



Photograph by Peter Fischmann

# YAMAHA'S BABY BLUE IT125G

## RIDER/OWNER EVALUATION

by Steven Cotterell

### CESSNOCK FOUR DAY

**W**hat am I doing here?! I've got to be kidding, sitting here looking up at (not to...) the Huskys and KTMs towering arrogantly around me. At least I can feel physically relaxed, sitting with my feet flat on the ground, while they teeter on tippy toes. I'm on the same minute as a Husky and KTM. I suppose this will be the last I see of them all day — unless the times are super slack. Minute's up and we're off! My bike starts first and I'm away — oh well, at least that's something. The first section is some bitumen and mainly wide dirt roads. The bike feels perfectly happy cruising along at 110kph, and realistically speaking that's about all any 125 enduro is happy to sit on for any length of time.

After this transport section it was straight into the gnarly stuff. A long, loose climb with plenty of washouts and stone steps. It was feet on the pegs

and gas it until about half way up, when the good lines disappeared and it was back to first and paddle. The little bike had amazing grunt for a 125 and with a bit of encouragement from a few size ten pushes the bike was over the top. The Husky and KTM were able to take the hill one gear higher and fly over the first half. Their momentum carried them a fair way up the really bad section until they were forced to paddle. It was then a matter of fanning the clutch and lurching awkwardly the rest of the way up.

Meanwhile the little IT was blasting down a fast but rough fire trail. The back end was hitting the sharp edged holes and consistently jumping into the air — even sideways now and then, just to make things more interesting. Soon the technique was learned of leaning back, pulling on the bars and hitting the bumps with a heavy rear weight bias. This restored some semblance of control, but was far from relax-

ing or confidence inspiring. Picking the best lines (a forgotten art in a time of plush 11 inch travel bikes) became a prerequisite to maintaining any decent pace. There were times when you knew you could blast through a rough spot but were psyched out by the measly 7" front and 8" rear travel and backed off instead. What travel there is works quite well, especially the front — there just simply isn't enough for serious enduro competition.

It was along this road that the Husky and KTM flew past with both riders planted firmly in their seats, while I was on the pegs and crawling all over the thing. About 3 kms down the road we turned off and dropped down a horrendous slope stewn with loose rocks. The Husky rider was off and walking his bike down the hill, while the KTM rider was obviously confident enough to let the bike go and blast straight on down. I took a middle of the road attitude and

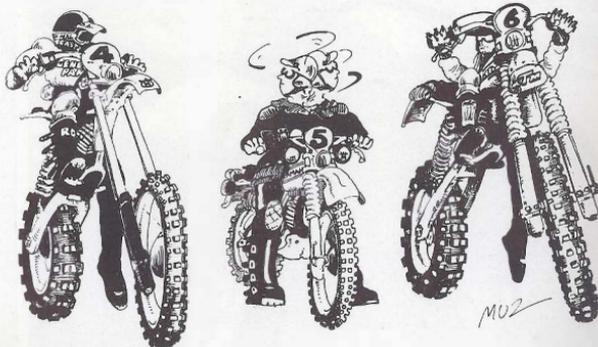


ILLUSTRATION BY MURRAY WAT

## YAMAHA IT125G

trials the bike down the slope, being able to safely dab when I wanted to.

The low seat height, excellent Yamaha brakes and light weight made this as easy as falling off a CZ. Then, into the trees and down some very tight, twisting trails. This is where the IT really shines. With its short 53.7" inch wheelbase and 28.5" steering head angle, Baby Blue is a turning fool, even with the standard tyres. The excellent mid range power of the bike, combined with all of the above, make the Yamaha equal to any in this type of riding. Which is fine if

all enduros are run exclusively in this type of country.

They aren't, and the IT lacks the versatility to cope with the many various conditions evenly encountered in an event.

