



# YAMAHA CT-3

HARD TO MAKE UP  
YOUR MIND BETWEEN  
125 AND 250? TRY A 175!

Yamaha Enduros need no introduction. They are the largest selling off-road machines on the market and have been for some time. Reasons for this are simple. They were the ones who set the industry on its heels with the first really true dual-purpose concept in motorcycling. Starting with a 250 model, various larger and smaller displacements were offered with the same concept in mind. One of the most overlooked of these models happens to be the 175-cc version.

For some reason, buyers usually start out with a 100 or 125; when they outgrow them, the change is made to a 250—in most cases. The majority of riders never stop to consider the 175 displacement class, and its too bad.

88/TRAIL BIKE

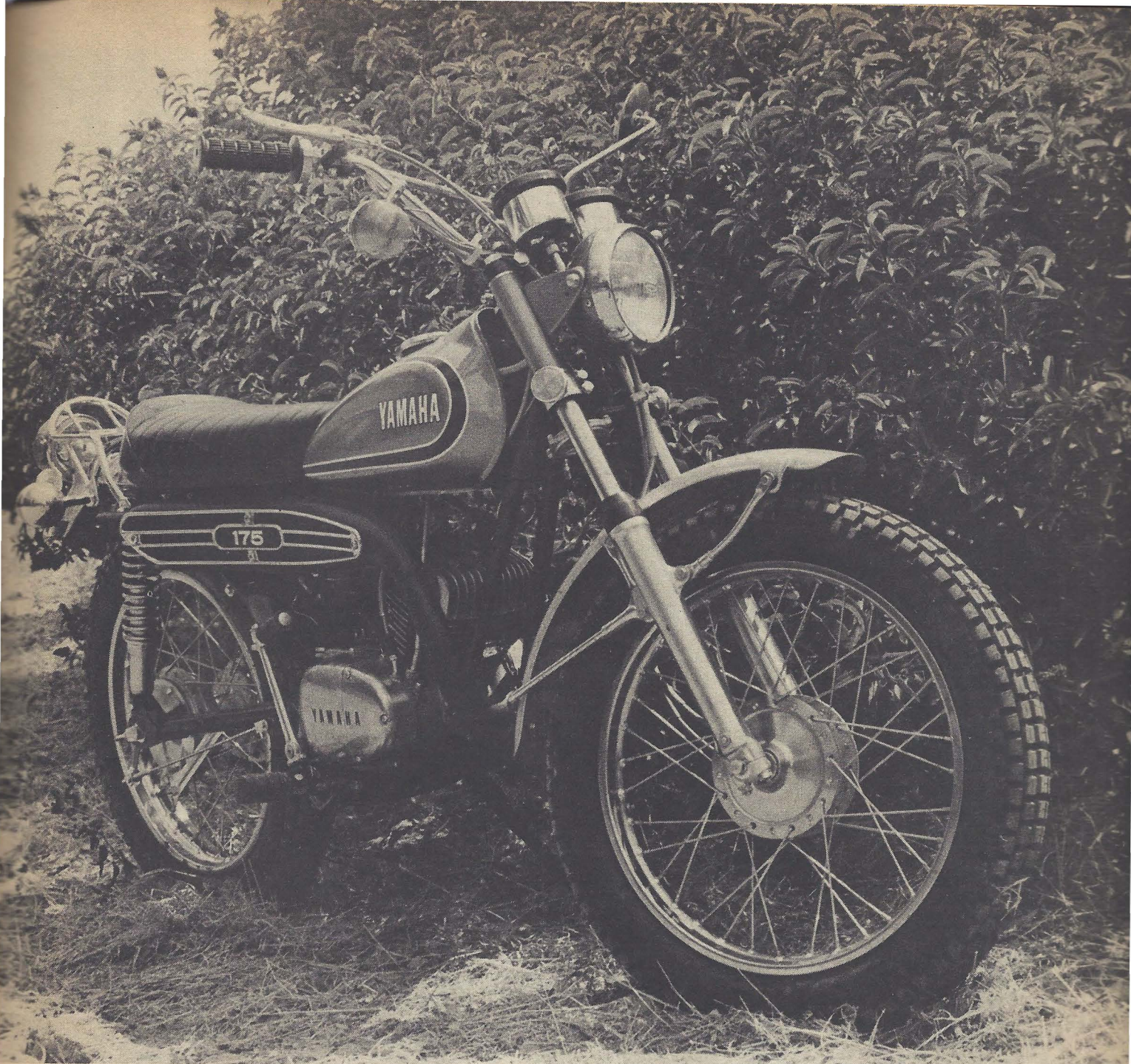
Little do they know that the 175 can deliver near 250-cc pulling power, in a frame that's as nimble and quick as a 125. What this makes is a pretty ideal trail machine, easy to maneuver with the power to pull you out of a sticky situation.

