

YAMAHA XT 500



The Yamaha XT500 — They said the “Thumper”

Less than five years ago, most of the world's motorcycle manufacturers had pronounced the big-capacity four-stroke single as dying...if not already dead. The “Thumper” was considered an anachronism, out of place and out of time in this modern two-wheeled world.

Yamaha's marketing men thought differently, however. They shrewdly surmised that the unique, slogging torque of the single-cylinder, big-bore engine still had an appeal to many thousands of motorcyclists and that the lack of a 500cm³ single-cylinder four-stroke machine had left a gap even in today's crowded market.

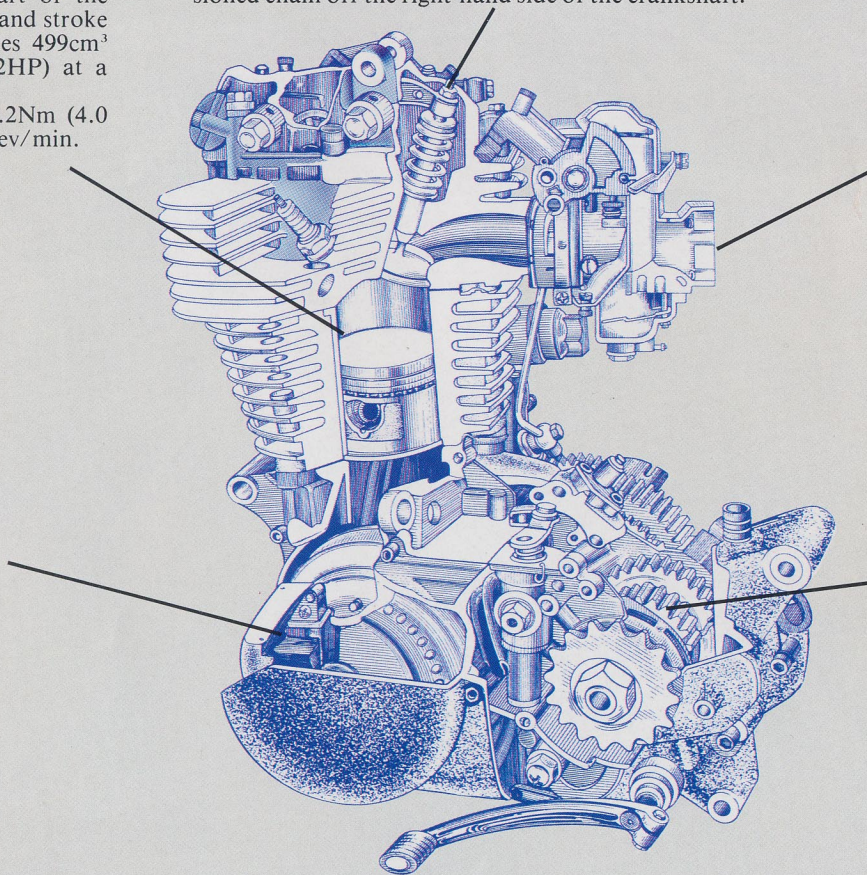
The secret of the appeal of the XT500 is the single-cylinder, four-stroke engine the heart of the “Thumper”! With a bore and stroke of 87 × 84mm, it displaces 499cm³ and produces 23.5kW (32HP) at a throbbing 6,500rev/min.!

Maximum torque is 39.2Nm (4.0 m-kg) developed at 5,500 rev/min.

Ignition and battery-charging are handled by a flywheel magneto. The extra weight of the magneto flywheel on the crankshaft is also a great added advantage to the already-strong, low-speed pulling power of the XT500.

Dry sump lubrication is utilised, the oil being drawn from a 2.4 litre frame tank, pumped under pressure around the engine, scavenged back to the tank and re-circulated.

Valve operation on the XT500 is via a single overhead camshaft in the alloy cylinder head. The camshaft is driven by a tensioned chain off the right-hand side of the crankshaft.



They were right. Three years ago the XT500 was introduced and - to the chagrin of Yamaha's rivals - this supposed “anachronism” took the motorcycle world by storm!

And it wasn't just nostalgia that caused this runaway sales success. Young riders who had previously never even thought of riding a single-cylinder four-stroke, tried the XT500 and were immediately captivated by the combination of light weight and lusty pulling power.