I was just gaining on the KTM when the light trail turned into fast rough stuff again and he disappeared quickly into the distance. Soon the Husky would catch up again, unless we got into some tight stuff quickly. Such was the story throughout the day. Catch up, be passed, catch up again. The only trouble is, the average enduro does not offer enough of the IT's favourite country to allow it to finish in

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## YAMAHA IT125G

### Test Bike:

Annand and Thompson,  
180 Logan Road, Burranda, Qld.  
Phone: (07) 3912845  
Retail price: \$1299 suggested

### SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	Single-cylinder, air-cooled reed-valved two-stroke
Bore x stroke	56 x 50mm
Capacity	123cc
Compression ratio	8.1:1
Ignition	CDI
Carburettor	30mm Mikuni
Lubrication	Premix of your favourite goop
Air filtration	Oiled foam element

### TRANSMISSION

Clutch	Wet, multi-plate
Primary drive	Gear
Secondary drive	520 DID chain
Transmission	It has six gears in there
Shift pattern	1-2-3-4-5-6, LHS, slickomatic

### DIMENSIONS

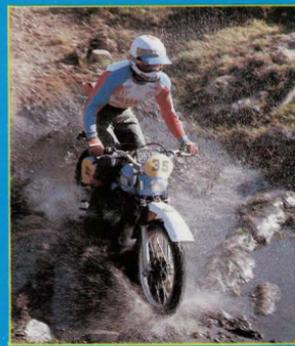
Wheelbase	365mm (53.7")
Seat height	850mm (33.5") so it's for little people
Ground clearance	300mm (12") which is amazing for its diminutive size
Weight	9.15kg (202 lbs) and that's pretty light!

### FRAME AND SUSPENSION

Frame	Old F-model style frame layout using mild steel tubing in a monoshock configuration with a split down tube semi-cradle thingo
Suspension: this is very sus	
Front	Looks like forks again, with a miserly 180mm (7.09") travel
Rear	Looks like another little trailie monoshock giving a mere 200mm (7.9") travel to the wheel!
Brakes	Excellent drum style single leading shoe type
Footpegs	Cleated, spring-loaded folding steel
Silencing	Excellent
Lighting	The others should be so good. This model has the full - headlight, taillight, stop light and blinkers
Compliance	You betcha
Fuel economy	This bike will go over well in Scotland but will be a big threat to Ian's stranglehold on the West
Enduro items	Yep, they're all there somewhere
Comfort	OK if you are short
Kilbultion	Of course. This is an upmarket machine
Numberplates	Wonderful little oval ones to irk the ACU
Colour	Baby Blue and Innocent White



Photograph by Peter Fischmann



front. No doubt they will post several high placings throughout the season and win gold and silver. This will probably be even more likely in the longer events. Most of these results will come at the hands of experienced riders, for although the bike was designed for clubman and beginners, it will take an expert to compensate for its shortcomings, if it is to finish up front.

After four days, Baby Blue sits there among the rest of the finishers. There's not as many as started, and the IT has come through remarkably well. The KTM is right next to it, still towering arrogantly and expensively over the top. As I

expected, the KTM did well; second in class to the Husky of Murray Watt.

Unexpectedly, the IT did well too: third in class! If only there were some way to make it lower and look arrogant. It still looked like a ladies bike to me.

What the IT125G can accomplish better than its more sophisticated opposition is to swell the ranks of the 125 class. Because in one area the IT has no equal — price. For \$1299 it averages out at a good \$800 to \$1000 cheaper than its opposition. With that saving the newcomer to the sport can cover his racing expenses for the year. This may not be of consequence to

the really serious competitor, but to the casual entrant it can mean the difference between his regular attendance at events, or not being there at all.

So what do we end up with? A bike that bristles with enduro features and necessities — quick release rear wheel, easy to service air cleaner, folding tip gear and brake levers, excellent 12" ground clearance, good quality plastic bits and even a trick enduro tool that works.

The engine is great, being flexible enough to climb anything, a mid range as good as anything in its class and top end only fractionally below the leaders. It stops well, turns well and is very reliable.

So far so good.

With all this going for it, the bike sounds to be adding up to a top class competition mount. It ain't.

It's let down by a playbike chassis and below average suspension. Sure, it's still fun and is far superior to the DTs and its other dual purpose 125, but it's just not in the same class as the IT175G.

Why the factory couldn't have put a 125 barrel on the 175 will never be known? Or even used the entire YZ125F frame and running gear. Either way, it would have meant the 125 would be competitive with the European machinery.

If only, if only, if only.