Now, if you are one of those power-loving guys that's just got to have a 250, and laugh at the thought of a 175, consider a few items. The 250 machine will cost you at least \$200 more for a very small increase in power. Smaller riders will find that a 250 mount can be a bit ponderous in rough situations, such as righting the machine on a steep hill or dragging one from a creek bed. That extra weight can make a big difference in your fa-

tigue factor, take it from us.

The biggest is not always the best, and a ride down a tight trail on Yamaha's new CT-3 will prove our point. Beginning life as the CT-1 back in 1970, Yamaha's latest 175 model bears strong resemblance to the original. Basic design remains as it was then, with subtle changes in frame geometry, suspension, and styling. Probably the most major changes took place with last year's model, when "Torque Induction" was introduced, a new reed valve intake system.

The CT-3 shares its frame with the smaller 125, and many other components as well. This is where the 125 maneuverability comes in. A short wheelbase of 50.8 inches coupled with



ample ground clearance makes the 175 a joy to ride up a narrow, rocky path. Framework is light, yet strong, with double downtubes forming the engine cradle. Welds are what would be expected from the automatic welding devices used in Japan. That is to say that the quality is good, but nowhere near perfect. Even though frame design makes for plenty of ground clearance, Yamaha fits a sturdy bashplate to the downtubes to protect both engine and frame rails.

Japanese dual-purpose machines are usually fitted with tires that are at best, a compromise for both street and dirt. Thankfully though, the people at Yamaha have equipped the CT-3 with tires of ample size, a 3.25-18 in the

front, and a 3.50-18 at the rear. So often a manufacturer will put skinny little rubber on a machine that can handle much more, but that's not the case here. Though the tread pattern could be better, the footprint is ample—it all helps.

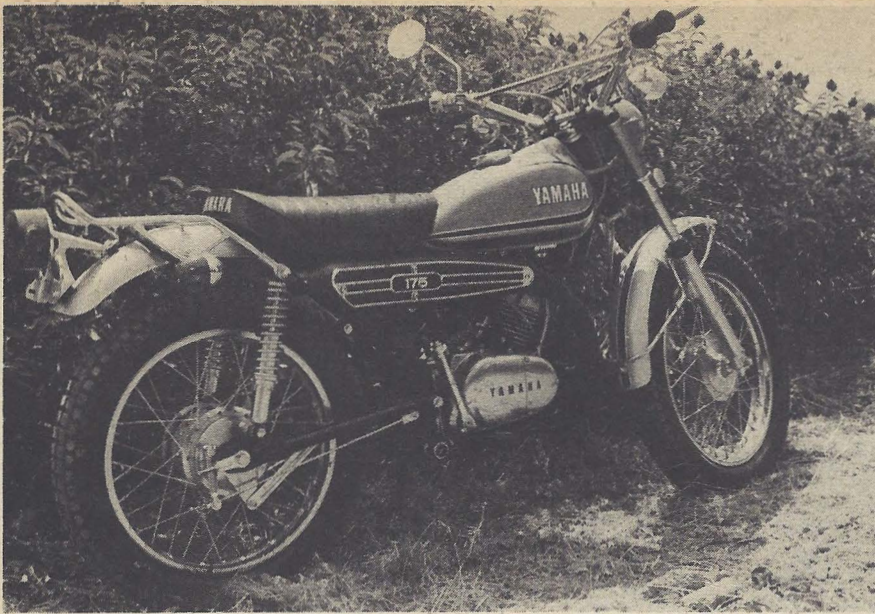
Hubs front and rear are lightweight alloy; the rear is a spool type for even more of a reduction in weight. This year, the rear hub is machined a little differently, to make a stronger mounting point for the spokes. Single leading shoe brakes are used fore and aft. The units do a good job on the pavement or in the dirt, but repeated water drenchings will render them ineffective temporarily while they dry out.

