



YAMAHA 400 TEST

We See The YZ C

By Chris Hatounian

We hired this new guy to be assistant editor see, and he really wanted to try his hand at writing a test. Most of the rest of the gang happened to be busy this month so we decided to give the kid a try. He did a pretty good job. We might keep him after all. Especially if he learns to type.

We looked over his review of the Yamaha Monocross 400 and, while not particularly wordy, the feel of the bike is there. The Yamaha 400 is not particularly wordy either. Just like

petitive machine and a team of riders to show off their new bike on the track. Soon after, Yamaha started to show up in the winner's circle more and more, and with the shocking introduction of the Yamaha mono-shock, they set the world on fire after ace European rider, Hakan Anderson, dominated the Two-Fifty class for the World Championship. Yamaha finally offered the mono to the public, and everybody had to have one. But the price was more than most could afford for the YZs. Now with



Chris, our new assistant editor, the Mono does its job with a minimum amount of fanfare. No muss, no fuss.

The 400 Mono is a very proficient motocrosser that left a favorable impression on the minds of all who rode it. Chris points out a few areas that could stand some improvement but none of them are big problems. On with it!

Remember way back in the beginning when Yamaha was fairly unknown in the pro racing scene? Then suddenly, they emerged with a com-

petitive machine, almost anyone can own and compete successfully with them. During the 1975 500cc National Championships, Jimmy Weinert showed up with a newly suspended front end, sporting a new long travel setup with Kayaba air-oil units on top. The system seemed to work so well, Yamaha decided to offer it to the public for the '76 model YZ 400 C motocrosser.

Yamaha describes their new model as, "a completely competitive motocross machine," and it definitely



shows in the quality and design. True, the Yamaha is definitely a new motocross machine, but still may be a little behind it's competitors for a few small reasons which we'll get into later.

Yamaha updated its already unique rear suspension with a lengthened shock assembly, and increased the oil reservoir. The swing-arm now comes as a complete tubular construction which is just as strong as last year's with a difference in weight, due to the use of smaller tubing.

Everything on the bike is easily serviceable and all adjustments are no problem, with the exception of the suspension. Nothing broke or fell off our machine, the whole time we tested it, proving Yamaha has things well designed.

The bike is almost always a first-kick starter and took about three minutes till it would run clean. After that, the bike was all power, almost anywhere through the RPM range. In comparison to most of the open class competition, the Yamaha is really full of torque. The machine, handled in the right way, could easily get you to the first turn in numero uno position.

One of our complaints with the bike was the gear-box operation.





Shifting was somewhat stiff and the lever was too short to effectively shift the bike during competition. Using the clutch was a must when gas was on, as our bike refused to cooperate under power without a grab from the left lever every time you chose a new gear. A long lever would cure some of the shifting trouble, but owners will have to get used to using the clutch more often, in order to assure positive changes. Another of our complaints was about the choke lever.

The 38mm Mikuni is fitted with the pin-type choke lever, which is almost impossible to use with gloves on. It's a good thing the choke is only needed when the bike is stone cold, or Yamaha would have to do some fast changing.

A compression release is equipped with the machine, and is the main reason starting is such a snap. The release is actuated when the kick-starter is depressed. A rubber boot covers up the little set-up to keep out the grit.

Brakes on the YZ 400 C are what you would expect from Yamaha. Superior up front and touchy in the rear. The front binder worked quite well throughout the testing period and never seemed to fade. The rear was another story. If not used carefully, the rear brake would constantly

lock up and cause much grief to the rider who had to give up five positions to restart his bike. You learned very quickly to give the unit a light touch. A quick cure would be to take the rear assembly apart and file down the sides of the shoes for a "Loose feel."

Tires fitted to the bike were Dunlops. The 5.00 18 rear was just enough to handle the 400's power output. While we're on the subject of tire's, the front rubber is something you should strongly consider replacing. We could not get the front end of the bike to cooperate in any type of surface. Instead of just diving into a smooth corner on the inside line, we found ourselves looking for a little groove to plant the front end into to avoid the legendary "Wash out." If you decide not to change the front tire, we recommend you learn to ride the berm more often.

Yamaha's new Kayaba air-oil suspension sets the YZ 400C a world apart from the old Yamaha's. We had absolutely no complaints about the forks and their operation, as they could handle just about any kind of abuse you could give them. With a little over eight and one half inches of travel, the units are ideal for the rigors of motocross and desert com-

petition. You won't see any accessory fork kits for these units.

THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT THE YZ 400C

The pipe was tucked well out of the way and caused no confusion with the rider's legs. Silencer equipped with the bike is very quiet and never showed any signs of cracking throughout the testing period.

Rubber boots on the forks work very well in keeping dirt out of the air-oil units. Boots even come with little vents at the bottom for better breathing.

Air cleaners were easy to get to for servicing. It's recommended that you put grease around the inside after every washing.

Seat was well padded and quite comfortable after a long ride. The seat absorbs the bumps instead of your rear.

In summary, Yamaha has created a truly fine racing machine for the public, with the exception of the weight and a few other little drawbacks.

In our opinion, this bike would probably make one fine desert racer. The suspension is quite good for both motocross and desert and it will serve almost any purpose.



