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YAMAHA WR250

IS IT 1995 YET? IT IS FOR THE PROSPECTIVE WR250 owner. Why? Well, usually the WR is a year behind the YZ250 motocross bike as far as development goes—underneath the 1993 WR250 was a '92 YZ motocrosser with the requisite off-road goodies added. But times have changed. The 1994 WR is the same basic bike as the '94 YZ250.

It differs from its motocross brother by way of an 18-

**YOUR
1995
OFF-
ROAD
BIKE
IS
READY
TODAY**



inch rear wheel, a wide-ratio gearbox, an O-ring chain, and a 3.5-gallon fuel tank. Also, there is a lighting coil in the ignition, and a round-slide carburetor replaces the flat-slide MX piece. But that's it.

The bike is sold as a closed-course competition model. It does not come with a spark arrester or meet EPA off-road noise regulations, but getting the bike registered for off-highway use in most states is as easy as fitting an aftermarket spark arrester. We tested the bike with the YZR accessory spark arrester (\$60), which, according to Yamaha, produced a surprising one-quarter horsepower

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It feels just like what it is, a slightly tamed-down motocrosser. The handlebar has a low bend; we rotated it forward in the clamps, which helped considerably.

the sidepanels and the radiators.

The WR motor is essentially the same as the YZ's, except for the carb, a 38mm round-slide Mikuni that makes the intake tract slightly longer and gives a smoother power surge.

Both powerplants have five speeds, but the WR's ratios have been altered. First gear is lower than on the motocross bike, and the ratios stay lower through fourth, though the jump up to fifth gear passes up the YZ and gives the WR a higher top speed. Fifth gear is all that you would ever want on a fireroad, but Baja-types will have to resort to sprocket changes.

This year, emphasis was put on suspension settings that work in areas other than the desert. With two top riders, Fred Andrews and Jan Hrehor, winning national hare-scrambles and cross-country races, feedback and testing for the new WR was much more well-rounded than before. As a result, the WR is versatile. It still works in the desert, but is now on par with the excellent Suzuki RMX for woods riding. It can even handle MX courses, though fast riders will find the calibrations too soft there. Compared to the YZ, the

YAMAHA WR250

gain on the dyno. Not bad, considering it took a considerable bite out of the WR's exhaust bark.

Sitting on the new bike brings a big surprise: It is thin. Past WRs have gained their extra fuel capacity at the expense of splaying a rider's legs around an oversized fuel tank. This year, the capacity is there but the tank's shape is better thought-out, and still holds enough for about 50 race miles, 65 at a trail-riding pace. The seat is shorter than the YZ unit, and if you were thinking of changing the bike over to the smaller YZ tank, it would require a YZ seat also. The rest of the bike is pure YZ, right down to

