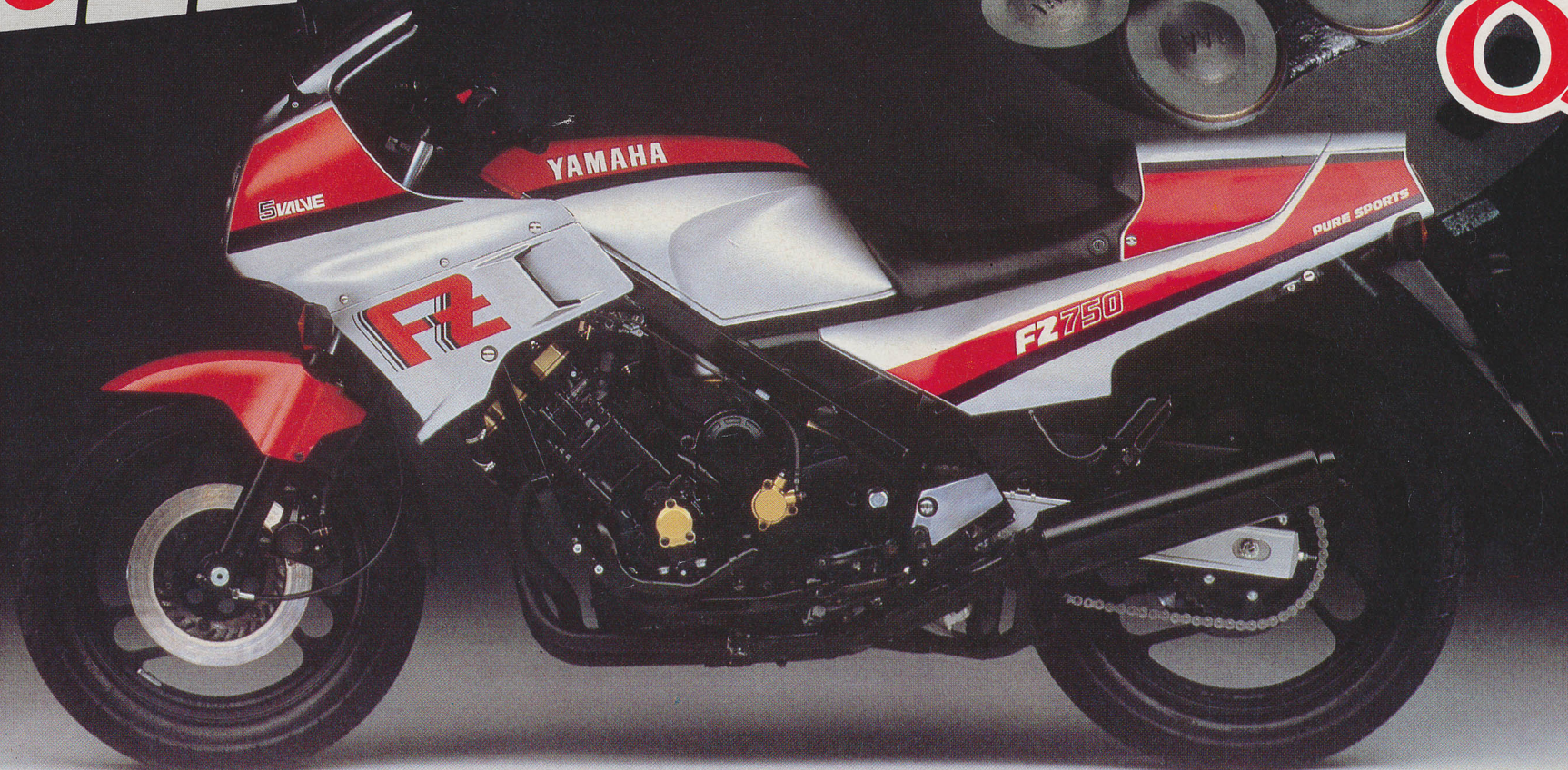




TOTAL PERFORMANCE 85



The year of '85 will long be remembered as the year that four-stroke motorcycle design moved into a new era. The design brilliance that has made Yamaha the undisputed master of two-stroke development, has taken the four-stroke world by

storm with the launch of the FZ750.

Yamaha's designers have built a unique engine that uses five valves per cylinder, near vertical down-draught carburettors and a hemispherical combustion chamber which gives the highest possible

compression ratio with maximum combustion efficiency.

The system makes all other configuration obsolete in terms of sheer power output!

Net result is the most potent 750 four-stroke on the market, housed in

a chassis built in the best Yamaha racing tradition.

Motor Cycle News road tester, Mat Oxley, rode the FZ750 in Portugal at the European launch. He came away impressed, read just how much, inside.

FZ750

Yamaha have finally done it! the kings of the two-stroke proved to MCN in Portugal last week that they really can build a no-holds-barred four stroke sports bike capable of taking on all comers.

At the demanding Estoril race track the FZ750 performed like a finely-honed F1 racer. And yet on Portuguese back roads it was capable of behaving like a mild-mannered tourer.

The secret of the FZ's impressive showing is a blend of innovative design and tried-and-tested formulas that continues the move away from overweight megabikes to lighter, nimbler sportsters.

The in-line four motor is the same but different. Just like Kawasaki and their GPz900R, Yamaha designers have broken away from conventional thinking to refine the inline four.

