

By Tony Murphy

We got our first look at the KT 250 in Japan in June. It was then too early for a test so we had to wait until its official introduction at the Kawasaki Superbike International at Laguna Seca. Their press preview was followed by a day's ride in the hills of Northern California sampling the power and chassis characteristics. We came away convinced that Kawasaki now offers the best trials bike built in Japan, offering features and performance that more than rivals the Spaniards.

Unlike their contemporaries, Kawasaki chose to build a new trials engine rather than modify an existing one and fit it to a trials frame. With the help of three-time European trials champion Don Smith, prototypes were built and tested under actual trials competition. Once Smith and the other riders were convinced that the engine/chassis combination was capable of winning International events, plans went ahead for a production version incorporating all the prototype's features plus a few more like lights and conveniences like a sidestand.

Finished in Kawasaki's famous lime green, the machine is obviously a trialler. With gobs of ground clearance and an almost totally hidden exhaust system there's no doubt as to its intended use. While it is actually only a matter of individual taste, we feel that the KT 250 is about the best looking trialler, combining form with function.

The all-alloy engine is over-square with a 69mm bore and 65mm stroke. Few trials engines offer unique features, and the KT-250 doesn't break with that tradition. It does offer automatic oil injection like the Yamaha, but no revolutionary breakthroughs in porting or carburetion are claimed. There's 17 horsepower for those interested and 19 ft.-lbs. of torque at 4000 rpm. The latter is important as is the "feel" of the power. Trials machines don't have to go fast but must be able to operate at low rpm without stalling.

One thing that's unique to the Kawasaki is the cylinder head. Inside, it provides for a compression ratio of 7:1, but outside it is obvious that it was designed to give the exhaust system room beneath the tank. It is flat, no deeper than two inches at its widest point, rather than being a large-finned head with a cut out for the head pipe. The cylinder, too, is a departure from the norm for Kawasaki. Rather than long, through-studs the cylinder is secured to the cases by a base flange and short studs.

The crankcases themselves are very

The KT 250 is a good example of form following function. It is a first-class trials bike and attractive at the same time. Finish is lime green.

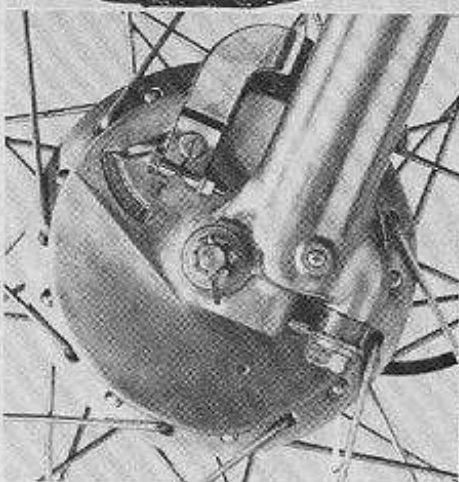




An all-new engine unit was developed to power the all-new machine. There's plenty of low speed pulling power. Top speed is shade over 60 mph. Note the "flat" head that allows the pipe to fit easily beneath the gas tank.

Rear wheel features snail-type chain adjusters and chain oiler in swing arm. The knurled knob controls the amount of oil flow for varying temperatures. Chain tensioner is an absolute must on a trials bike.

Lightweight front end features forward mounted axle and the most intricate brake lever we've ever seen. It's that way to keep from snagging brush and causing the wheel to lock.



KAWASAKI ON TRIAL

**Even the Spaniards
will be surprised**





KT-250

Base Price as tested...\$900.00 (approx.)
Factory warranty.....6 mos.

ENGINE

Type.....Single Cyl. 2-stroke, piston port
Bore x stroke.....59x65mm
Claimed HP @ rpm.....17.0 @ 6,500 rpm
Claimed torque @ rpm15.9 ft.-lbs. @ 4,000 rpm
Compression ratio.....7.0:1 (actual)
Lubrication system.....Superlube (oil injection)
Carburetion.....Mikuni VM 26SC (26mm)
Air Filter.....Open pore foam
Ignition system.....Magneto/CDI
Electrical systemFlywheel magnet (no battery)
Starting.....Kick starter/primary system
Exhaust.....Upswept with muffler/spark arrester

DRIVE TRAIN

Primary/ratio..... Gear/3.263:1
Clutch..... Wet, multi disc
Transmission/shift..... 5-speed/left foot
Gear Ratios..... 3.250, 2.466, 1.833,
1.217, 0.785
Final drive/ratio..... 3.714 (52/14)

