



# Suzuki's New TS250

THE FIRST  
OFFSPRING  
OF A  
NEW BREED

*Short, squat and engineered by designers in a cooperative, communal way, the new TS250 Suzuki is a hint of what's to come in the enduro field.*

## Dirt Test

**J**ust what exactly is an enduro bike, specifically one of the Japanese variety? The motorcycle that, with tongue in cheek, was labeled enduro machine for one reason or another that just didn't cut it with many customers. Some of the manufacturers even tried a different angle, calling it an on/off road bike, hoping that the official title of this creation would be a sufficient disclaimer to the purchaser. After all, calling it an on/off road machine doesn't necessarily say that it does either satisfactorily, does it?

To the dyed-in-the-wool motocross rider, an enduro bike merely represents an experiment that he would rather not get involved with. Obviously the manufacturer took a motorcycle that was basically all right. The term to the average critical motocrosser of "all right" is a rating somewhere between mediocre and a poke in the eye with a sharp stick. As far as he's concerned, the creator of the enduro bike took a machine, magnetized it, and then proceeded to hurl it down the aisles of the parts department, in hopes of pawing off a few excess parts, and underneath all of the chrome and pin striping, a bad handling, under-powered motorcycle.

Many a street rider looks at a Japanese enduro machine in a different light. To him it's obviously a sneak plan undertaken by the manufacturer. Why, an enduro machine is no more than a glorified motocross machine, capable of throwing you on your head, making obnoxious noises,

and going out in the dirt, where, as everybody knows, is no place to be.

So in the past the enduro machine has been stuck in the middle of all this, wandering around, confused, just trying to figure out where it really belongs. Nobody wants to lay claim to it. It's the bastard of the motorcycle world. But strangely enough, there're a lot of enduro machines sold today.

Even your local dealer can attest to this fact, although he doesn't enjoy selling them. When asked about horsepower, handling or suspension, he gives vague answers. When asked what should be done when encountering particular obstacles with a machine such as this, he would give the same answer that your parents gave when you started asking questions a little deeper than "where do kittens come from?" The old stand-by of "when the time comes, you'll know what to do" didn't satisfy a lot of customers, yet they still bought enduro machines by the bundle.

This has had a large effect on the manufacturers, particularly the Japanese. This year is going to be the year of the enduro machine. What we were offered in the past is nothing compared to what's coming over here on the boat right now. Yamaha has a nice new little surprise package coming. Suzuki has got the new PE250, to compete with the IT model line. Honda isn't saying anything, usually a sign that they're up to something. Kawasaki just sits back and smiles like a Cheshire cat.

The first of this new generation of enduro, or on/off road machines, is the Suzuki TS250. You remember the

TS, it's the offspring of the fabled Suzuki Savage, every college boy's dream. Tons of horsepower, no handling or suspension, wrapped in a neat white (all the good guys wear white) package.

The TS250 is quite a departure from what we're used to, yet some of the holdovers (such as the pony deficiency) are still with us. Something completely unheard of before in the enduro world is suspension. Suzuki has been the first company out on the market with an enduro machine that breaks the norm.

That's right, it's got suspension. Not just two things in the back to hold the fender off the tire, or two tubes in front that keep the gas tank and seat horizontal with the ground.

Real honest to goodness suspension. For instance, in the rear you'll find gas Kayaba shocks. Similar to those found on the motocross models, and to an extent the same shocks (possibly in name only) that Roger DeCoster uses. The internals of the shocks have been changed, mainly in the dampening department, to give a smoother ride by slowing down the travel speed of the shocks. They're even mounted in the laid upside down position—just like the race bikes.

Up front you'll notice that Suzuki took last year's forks, threw them downwind, had a quick burial ceremony, and got new units. These forks are beefier, have better response in both up and down dampening, good springs, and generally get along with the terrain. Like the rear end, they're a tad on the mushy side, but then again, you don't want







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motocross type harshness on a machine like this.

Some of the RM-ness has rubbed off on the new TS, particularly in the engine. You'll find a new cylinder, and lo and behold, a case induction reed valve system, like the motocross models. A different cylinder head configuration tops out the piston's main place of employment. A 28mm Mikuni carb does the feeding honors, and a bell crank throttle housing measures out the appropriate amounts. In the midst of all these gismos, there's still room for an oil injection system, mounted behind the left side panel.

Among the things that you can't see, but would appreciate, are the new PEI spark system and the new transmission gears. The rear hub is directly off the motocross models, with the distinction of not having the expensive magnesium backing plate. The front hub is all new for Suzuki, and is modeled in a similar fashion to the Honda MR and XL series.

Getting down to particulars, you'll find a good pipe that couldn't burn you if there was a \$10 bet riding on it, real footpegs with gripping teeth, a skinny gas tank, motocross bend handlebars, two chain guides, a skid plate and passenger pegs.

