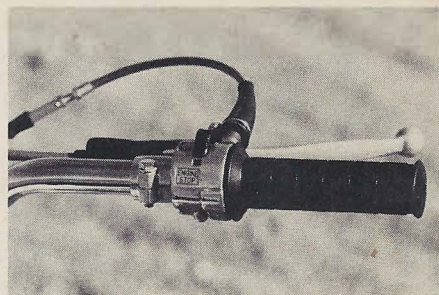


## CYCLE RIDER ROAD TEST



**Japan's first 250 trialer is for folks who like the same strokes, only different.**

What is the first thing you think of when anybody mentions a trials bike? If you are like us, your mind immediately wanders to one of the three popular Spanish bikes: Bultaco, Ossa, and Montesa. This is a normal reaction for two reasons. One, there have been no other companies that offer a readily available 250 trials bike for sale. Two, all trials events in recent years have been dominated by these three makes of machines.

The manufacturers across the other pond are well into developing competitive trials machinery to contest the Spanish domination of trials events. Last year Honda introduced their TL 125. They, and Kawasaki, are working on 250s and Suzuki has announced a 250 for the spring. But Yamaha beat everybody to the punch with the first 250 from Japan. (Aren't they the same outfit that gave us the DT1 Enduro that opened up off-road riding to so many some six years ago?)

Actually Yamaha has focused their

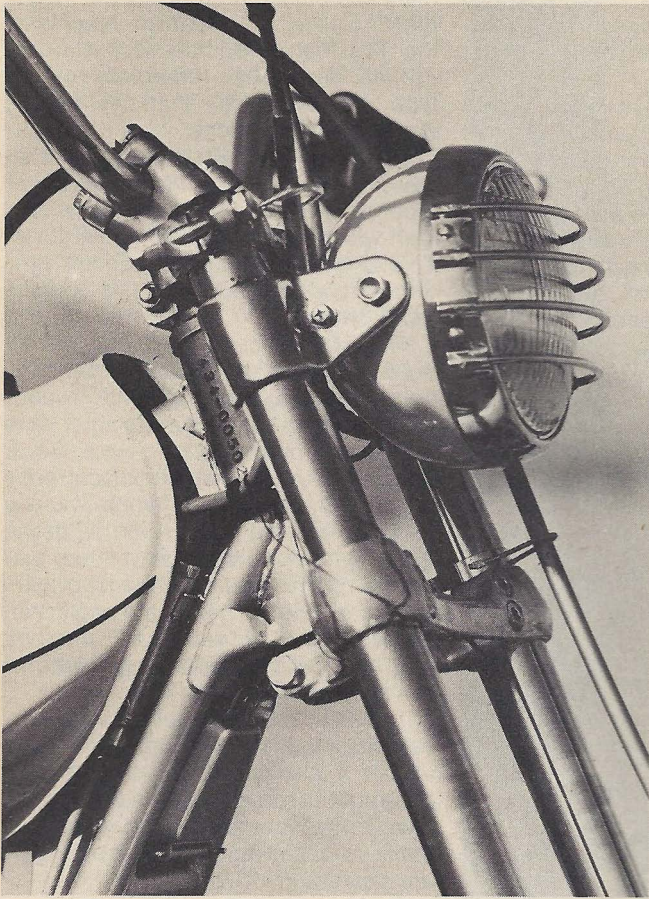


# YAMAHA TY250



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attention on two classes. They also have a TY 80 available for the young riders. In designing and developing the TY 250 Yamaha enlisted the services of Mick Andrews, who is a trials rider extraordinaire. Andrews has been world champion more than once on an Ossa which to this day carries his name, the Mick Andrews Replica Yamaha came along with the almighty yen, and Andrews' knowledge and experience were utilized to shape up the prototype they had in the works. Just like the Enduro did six years ago, the TY should open the door for many new riders.

A quick once over will show that the usual Japanese attention to detail is present in this unit, except for the welding. Much emphasis has been placed on appearance. Of late, the Japanese product is starting to place much more emphasis on performance.