CHASSIS AND SUSPENSION

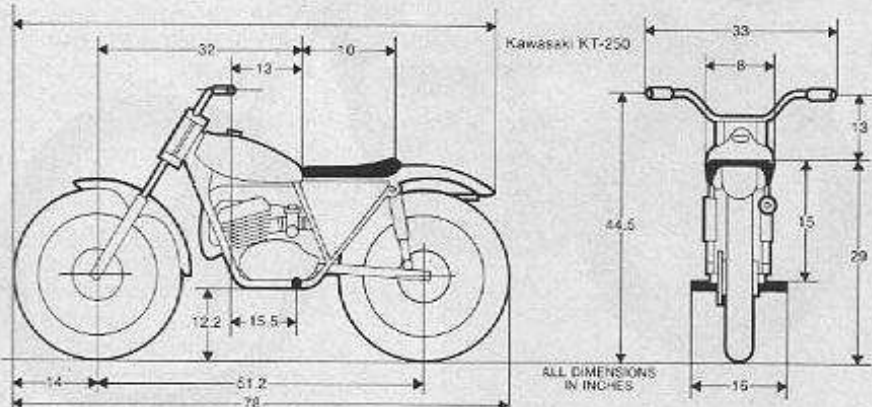
Frame.....	Tubular, double cradle
Suspension,	
front.....	Telescopic fork, 2-way damped
rear.....	Hydraulic shock/dual rate spring
Brakes,	
front.....	4.7" dia. SLS
rear.....	5.1" dia. SLS
Tires,	
front.....	2.75x21 Trials Pattern
rear.....	4.00x18 Trials Pattern
Rim locks front/rear.....	1/2

WEIGHTS AND CAPACITIES

Weight, wet, unladen.....	207 pounds
Fuel capacity.....	6.3 liters
Oil tank capacity.....	1 pint

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Speedometer	80mph, no trip
Tools	yes
Stand	Right side stand



narrow. A CDI magneto is driven off the left side of the crankshaft while the primary drive is on the right. The oil injection pump occupies the front portion of the right side cover ahead of the clutch and primary drive. All very compact.

The gear driven five-speed transmission utilizes typical trials-type gear ratios. The first three are low, intended primarily for use within a section, while the top two are spread a little farther apart for use at higher speeds. With the combination of internal and overall gear ratios provides a machine capable of going from 5 to 35 mph in third gear and yet still possessing a high gear that allows a 60-plus maximum. The shifting, like all the other controls, was smooth and effortless.

A well-tucked-in kick starter lever is mounted on the right side along with an almost hidden rear brake lever. The left side shifter mounts almost vertically to keep it out of the way of rocks and bushes and since the shift shaft protrudes from both sides of the cases it can be switched over to right shift for Bultaco or early Montesa riders.

Carburetion is supplied by a 26mm Mikuni attached to a large air cleaner. Fitted with a starter jet, the carb provided two kick starting every time, hot or cold. The air cleaner is easily accessible by removing one of the plastic side covers.

In the chassis department the KT offers a double downtube frame that doubles as a skidplate where it runs beneath the engine. Of small diameter tubing, the frame is conventional for a trials machine. It is designed to support the engine and suspension and still have room left over to keep all of the other essential components inboard of the frame.

Up front a set of internal spring telescopic forks support a 2.75x21 trials-tired wheel on a Bultaco-style forward mounted axle. Non-parallel alloy fork crowns lock onto the tubes with allen bolts and allow for the tubes to move up or down, depending on your geometry preference. A clever bracket hooked between the two crowns supports the small shielded headlight.

In the rear a 4.00x18 trials tire is mounted to a light weight alloy hub and wheel. Snail-type adjusters and a spring-loaded chain tensioner are included features. Also the left tube of the swing arm contains oil for the adjustable chain oiler. The right side mounts the sidestand.

From the rider's position the machine instantly feels like a competitive trials bike. With nothing jutting out against your legs it "feels" even narrower than it is. All control locations seem right and the attractive slimline tank and seat blend smoothly together.

Continued on page 80

Fast Track to a Cool Job!

★ TRAIN AT HOME TO BE A

Motorcycle Mechanic



If you like to
ride a cycle
for fun... learn how to fix

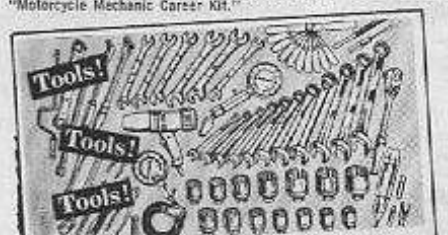
it for profit! Can you imagine a better way to
earn your living? And to make it even better, the
pay is great—whether you choose to work in a
cycle shop for someone else or decide to start
your own cycle repair business.

Now, thanks to North American, there's a fast,
easy way to get the training you need... at home in
your spare time. No need to quit school or your job.
Experts show you step-by-step everything from
minor tune-ups to major overhauls.

CYCLES ARE BIG BUSINESS

...AND SO IS FIXING THEM!

There are more than 3 million cycles registered
in the U.S. today. Plus an estimated 3 million
more dirt bikes. But there are fewer than 10,000
motorcycle mechanics available to repair them.
(Imagine only one mechanic for every 600 motor-
cycles!) No wonder career opportunities are so
great... and getting better every day. The door
is open to you now. Rush coupon for FREE
"Motorcycle Mechanic Career Kit."



