

TYRAN-O-SOUR-US

MX 125

by the Staff of
DIRT BIKE

Roll Your Own

When you walk into one of their showrooms, Detroit's finest salesmen start by showing you cars and trucks, but in no time, they're shoving option lists under your nose. Build your personal car out of these, boy. OK, I'll take the model 2 van with glass, fat tires and a six. But then you have to select from the powers-that-be: steering, brakes, windows, seat. . .you can even get a power radio aerial. Then there's the more esoteric stuff: custom exterior trim (where they put molding on the sides); the art decor group (you get a garish stripe and maybe a painting of a desert sunset); how about the handling package? (it's stiffer springs and wider wheels); and don't neglect the road comfort group (that's where they stuff the hood and the firewalls with junk to deaden the noise). It goes on and on. We haven't even mentioned air and the eight jillion kinds of radios you can get.

You get the sensation that a car without options would cost about \$219, but it wouldn't have a steering wheel.

Dirt bikes aren't sold that way. At least they haven't been up 'til now.

Turns out that the Tyran 125 MX is a basic motorcycle and a bunch of options to make it trickier. New ground. A good idea, basically. Why buy a bunch of stuff that you're going to take off and stow, replace with lighter items, or otherwise modify, if you can get it all at once and just go riding?





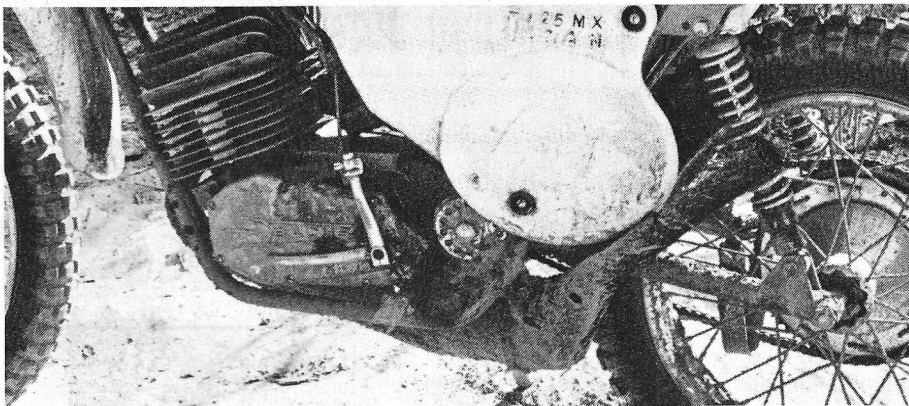
Bobby Messer and Tom Brooks wrung out the Tyran for the camera.

Here's how it works.

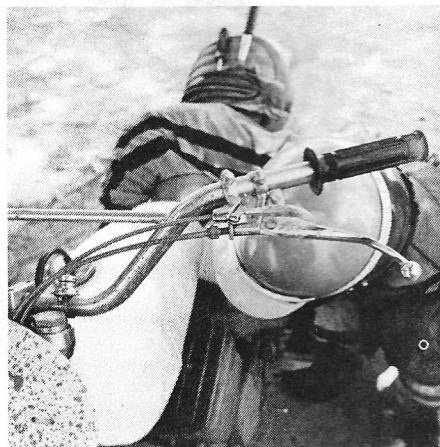
Mitsubishi International — one of the biggest companies in Japan, one of the biggest in the world, as a matter of fact — imports the basic motorcycle into the States. It's a Sachs six-speed B engine, hung in a Wassel frame, and held off the ground — sometimes — by REH forks and Girling shocks. From there, American-made Rahm Engineering plastic is used for the tank and fenders, and the legendary E.C. Birt makes the pipe.

Now it starts getting complicated. The option list is incredible. It amounts to picking a Stage I, II or III Tyran. Stage I is mild, but it only costs \$960. Stage II is another pipe, a bit of porting, some cutting, and a little carb boring. Stage III is even more of the above, plus yet another pipe and a new Bing.

Then there're suspension mods. You can get Boge/ Mulholland or "E.C." Arnaco RP Gold shocks for \$60. Or either of them and a mid-mount swingarm for \$103.80. So much for the Girlings. And you can do the whole thing on the other end too; the alternative is



Various size bellies and stingers go into the I, II and III stage pipes.



Note the Andre's bars and dangerous levers. Note Jim Connolly working on the bike.



The motor is the best part of the Tyran; it's the only part worth talking about.

eight-inch Boge forks for \$200.

Wait a minute; we're not finished. You can also order the bike with a Filtron instead of the paper thing and then there're two kinds of air boxes available. You can substitute Andre's bars for the English units for \$15.

You can do almost anything — before you pick the bike up.

But let's go back through the list of stuff we actually got the chance to try.

Our bike was delivered with all three pipes, but was stock as far as suspension. Too bad, because we can't recommend the Girlings and the REH forks with a clean conscience. The shocks had about 15 hours on them and were completely wasted. The vented REHs had an actual travel of 5½ inches, but the seals were gone. The result was a harsh ride, made even more uncomfortable by the incredibly bad saddle and a seat/peg relationship that makes old Bultacos the model of comfort.

The height of the footpegs and the saddle made sitting down near impossible. And that peg height actually affected the handling of

the Tyran. When you stood up for braking or bumps, you tended to slide back, keeping the bars at arm's length. This unloaded the front end, which immediately started skating. You could cope, but not easily — and not for long. The motorcycle simply wore you out, compensating for it all the time. Even Jim Connolly, District 37's 125 expert points leader and our senior guest tester, couldn't relax enough to start pushing it.

It makes evaluating the handling very difficult when you can't keep the thing on the ground, so we can't say a thing about the geometry.

Power out of the Sachs is good, though. Really good. With the Stage III pipe on it, the Tyran moves out like a 250. No one grinds like E.C. Of course there was zero bottom end. It definitely did not make it on the MX course, but then, that version is advertised for TT and short-trackin' only. Strap on the Stage II pipe and the bike gets a little more tractable; still, you're busy with the shifter — even in the corners, as well as before and after. This was the combination our expert riders



The English frame uses cams at the swingarm pivot to adjust the chain.



preferred, but the novices felt best on the Stage I outfit. You pay your money and take your choice; at least with the Tyran, you get a choice.

BITS AND INCONSEQUENTIAL ITEMS THAT YOU PROBABLY OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT

All the plastic parts and the optional forks and shocks are guaranteed for a year. If you bust one, Mitsubishi ships a replacement to your dealer within 24 hours of the order.

And E.C. Birt promises to be personally available for anyone with problems; just telephone him at E.C. & Walker in Boynton Beach, Florida.

Some of the things you might be calling him about are the levers (they're the old steel kind that make you cringe and count your fingers when you look at them), the steel rims, and that saddle (but there's another one coming, they say).

You wouldn't be calling about the brakes 'cause they work. You won't complain about the power. But you'll probably need him to help you repair the shifting — it is a Sachs, you know.

SUMMARY

At the risk of being accused of floccinaucinihilipilification, we have to sum up our one-day session with the Tyran by saying that we couldn't find any reason to buy one. Not now; not with all the other bikes available. Even that motor doesn't compensate for all the other defects. And that is that.

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