Yamaha's design boys have tilted the cylinders forward by 45 degrees to lower the centre of gravity and enable the use of downdraught carbs for more power. They've also come up with the smallest 750 four motor ever. But most important of all they've gone for five valves per cylinder. Cynics are bound to say that the 20 valve head is just a piece of over-complex marketing one-upmanship.

But last week's test revealed that nothing could be further from the truth. The FZ combines the kind of power and torque only usually found in much larger engines.

For sure it's the fastest 750 ever – we expected that – but the low and mid-range power available is quite startling. Happy from little more than tick-over, the motor really gets going at about 3000 rpm. Power builds up so smoothly to the 100bhp peak at 10,500 rpm that Yamaha's European testers asked the factory to build in a step at around 7000 rpm to liven up the power curve and get the adrenalin pumping.

On the twisting Estoril track it was hardly necessary to use the 11,000 rpm red line to put in fast lap times. Much of the time I kept to around 9000 rpm and even at 7000 rpm the motor has more than enough power to slide the rear tyre. During my first ride on the road the motor had me totally fooled.

Response was so impressive from 50 mph that I was convinced that the motor must be in third or fourth. It was in fact in sixth!

Yamaha say they have sacrificed some top-end power to attain the FZ's very flat torque curve. But sink the tach into the red line and you'd find that hard to believe.

In a straight drag race the FZ isn't far behind the 1100s. In Japan it's already turned

11.2 second quarters and on the Portuguese roads (with the blessing of the local police) I saw the speedo nudge 155 mph at 10,800 rpm – Yamaha claim a real 146 mph.

Engine design hasn't only focussed on sheer performance though.

Right from the start of engine R&D, Yamaha

were thinking hard about the chassis.

Quite simply the bike is capable of out-cornering any four-stroke super bike – and that includes current leaders – the GPz750 and 900RS.

What makes the FZ so quick around the really twisty bits is razor sharp but predictable steering.

Tipping the cylinders forward has put nearly 50 per cent of the FZ's

weight on the front wheel and that has allowed a very steep 25.5 degrees castor angle and short wheel base of 58.5 inches (that's nearly 1.5 inches less than a GPz750R) without losing stability at higher speeds.

On Estoril's tighter turns the FZ felt like a racing bike despite its less than radical riding position. Neutral steering and loads of grip from the front 16-inch Yokohama meant that the front end could be sunk into bends deep and hard.

No anti-dive is fitted – or needed.

Air-assisted forks with variable damping prevent the FZ from nose-diving even under crash braking and the set-up doesn't harm the feel of the massively powerful brakes – as is the case with many hydraulically activated anti-dives.

The FZ's ability to change line mid-corner and change direction are similarly impressive. A low centre of gravity and dry weight of just 460 lbs, allows the FZ to be switched from side to side very rapidly without too much physical exertion.

With its very low fuel tank that's hardly surprising. Full-up, the 4.8 gallon tank weighs over 48 lbs – and that's a useful

amount of weight to get as low as possible.

Yamaha have been able to shift it by tilting the cylinders forwards and using downdraught carbs. The FZ's tank goes where the carbs sit on most bikes with an electric fuel pump taking gas to the carbs. The tank is also closer to the bike's centre of mass and thus maintaining better weight distribution under braking and accelerating.

The front section of the tank holds no fuel and just covers the voluminous air box.

On faster bends the FZ's lightweight and racy geometry again pays dividends. At the race track Yamaha fitted the test FZs with old treaded Dunlop endurance racing tyres to allow us to explore the bikes outer handling limits. But the race rubber still reached its limits before the chassis. Leaving the quicker corners I could comfortably get the rear tyre sliding while the chassis allowed me to remain in control – and around Estoril's Armco-lined corners you really need confidence.

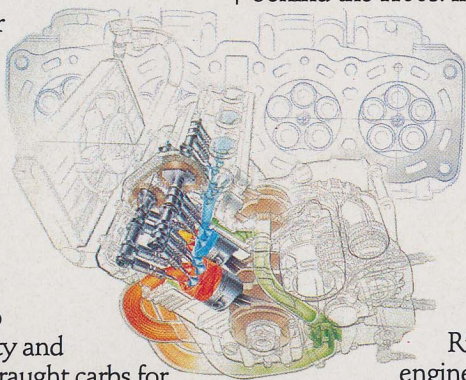
With the rear monocross system set-up fairly soft the back end would squirm about while cranked over. But tightening up damping and pre-load to Yamaha's Brit tester Dave Bean's suggestions solved that problem. From then on the tyres were the only limiting factor to ever-quicken lap times.

Yamaha have built loads of ground clearance into the FZ. Pipes are tucked right under the motor, following advice from European testers, and there's no fairing or belly pan to scrape. Looks like you'll have to fall off this one before anything but the pegs touch down.

As for high speed stability the FZ once again comes out with full marks. Even at 150 mph on some fairly dodgy Portuguese roads the bike was dead steady, though stability was compromised somewhat at the track with the larger rear racer tyre.

Yamaha say that during testing the FZ put in faster lap times than both the FJ1100 and RD500LC. Indeed it can run rings around the FJ, and Yamaha know that the bike is going to steal sales from its stablemates.

In fact at the projected price of less than £3500 the FZ is good enough to tempt buyers away from Kawasaki's GPz750 and 900RS.



RD500LC

Matt Oxley, chief road tester of Motor Cycle News, gives his first impressions of the RD500LC.

I could hardly believe it. Kicking down the sidestand after my first ride on Yamaha's RD500LC, I realised that I'd never thought that the machine would exceed all my expectations.

