

## Suzuki PE250N

# PEOPLE- PLEASING PE

They're getting closer every year

By The Staff of Dirt Bike

Deciding whether an enduro bike is good or bad, is tough. So much depends upon rider preferences, personal abilities, or physical dimensions. For some, long travel is the hot setup. For others, it's a big hunk of motor. While on the other end of the crossbar, some people prefer the old four-to-six in suspenders of yesterday, and a mild-mannered powerplant.

This really puts Japan in a bind. Their engineers have to come up with something for everybody; a please-all machine with just enough travel, yet not too much, and a mellow engine that still pulls any hill.

For 1979, Suzuki has done a good job of building a middle-of-the-road enduro mount: their PE250.

How is the PE in the middle?

First, the suspension. The bike offers reasonable travel both front and rear, yet doesn't sit as high as your van. The bike feels comfortable to sit on, without drifting from tiptoe to tiptoe waiting for your minute.

And secondly, the motor is a bit more tamed than last year. The power in the '79 is not as strong as the power in the PE250C, but is still ample for almost any situation out on the trail.

The first day out on the bike, we ran through some tight stuff to get the feel of the turning characteristics. The PE turns much better than its long-legged RMN cousins. To further explain these cornering qualities, we took a quick trip back to a motocross course and gave it a whirl. Funny, the PE actually felt competitive there, too. That put the motorcycle in our good graces right away. If it turned well, it had to be somewhat competitive in the woods. But what about in the sand?

Ah ha! We found a weak spot. Without the power of last year's engine, the Suzuki would not pull fifth gear in the soft stuff. That's not just putting around, either. We had the bugger



pegged in fourth until it screamed for mercy, and only then did we kick the shift lever up to the last notch. Every time, the engine began to bog, despite clutching, and the throttle was still pegged.

But, take the motorcycle out on normal terrain, and it flies right alongside any other 250 enduro. Hills and fireroads are no problem, even rutted, washboard climbs. Just keep the PE buzzing, and it'll take you anywhere you want to go.

Even rocks. Although the front end gets spit around by the big ones, the machine goes basically in the direction you point it, at whatever speed you feel comfortable.

Looking over the suspension, the components appear adequate, but one drawback can be quickly spotted: the leading axle front forks. They work nicely, and are very easy to get along with, but below the axle, they stick out way too much.

Apparently, they were taken straight from the motocrosser, where rocky

stream beds don't get considered during designing. These two extensions are just waiting to get hold of some deep mud or a big rock. Especially in a one-lined, soft section. As the day wears on the line gets deeper and deeper, while staying relatively thin in diameter. When the PE's front end gets rolling in that rut, you had better prepare for an abrupt halt of forward motion, or weight the back end heavily and gas it as hard as you can.

The KYB shocks are a bit too stiff, as usual, unless you weigh a few hundred pounds, or enjoy pogo-sticks. We highly recommend a set of the Luft reservoirs for an inexpensive, yet effective, modification, or if you've got an accessory pair of Works Performance shocks handy, slap 'em on. With the plusher rear end, the whole motorcycle will feel better.

Stock equipment worth mentioning includes the bars and levers. Both feel comfortable after setting up for personal preference, but both also bend quite easily. The levers stick out for easy reach, by either rider or Redwood tree. Expect them to break within the first three falls, then replace them with some non-breakables.

Stock levers for the feet, shift and brake, are also taken straight from the motocrosser. Folding units would be better here, as the stockers have a tendency to reach out and bite things as they go by.

Chain adjusting is done by a snail-type arm, notched on the back to slip easily onto a stopper. Watch these units carefully. They are nice to have, and quick to use, but if one side or another works its way loose, the adjuster will strip itself smooth.

While just about everybody else on the ride had to tote along a spoke wrench, the Suzuki never needed a nipple touched. That is a big advantage while riding through rough terrain,









In the rough, the PE's suspenders worked well, but sometimes bottomed harshly.



New trick goodies include snail-type chain adjuster and chain rock guards.



Suzuki packed a little less in this year's powerplant, which shows in the sand.



Leading axle front forks are nice, but stick too far down past the front axle.

knowing that your rims aren't going to start disintegrating underneath you every 20 miles.

