple of test runs before they decide to drop the bucks on an aftermarket pair.

Power output was next to marvelous. The PE would torque down really low, if we forced it, but its best feature is in the midrange, where it'll jerk back the neck of some of the best. The first rider aboard actually thought he'd made a mistake and gotten on the PE400 after he took his fist short ride.

When the power comes on in the first three gears, the PE does its best to claw for the stars, and it takes a bit of concentration to keep the front wheel on the ground. Back off the throttle a little and ride the 250 more casually, and it actually behaves as mellow as a TS. A TS with some snap in the middle.

The power doesn't stop halfway up the band, though, as the PE is an able and willing revver—the ground goes by awful fast if the throttle is held to the stops. Ordinarily, a hyper motor like this would make for a scary ride, but as we mentioned earlier, the suspension makes everything easier. The PE250 isn't the kind of bike a beginner will be comfortable with, but it will definitely make a seasoned rider happy.

Bits and Pieces

The chain is protected by a large aluminum guide mounted to the swingarm. The unit works well, but keep an eye on the mounting bracket.

The silencer is long and heavy and may crack the pipe if it's allowed to loosen.

As a matter of fact, it'd be a good idea to go over everything with a tube of Loctite. Suzuki bolts aren't the worst, but they're not the world's best either.

Speaking of that silencer: the exhaust note is reasonably quiet for a strong-breathing bike. Way to go Suzuki!

The 250 uses the same controls as the rest of the PE line, most noteworthy of which is the straight-pull throttle. It works fine and makes cable servicing a joy. All the bike needs now is a couple of folding footpedals.

There's no tool bag on the PE, but Suzuki supplies an all-in-one tool strapped to the front number plate. This year it has picked up a separate

12mm wrench, making it just that much more useful. Maybe they'll add another wrench next year?

Concerning that tall seat height: most of our test riders agreed on the best way around it—don't put your feet down. And always try to talk someone else into starting it for you.

Summing Up

We found a few things to snivel about, but that's our job. Overall, we'd have to say that we liked the bike quite a bit, and wouldn't hesitate to recommend the PE to any long-legged enduro rider looking for a better mount. It's reasonably light, handles well, has an adequate suspension, and it goes like a demon. In short, it does everything a good bike should. □



SUZUKI PE250T Specifications

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| NAME AND MODEL | Suzuki PE250T | GROUND CLEARANCE | 320 mm (12.6 inches) |
| ENGINE TYPE | Reed valve, two-stroke | SEAT HEIGHT | 960 mm (37.8 inches) |
| BORE AND STROKE | 67 x 70mm | STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE) | 29.5 degrees |
| DISPLACEMENT | 246cc | TRAIL | 125 mm (4.92 inches) |
| CARBURETION | Mikuni VM36S | WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS | 251 pounds |
| FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING: | | RIM MATERIAL | Aluminum alloy |
| MAIN JET | 280 | TIRE SIZE AND TYPE: | |
| NEEDLE JET | 0-0 | FRONT | 3.00x21 Bridgestone |
| JET NEEDLE | 6DH20-2 | REAR | 5.10x18 Bridgestone |
| PILOT JET | 37.5 | SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL: | |
| SLIDE NUMBER | 2.5 | FRONT | Air/oil forks, 250 mm (9.84 inches) |
| RECOMMENDED GASOLINE | Premium | REAR | Kayaba gas/spring shocks, 257 mm (10.1 inches) |
| FUEL TANK CAPACITY | 10.6 liters (2.8 quarts) | INTENDED USE | Off-road, enduro |
| FUEL TANK MATERIAL | Plastic | COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Japan |
| LUBRICATION | Pre-mix, 20:1 | RETAIL PRICE, APPROX | N/A |
| RECOMMENDED OIL | Suzuki CC1 | DISTRIBUTOR: | |
| OIL CAPACITY, TRANSMISSION | 800 ml (0.85 qt) | US Suzuki Motor Corporation | |
| AIR FILTRATION | Oiled foam | 13767 Freeway Dr. | |
| CLUTCH TYPE | Wet, multi-plate | Sante Fe Springs, California | |
| TRANSMISSION | six-speed | PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS: | |
| GEARBOX RATIOS: | | PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE | \$45.86 |
| 1 | 2.384:1 | RINGS ONLY | \$13.68 |
| 2 | 1.750 | CYLINDER | \$119.35 |
| 3 | 1.352 | SHIFT LEVER | \$10.96 |
| 4 | 1.095 | BRAKE PEDAL | \$12.10 |
| 5 | 0.904 | FRONT SPROCKET | \$8.94 |
| 6 | 0.760 | OVERALL RATING, 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND: | |
| GEARING, FRONT/REAR | 13/52 | HANDLING | .94 |
| IGNITION | Suzuki PE1 | SUSPENSION | .95 |
| PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM? | Yes | POWER | .98 |
| RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG | NGK B10EGV | COST | .95 |
| SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY | Yes/yes/good | ATTENTION TO DETAIL | .95 |
| EXHAUST SYSTEM | Up-pipe, through frame | EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK | .97 |
| FRAME, TYPE | Single downtube, cradle | | |
| WHEELBASE | 1445 mm (56.9 inches) | | |