

R A C E T E S T !

The Wicked Sister

DICKS RACING KTM 360 M/XC

And The Smooth

A N D A T K 2 5 0 L Q

Operator

MORE LIKE MIRACLES THAN ORDINARY HOP-UPS

December. There are two events that we here at *Dirt Rider* never miss: Christmas (a fat guy sliding down the chimney with new riding gear and a fresh rear tire in his sack: aka, heaven) and Casey Folks's Laughlin round of the Best in the Desert Silver State series. If Christmas passed us by, we'd be upset. But forget Laughlin? Only if California fell into the ocean. We can always count on two things: a nasty, tight, twisty course, peppered with Armageddon-inspired cactus bushes, and Dick Wilk of Dicks Racing looking like a sleep-deprivation experiment gone terribly wrong in order to equip us with machines that would make any self-respecting factory mechanic slather in disgust at his own weak and paltry race bikes.

Out West, Dicks Racing has a stellar reputation for superb suspension that easily handles endless rock piles and giant whoops and G-outs. We've never experienced better WP or Marzocchi mods than Dicks'. Lately, though, eyelid-flapping, flaming-fast motors spread the name further afield.

For the 1996 Laughlin event, Tom Webb opted to saddle up Dicks' fire-breathing '97 KTM 360 M/XC. This bike motos between high-speed desert events and high-traction MX work with ease. It gobbles up Honda CR500Rs for breakfast and is hungry again minutes later. Karel Kramer opted for a less conventional ATK 250 LQ that started out identical to the bike that finished dead last in our '96 250cc Enduro Shootout. Dicks massaged the LQ into a vibrationless rocket with the most amazing WP suspension we've ever had a taste of, no doubt. Dick Wilk, the King of Quick and the Sultan of Supple for European bikes, is a grad-

uate of UNLV, but his chariots owe more to his years of racing—five off-road number-one plates and one Nevada motocross Open-expert championship—and tuning bikes than to his business degree.

WHAT AND WHY

The '97 KTM 360 has a great motor, which has been improved dramatically for this year, and superb suspension in stock trim. So, what's to improve?



At speed, the Dicks Racing's machine is simultaneously stable and cush, ballistic and explosive. It makes incredible power and packs a midrange wallop flat nastier than any Open-class bike we can remember!



ATK's 250 has always sported excellent ergos, in spite of being wider than most bikes. Dicks polished the rest of the accoutrements, as well. A tall Guts seat foam and nonslip cover from DeVol, and a wider-than-stock Answer ProTaper handlebar aided comfort and control.

Plenty. Dicks revalves the shock with multistage damping and adds a stiffer coil, coaxing the Öhlins to react better on the little bumps and square edges while still taking the high-speed hit. But the fork gets the most attention.

On the fork, a completely redesigned compression cartridge enables better initial and midstroke plushness; custom-made bottoming cones aid the end travel; SX springs stiffen up the package. The steel fork tubes received an expensive gold-colored titanium-nitride coating. KTM's unique fork guards jealously protect the fork from other bikes' roost, but rocks tossed forward by the front wheel can nick the tubes' vulnerable backside. The gold coating, ten times harder (and much more slippery) than the stock chrome, ended seal damage. Fork boots might be cheaper, but the gold-looking fork tubes are beyond trick!

The heart of the engine's new virile performance lies in porting changes, head and cylinder machining, piston and power-valve mods, and tried-and-true bolt-on parts. Dicks tested all available pipes. The best turned out to be a '96 FMF KTM 360 pipe with a stock '97 KTM stinger welded on and mated to a '96 FMF silencer. FMF should make a pipe like this soon. For the race, a Boyesen RAD Valve was used with a Mikuni TMS40 carb. This setup made the smoothest, most consistent power.



KAREL KRAMER

Mere words fail to describe the improvements on the Dicks Racing ATK when compared with a stocker. The engine feels as if it came from a different factory altogether; the suspension impressed us even more. The Dicks fork was hands down the best WP unit we've ever sampled, and the shock performed excellently for a linkless rear end.