Sure I had expected it to be fast and handle well. But never in my wildest dreams had I expected it to be so tractable and easy to ride.

That really is the incredible thing about the Kenny Roberts replica – the decade's most long-awaited machine.

Yamaha have gone the whole hog and produced a GP racer with a tax disc – this is not a roadster with some flash bodywork.

And far from unleashing a deadly weapon, Yamaha have built such a superb motor cycle that it makes you wonder why nobody's done it before.

The machine's astonishing performance is only half the story.

148 mph one way, 142 mph mean, are the sort of figures speed testers were struggling to get out of 1100s a couple of years back.

The RD's speed says an awful lot for a good power-to-ratio and efficient aerodynamics.

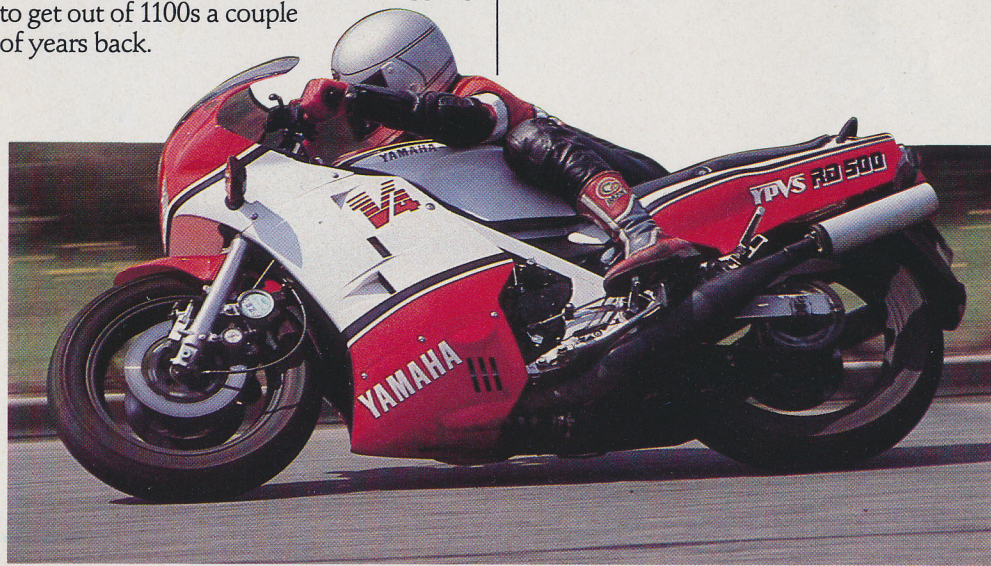
Acceleration is TZ-like – you'd expect the kick-in-the-pants feeling to tail off as you reach the upper gears but the power just keeps on coming, hurtling you relentlessly towards the horizon.

With both reed valve induction and their YPVS system, Yamaha's boffins have also managed to produce a motor that will pull top cleanly from as low as 2000 rpm.

Okay, so that's not what the RD was built for but it illustrates the motor's torque capabilities.

Of course the RD won't match a big four-stroke from low revs but it's got more low-down pull than Honda's torquey VF500F2. The engine's torque curve is civilised with very clean carburation. Power really comes in between 6000 and 7000 rpm.

There's no sudden catapult effect when the tachometer hits that bracket – just an adrenalin-pumping surge.



RD350F RD350N

For years the RD range of two-stroke sports models has been at the forefront of every sales category. Starting with the air-cooled models, and now finishing up with such exciting machines like, the RD125LC II, RD350YPVS, and the RD500LC vee-four, the range continues to be synonymous with the very best in two-stroke technology.

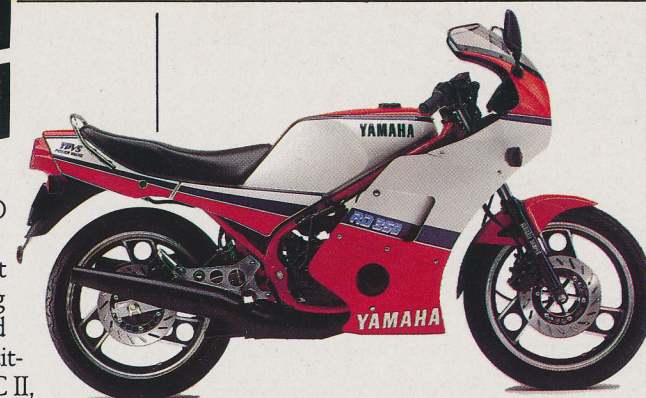


Perhaps the most enduring of all the RD models, has to be the 350. First with the twin-shock, then through to the first RD 'water-bottle', and now the exciting race-bred RD 350LC YPVS, the machine seen by millions of television watchers in the nail biting Yamaha Pro-Am series.

For '85 the 350 power-valve model will be available in two brand new options. For the rider who loves the look of the grand prix machines, there's a fully faired model that takes the 350 even closer to the TZ racer it's descended from.

For those willing to trade aerodynamics for lighter weight and freedom of movement, provided by a naked motor cycle, there's the RD350N.

Both these superb race-bred models are powered by Yamaha's race winning 347cc, liquid-cooled twin cylinder two-stroke engine.



Crisp throttle response throughout the rev range is assured, by the unique YPVS system, which matches exhaust port timing to engine speed, giving one of the widest spreads of power, of any two-stroke, and the smoothest possible mid-range running. So successful is this engine, that it's powering machines, in only a slightly re-tuned state, to victory in Formula II races!

