

YAMAHA YZ

Better but . . .



We've got some good news and some bad news. First, the good news: the new Yamaha YZ-80 handles at least as well as the Honda XR-75, maybe a little better. Now, the bad news: the Yamaha engine is still not competitive with the XR. Since the XR-75 was introduced, it has been the bike to beat, and we suspect that was what Yamaha was aiming for with the YZ. Although they didn't completely succeed, Yamaha has come up with a bike which is a pleasant step up from its older brother, the GT-MX.

If you want a good-looking minicycle, most people will agree that the YZ-80 is among the best. It really looks neat. Styling is the same as the larger YZ bikes (125cc and 250cc). The only thing missing (on the 80's we've seen) is the set of rubber straps which wrap

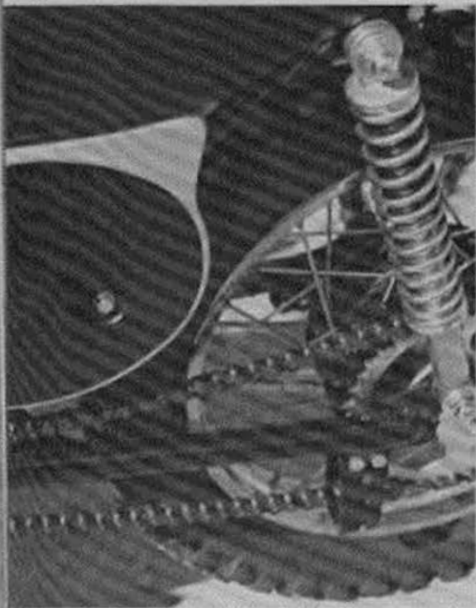
around the larger YZ gas tanks. The gray-with-red-trint paint job is the same, as is the shape of the tank. They've even tucked the exhaust up under the right side of the seat like the big bikes.

The YZ designation is supposed to refer to a "factory works replica." In other words, the YZ bikes supposedly contain all the trick equipment used by factory team racers on their competition machines. As far as we know, Yamaha doesn't have a factory-supported racer in the 80cc class, so the YZ designation is only borrowed. However, it looks like Yamaha took some lessons from last year's dealer-sponsored Yamaha 80's.

Our test rider, Jim Holley, raced a modified GT-MX last year. His bike was set up by Bill Butler of Fun 'n Fast, Northridge, Calif. To improve the hand-

ling on the stock 80, which was notoriously mediocre, Butler replaced the front forks with Showas, which were stock on the XR-75. He also put Arnaco shocks on the back, cut the frame to lower the engine 1 7/8 inches (which lowered the center of gravity), and extended the swing arm 1 1/2 inches. Sixteen inch wheels were added, front and rear.

The YZ follows some of the same modifications and principles. It has the Showa forks, lower center of gravity, and a 16 inch front wheel (the back wheel is 14 inches, but the tire is wider, so the outside diameters are about the same). The swing arm was not lengthened, but the Showa forks are slightly longer than last year, which adds a little length, anyway.

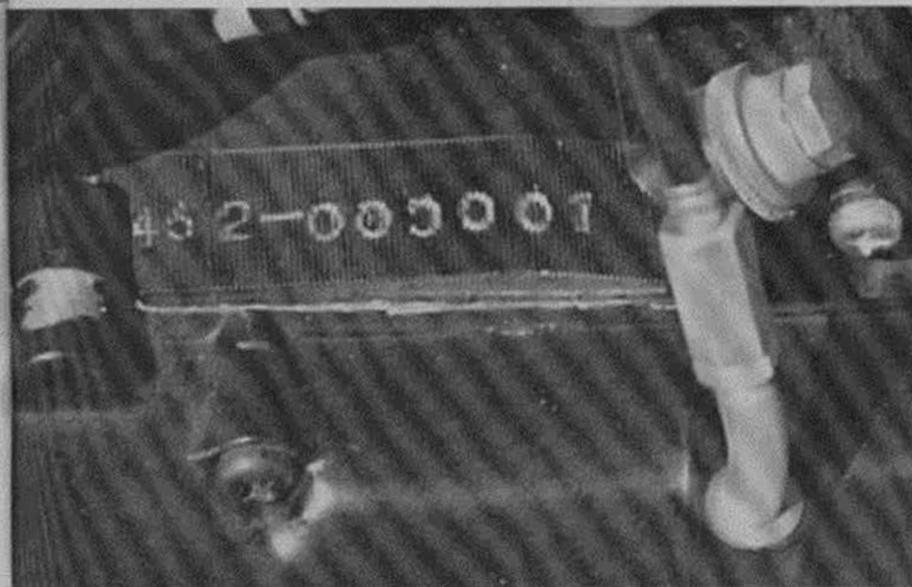


Fork angle is straighter than GT-MX. Side number plates and chain guide are new.

New Yamaha YZ-80 looks good on the track, just like its big brothers (125 & 250).

Jim Holley, experienced Yamaha 80 racer, gives the YZ a workout.

MintCycle photographed the first of its kind, YZ with serial number (X0000).