Yamaha must feel that the CT

model is very close to perfect, since they've done little to change it for 1973. Stylingwise, the tank sports a more attractive paint scheme, with painted on striping added. For the new stripe on the front fender, a stick-on decal was used instead of the paint. The new model looks more dressed up and striking. Last year's machine was just a little too plain.

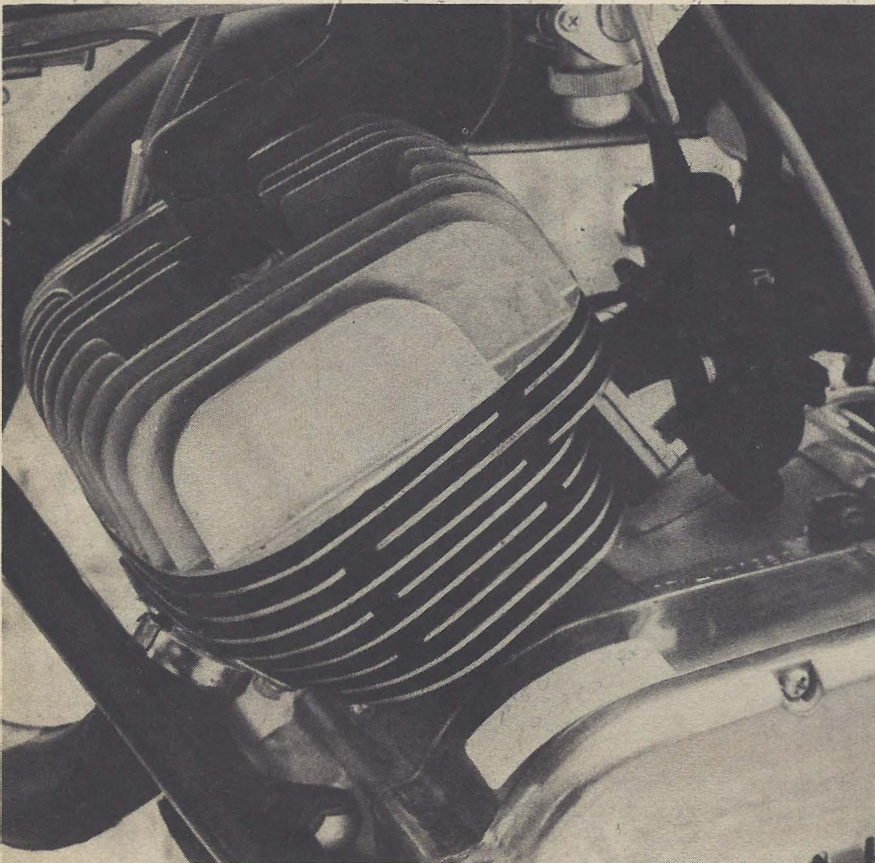
Over the years suspension has been improved to the point where only the hard charging rider would find fault with it. Casual trail riders will be more than happy however. Forks offer adequate rebound and damping characteristics and travel is sufficient.

Riding at speed can be choppy due to the rear suspension units. Over a



Front suspension is snug yet not hard. No oil leakage is evident.

Yamaha engine features reed valve induction and seven-port breathing. Twenty-four-mm carburetor is used.



series of whoop-de-dooos the shocks have a tendency to "pump up" and the rider really feels it. On long rides this could be tiring, but as it occurs only at higher speeds, most people won't be bothered by it. Of course, changing to an accessory brand of shocks is not much of a problem, and most serious riders will go this route.

The CT-3's engine is not an exceptional powerhouse by any means, but its torque characteristics make it extremely adaptable to a variety of situations. Flexible is its middle name. Displacing 171cc, the little unit pumps 90/TRAIL BIKE

out 16 horsepower at 7500 rpm, not too far behind 250 machines designed for the same purpose.

The crank rides in two ball bearing main bearings, while a roller bearing fits into the big end of the connecting rod. Yamaha lower ends have always proved to be strong. Primary drive is by gear, which transmits power to the five-speed constant mesh gearbox. A few items are worthy of mention here.