Common to both machines is the racer style frame, and the Yamaha monocross rising rate rear suspension system, with the single gas shock, fully adjustable, mounted in front of the swingarm.

For 1985 Yamaha have advanced the 350 technological package even further.

Smoothing out the bumps, at the front, is a pair of strengthened, air-assisted forks with integrated variable damper, which is self adjusting to road variations and surge under heavy braking. Mounted between the forks is a new wind tunnel tested fender, to cheat wind resistance even further.

Mounted behind the new triple meter instrument panel, is a pair of forged steel clip-on handlebars which, coupled with the re-shaped seat, allow the rider to get into the real racer position.

The worst thing about the new RDs is the choice. Either with fairing, or without, both models are destined to be instant success stories. The choice may be hard, but whatever you choose, one thing's for sure, you'll be riding a winner.

STARTING

The most obvious requirement before discovering the joys of motorcycling, is the correct type of licence. Although this fact is understood by everyone contemplating taking to the public roads on a motorised vehicle, the prospective motorcyclist, not fully conversant with the Transport Act of 1981, should take time to look into how the Act affects the motorcyclist.

Under current legislation a 16 year-old, with a provisional licence, can ride a moped restricted to 30mph. The minimum age for a rider to be eligible for a 125cc machine, with a 12 bhp restriction, is 17 years old, and again a provisional licence must be held.

Provisional licence holders, who want to ride unlimited machines, have to pass two tests – Part 1 (off-road) and Part 2 (on-road). A provisional licence is valid for a maximum of two years. If a learner hasn't passed both tests within that period, then the licence can't be renewed for a year.

Having applied for and received your licence, the next, and perhaps the most difficult step is to select your first machine.

The choice of machine has never been more difficult, whether you're looking for a machine to go to the shops on, a sports moped or step-thru. And that's only in the 50cc class. Move up to the 125cc category, and the choice gets even harder.

Yamaha's 1985 range has a model for all occasions, and every variety of preference a learner may have.

At the bottom end there's the unique new MS50, with a robust design, snappy, reliable performance and a new name in comfort.

At Yamaha we recognise the value of producing machines with performance characteristics suitable for the learner. Our 125cc machines have the best torque figures of just about any machines in their respective classes, and exhibit smooth and progressive handling and braking.

Ideal for the learner to embark on his or her motorcycling career, and perfect for the learner to approach the testing centre with confidence.

Although not compulsory, it's worth considering investing in some expert tuition before that first leg of the two-part test.

There are organisations, private and funded by the industry, who will explain the test to you, teach you the basic skills of motorcycling, that will form the basis of your riding throughout your time on two wheels, and pass you through the part one test.

These organisations have instructors who have ridden for a considerable time, are experienced in all aspects of the government legislation, and how it applies to you, and above all they are willing to help. So don't be daunted, go along and make good use of the training facilities available, it may well help you get through the testing that much easier.

Just as important as, good instruction, machine selection and proper insurance cover, is the right set of clothing. An ill fitting helmet, a tight jacket and a pair of gloves that mask any feeling you may have for the hand controls, are just as dangerous as a badly prepared and maintained motorcycle.

The Yamaha dealer will be able to advise you as to the right type of clothing, and fit you out in the correct manner. He is just as interested in forming a successful relationship, and giving value for money as the customer is hoping to receive satisfaction.

Starting out on two wheels can either be a nightmare, if done without proper planning and a little commonsense, or it can be a highly satisfying experience if you receive the right advice. The dealer and the instructors are there to help, so make use of them.

MS50

In the current climate of ever increasing fuel prices, the inevitable inner-city traffic jam and the rapidly reducing number of parking spaces available, the small capacity commuter and step-thru models have come to play a very important role.

A fine example of how the 50cc model has been developed to cater for the varying needs of the short distance rider, is the Yamaha MS50. The MS50 complements the Yamaha range of step-thru and scooter models, and whilst being superbly simple and low on maintenance, it has a high class technical pedigree.



Yamaha's MS50 is totally new in step-thru design, in that it's the first model, of this type, to combine a shaft-drive transmission, with a push button, electronic starter. It features a lightweight, yet sturdy, tubular steel frame, a 12 inch rear wheel, and 14 inch front, giving increased stability.

Mated to the two-stroke engine is an enclosed shaft-final drive, where the need to constantly adjust and lubricate the more familiar chain drive becomes a thing of the past, general engine maintenance is reduced, and best of all, the resultant ride is as smooth as any step-thru on the market.

Starting off is simple, open the throttle, and through the automatic two-speed transmission, the power increases consistently, taking the MS50 to a top speed of 30 mph. At over 100 mpg. Getting around town, or slipping down to the local supermarket, the MS50 proves unbeatable. For the first time rider, sick of getting stuck in a jam everyday, the MS is a superbly simple alternative.