As for plastics, Suzuki has good, quality equipment. The fenders, side plates and front headlight/number plate all resist breaking. The only problem you'll ever have is wearing out a side plate, due to the bulge where the top of the shocks mount. That's one they fixed for the motocrosser, but left alone on the PE line for '79.

Long-travel fork boots come standard to protect the tubes and seals, and they do their job well. The sign of a truly neglected Suzuki is leaking fork seals. Them suckers hardly ever start

sniveling on you.

Tires are IRC rim-savers, which work only average, but wear out way too fast. Within 15 minutes, we had the rear knobs worn round, and even breaking off. That blew our minds right away. New rubber will have to be slapped on after a few rides; hardly the life expectancy of a good enduro tire.

#### Conclusion

There are a lot of minor things wrong with the PE250, but on the other hand, there are a lot of major things that work well. The way the motorcycle handles is far superior to last year, and the tamer motor makes it easy to ride. Comfort and control are both wrapped

into one package, which is a necessity in any enduro machine, no matter what size.

With a little set-up here and there, and a good rider aboard, the PE can win in both enduros and cross-country, but watch it before you try to wipe up the desert with it. It takes a pretty long lake bed to get the PE wound out in fifth gear, and it's almost impossible in soft sand.

If Suzuki takes a little more time with the whole family of PEs next year, they'll have a good chance to compete with the Europeans. But until then, you'll have to do the wrenching and development yourself. □





## SUZUKI PE250

ENGINE TYPE ..... Two-stroke, power reed, single-cylinder  
 BORE AND STROKE ..... 67mm x 70mm  
 DISPLACEMENT ..... 246cc  
 HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY) ..... N/A  
 CARBURETION ..... Mikuni 36mm  
 FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING ..... VM36SS  
 MAIN JET ..... 2.5  
 NEEDLE JET ..... 6DH3-2  
 JET NEEDLE ..... N/A  
 PILOT JET ..... 37.5  
 SLIDE NUMBER ..... N/A  
 RECOMMENDED GASOLINE ..... Premium  
 RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.) ..... CCI  
 FUEL TANK CAPACITY ..... 3.2 gallons  
 FUEL TANK MATERIAL ..... Plastic  
 GAS/OIL RATIO ..... 20:1  
 LUBRICATION ..... Pre-mix  
 OIL CAPACITY ..... N/A  
 AIR FILTRATION ..... Foam  
 CLUTCH TYPE ..... Wet, multi-disc  
 TRANSMISSION ..... Five-speed, constant mesh

### GEARBOX RATIOS:

1 ..... 2.666 = 32/12  
 2 ..... 1.750 = 28/16  
 3 ..... 1.200 = 24/20  
 4 ..... .915 = 21/23  
 5 ..... .692 = 18/26  
 GEARING, FRONT/REAR ..... 4.000 = 13/52  
 IGNITION ..... CDI  
 PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM? ..... Yes  
 RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG ..... V10EU  
 SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY ..... Yes, yes, good  
 EXHAUST SYSTEM ..... Up-pipe, expansion chamber  
 FRAME, TYPE ..... Single downtube  
 WHEELBASE ..... 145.5mm (57.3 inches)  
 GROUND CLEARANCE ..... 11 inches  
 SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK ..... 49 inches  
 STEERING HEAD ANGLE ..... 60 degrees  
 Caster ..... 60 degrees  
 TRAIL ..... 130mm (5.12 inches)  
 WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON

GAS ..... 248 pounds  
 RIM MATERIAL ..... Aluminum alloy  
 TIRE SIZES:  
 FRONT ..... 3.00x21—4 PR  
 REAR ..... 4.50x18—4 PR  
 SUSPENSION:  
 FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL ..... Fork, leading axle, 9.1 inches  
 REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL ..... Box-type swingarm/shock, 7.9 inches  
 INTENDED USE, MFR ..... Off-road, enduro  
 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ..... Japan  
 PRICE, APPROX. ..... \$1739  
 DISTRIBUTOR:  
 U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.  
 Santa Fe Springs, California 90670  
 OVERALL RATING, FROM 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:  
 HANDLING ..... 94  
 SUSPENSION ..... 89  
 POWER ..... 85  
 COST ..... 80  
 ATTENTION TO DETAIL ..... 90  
 EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK ..... 92