

Enduros are neat. There are some enduros that allow you to sit back in the saddle and leisurely watch the scenery roll by under your wheels. There are others that frustrate you, taxing both your body and your bike, and start you thinking about a new hobby. But on the whole, enduros are a nice way to clear your head without worrying about getting the hole-shot when the gate goes down.

To make those enduros a little easier on your body, Yamaha has introduced the DT 400B. It won't win an enduro for you—you've got to help. But you won't work up a sweat that you might have obtained on last year's machine. The 400B is an enlargement of last year's 360, and along with those refinements, you get an engine that is willing to cooperate with the frame and that works with the rider.

One of the nicest things found on the 400B is the starting procedure. When you kick the starter it actuates a cam follower on the starter shaft, which in turn opens a compression release valve on the fore side of the cylinder, lowering the compression, but allowing the engine to fire. In plain and simple terms, it's a lot easier to start and it doesn't bite back. You don't have to push a compression release, it's built into the kick starter. Neat.

As with any other enduro machine available from Japan, it comes with all trivia such as blinkers, horn, lights, tail-

light, high-beam switches and other useless goodies. If you're serious about enduro riding you'll put everything into a box, throw on a Preston Petty headlight and taillight assembly, and be on your way. The bikes as it comes stock, is slim and narrow, with the exception of the protruding light garbage. With the PP equipment, you could pass it off as a trials machine with a good seat.

For the guy who isn't that seriously into enduros and just wants the machine to race down to the nearest Ralphs supermarket, we would suggest that you check the local laws concerning blinkers. It



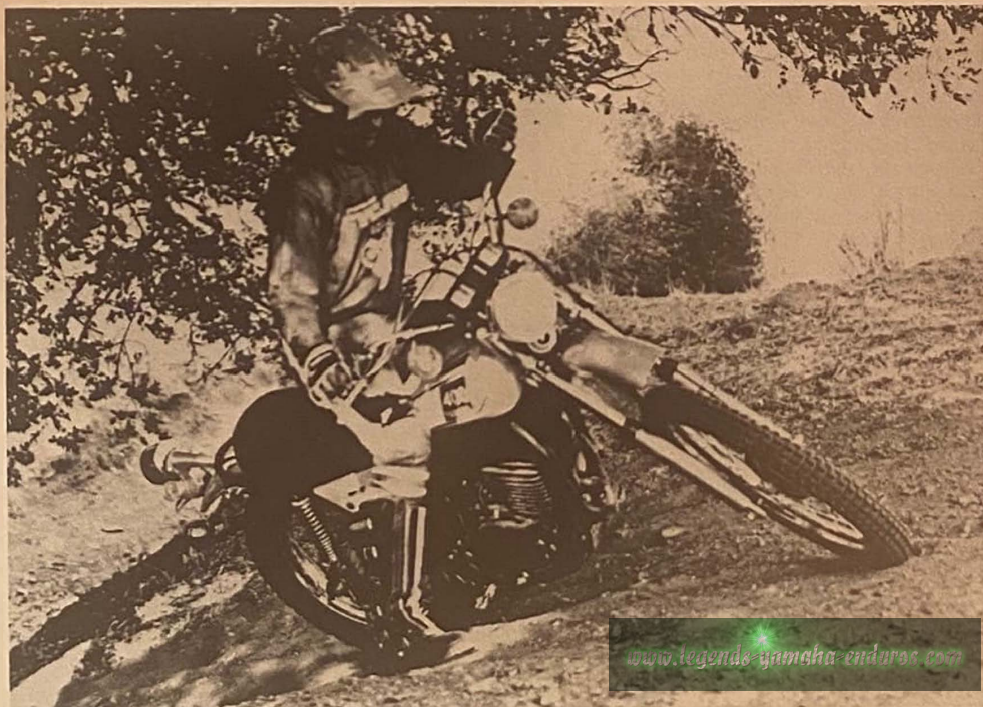
Photos by Steve Reyes

seems that if you're really concentrating on it, you can get your leg over the bike without catching it on the rear end and knocking the Yamaha over. Forget about it for a moment, and you get very embarrassed.