Special Cycle Tools and Test Instruments included to start
you fast! Professional tools plus your North American "know-how"
turn you into a skilled mechanic. We teach you how to use wrenches,
sockets, impact screwdrivers, timing lights, electrical test instruments,
compression gauges, vacuum gauges, digital wheels, soldering irons,
ignition switch sets, dual indicators and much more! We even
include a set of special cycle tools and instruments to get you started.
Just these are yours to use during your training... and yours to keep
after you graduate! Rush coupon for FREE "Motorcycle Mechanic Career Kit." No cost
or obligation... now or ever! Rush coupon today!

You'll Be the Center of Attraction in Your Circle of Friends...

Be the envy of friends and neighbors
as they flock around to watch you
tear down and tune-up all kinds
of motorcycles. And just think of
the satisfaction in knowing you've
got the best performing bike in
town. Plus, you can make extra
dollars fixing motorcycles for
your friends and neighbors.

SEND FOR FREE CAREER KIT

Get all the facts now... with-
out obligation. Be the first in
your neighborhood to cash in
on the big demand for motor-
cycle mechanics.



Mail Coupon Now!

Careers by Home Study

NORTH AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MOTORCYCLE REPAIR
4500 Campus Dr., Dept. 5084 Newport Beach, CA 92663

Rush FREE "Career Kit" on how I can
become an expert Motorcycle Mechanic.

NAME _____ AGE _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____

KAWASAKI TRIALS

continued from page 40

Even the separate sidecovers are
formed into both the tank and seat.
And the exhaust! The only evidence
that it has a pipe, muffler and spark
arrestor is the spark arrestor portion
jutting out behind the right rear shock.

A brief ride tells you that the KT is a
good trials bike. A longer ride makes
you realize just how good. It's nimble,
tractable and yet is not hurting for
power when it's really needed. It'll
plunk. It'll scream if you want it to. It



has steering and suspension that is
predictable under the most adverse
conditions. It's a machine that can be
criticized in several respects but all of
them border on nitpicking.

For instance. We found that the rear
frame loop supporting the rear plastic
fender was so high that it would occa-
sionally slap the rider just below the
tailbone. It's supposed to be lowered
on the next batch since apparently
several test riders had also complained
of it. The footpegs have flat tops, mak-
ing them potentially slippery in wet go-
ing. The forks, at least on our test
bike, were a little on the weak side,
bottoming several times with 150
pounds of rider aboard. This, however,
is something that might be rectified by
the individual by careful selection of
fork oil. In any case, better soft than
too hard.

That's it. We spent an afternoon
aboard a KT in Japan and nearly a full
day on one in California and could
come up with no other criticisms. And
those that we did point out could be
changed by a competent rider on a
Saturday afternoon. All the other sys-
tems were GO. It thoroughly impressed
us and due credit should go to both
Don Smith and Kawasaki for producing
such a fine machine on the first try.
We predict that you'll be seeing lots of
them in local events and from among
them will come lots of winners.

Keep 'em clean with

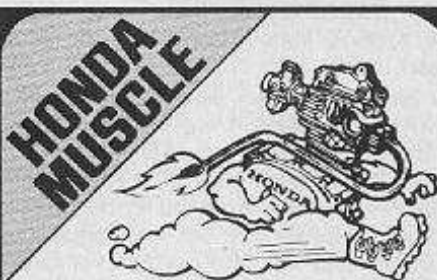
GUNK
ENGINE
BRITE



Spray it on...
hose it off
sparkling
clean!
Removes
grease
and dirt.

**ROYAL
KENFIELD** WEST

Mail Order Parts, Shop Manuals, etc.
Largest Stock in U.S.A. — Tell us your needs today!
RE WEST 420 So. San Gabriel, San Gabriel, Ca. 91776



**BIG BORE KITS • TUNED PIPES
STROKED CRANKS for SINGLES
ENGINE BUILDING • CAMS**

Send for
Complete Catalog \$1.25 Cash
Model Information 50c

Powroll Inc.
P.O. Box 1206 S10
Bend, Oregon 97701
(503) 382-6395

VANTASTIC products

"TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS FOR TOMORROW'S PEOPLE"

The NEW California sensation, "Van Bra's"
Protect the custom paint on your Van from
rocks & bugs with "THE BRA" from Alphabet's.
The custom touch that no castle on wheels
should be without.
Made of top quality black naphthalene. Easily
detaches for access to engine.
Fits late model Ford, Dodge, Chev/GMC
Vans only. Specify make of van when ordering.
Remember:
It's what's up front that counts!

\$59.95



CHECK WITH ALPHABET'S FOR
THE LATEST IN INTERIOR &
EXTERIOR VAN ACCESSORIES.

SEND \$1 FOR CATALOGUE
SPECIFY VAN OR MOTORCYCLE.



**Alphabet's
Custom
West**

M-1

(213) 327-4430

821 W. GARDENA BLVD., GARDENA, CA 90247