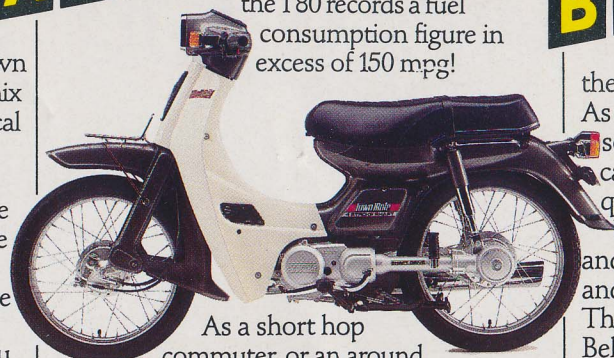
Licence	
Insurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Machine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Training organisations:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Star Rider	
BMF	021 742 5296
RoSPA	01 942 7914
	021 233 2461

4296

The following is a checklist of things you need to consider when starting out:

T80TOWNMATE

The T80 Town Mate offers a superb mix of comfort, luggage space and economical performance. In the tradition, and proven, step thru design, the T80 has a robust four-stroke single engine, with a low maintenance shaft drive system, which makes the T80 one of the smoothest performers in its class. The electronic ignition is totally maintenance free and needs no adjustment, whilst the gearbox has a fully automatic clutch. All you have to do is select the right gear. The T80 has a dual seat and takes two-up riding in its stride. The 79cc single overhead camshaft engine puts out a healthy six and a half bhp



As a short hop commuter, or an around town machine, Yamaha T80 Town Mate takes a lot of beating.

and when ridden at 30mph the T80 records a fuel consumption figure in excess of 150 mpg!

DT125LCII

Since its launch the DT125LC has been a sales and popularity chart winner with riders all over the world. The DT broke new ground in the 125cc trail bike production, being the first to be liquid cooled, have true motocross style suspension travel and the forerunner of a whole new breed of machines styled on the pure competition models.

For 1985 the DT is even better, with a host of technical and styling changes that will maintain the fine reputation the bike has.

The major change to the '85 DT125LC is in the rear suspension department. Replacing the highly successful triangulated swingarm, with angled monoshock, is the superb Yamaha monocross system, with a single De Carbon shock absorber mounted at the pivot point of the square section swingarm. This system has been tested to the full on Yamaha competition motocrossers, and all the lessons learnt have been put to good use in the design of the system for the DT's road application.

The front end has also been improved to make the DT125LC an even finer handler, either on the road or for trail riding. The front forks are now even closer in specification to



those on the motocross models, being air-assisted and having thicker, heavy duty stanchions.

The DT engine remains the same, superb liquid, reed valve, two-stroke single cylinder engine that's made the bike so popular in the past. The Yamaha Torque Induction system ensures an even spread of power throughout the rev range, as well as supplying instant power at low revs.

The crawl up the tank safety seat contrasts with the matching tank and side-panels, the tank is designed to let the rider slide up the seat, in true motocross style, when trail riding, and there's competition number plates if you want to enter the trail bike section of your local enduro.

The '84 DT125LC was a great bike to ride, with all the looks, feel and some of the performance of a motocrosser, but with the handling of a fine road bike. The 1985 version promises to be even better!

BL125

In the past two years the scooter market has come in for more and more attention from the Japanese motorcycle manufacturers. As fuel costs and traffic jams have increased, so has the need for a cheap, economical small capacity machine to get you around town quickly. Yamaha has a fine reputation for building excellent small capacity step-thrus and scooters, starting with the 50cc Passola and onto the 80cc Beluga. The latest edition, the BL125 Beluga, looks like continuing that fine tradition.



At 123cc the Beluga satisfies the learner restriction laws, but is nippy enough to meet the demands of the around town rider and the suburban commuter.

Powered by a reed-valve two-stroke single cylinder engine, the BL125 produces the highest horsepower and torque figures of any 125cc scooter, currently on the market, plus the air-cooled engine has a superb degree of reliability.

Riding the Beluga couldn't be easier. Fully automatic transmission, tried and tested on the rest of the Yamaha scooter range, is by vee-belt with an automatic centrifugal clutch. This system works in perfect harmony with the engine speed, so as to always ensure maximum engine efficiency, no matter what the change in road gradient may be.

Rider comfort is available in abundance on the BL125. The rider has leg shields for protection, the passenger integrated footboards. Handlebar protectors safeguard the rider's hands, and they also house the indicators. For the briefcase, or the shopping, a large lockable trunk is built in, along with a sturdy rear carrier.

The BL125 has the best of everything, comfort, economy, looks and fun. A swift run down to the local supermarket, or a dash round town couldn't be easier.

RD125LCII

Right from its launch, the RD 125LC became a legend. Never before had there been such technical brilliance crammed into a 125cc roadster.

For 1985 the RD 125LC II has even more of the Yamaha design magic, and is sure to carry the legend on for quite a while to come.

This year the 125LC has even more of the racer image. The front wheel is in the true race mould, with a 16 inch rim for quick steering, and the rim has been widened for increased stability and traction.

New clip on handlebars are lower, and combined with the reshaped seat, allow the rider to assume a natural, sporting riding position.

The well-proven monocross suspension system, with a triangulated swingarm, has been revised to further increase stability.

The superb looks and handling of the RD 125LC II make the bike the real sports machine of the 125 learner class.

A brilliant performer in '84, the RD125 is even better in '85.



XT350

The Yamaha technology in the building of four-stroke engines, no matter what the configuration, is famous throughout the world. As demonstrated on the fabulous new FZ750, we can turn out consistent winners, in either road or off-road chassis, to meet the most stringent demands of today's sporting riders.

The XT350 is a completely new model for 1985, and is sure to be the top contender in what is a very hotly contested sector of the market.

Like the larger XT600Z Tenere, the XT350 sports a robust competition standard chassis, which has had as its test ground, the toughest of all off-road events, the 12,000 km Paris-Dakar marathon.

The main frame is a triangulated "diamond" pattern structure, made in lightweight, high-tensile steel tubing. The engine also acts as a stressed part of the frame, which not only adds to rigidity, but, as the engine is placed so high up in the frame, the ground clearance is also increased.