Another little added feature that your local dealer might not know about is the lighting system. Although it looks like your average everyday enduro light collection of garbage, the Suzuki TS250 has the distinction of being equipped and designed in such a way that you can remove the lights in about an hour's time. Both the front headlight assembly and the rear taillight unit can be easily and quickly removed using the tools found in the bike's tool kit. The blinkers even come off as part of the unit. Very simple, basic, smart, and long overdue in an enduro.

So what really happens when you take a motocross type engine, add some lights, put on good suspension, and come up with a motorcycle? In the case of the TS250, you've got a very good all around package.

First of all, somebody did their homework in the handling department. Granted, you aren't going to be able to do all the trick things that the motocross riders accomplish. But take off the universal trials tires, put on a good set of knobbies, and you've got a bike that is closer to a motocross machine than any of the other Japanese mounts to date.

The chassis design comes very similar to that of the motocross model, and you already know how well



*Good suspension and excellent handling give the Suzuki the distinction of breaking with the on/off machine norm. Horsepower deficiency is its only drawback.*

that works. A little front head angle work was done, the swing arm got some attention, the frame was shortened or lengthened here and there, to come up with a machine that not only handles good, but doesn't give you that spooky feeling of riding on the brink of disaster.

To go along with the chassis, Suzuki has again broken with the norm by using a suspension system that the average weekend rider will never ride to its limits. The gas Kayaba shocks on the rear are tuned to a happy medium point between street riding and dirt whumping. They are a little on the soft side for the WFO type of rider, but most of us will never experience that clunking, tire-against-fender feeling associated with improper suspension. The Kayabas are a very good choice for this

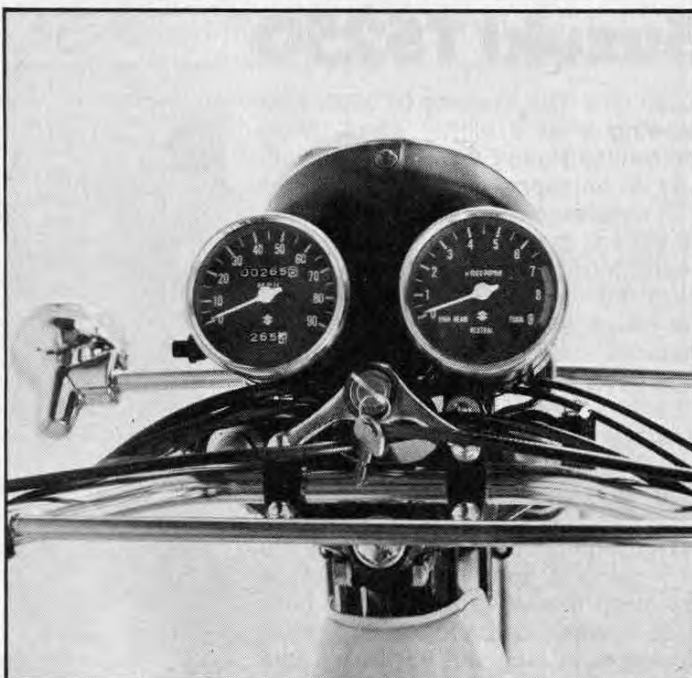
machine, and its intended uses.

Obviously the people who worked on the rear suspension units had coffee at ten o'clock with the guys working on the front forks. They all got together at lunch one day and decided to try out a novel idea. Instead of the usual, why not make an enduro machine that has both suspension working in harmony, instead of the usual continual battle of bottoming, topping, and general suspension apathy? That's exactly what they did. The front forks, with their smooth action and good spring rate, are directly related to the rear shocks, either by conspiracy or an actual planning stage of the development work. Whatever the reason, whoever set up the suspension on both ends, should take a bow.

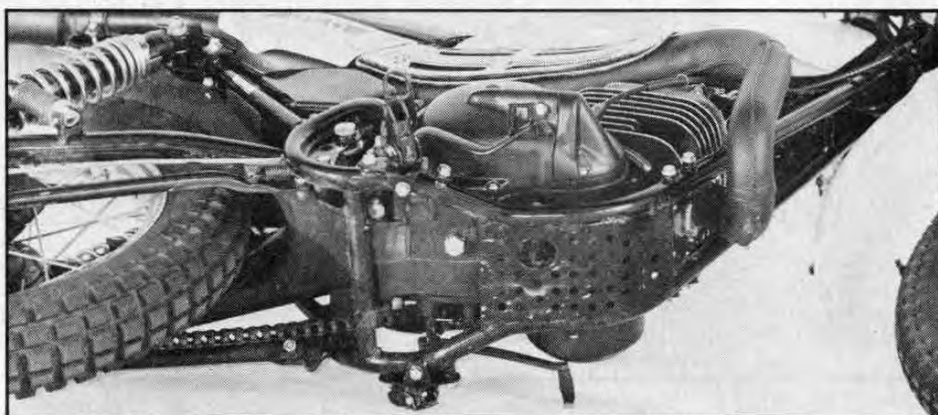
Not to be outdone or stand in the



*The entire headlight cluster, including tach and speedo, can be removed as a unit for serious off-roading, and to reduce weight.*