The handlebars were a bit high for our preference, but those riders who are used to enduro bars on Yamahas will feel right at home. One nice thing about the bars is the fact that they were nice and narrow, close enough so that you could get through some bushes without cutting a six-foot swath.

Yamaha has been slimming down the Suspension was good, but a bit mushy when going through rough terrain. Front brake worked excellently.

The taillight was especially designed to make the rider look foolish when mounting. Once your leg hits it, the bike falls over and laughs at you.



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Yamaha DT 400 Enduro

The best offering
from Japan in its field.

Low-speed handling was aided by lots of grunt, turning trials-type sections into tamed cowtrails.

gas tank over the years until they have arrived at this year's machine, which we felt was bit too small. On a basic enduro run you can only get about 70 miles on a tank of gas in the 400B. This could be a drawback if you were planning a long enduro or desert ride and had a limited access to a gas pit crew. Besides the smallness of the tank, it sure doesn't get in the way of your riding, no matter how radically you interpret body English.

At first the seat seemed to be too stiff. The edges could be distinctly felt through the leathers, and you could feel the strap on the seat. But after a few hours on the bike, we realized that it was intentionally stiff for two reasons. First off, you can break in a slightly soft spot in your own personal riding position. The second was that a soft seat on a motorcycle is prone to getting your rear sore faster than a hard seat. We're not talking about sitting on a bus stop bench, the seat did have padding, but not so much that you would feel like putting your feet up and lighting

a cigar.

As we mentioned before, the new Yamaha enduro doesn't have the rubber covered footpegs. Finally, all our complaining has been heard. Now you can go through those creeks and shallow lakes without riding for 15 miles with your feet in the cases, waiting for the rubber footpegs to dry out.

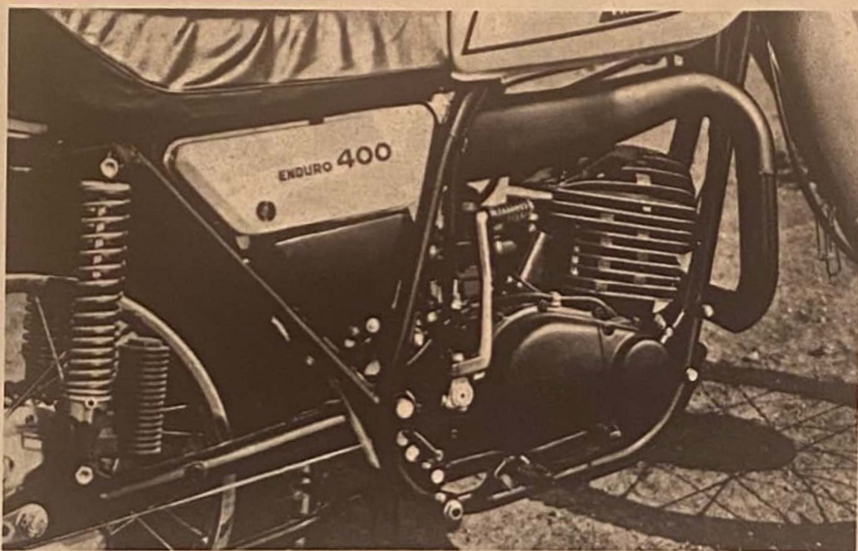
The 400B seems to incorporate quite a few of the assets of the motocross machine. The high fenders are the same as those found on the motocross machines. The frame, without the mono-shock rear suspension, is surprisingly close in dimensional figures to that of the motocrosser, giving you the impression of an MX machine with lights. Both front and rear can be found on the motocross machine. All the controls, shift and brake levers are the same, as are many of the internal engine parts.

On our initial ride with the machine we were first impressed with the power. Even though the change from a 360 to

the 400 seems to be small, it has done wonders for the power of the bike. There is no reason that you can't keep up with the big-bore Bults, Montesas and Husky machines when climbing those steep hills. The 400B will take on just about anything. The only drawback would be the trials universal tires. A good set of knobbies and no enduro should scare you off with rumors of big uphill.