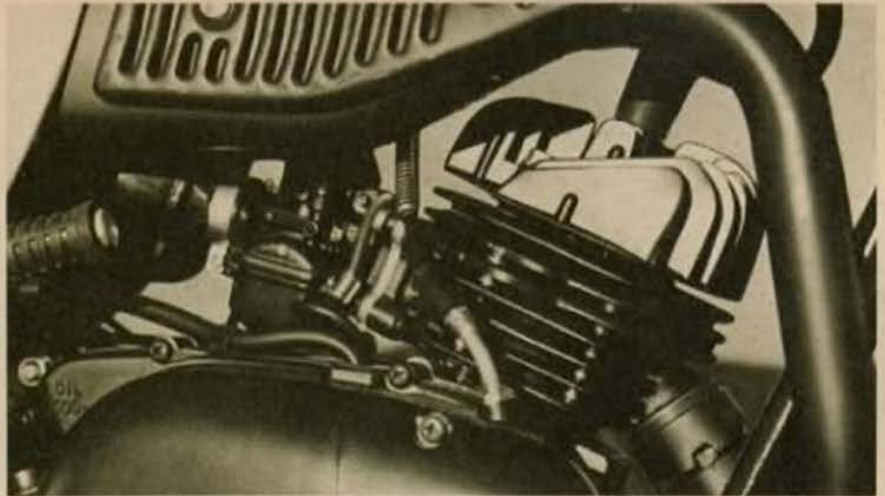
The result of these improvements is a bike which handles beautifully, responding quickly to the rider's intent. After a short ride on another hike which preferred to track in a straight line, we couldn't wait to get on the YZ.

That brings us around to the engine. Al Holley, Jim's father, had a chance to dig into the YZ engine and do some measuring. He reported that this was the same old 72cc engine, except for a larger exhaust port. That helps the engine to pass gas a little better through the new exhaust, and it appears to help performance. But it's not enough to make the bike competitive in stock trim. Let's hear a sigh of disappointment from the loyal Yamaha fans.

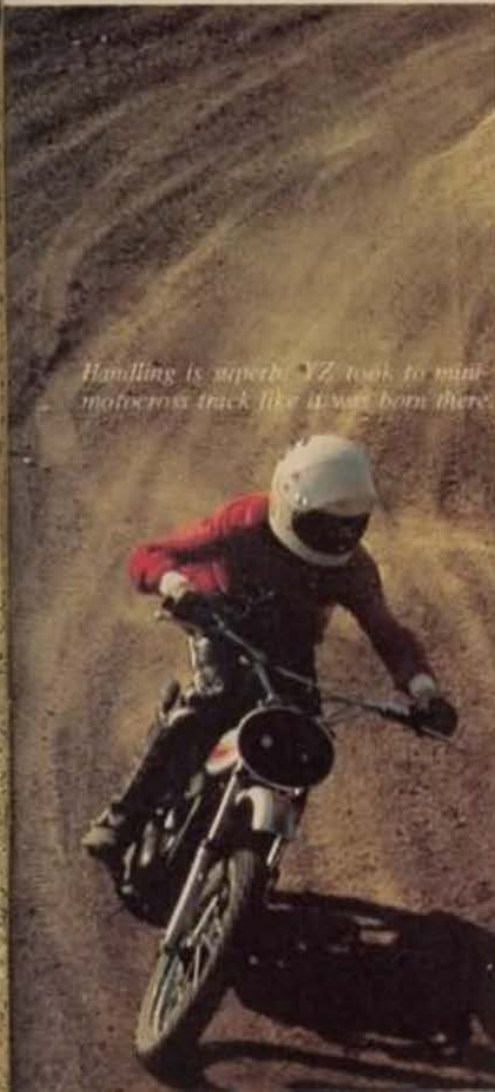
The YZ transmission is a five-speed. The fifth gear was an optional add-on



Same old 72cc engine, except for larger exhaust port. Performance is better.



Handling is superb. YZ took to mini-motorcross track like it was born there.



last year. The range and spacing seem well suited to a variety of track and trail situations. The broad power range of the non-radical engine gives a little leeway in gear selection.

There are a bunch of details which add to the appearance or workability of the bike. The nice looking number plates cover the oil reservoir and oil injection system. The system is a carryover from the previous 80's, and it works efficiently, although racers may remove it to save weight and pre-mix gas and oil.

They've finally got rid of the rubber-covered foot pegs, which can get slippery very quickly. The pegs on the YZ have serrated tops for a good grip. There's a chain guide on the left swing arm, back near the rear sprocket. Rubber dust boots cover the adjusting nuts on the

clutch and front brake levers. There's also a trick-looking breather tube on the gas cap.

Something which we didn't notice until we compared pictures of the YZ-80 and the GT-MX is the difference in rear shock angle. The YZ shocks are more nearly vertical. We've seen experiments going both ways, to more or less angle on the shocks, to try to get more shock travel. In this case, the travel is sufficient, but the shocks seem a bit springy. That interpretation was given by an oversized (for minis) rider. Holley was satisfied, but might put on stronger springs for heavy racing.