The TY weighs in at 221 pounds with a full tank. This is a bit overweight but nothing serious. Some of this weight is the result of the headlight and taillight fitted as standard equipment. There also is a tool kit compartment not found on Spanish bikes. The bike is not street legal,

however, and the lighting equipment can be removed easily to help reduce the weight.

One item that must be replaced for the serious competitor is the gas tank. Instead of being made from fiberglass or plastic, it is made from steel. This added weight is also well above the center of gravity. At times every ounce makes a difference in clearing a section or losing points. The tank is finished in white and yellow, as is the rest of the machine.

The front and rear fenders are made from an unbreakable plastic material. The fender selection illustrates the benefit of a durable, yet weight saving material. Front fenders on all trials machines are low mounted, permitting the rider to see exactly where the front wheel is. If a high mounted fender were tweaked to one side or the other it would be difficult to tell exactly where the tire was. That's the way experts like it, even if it does increase the possibility of a mud loaded front wheel "locking up" against a low mount fender. We had this happen to us while testing a trials bike last year.

The tires are the conventional block tread fitted to most trails machines.

These seem to offer a reasonable amount of traction on both dry and wet surfaces. Security bolts on both wheels are necessary to prevent the tire from slipping on the rim. Low air pressure is used to improve traction. Should the tires be allowed to spin on the rim they would undoubtedly pull the stem right out of the tube. This noticeably inhibits handling. There are two rim locks found on the rear wheel, one up front.

The performance of the brakes was definitely above average for a trials machine. The Spanish have seen fit to continue building units that offer what we would term no more than adequate binders at best. Both brakes offer good feel and positive stopping power without offering "too much." That can be disastrous on a trials machine. The rear requires slightly more pressure than we think necessary. Moisture seemed to have little effect on brake performance.

To propel this machine Yamaha has produced an all new redesigned 250cc engine. As with most of their other two-strokes, the TY utilizes Yamaha's Autolube oil injection system.

The gearbox, a strong point on most

Yamahas, offered firm but positive clutchless shifting. Trials riders don't like the super smooth dabbers found on many motocrossers. The ratios are well thought out. They are perhaps spaced slightly farther apart than the Spanish counterparts, thus fifth, used for travel between sections is somewhat closer to fourth. It's still a good jump, though.

We feel that the ratios are well suited for the purpose the bike was intended. Trials machines are generally ridden in first and second gear through a section, and are almost nev-

er shifted while negotiating a section. The higher ratios are used primarily from getting from one section to another. Shifting was no more difficult than we expected.

The shift lever is positioned farther away from the peg than on normal bikes. This is traditional on trials machinery, so that the rider's foot does not accidentally tap the bike out of the selected gear. Shifting was more positive than on other machines of this type that we have ridden. Neutral could be selected with little effort.

The action of the clutch was typical

Yamaha. It offered easy disengagement and smooth and positive engagement. Unlike the Spanish machines, the TYs feature primary kick starting. For all dirt bikes, regardless of the type, we would say that this feature is a very desirable one.

Once the kill switch was turned to the off position, and the choke lever flipped, we found that the TY would start with one or two kicks on the lever. This is another big improvement over the starting procedure of the Spanish motorcycles.

The Mikuni carburetor on the TY does wonders for the bike's performance. The low-end snap and responsiveness is quite surprising. More than that, however, we were never plagued with the common occurrence of loading up a plug. When we say common, we are again referring to the three Spanish bikes. Laying these machines on the ground, or parking them on the side of a hill at an angle can cause their carburetors to run over and load up the spark plug. None of this was evident on the TY.

The TY comes equipped with a rubber mounted USDA approved Spark arrester. It's just a matter of time before all of the off-road machines will have to be equipped with this device, but it is a convenience to be "legal" anywhere.

The frame utilized with the TY is a lightweight tubular double cradle type. Folding serrated footpegs are fitted to the bike in a position that makes standing up easy. The seat is sparse, but still softer than those found on any Spanish offering. Most trials bikes are designed for standup riding.