The powerband had enough torque to pull the machine out of those instances where you go from zero to five miles an hour. The only precaution that you might have to take is to watch the engine revs, for the machine is very light in the fly-wheel department, having almost zero drag on the engine. You can stall the 400B if you're not careful. After a few hours with the bike, you'll get the hang of it and the problem disappears.

Shifting was accomplished easily and smoothly with the clutch. The old problem of missing accurate downshifts seems to have disappeared on the 400B.



DT400



Looking all the world like a motocrosser, the Enduro machine incorporates some of the fine aspects of MX into a pleasurable mount.

A good view of the belly was demonstrated when photographer said the wrong thing to test rider, who was having a bad day.

Instrumentation was good for street riding, but for bush bashing something a little more streamlined and compact would work better.

The only problem we had with the shifting was that the machine wouldn't engage into the next cog if you were running along at over half-throttle and wanted to change without the aid of the clutch. We felt that this wouldn't be a very big problem with any enduro machines, for sudden bursts of speed aren't really necessary on this type of machine, and a quick shift isn't critical. You can easily shift the bike without the clutch when the revs are down. But use the clutch anyway, it saves trannies.

The front brake is the same as found on the motocrossers, and we felt that it is one of the best front brakes on the market. It is very sharp, yet gives a super-precise feeling, allowing you to stop smoothly and easily with just two

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With better tires, you could tackle hills such as these and not go away conquered too often.

