



**SAME TIME  
NEXT YEAR?**

# **YAMAHA DT175G**

*Once Is Not Enough*

**By the Staff of Dirt Bike**

Renovations seem to take a long time to make it down to the dual-purpose line at the Japanese factories. We could go for a few years and never see a change in anything but the color. Then, bang, all at once there is a whole new motorcycle sitting before us. It can be staggering to look at what came out the year before when comparing it to one of those brand new models with all the latest improvements.

In most all of the cases, the dual-purpose motorcycle *needed* the changes. But, some years the line gets the full-blown treatment, and other times we just have to sit back and take whatever's offered.

This year, Yamaha concentrated solely on their off-road market, and brushed off the street/trail machines. And, as we stated in last year's DT test, this dual-purpose machine accounts for the second largest market in the industry.

We should have seen some better cosmetic changes at least, other than the new blue gas tank paint which replaces last year's bright silver—or the new front fender. That bike was in desperate need of suspension work. It was too soft for trail riding, and the overall performance of the motorcycle was subsequently limited also.

Enough of what Yamaha *should* have done to the new DTs. No matter how little they did, this is still what's offered for the whole year. And, with a certain degree of objectivity, we headed for some hills, trails, and various forms of abusive nature, to test the 175.

First feelings toward the DT175G were relatively good. Overall it is a nice, light machine, with a comfortable feel to it. On some moderate trails, with a low roughness factor, the DT performed impressively. It is a nimble bike with good handling capabilities, as long as the going doesn't get too rough.

The tires, which are the standard trials units of so many years with Yamaha, give a very limited amount of traction, so loose that a silty trail can make for some interesting riding experiences, especially if you're in the process of climbing a fairly steep hill. The suspension was soft, not plush, and for this type of riding, both the front and rear ends stayed under control.

Now, on a rough trail, with stutter bumps, whoopedoods, and rain ruts,



the DT is a totally different motorcycle. It still feels light and nimble, but the tires and suspension become literally unbearable. The front and rear wheels constantly slither all over, and the available traction is minimal. Every bump larger than a small rut gets transferred directly to the rider's body, from both the front and rear. The monoshock pogos around like a jackrabbit in heat, and the forks feel like they're driving in a railroad spike at the bottom of the compression stroke.

In other words, they can't take the roughness. All of this, in turn, makes the handling drop way down, and the machine becomes just another typical dual-purpose motorcycle that you should have left on the blacktop.

But, low and behold, we here at Dirt Bike refuse to leave it at that. If you happened to purchase a DT, and found out that the trail capabilities are too restricted for you, then we've got the hot setup. Since most of the suspension components are basically old IT materials, there are going to be fork kits and shock mods available in

the aftermarket places. Check with White Brothers, or another reputable Yamaha suspension shop and see if they've got some old IT mono mods that are within your budget.

For the front end, a Terry Kit is the most sensible item available. White Brothers uses a special fork kit for \$44.95. Mono mods are about the same. With these inexpensive changes, you should have your DT ready to go anywhere off of the highway.

#### Street Struttin'

If nothing else, the Yamaha DT 175G is a good form of transportation. The motorcycle is easy to get along with on the pavement, and its light weight again makes it feel comfortable and nimble to cruise around on. On the city streets, the DT will have no problem in stock form, but on the freeways, the gearing is going to have to be altered a few teeth.

The motor screams at 55 mph, which can cause premature cylinder wear. The trials tires don't agree with the rain grooves either, but the

annoyance you can live with.

The lever/handlebar/footpeg relationships are comfortable for most every rider, and the speedometer/tach/odometer combination doesn't interfere in its mounting place above the headlight. Blinkers are rubber-mounted at the rear, but the front units are bolted directly to the bars and are vulnerable in a crash.

#### Wrap-Up

It's too bad that Yamaha neglected this dual-purpose bike, because once we were out in the dirt with the DT175, we began to like it. That is, until the rude awakening of a bump brought out the harshness of the suspension. The motor was pleasant, with good, solid power throughout the range.

If you're thinking of buying a DT175, consider spending a hundred bucks or so on some suspension work, and a countershaft sprocket. You'll have no problems finding old IT mods that will suit the DT just fine, and with that, you'll have a bike that's probably two years ahead of the stock 1980 "G" model. □

