
YAMAHA TY 175 TRIALS

With less enduro and more trial the TY 250's progeny is a more optimistic bunch of ifs.

Upon last report there were roughly five to seven thousand examples of *Dirt Rider's* favorite Yamaha floating around in this warehouse or that waiting to be disposed of in almost any way possible. The TY 250 was a horrible sales bust for Yamaha. Possibly the fact that we called it Yamaha's best trailbike didn't help, but more than likely it made little or no difference. What seemed to be a bust was the trials market itself or more appropriately, the trials market's inability to accept a trials bike that cost \$100 less than the very best but was worth about \$300 less. Face it, unless you wanted to turn the TY 250 into an enduro playbike it was a calamity.



As delivered for test, our TY had the forks dropped in the clamps thusly. Steered reasonably well, quicker than the TY 250 tested last November.

As a reward the TY 250 has been transformed into a feline after one short year. The TY 175 is a completely different motorcycle than the 250. Frame and engine bare all the resemblances but none of the pieces or dimensions. They don't work at all the same either; the 175 is twice the trials bike that the 250 was and about half the enduro. If Yamaha is right in assuming that the market wanted a trialier Yamaha trials bike rather than none at all, they should justly be rewarded with lots of sales.

First difference: at 192 pounds the TY 175 weighs 25 pounds less than the TY 250 and 5 pounds less than any production trialer we know of. That's 192 pounds with headlight, taillight, tool kit, oil pump and a full oil tank. Remove unnecessary ticky-tacky and it will float down to 185. Get tricky with handlebars and a few other parts (side stand for instance) and it will weigh 180 pounds ready to trial. It might be the lightest full-size production ready-to-ride motorcycle.

On a Japanese motorcycle with those magical attributes of Japanese motorcycle handling, weight is the single most important factor in how easy it will be to get along with. Lower the weight and even the suspension will work better. On the TY 175 light weight has saved the bike from what could have been inexcusable flaws in chassis geometry

Effective front brake is exceptionally trick with neatly tucked away cable and lever and a magnesium backing plate.





Footpeg mounting is too far back, but because of bracketing, not too difficult to move forward.

and weight distribution. When the fully dressed rider weighs within a few pounds of the bike's weight, said motorcycle just can't have that independent a nature. The TY 175 does just about what you want it to do, probably for lack of inertia more than excess of proper geometry.

For example, despite a horrendous goof in footpeg positioning, the TY 175 can still be jimmied through tight slots with a fair amount of accuracy. Anytime you use the throttle the front wheel will be no more than skipping over the ground because the pegs are so far back, but the motorcycle will turn without the front wheel on the ground.

Unfortunately, the light weight can't completely compensate for the footpegs being 2-3 inches too far back. The on-the-pegs weight distribution renders the TY a less effective hill climber than the Honda TL 125 despite the fact that the Yamaha motor easily produces twice the foot/pounds of torque. You just can't keep the front wheel down. Bury your navel in the fork clamps and grab any gear—first through third; there's enough power to go almost straight up, but

Excellent chain tensioner was more than tempting as an add-on item for a few of our own scooters floating around.



you're either going to spin the rear wheel or wheelie over backwards. When you try to back off a little to get traction, you can get upside down in a big hurry. No European trials machine wheelies with half the ease that the TY 175 does, because no trials bike needs to wheelie half that easily.

Especially if it doesn't have an easy-to-find balance point, which the TY, like any other Japanese trials machine, is not endowed with. Because the TY wheelies so easily, it's fun to be entertained by useless long wheelies. Except that the TY always seems to be either a little too far up or not quite enough. End result is a teetering, nerve-wracking battle between the throttle and the rear brake.

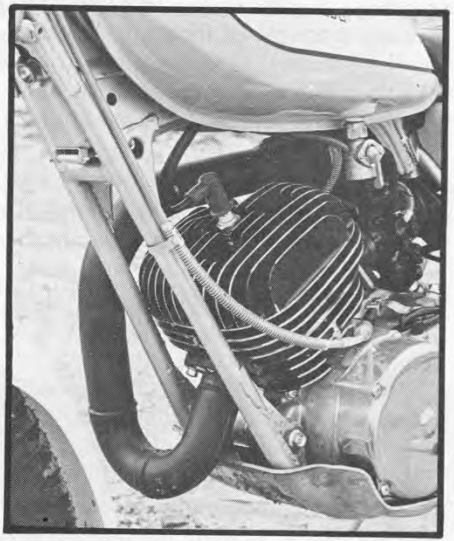
Someone at Yamaha obviously decided that if you want to make people happy with a trials bike, it has to wheelie over backwards in every gear. If so, the TY is a raging success, but seriously, if you move the footpegs forward a couple of inches it actually has the potential of being a real trials bike. It will handle more than acceptably since the geometry probably isn't that far off.