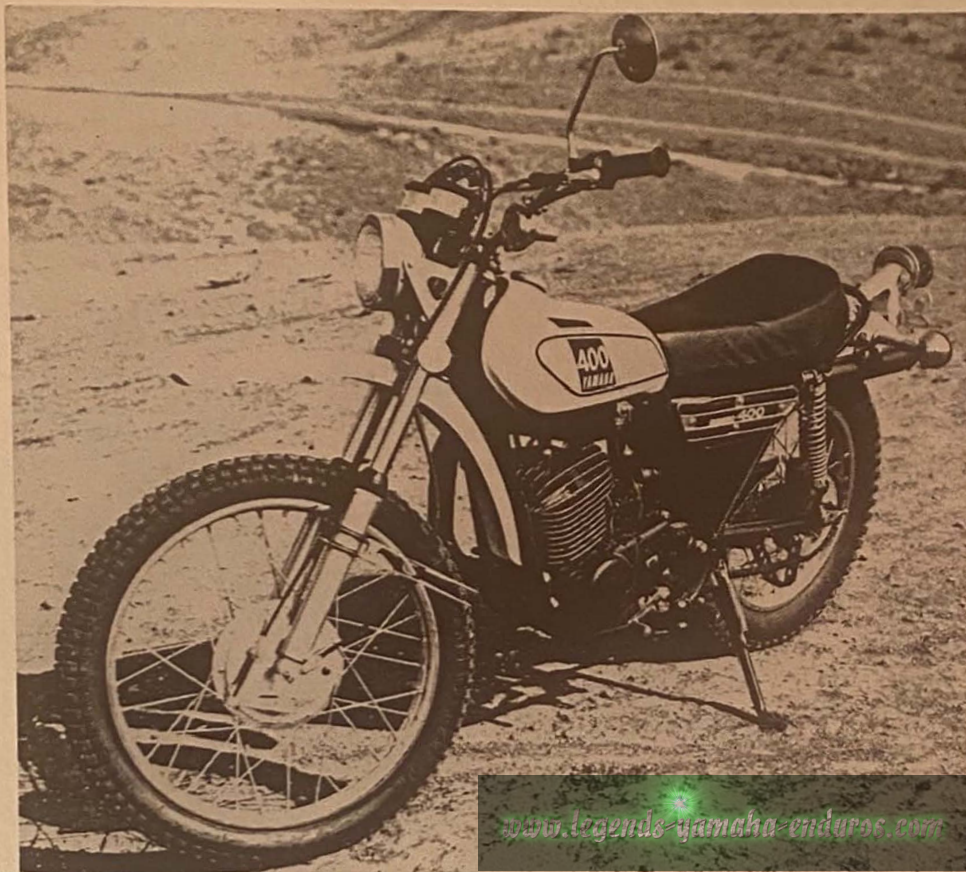


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fingers. The rear brake, however, still has that touchy feeling. If you try for any precision on the unit, it will either be all the way on or all the way off, like a light switch. We found a cure by bending the brake rod out towards the right then re-adjusting the brake pedal. This gives the actuating arm a little bit of area to flex about in, toning down the rear brake to normal. With this slight modification, the rear worked just as well as the front in stopping power.

As mentioned before, the 400B does

the opposite. Although it isn't a Husky Enduro or a Maico Qualifier, it's the best offering from Japan. And along with the 400B comes the need for the usual Japanese maintenance, consisting of cleaning the air filter and tightening the spokes. It's not a European enduro machine, but it doesn't carry the European-type price tag that we've all come to love and cringe about at the same time either. We felt that the 400B Yamaha is your best bet in the enduro mount field, Oriental-style.



have surprising power. While we were climbing some of the larger hills in one area, we noticed that you could easily loft the front wheel almost all the way up the hill in second gear. The 400B definitely doesn't have the heavy front end feeling like last year's machine.

For anybody who's really into it, the new Yamaha isn't a big slider. You won't amaze anyone with your Bultaco impressions of full lock slides. Even on a T.T. course, the 400B was reluctant to pitch sideways. Possibly all the extra lighting equipment had a lot to do with this problem. On the other hand, not too many people get their jollies by throwing enduro machines, complete with lights and blinkers, into corners fully locked.

Overall, we felt that this is Yamaha's best try at a true enduro mount. We've come to expect from the Japanese a mixture of motocross theory, coupled to a gutless engine and some really bad handling characteristics. The 400B is just



On the 400B I had my qualms about running up hills twice this size. This one was started in third gear at 10 mph, and the machine revved up effortlessly.

YAMAHA DT 400

ENGINE

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Engine type | 2-S, sgl., reed valve |
| Bore and stroke, mm | 85 x 70 |
| Displacement, cc | 397 |
| Horsepower/rpm (claimed) | n.a. |
| Torque/rpm (claimed) | n.a. |
| Compression ratio | n.a. |
| Air filtration | foam |
| Carburetion | VM-32mm Mikuni |
| Lubrication | injection |
| Ignition | CDI |

DRIVE TRAIN

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Transmission | 5-speed |
| Clutch type | wet, multi-disc |
| Primary drive | n.a. |
| Final drive ratio | 2.8:1 |

CHASSIS

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Chassis type | split downcradle |
| Overall length, in. | 85.8 |
| Seat height, in. | 32.1 |
| Peg height, in. | 9.6 |
| Ground clearance, in. | 8.7 |
| Wheelbase, in. | 55.5 |
| Weight, lbs. (as tested) | 273 |
| FR/RR wt. bias, percentages | 125/148 |
| Tires, front | 3.00 x 21 |
| rear | 4.00 x 18 |

| Max. Pts. | NUMERICAL EVALUATION | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|---------|
| 10 | Starting | 9 |
| 10 | Power | 10 |
| 10 | Powerband | 9 |
| 10 | Transmission | |
| | (5) Ratios | 5 |
| | (5) Operation | 4 |
| 10 | Suspension | |
| | (5) Front | 4 |
| | (5) Rear | 4 |
| 10 | Brakes | |
| | (5) Effectiveness | 4 |
| | (5) Waterproofing | 4 |
| 10 | Handling | |
| | (5) Low-speed maneuverability | 5 |
| | (5) High-speed stability | 5 |
| 10 | Comfort | |
| | (5) Sitting | 5 |
| | (5) Standing | 5 |
| 20 | Miscellaneous | |
| | (5) Quality of craftsmanship | 4 |
| | (5) Instrumentation | 5 |
| | (5) Electrics | 5 |
| | (5) Noise level | 5 |
| 100 pts. | Overall Rating | 92 pts. |