The rear suspension is the well tested, and superbly responsive Yamaha Monocross system. The single De Carbon type gas shock, has five stages of adjustment, and a progressively wound coil spring. The system is completely

in contact with the ground, no matter what the variation in terrain may be.

The front suspension, leading axle, motocross-type front forks, perfectly complements the rear Monocross system.

The hydraulically operated forks offer a sizeable 255mm of wheel movement, and thanks to the air-assistance, supplies a superbly smooth and progressive ride.

Perfectly in tune with the impressive suspension package, is the high-torque, twin-overhead camshaft engine. Like the rest of the XT350, the unit is completely new, and sports all of the superb facets found in Yamaha's larger trail bikes.

Yamah's YDIS system of two-stage carburation is used to give the XT superb throttle response throughout the range.

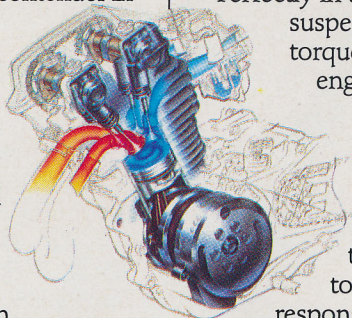
The system works with one carburettor metering the fuel, the instant the throttle is opened, and the second comes into play as the revs increase, thus maintaining response throughout.

This system means that the XT350, when combined with the four-valve cylinder head layout, gives 25% more intake area than a conventional two-valve motor, which means

an increase in power and torque, plus a saving on fuel consumption.

The XT350 makes a fine addition to the superb Yamaha range of performance single cylinder trail bikes, and will surely be a winner in its class.

The styling, like our championship winning motocrossers, the performance and handling are sure to make it a big favourite in 1985.



XT600 XT600Z

The XT600 and XT600Z Tenere could well be called the odd couple of the Yamaha range. The XT600Z Tenere is a direct descendant of the works "thumpers" that have brought the Yamaha so much success in the gruelling 12,000 kilometre Paris-Dakar desert race. The Tenere has a massive fuel tank, oodles of suspension travel, and the appearance of being rather ungainly, which has proven oh so wrong as soon as you take to the road.

The XT600, on the other hand, has superbly sleek styling, narrow lines, looking more like the competition racer, than a brilliant dual-purpose model.

However, diverse as these two models may appear to be, they share in the renowned Yamaha off-road and four-stroke technology.

Both machines are powered by the four-valve, single cylinder four-stroke engines. The 595 cc engine pushes out 44 bhp for the XT600, and the XT600Z is one less at 43 bhp.

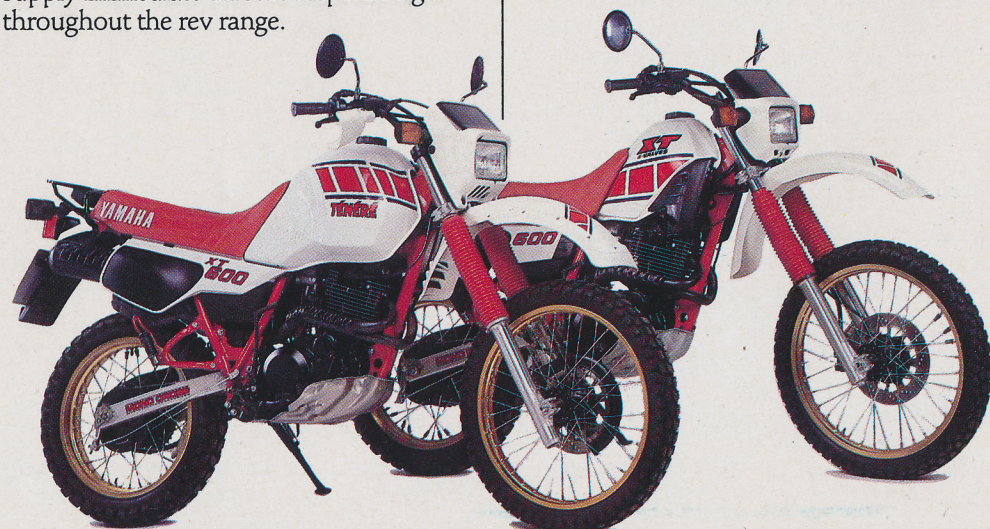
The engines in both machines feature the unique YDIS system of twin carburettors, to supply immediate throttle response right throughout the rev range.



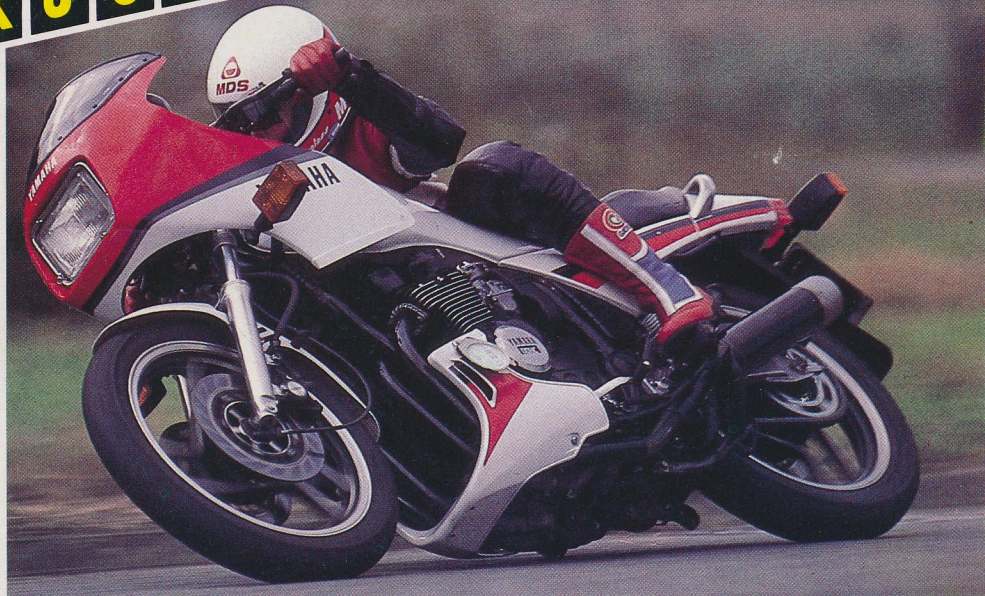
Also common to both models is the superb monocross rear suspension system, with heavy duty, air-assisted, motocross type forks smoothing out the bumps at the front.