From a purely rider preference standpoint we found the standard bars fitted to the TY a bit too low. The kick starter lever and exhaust pipe are tucked well out of the way of the rider's leg.

Suspension-wise, the Yamaha components match up to those found on the Spanish motorcycles. We feel that these units are satisfactory. The rear shocks are adjustable to five different positions. As we rode with the shocks in bottom or soft position we felt the spring rate was a little stiff. The telescopic forks up front are equipped with a small dust shield to protect against grit and grime. After logging quite a few miles on the TY, both under trials conditions and over the wide open spaces of a desert enduro, there was no indication of oil leaking from the seal. We were never bothered from the forks topping or bottoming out over trials terrain.



We liked the right off of idle throttle response. This response is coupled to a power range that seems like too much—too soon. Because of this the front had a tendency to loft itself quite a bit at some of the most undesirable times, such as climbing a near vertical bank. Other Spanish bikes we have ridden are not so overly responsive right off the bottom end, possibly because of carburetion. It might also be because they have a greater flywheel effect to slow things down.

If the Yamaha had less power or less throttle response we feel certain that this would not be as noticeable. As it was, we spent a great deal of time concentrating on keeping as much weight as possible over the front wheel to prevent it from coming off the ground. When coming up to rough rocky sections it was difficult to get the TY to lug along. Instead it tended to surge ahead every time the throttle was turned on, ever slightly.

As we mentioned earlier, it is actually possible to ride down on the seat without being greatly discomforted. Honda did the same thing with their TL 125. We rode the bike in two enduros and came away feeling that some easy modifications would make it an interesting enduro type machine. It may not be fast, but it will go almost anywhere.

After putting quite a few miles on the TY it is evident to us that Yamaha has come up with an extremely good first effort motorcycle. There are things, however, that do need to be improved upon to make the machine truly competitive in the Master's class. We refer mainly to a reduction in weight and a restructuring of the power output of the engine.

The Owner's Manual received with the TY is a 120-page effort put together by Yamaha here in the U.S. It is quite thorough and reveals just about anything the rider could possibly want to know about the machine except what TY stands for.

As it stands now the TY would be an excellent choice for the Novice or Intermediate rider in trials events. The Expert would probably fiddle around with it a bit. It isn't cheap, with a suggested retail under \$1100, but that price is quite competitive. For many riders the advantages offered by Yamaha's approach should more than offset the subtle handling or performance edge fed into the Spanish equipment from quite a few years of competition feedback. ■



## YAMAHA TY 250

Engine type	single cylinder, two-stroke
Bore and stroke	70 x 64mm
Displacement	246cc
Compression ratio	6:1
Claimed torque	15.2 ft./lbs. @ 5500 rpm
Ignition	flywheel magneto
Starting system	kick, in any gear
Carburetion	26mm Teikei
Lubrication	Autolube (oil injection)
Type of transmission	constant mesh 5-speed
Clutch	wet multi-plate
Internal gear ratios	(1) 2.714, (2) 2.058, (3) 1.523, (4) 1.0, (5) 0.656
Final ratio	3.785
Countershaft sprocket	14
Rear wheel sprocket	53
Length	78.1 in.
Wheelbase	51.0 in.
Ground clearance	11.2 in.
Listed dry weight	205 lbs.
Actual weight, full tank of gas	221 lbs.
Front tire size	2.75 x 21 in.
Front brake type	internal expanding
Front brake size	110 x 25mm
Rear tire size	4.00 x 18 in.
Rear brake type	internal expanding
Rear brake size	130 x 28mm
Air filtration	washable foam
Lighting	6V
Fuel tank capacity	1.6 gal.
Oil tank capacity	0.37 qts.
Gear box capacity	1000cc
Front suspension	telescopic double damping
Rear suspension	5-way adjustable spring over shock
Frame type	tubular semi-cradle
Exhaust system	U.S.D.A. approved spark arrester
Colors	white with yellow trim
Retail price, Los Angeles	\$1086

### Distributor:

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