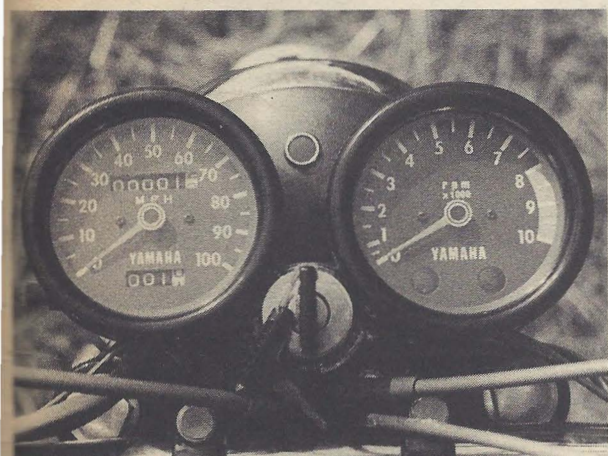
The new model's gearbox now has a dovetailed fifth gear, to prevent the trans from popping out of this gear, a problem that has occurred in enough

instances to justify the change. Another modification in the gearbox has come in the area of second gear. In a few instances where a heavy rider had been aboard a CT model, the second gear drive gear has spun on its shaft, due to its being pressed on. The 1973 model now has a splined shaft, and it is unlikely that this problem will happen again. Small items such as this can't be seen by the eye, but they certainly make for a better motorcycle.

When "Torque Induction" was introduced last year, it proved itself reliable and worthwhile. The reed valve



Fuel required is low-octane stuff (lead is bad for plugs anyway.) Tank capacity is 1.8 gallons.



Instruments are large and easy to read at a glance. Top speed is 'bout 75 mph.



improves on the piston port induction system. Port timing usually gets sloppy at low rpm in this type of system due to the overlap, but the reed valve prevents the fuel charge from blowing back when this happens, and low rpm power is increased. The reed is simply a one-way valve, and it works.

Only minor rejetting has been done to the 240-mm Mikuni carb, the reed valve is as before. The 175 burns extremely clean and starts easily, and routine maintenance should offer no trouble. Autolube does the oil and gas mixing for you and improves plug life.

Our biggest complaints with the 175 came when the machine was run through water crossings. The rubber-covered footpegs get slippery and, like we said before, the brakes quit working. The most serious problem though, is with the electrics and air intake. A splash through water is usually enough to fill your air box with the wet stuff and drown your spark in the electrical system. Better waterproofing is needed.

Overall the Yamaha CT-3 offers the same high quality as in the past. Good instrumentation and lighting are all part of the package. An owner of a

## YAMAHA CT-3

**PRICE**  
**SUGGESTED RETAIL**  
n.a.

**ENGINE**  
**ENGINE TYPE**  
two-stroke, single-cyl.

**HORSEPOWER @ RPM**  
16 @ 6000

**BORE AND STROKE**  
66-mm x 50-mm,  
2.57 in. x 1.97 in.

**DISPLACEMENT**  
171cc

10.34 cu. in.

**COMPRESSION RATIO**  
6.8:1

**CARBURETION**  
24-mm Mikuni

**IGNITION**  
battery-coil

**TRANSMISSION**  
**SPEEDS**

five

**PRIMARY DRIVE**  
helical gears

**CLUTCH TYPE**  
wet, multi-disc

**FINAL DRIVE**  
chain, 1/2 x 5/16

**CHASSIS**  
**LENGTH OVERALL**  
76 in.

**WHEELBASE**  
51 in.

**GROUND CLEARANCE**  
9.1 in.

**WEIGHT**  
223 lbs.

**FRAME TYPE**  
double-cradle

**TIRE SIZE**  
front: 3.25-18  
rear: 3.50-18

CT-3 will find he has a motorcycle that will run him around town in comfort and yet perform to his satisfaction in the boonies. More serious dirt riders can make minor changes such as tires and shocks and be happy too. There are little faults, but nothing that can't be remedied.

So when you go looking at those 125s and 250s, and get yourself in the 125/250 dilemma, take a minute to look at the 175. For many people it'll be just the ticket. ■

TRAIL BIKE/91