This system, tried and tested on the world's motocross circuits, has a smooth, progressive action and complements the superb handling exhibited by both machines.

The XT600 and XT600Z are fine examples of the Yamaha expertise in the building of high performance dual-purpose machinery. The Tenere, with its 30 litre tank, will take you happily touring, with over 250 miles between fuel stops, in amazing comfort. The XT600 will require very little modification to win at the local enduro. Whatever the roles, the big 600s are winners.



XJ600



Launched last year, the XJ600 proved a big hit with critics and customers alike. We extracted a sample of Colin Schillers testimony to the delights of the XJ, from a recent Which Bike? road test.

Above 80 or 90, the XJ responds almost identically to the GPz550, 'cept it's faster. It squirts past the ton with real spirit and can be ridden 10mph faster than Honda's VF500 in uncontorted body mode. Speeds read 40 in first, 55 in second, 72 in third, 90 in fourth and 110 in fifth, with the XJ capable of pulling high into the red and reaching max rpm (130mph) in top on the road.

Though, due to size, the XJ has no real sinew at less than three grand, it accelerates without judder from two and exhibits pronounced pull from three and a bit onwards. Normal overtaking requires no change-downs, though impromptu GPs necessitate the inevitable box stirring. Dabbs covered 2000 miles on an identical XJ to the one I was using and reported no drive-train foibles. Though our own had a pretty stiff box, the 600 certainly has an impressive touring potential. But, like Honda's VF or Yamaha's RD, it's a travesty of the spirit of

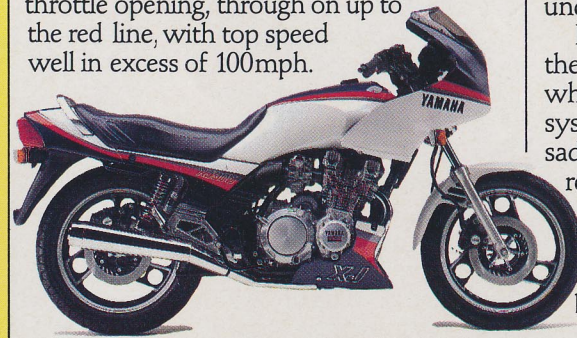
the bike (sorry, but how else can you say it?) to plonk it on straight and dull triple carriage-ways. Strip off the tupperware and the bon-bon shaped tank and you soon see why: the four pot-holes are certainly crammed into an impressively small space and the centre of mass overall is exceptionally low. There is little other way of getting a bike to steer so impressively and it's pure good fortune that the person who designed the XZ550 was on holiday when the 600 was conceived.



XJ900

Sandwiched between the XJ600 and the FJ1100 four-stroke, across the frame four cylinder sportsters, is the XJ900. The 900 is a machine with the best of both worlds, sports performance and handling, with a fine reputation as a touring machine as well.

Powered by one of the narrowest double overhead camshaft engines in the business, the XJ900 produces power right from the throttle opening, through on up to the red line, with top speed well in excess of 100mph.



Either as a tourer or a sportster, the XJ900 displays higher responsive handling, together with a very comfortable ride.

The rear suspension, although traditional twin shocks, is progressive and, with its remote reservoir, able to cope with all the demands made on a motorcycle during two-up touring.

The front hydraulic forks are air assisted, and sport the latest Yamaha anti-dive system, which negates any forward surge under heavy braking.

In keeping with its smooth, touring image the final drive is by low maintenance shaft, which makes for one of the smoothest systems going, and after a long day in the saddle, the low maintenance required is a real bonus.

Yamaha XJ900 is the ideal dual purpose roadster. A comfortable, robust tourer, and when required a high powered, performance sportster. The very best of both worlds.

FJ1100

Motorcycle News chief road tester, Matt Oxley, was amazed at how low the Yamaha engineers had been able to make the fabulous FJ1100. Here's his thoughts.

The widely spaced frame tubes allow easy access to the top end of the motor. The head can be removed with the motor in situ and when the tappets need shimming there's no groping round frame tubes to do the job.

The tubeware encases the motor so closely that both downtubes need to be unbolted to drop out the engine. That should only be a once-in-a-lifetime exercise though.

Yamaha have also followed the Bimota bible with the adoption of 16-inch wheels front and rear. Even the tyre sizes of the Japanese Dunlops are the same and wet and dry they stuck to their task well.

Tyre replacement shouldn't be a problem since Michelin, Pirelli and Bridgestone also produce tyres that fit.

