

1978 PE-250C?

Building A Better Suzuki

By Ned Owens

When Suzuki's PE-250 hit the market last year, it was met with mixed reviews. Some found little fault with their first serious enduro effort—not polished—but a good effort.

Others said that the gear spacing and overly soft suspension would keep it from being a contender. Both of those things are faults, admittedly, but are they irreversible? What would it take to "shape the PE?"

We decided to tackle this project and provide several stages of engine and chassis tune that would suit budgets from slim to big buck. We also knew the '78 PE would be coming out soon and we tried to anticipate what it might be equipped with. Our shaped PE is a mix of all the factors.

SUSPENSION

When Suzuki started with basically an RM-250 and designed some changes on that basis, they figured that the suspension for an enduro bike should be as comfortable as possible. But this soft, plushness ruined the chassis integrity by causing the bike to wallow unduly. The rear suspension, many times was

near bottoming under normal riding conditions.

This extra softness seems fine to some riders, but it is detrimental to precise steering and puts the PE at a disadvantage when compared to the KTM/Penton or Yamaha IT machines.

The first step, and least expensive is merely bolstering the spring forces at each end. A pair of air caps with 8-12 psi can be used with the stock springs. Procuring a set of split-rate Kayaba springs from an RM-riding motocrosser (who has probably replaced the original shocks before he put 10 hours on them) will spring the rear to satisfaction. This minor change will make a noticeable difference. The front end will bite as it was intended.

Stage two suspension involves the installation of the Moto-X Fox air/spring fork kit in the front. Treatment of the rear includes a pair of modestly priced shocks like S&W Freon baggies or Gas Girlings and progressive rate springs.

Going for shocks in the under \$150 category is the next step used in conjunction with the Fox fork kit. Fox

Shox, Curnutts, Works Performance and Arnacos are some of the top shocks in this price range. Each has different features that offer the rider a wide selection based on his riding style and terrain. (You'll also find that each of the shock manufacturers have tested various lengths of their shocks and usually have a combination worked out. For instance, Works Performance Shocks tend to be longer than the stock length. Arnacos on the other hand are almost always fitted as the same length. Confer with these companies as to their suggestions. It'll save you time and hassles.)

The next stage would be to go for accessory forks. Among those available are Marzocchi, Betor, Ceriani, TTC, Kayabas and the Simon's Forks. Unless you are after a bunch more travel, we wouldn't go that far. The Fox kit performs admirably with an increase in travel. The forks listed above range from about \$220 to \$375. (The new air/spring forks like those on the "C" model RMs are also available from your Suzuki dealer, but the tab on those is \$400.)

Bag is attached to tank only, so that removal of the tank in emergency is not hindered. Yam IT gas cap replaces hard-to-grip slick Suzuki unit.

Control modifications include Magura blades in the stock Suzuki clamps; mirror and bulb horn; switches moved under the cross-bar for protection; and sticky Oakley grips. Speedo bracket is sandwiched between clamps to lower mounting for long-travel forks—the cable became too short with the switch.