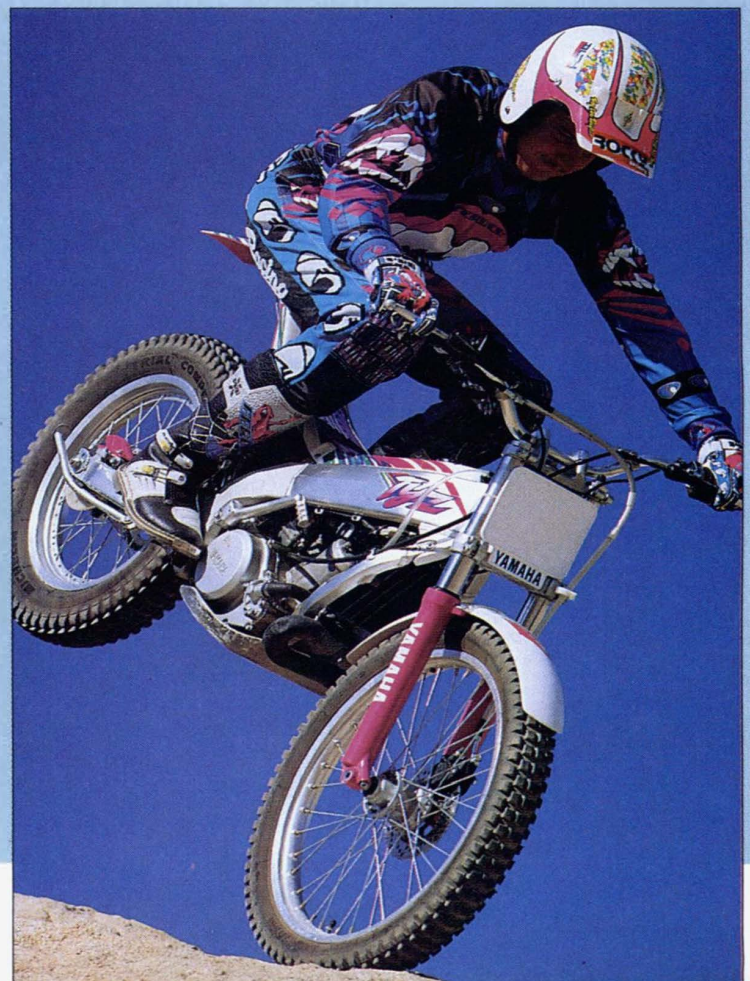
YAMAHA TY250Z

**TRICKEST
DIRTBIKE
IN THE
WORLD?**

IF AN ALUMINUM FRAME APPEARED ON A DIRTBIKE IT would be big news, right? Well, here it is, and it's been around for a while. Trials bikes like Yamaha's TY250 have been at the forefront of off-road technology, yet they've managed to quietly putt-putt-putt right past our noses without getting much attention, mainly because they don't clear 80-foot triple-jumps or move large quantities of real estate with a twist of the wrist.

The TY250Z is state-of-the-art in the trials game, a competitor to European brands that go by names like Gas-Gas, Fantic and Beta. In the U.S., the bike is not available directly from Yamaha. Shops specializing in trials import these bikes in small numbers for hardcore enthusiasts who pay up to \$7000 for the privilege of owning a brand-new TY.

A trials mount is not like any other type of bike. It is not made to sit on, hence the absence of all but a small section of padding to give your posterior a perch after a tiring section. It has incredible ground clearance, and the



shock has its own valving setup and a lighter, 5.0-kg. rear spring. The fork utilizes the same 0.4-kg. springs as on the YZ, but again valving is more suited for trails than for the track.

Starting never took more than a couple of kicks. Put the bike in gear while cold and the clutch has a grabby feel, but this goes away in a matter of minutes. Clutch pull is very light and missed shifts were rare. The clutch takes a lot of abuse. We subjected the bike to slow, trials-like conditions where tons of slipping was necessary, and the clutch never lost feel or faded.

This bike has horsepower everywhere in its rpm range—a seat-of-the-pants guess would even have the WR running better than the YZ. There is not much power just off idle, as with a Kawasaki KDX or an RMX, but there is plenty above that, a situation that can partially attributed to an ignition—and its light flywheel effect—that is shared with the YZ.

The amazing thing is how much hit the engine can put out while remaining so user-friendly. And it doesn't take much throttle control, either. If you need stump-pulling grunt, it is there. If you need to lift the front wheel *right now*, tap the clutch. If you need more than this, you need a 500.

A word of caution, though, about the motor. Like the YZ's, it is prone to detonation. Yamaha set the timing on our WR to 0.8mm before TDC from the standard setting of 1.2mm BTDC. At this setting and running 92-octane pump gas with Yamalube R at 32-to-1, the engine did not detonate. Throughout the test, the carburetor didn't require any jetting changes, and functioned perfectly all the way up to 7500-foot elevation. The air-filter stayed surprisingly clean and as an added bonus proved as water-resistant as any dirt-bike's we've tested recently.

So what is wrong with the WR? Nothing, as far as performance is concerned. Pricing may be an issue, though. At



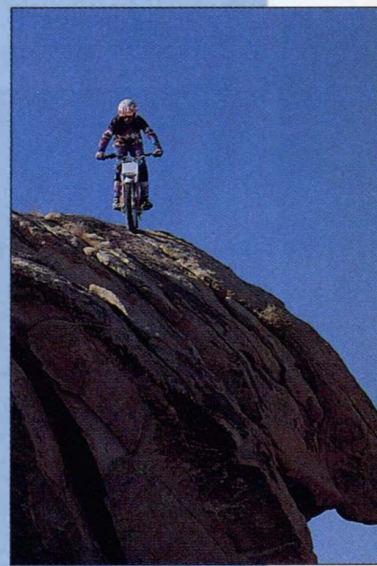
The TY250Z is Yamaha's only aluminum-framed production dirtbike. Reverse-pull spokes grace rims set up for gummy Michelin tubeless radials.

shifter is way out of reach of your left foot. You usually select a gear and stay in that gear throughout a section.

The bike is built light and with plenty of thought put into protection for the inevitable crushing slide off a rock face. The radiator and gas tank are housed between the frame tubes. The engine is a stressed member of the frame and guarded by an incredibly thick and rigid skidplate. The footpegs, extremely susceptible to getting peeled off, are hinged on replaceable mounts.