Thanks to the frame layout and small wheels the FJ is amazingly low for an 1100. But ground clearance is still excellent. The undercarriage never hit the road and the right-hand footrest had only been mildly grazed after a track test by a well known F1 rider.



XVZ1200TD

The Yamaha XVZ1200TD is the most lavishly appointed tourer ever produced. Every conceivable extra has been incorporated, to make the ultimate touring machine. Freelance journalist, Peter Clifford, was lucky enough to ride one in America. Here's his report.

"Riders on the storm" came blasting out of the stereo; the sun was dipping below the Pacific Ocean horizon and the Yamaha Venture cruised down the highway five miles south of San Francisco...Now tell me that isn't living.

Okay, so the 1200cc, 700lb vee-four, water-cooled, full-dress faired, pannier-hung, top-box-bedecked, radio-and-cassette-players-endowed cruise liner wouldn't match a Ducati down a country road or a Tenere on the Paris-Daker, but in its element it is no less a king, and you have to appreciate it as such. Besides, Eddie Lawson, knee-scraping supremo, said it was "A-1" and wouldn't let me give it back to Yamaha. It now resides in his garage, just for the odd blast up the canyon road for lunch, with a few wheelies thrown in to amuse the girl on the back.

Scratching through open country on a well-dressed roadster is more my usual idea of fun, but the California cruising bit is an important part of motorcycle mythology, and worth the experience. To test the Venture, I took it on a 2500-mile trip that touched four states in five days, taking me from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, Yosemite National Park and Frisco. It was in January and from the pleasant sunny sixties in lowland California I went, via the Grand Canyon, to the icy roads and snowy surround in sub-zero temperatures up at 7000 feet is Yosemite.



Compared with such monsters, the Yamaha Venture really is minimalist travelling. The first thing that pleased me was that the bike didn't require careful packing. I just threw everything I thought I would need for two weeks into the panniers and top box. There was plenty of room, and it wouldn't have been much more trouble for two people. The cruiser's size is so impressive that you can't imagine it handling like a normal motorcycle. The second nice surprise is that it does. At low speed it is a touch shaky – the front wheel wanders a little – but, above a walking pace it is pleasant to control.

Once under way it was time to push the button on the radio and head towards Barnstow, on my way to Vegas.

Sitting, neon-bathed, at a junction next to Caesar's Palace, waiting for the traffic lights to turn green against the multi-coloured background, a taxi drew up alongside. The driver looked at the golden Yamaha in obvious admiration, nodded sagely and made a deliberate 'O' with his thumb and forefinger. It was a reaction I met often from Vegas to Frisco. The metallic-painted size impressed. I had already been well satisfied with the way the machine performed on the open highway, with its utterly smooth, effortless power, and the torque that encouraged me to use top gear everywhere. In the wide open expanses of the freeway it could not be faulted. Around town it was manageable and quiet. In a word, it was civilised, right down to the sound sensor that varied the volume output of the speakers to suit conditions.

COMPETITION

It's now over a year since Yamaha stunned the motorcycle world with the much awaited launch of the race replica RD500LC.

Apart from proving an instant winner with the world's press and buying public alike, the unique vee-four, liquid cooled, two-stroke roadster scored immediate success on the race track, with a win at its first outing in a three hour production race in Australia.

That win was the first of several in Aussie production racing, with the high point being the RDs narrow win in the Castrol Six Hour race.

The Castrol is the world's premier race for pure production machinery, and manufacturers pull out all the stops to scoop the most prestigious title going in out of the crate racing.

The Yamaha Australia entered RD500, ridden by Alan Scott and Mike Dowson, fought a race long battle with the VF1000R Honda, and although the big Honda had the best speed down the straight, it just couldn't compete with the superior handling of the Yamaha in the tight swervy.

In 1985 the RD500 is eligible to move up a grade, into the modified Formula One racing. Mitsui Yamaha, the UK importers, will be

SUPERSTOCKS FZ750

April 5th – Brands
April 7th – Donnington
April 21st – Mallory
June 23rd – Donnington
August 11th – Cadwell
August 26th – Oulton
September 15th – Scarborough
October 20th – Brands

campaigning a very special RD500 prepared by Grand Prix veteran Steve Parrish and his mechanic Dave Johnson. Steve has been so impressed with the way the vee-four has performed, after tuning, he's seriously considering entering the RD in selected GPs! Although several top riders have stated they will be racing RD500s in the '85 F1 series, Steve is brimming with confidence for his first season in Formula One.

As well as doing battle in the Formula One Championship, Steve Parrish will be riding one of the superb FZ750s in the new MCN Superstocks series. The series is for production based machines, up to 750cc, with modifications able to be made to tyres, exhausts and the deletion of lights and indicators.

Designed with racing in mind, the FZ's alloy swingarm is wide enough to accommodate the widest racing tyres, the front heavy duty racing forks are air-assisted and to help keep steering precise in a new variable damping system.

In addition to the F1 and Superstocks series, Steve Parrish will be heading a team in the Isle of Man TT races, to defend the manufacturers production TT trophy won by the Mitsui team last year.

Whatever the race is, with the Yamaha models available in 1985, success is assured.

SPORTS DATES RD500 F1

March 17th – Thruxton
April 8th – Donnington
May 5th – Snetterton
May 28th – Isle of Man
August 4th – Silverstone
September 15th – Scarborough
October 6th – Cadwell
October 20th – Brands



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This brochure serves as a guide only, for full details please consult your Yamaha dealer. Specifications and appearance of Yamaha motorcycles shown here may vary according to requirements and conditions and are subject to change without notice.