*Instruments are plain, easy to read, and get the message across. A tripometer is included for riders watching the mileage between gas stops and on enduros.*



*There is a small skidplate, drilled for weight reduction, found on the belly. Also included in the package is a clutch lever cover, protecting the unit from rocks and branches on the trails.*

*The reed induction system found on the TS, which was inherited from the RM series, does much to improve the low rpm torque abilities.*

echoes of applause, the people responsible for the gear ratios also deserve a lot of credit. They're just about at that ultimate happy medium between good street gearing and properly spaced dirt gearing. You don't have to go to the expense of changing sprockets and other such foolishness. Just add gas and ride.

The only drawback to the machine is the power. Possibly the Head of Horsepower was sick the day that Suzuki finalized plans to put the machine into production and wasn't on hand to explain that he wasn't quite down to a satisfactory level yet.

The horsepower deficiency really came to light when the machine was put on the Webco dyno. Its best horsepower output is 16.16, down at





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5,500 rpm. The Yamaha DT250's best showing is at a higher 18.16, while the MR250 Honda tops the three with a 21.86 horsepower.

The horsepower (or rather the lack of it) isn't going to surface for the average rider out for a weekend jaunt. For him, all he'll know is that the bike seems to do what he wants (handling gets the credit) and it goes over those bumps that the old bike hit with a vengeance (suspension gets the tip of the hat here). All he has to ever do is put in gas, oil and lube the chain (good old Suzuki dependability).

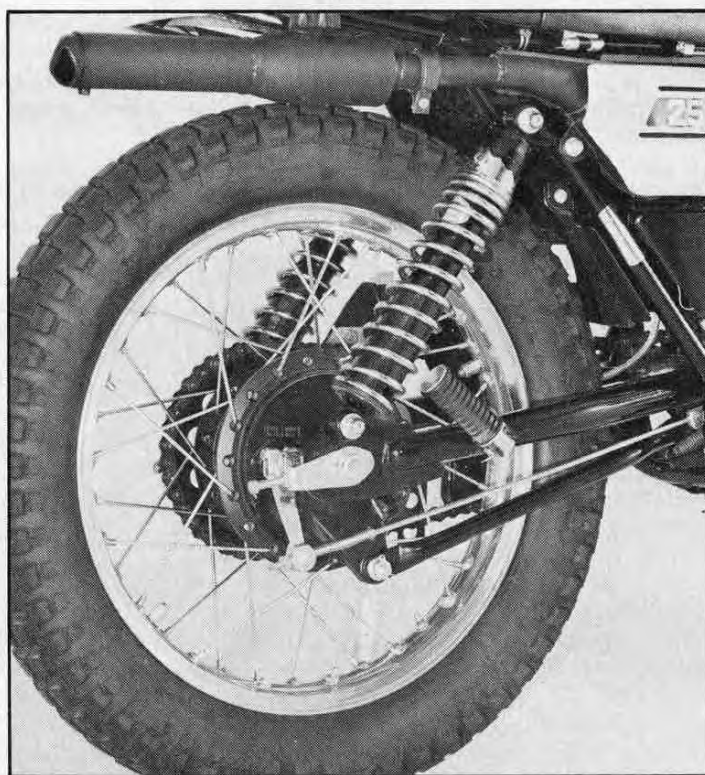
The slightly above average trail rider is going to find himself stuck on a few steep hills while his buddies continue upward, or paddling through a sandwash or two, and not being able to pull those good wheelies with the girlfriend watching.

Actually the fact that it's down on horsepower shouldn't really be a deciding factor for many riders. You've just got to be honest with yourself. Are you the caliber of rider who is going to tackle the biggest hills, try to go down a trail with the throttle wide open, and do berm shots off of tree trunks? Don't buy the Suzuki. But if you're just looking for a good motorcycle that isn't going to let you down, and is more pleasurable to ride than anything you've previously owned, this bike should keep you satisfied.