Hopping around on the TY takes a little getting used to, but in a matter of minutes the staff of *Cycle World* was roaming around the office parking lot scouting urban sections and getting acquainted with the ever-popular nose wheelie. The bike is very quiet and a huge flywheel keeps the two-stroke Single turning at exceedingly low revs. Combine this with a first gear so low as to be practically useless, and you could almost stand still with the motor running and the clutch out. Starting off was best in second or third gear and most of the time these were the right selections for even the tightest sections. Fourth and fifth were best for traveling between sections, or for extended wheelies, another highlight in a trials bike's bag of tricks. Brakes offered great control despite their small size, but you don't need much to slow down a 175-pound bike.

In the 1970s, trials was billed as the fastest growing sport in motorcycling. It soon fizzled. Twenty years later, trials is making a small but significant comeback, and bikes as trick as the YZ250Z are part of the reason.
—Jimmy Lewis



Not exactly a spectator sport, outdoor trials is mentally demanding and excruciatingly fun.



If the WR only had these features standard: We installed an Acerbis Elba II headlight (\$55), taillight (\$26), and handguards (\$26). A Yamaha voltage regulator (part# 82F-81910-A0-00, \$42) rounds out the necessary hardware to make the WR a real enduro mount.

YAMAHA WR250

\$4999, it is right up there with the current crop of top-dollar motocrossers—appropriate since it's basically an MXer in disguise. What you don't get for that price are such off-road amenities as lights and handguards. Internally, there is a lighting coil for powering lights, but a voltage regulator and the lighting setup have to be purchased separately, adding \$100-plus to the bike's overall price. An addition this year is a nicely done plastic front-brake cover, but including a set of sturdy handguards would sweeten the package.

If Yamaha set out to totally upgrade the WR250, it has hit the mark. Functionally, there is nothing wrong with the WR. We like the idea of selling the bike as a closed-course

model—unlike an RMX or a KDX that has to have a lot of work put into it before it's race-ready—but more stock off-road items should be standard for the WR's five-grand asking price. Both Husqvarna and KTM manage to do it, so should Yamaha.

But no matter, this is one of the most enjoyable off-road bikes to roost through the *Cycle World* offices in a while. The Best Enduro Bike award of 1994 is going to be a real contest. ☐

YAMAHA WR250

SPECIFICATIONS

GENERAL

List price	\$4999
Importer/manufacturer	Yamaha Motor Corp., USA 6555 Katella Ave., Cypress, CA 90650
Customer service phone	714/761-7439
Warranty	none

ENGINE & DRIVETRAIN

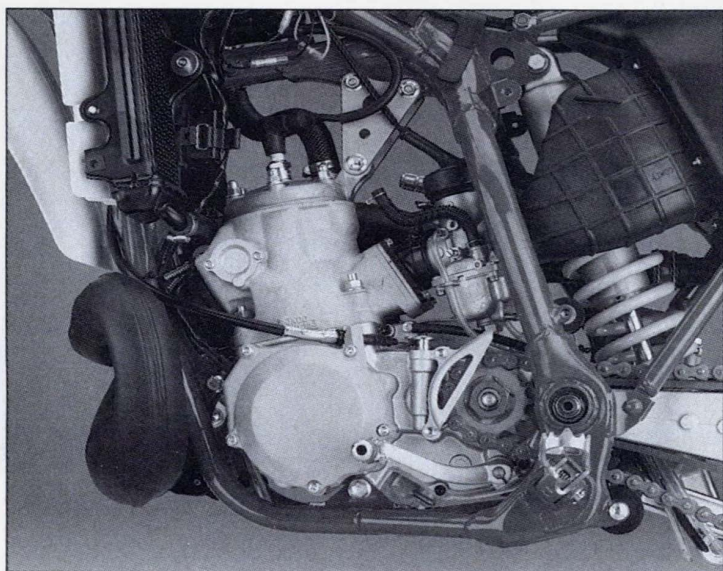
Engine	two-stroke Single
Bore & Stroke	68.0 x 68.8mm
Displacement	249cc
Compression ratio	9.0-10.9:1
Carburetion	38mm Mikuni

SUSPENSION

Front suspension:	
Claimed wheel travel	11.8 in.
Adjustments	compression and rebound damping
Rear suspension:	
Claimed wheel travel	12.4 in.
Adjustments	compression and rebound damping, spring preload

CHASSIS

Weight:	
Tank empty	236.5 lb.
Tank full	257.5 lb.
Fuel capacity	3.5 gal.
Wheelbase	58.3 in.
Rake/trail	27.5°/4.8 in.
Seat height (unladen)	37.3 in.
Footpeg height	17.0 in.
Footpeg to seat top	20.3 in.
Ground clearance	14.0 in.



The key to smooth power, and lots of it, hides here. The round-slide carburetor is the only major motor change effecting performance from the YZ. We liked the WR motor more.