Set up as a true dual-purpose machine, the XT500 is now one of the most popular Enduro machines on the market and is just as much in demand as a road-going motorcycle.

So... Yamaha resurrected the “Thumper” and now the rest of the world's major manufacturers are trying to catch up with the bandwagon!

A big-bore, competition model Mikuni 32mm carburettor feeds the fuel/air mixture into the XT500. The carburettor draws air through a massive air-cleaner designed to keep the dust of off-road riding out of the engine.

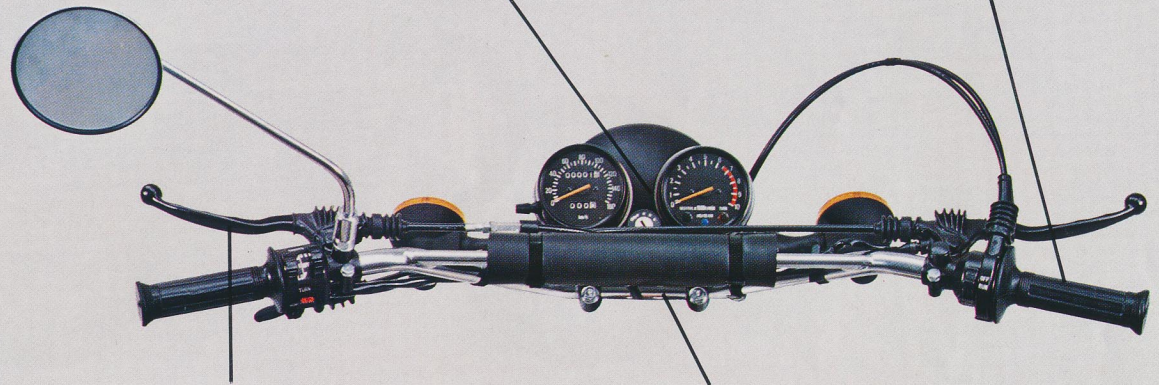
The five-speed gearbox has ratios especially chosen to cope with anything from walking-pace, off-road rough stuff to highway speeds up to 150 km/h. A multi-plate clutch runs in oil and primary drive is via reliable gears.



... was dead But Yamaha proved them wrong!

Even though it is an Enduro-style machine, the XT500 still has comprehensive instrumentation and all of the necessary equipment for highway use. Speedometer, tachometer, powerful headlight and bright, flashing turn signals are all part of the specification.

A quick-action, competition throttle is fitted to the XT500. This lessens the wrist action necessary to turn on that thumping horsepower. Off-road riders, who use the twistgrip a great deal (as against the more constant throttle openings of road riding) will particularly appreciate this.



Bell-crank control levers give added leverage and make the riders job a lot easier by lessening the strain on his hands. The levers have rubber shrouds at pivot and adjustment points to keep out water and grit.

The XT500 handlebars are braced to cope with the strain of off-road riding. This brace is padded in order to protect the riders face in the unfortunate event of a spill on the trail.

The immediate success of the XT500 in sales terms was very definitely linked to the fact that it was just as quick to become a winner in various types of competition events.

First success came soon after the XT500 was introduced in 1976 and it came in the white heat of American Grand National Championship Competition! Young Californian, Rick Hocking, used the lightweight 500cm³ single to soundly thrash all the 750cm³ opposition in the Houston Astrodome T.T. — an event like a motocross run on a smooth, slide-provoking dirt-track.