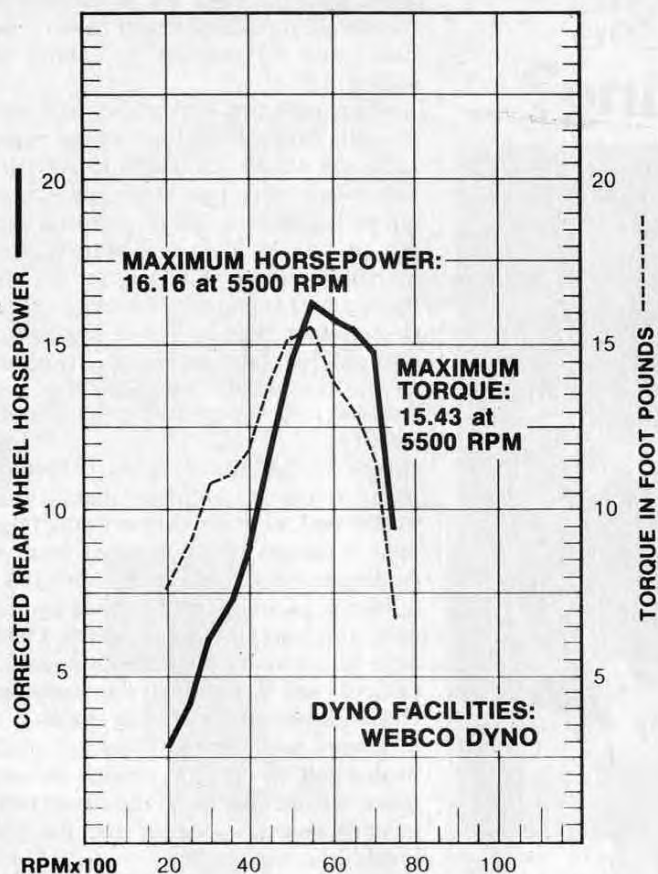
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Clean and functional is the new look for enduro machines this year. The pipe tucks in nicely, running slightly over the tool kit cavity. Real footpegs, good brake lever and kick starter are all indications of the serious attitude taken by the Japanese.



Kayaba shocks work well in both dirt and street situations. Bike is very quiet with the improved silencing system. Buddy pegs are stock.



#### PRICE

SUZUKI TS250B	\$1140
HONDA MR250E*	\$1019
YAMAHA DT250B*	\$1259

\*1976 PRICES

#### HORSE-POWER

SUZUKI TS250B	16.16
HONDA MR250E	21.86
YAMAHA DT250B	18.16

#### WEIGHT

SUZUKI TS250B	276lbs
HONDA MR250E	268lbs
YAMAHA DT250B	284lbs

#### TRANS-MISSION

SUZUKI TS250B	5-SPEED
HONDA MR250E	5-SPEED
YAMAHA DT250B	5-SPEED



#### TEST BIKE: SUZUKI TS250B

Price, sugg. retail.....\$1140

#### ENGINE

Type.....Piston & reed valve  
2-stroke single  
Bore/stroke.....70x64mm (2.76x2.52 in.)  
Piston displacement.....246cc (15.0 cu.in.)  
Compression ratio.....6.5:1 (corrected)  
Carburetion.....Mikuni VM 28 SS  
Air filtration.....Oil-wetted foam  
Ignition.....Pointless electronic  
BHP @ rpm.....16.16 @ 5500  
Torque @ rpm.....26.44 lbs/ft @ 5500  
Lubrication.....Oil injection  
Electrical power.....A.C. generator  
Battery.....6V 4 AH

#### DRIVETRAIN

Primary transmission.....Helical gear (3.19)  
Clutch.....Multi-plate, wet  
Secondary transmission.....# 525 chain (2.66)  
Gear ratios, overall.....(1) 27.05 (2) 22.55  
(3) 10.76 (4) 8.48 (5) 7.00

#### CHASSIS & SUSPENSION

Suspension, front.....Telescopic fork  
Suspension, rear.....Swing arm  
Tire, front.....3.00-21  
Tire, rear.....4.00-18  
Brake, front.....Drum, 5.9x1.1 in. (150x28mm)  
Brake, rear.....Drum, 5.9x1.1 in. (150x28mm)  
Brake swept area.....40.78 in/sq  
Rake/trail.....29° / 5.59 in. (142mm)  
Wheelbase.....55.3 in. (140.5cm)  
Seat height.....32.5 in. (82.5cm)  
Handlebar width.....32 in. (81.3cm)  
Ground clearance.....9.5 in. (24.1cm)  
Instruments.....90mph speedometer,  
reset tripmeter, 9000 rpm tach,  
hi-beam, neutral, turn warning lights  
Stands.....Side  
Tire retention device(s).....Security bolts,  
one front, two rear

#### WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

Fuel capacity.....2.6 gal. (10 liters)  
Oil capacity.....2.5 pt. (1.2 liters)  
Weight, wet, unladen.....276 lbs. (125.2 kg)