Unlike the 250 the 175 doesn't try to pick wider routes than you had in mind and can actually be jockeyed, albeit with extensive use of body weight, into turning cleanly on slippery off-cambers. In rocks you can actually get your knees apart and let it clamber over, around and through without the bike lashing back and climbing out of the gully unexpectedly. Whether or not the basically acceptable manners are due to a competent chassis or light weight can be left to the very best riders to determine, which we are not. Fact is, for novices it doesn't matter because it works pretty well.

Just producing a trials machine that can work for novices is an accomplishment, one that is so far unknown from Japan. There is little doubt that most anyone would be better off *riding* one of the big three Spanish machines, but a neophyte might end up being happier *owning* the Yamaha.

There's that new example of typical Yamaha powerplant. It produces torque and horsepower out of proportion to its displacement—a very strong motor. It will actually pull all of its six gears with relative ease—will even pull sixth in sand. First through fourth are trials gears; some sections can actually be taken in







on smoothly which tends to turn sections into a series of leaps and lurches. Throttle turn is 90 degrees, which is about right, but if you remove the oil pump the return pressure is reduced enough to make control a little easier. Some additional flywheel and no more pump would make the 175 much easier to deal with.

It's a little hard to say why the transmission has six speeds. They actually prove to be more hassle than advantage. Three wider spaced gears would have been perfectly adequate for most any section imaginable, and even one overdrive would have worked with the TY's powerband. And unfortunately, the excess of ratios is complicated by the transmission's disinterest in shifting. It's not merely a matter of stiffness, but more a matter of inaccuracy. Sometimes it feels like it has shifted when it hasn't. Once you find one you like it does tend to stay there, though it's a bit too easy to tap the lever into neutral from second. The pedal is far enough from the peg, but a clumsy boot toe will apply enough pressure to the shaft to pop it out of gear. If the case had been indented like the 250 this wouldn't have been a problem, but then, like the 250, you couldn't have moved the lever to a more acceptable vertical position.

(Text continued on page 76)

Yamaha TY 175 Trials

(Text continued from page 23)

Both brakes work excellently and mysteriously for trials work. The front is not nearly as potent as your average Yamaha binder and happily possesses more feel and less likelihood of lockup. It can be used effectively and confidently on serious hills. The rear is the mystery; it lacks any great amount of feel, just like any rod actuated Yamaha rear brake, but doesn't lock the wheel completely. It will easily cause the tire to slide but won't stall the engine. Once you become accustomed, it's easy to use it for maneuvering and only a little tricky on off-camber. It works excellently going downhill with a little gas on. Almost as good as a Sherpa T.

Though the TY 175 is a vast improvement for trials over its predecessor, after a few days of frolic we couldn't help but be most impressed by its ability to be summarily crashed and crashed without the slightest damage. Mostly due to its desire to wheelie on hills, we collectively tossed the TY away heavily about 20

times. A dozen of those were attempts to get up one hill in particular. Everyone who either tried or witnessed crashing the Yamaha was astounded by its stoutness. There are at present a couple of scratches on the tailpipe, a scuff on the left grip and a slightly melted rear fender from looping it so often. It's interesting to note that the greatest technological advances on this Yamaha seem to be in crash resistance.

Actually, the TY 175 is a giggle to have around, not at all unlike the TL 125 Honda which we dearly love. The TY is like a more powerful but slightly less friendly TL. With a new place for pegs and some flywheel it would be everything the TL is and some more. Except for one thing: the exhaust note. The system is about like the 250's: curls alongside and slightly underneath on the right into a dump chamber reminiscent of a dit uno, then proceeds into a standard Yamaha/Krizman spark arrester. The whole thing is a bit loud when it works right, especially next to a TL Honda, but ours had a seemingly incurable leak at the junction of the dump chamber and the pipe to the spark arrester. The fit just wasn't

adequate and left the exhaust note raspy. Did not like that a bit, since it was easily too loud to ride in the backyard without disturbing the neighbors. Maybe the pipe should be welded into the dump chamber and a Skyway ALD added to the end.

It's simple to maintain: there's a foam filter tucked in under the seat which is easily removable; the oil tank pivots out on hinges for easy filling or exorcism. Snail type chain adjusters make that job easy, and an excellent spring loaded tensioner keeps the chain taut and ready. Rims are Takasago alloy without ridge. The front spokes became quite loose after being thumped repeatedly, but the rear produced no problems. Like any Yamaha, the motor mounts stay tight, things don't vibrate off, it doesn't foul plugs, starts on the first kick three out of four times and burbles until it's warm.

Like any '75 Yamaha the forks work acceptably in their damping qualities, but allow way too much flex. The tubes twist in the clamps quite easily. Like any Yamaha, the shocks don't possess much damping, but unlike most they are sprung about right for their intended use: trials. That means they are useless for aggressive trail riding. But remember, unlike the TY 250, this one isn't going to be easy to trail ride. It handles more quickly, has a more trials-oriented powerband. It is not a good skidder. Sitting down is next to impossible since it will loop if you use the throttle.

This TY is actually a trials bike. It's a trials bike with some problems but none of them beyond easy remedy. If you want a Japanese trials bike (try a Spanish one before you decide), then this is the best we've encountered. ●

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