Jim's impressions were based on our trip to Indian Dunes in the middle of the week. There weren't many other bikes around, so we had room to do

MAY 1974/21

YAMAHA YZ 80

some serious playing. First stop was the latest mini-motocross track. The course is a little tight in spots, scaled to minicycles. The YZ maneuvered around the track as if it was born there.

Later we wandered out on the sand. Jim on the YZ and a larger tester on another bike. About a quarter mile out, we swapped bikes and headed back. The two riders compared notes and agreed that the YZ took about half as much effort to keep on a controlled course. The easier a bike is to control, the less it will wear out the rider in a long ride.

Our last stop was the full-size Shadow Glen motocross course. All the other bikes were motorcycles, so the mini was outclassed. However, Jim's riding talent made it look good. He even led a YZ-125 for awhile, but only in a tight section of the track where the larger rider couldn't find a hole to get by.

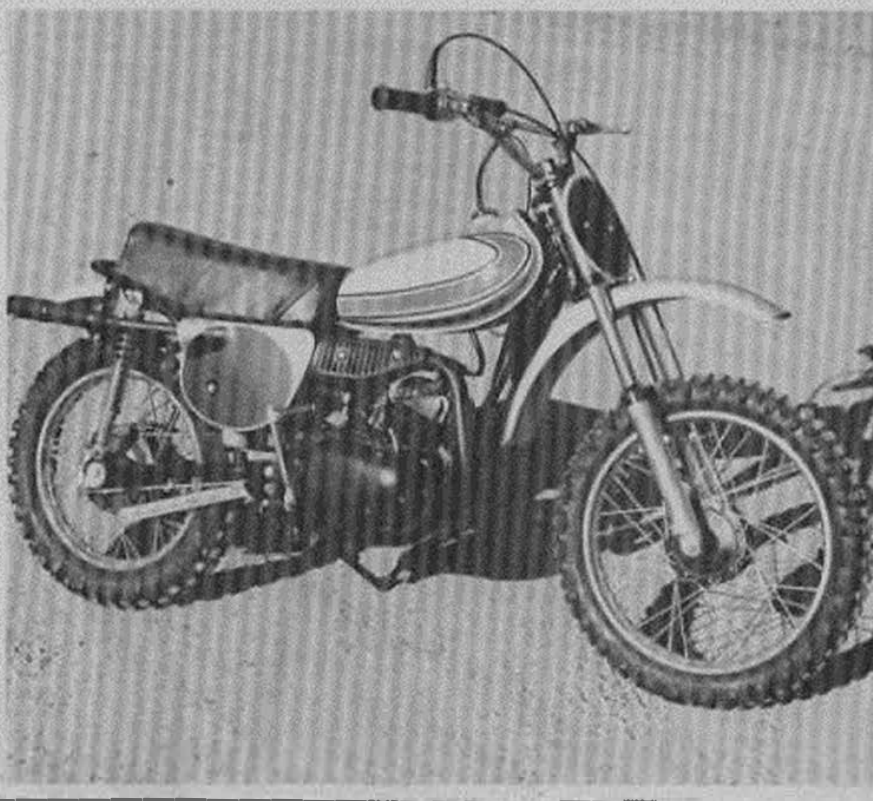
On another occasion, the YZ was used as a trail bike, on terrain which probably wouldn't inspire a motocross racer. The bike was a joy to ride, in any situation that cropped up.

That brings us to a slightly ambiguous conclusion. We have a bike that looks and handles like a racer, but with un-miraculous stock power. It also would make a darn good trail bike.

We're quite sure Yamaha will sell a bunch of these YZ's, just because it looks so good. Some riders will really dig having a bike that looks like the bigger YZ racers. But we hope those buyers will know exactly what they are getting. It's a darn fine bike, but it's not quite a Honda-beater.

22/MINICYCLE

Show front forks, lower center of gravity, etc., contribute to great handling.



YAMAHA YZ80A

Manufacturer: Yamaha International Corp., 6800 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620

ENGINE

Engine type	Single, two-stroke	Carb.	16mm Teikei
Bore	47mm	Ignition	Flywheel magneto
Stroke	42mm	Lubrication	Autolube oil injection
Displacement	72cc	Fuel capacity	1.1 gal.
Horsepower @ rpm	N/A	Fuel requirement	Reg. gas
Compression ratio	8.8:1		

TRANSMISSION

Transmission type	5-speed, constant mesh	Gear ratios (overall)	
Primary drive	Helical gear	1st	35.726:1
Clutch type	Wet, multi-plate	2nd	21.985:1
Final drive	No. 420 chain	3rd	18.704:1
		4th	12.387:1
		5th	10.570:1

CHASSIS

Frame type	Sgl. backbone, dbl. engine cradle loop	Tires	
Wheelbase	48"	Front	250 x 16
Overall length	66"	Rear	300 x 14
Suspension:		Brakes	Internal expanding, frt. & rear
Front	Oil-dampened forks	Ground clearance	7"
Rear	Swing arm, shocks	Seat height	28 1/2"
Wheels	Front 16", rear 14"	Handlebar height	36"
		Dry weight	134 lbs.

PRICE AS TESTED \$454.00

www.legends-yamaha-enduros.com