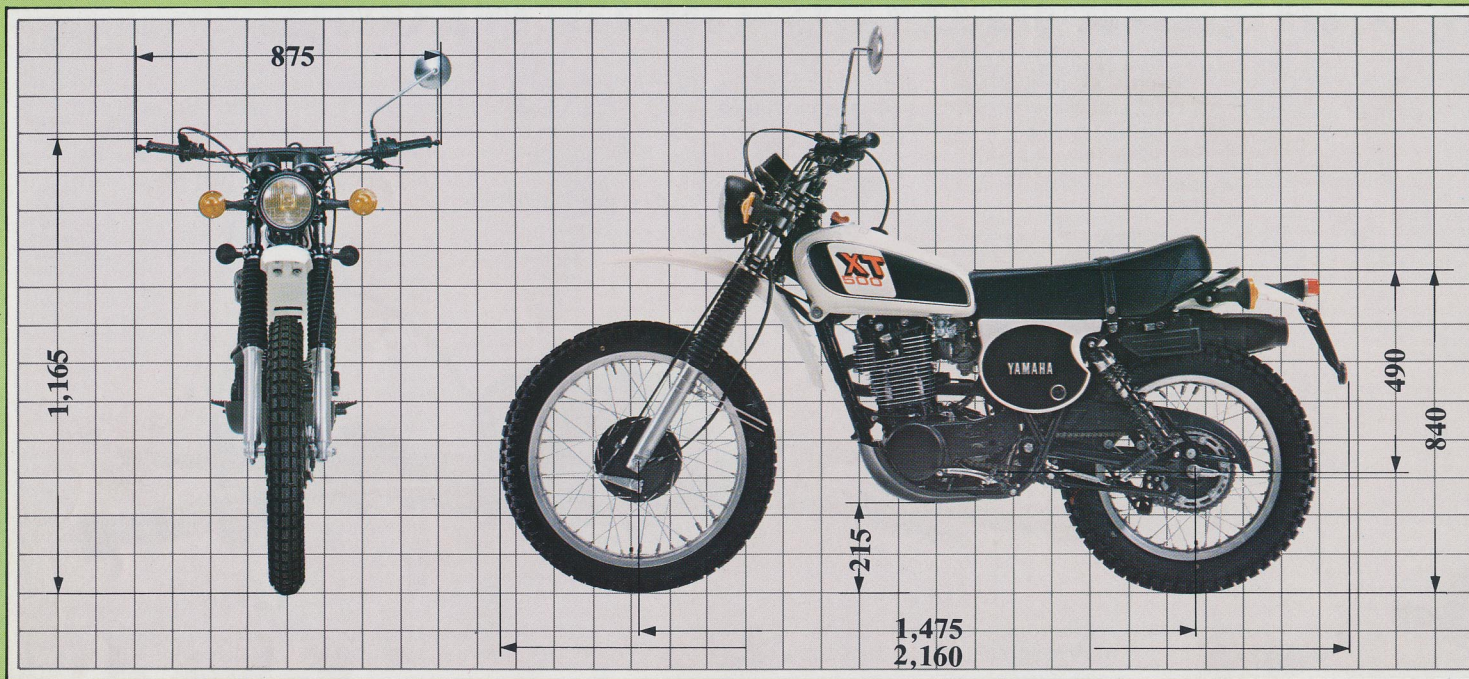
Later that year, an XT500 won the 500 Mile Greenhorn Enduro — one of America's classic off-road events.

Africa also saw XT500 success, early in 1977 in the French-organised, 6,000 mile marathon from the Ivory Coast in West Africa, across the Sahara Desert and finally through Italy to Nice on the French Riviera. Parisian, Gilles Comte, vanquished all opposition on going that varied from jungle trails to desert sands.

Finally, Bengt Aberg set the seal on the XT500 competition program by winning the 1977 Luxemburg Motocross Grand Prix —

First Grand Prix win by a four-stroke moto-cross machine in almost ten years!

That's the kind of background that the XT500 rider can consider when putting his own bike to the test of road or trail riding!



XT500

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

Type 4-stroke, OHC, Single
 Displacement 499 cm³
 Bore & Stroke 87.0 × 84.0 mm
 Compression ratio 9.0 : 1
 Max. horsepower 23.5 kW (32.0 HP)
 @6,500 rev/min.
 Max. torque 39.2 Nm (4.0 kg-m)
 @5,500 rev/min.
 Lubrication system Dry sump
 Starting system Primary kick starter
 Primary transmission Gear
 Final transmission Chain
 Gearbox 5-gear
 Carburettor VM32SS
 Clutch Multi-plate, Wet
 Battery 6V, 4AH
 Charging system Flywheel magneto
 Ignition type Magneto, CB/Coil

DIMENSIONS

Overall length 2,160 mm
 Overall width 875 mm
 Overall height 1,165 mm
 Wheelbase 1,475 mm
 Min. Ground clearance 215 mm
 Seat height 840 mm
 Front fork travel 195 mm
 Rear wheel travel 160 mm
 Weight (net) 140 kg
 Fuel tank capacity 8.8 lit.
 Oil capacity 2.4 lit.
 Tires front 3.25-21-4PR
 rear 4.00-18-4PR
 Brakes front Drum
 rear Drum

**Specifications subject to change without notice.*

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