KEN FAUGHT

The 40mm Boswell carb we tried out provided the most mid, but was not only too gnarly for off-road use, but difficult to jet and set up, too. It also required a specially modified RAD Valve and cost the most money. We liked it for moto. A stock Keihin bored to 40 millimeters provided a decent mid/top boost for the least amount of money.

DICKS ATK: AN AMERICAN WINNER

The '95 liquid-cooled ATK 250 LQ impressed us, so much so that we extended an invitation to ATK to compete head to head in our '96 enduro shootout. In the tight, slick and nasty conditions we seek for enduro testing, however, the ATK simply didn't have the modern power characteristics and clutch feel necessary to beat out the competition. What's a serious racer who wants to "buy American" to do?

Wilk had heard some good reports on the LQ and likes working with WP suspension, so he decided to see what he could do with one. After his initial ride, he listed the LQ's positive and negative performance aspects. Positives were a quality WP suspension, virtually no vibration from the counterbalanced engine and overall light weight. The negatives included an inability to

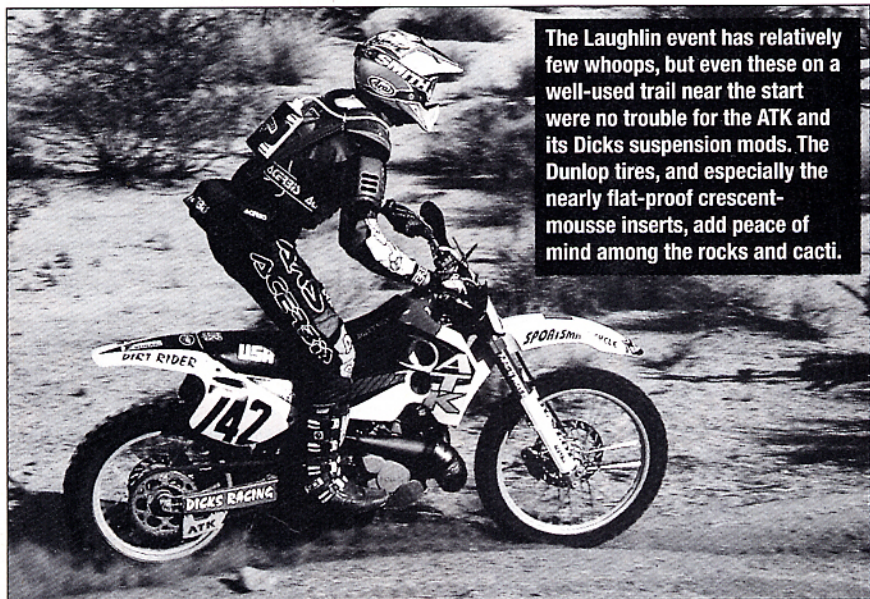
wheelie on pavement, suspension that wasn't plush but bottomed, and weak brakes. Tuning goals that emerged included giving the engine more torque and low-end power to allow the bike to work in tight terrain, plushening the suspension action while decreasing the danger of bottoming and polishing ergos to make long races a pleasure.

Wilk started by modifying the Rotax's hemi-combustion chamber to a more conventional shape with a squish band. Dicks modified the cylinder to accept an FMF Ram Valve and either modified or blocked off the

ders. The Dunlop 490/695 tires were fitted with the new crescent mousse inserts and tubes.

KTM RACE TEST: WEBB

Richard, Richard, Richard. Next time you want to age me, horrify me, torment me or abuse me, please give me more than one measly day to prepare. Dick Wilk builds about the best motorcycle this boy's ever had the privilege to race. His suspension work borders on magical, and he sets up his machine to react just the way I like it. The combination equals sheer wizardry, with a



DONNIE BALES



KEN FAUGHT

ports altogether. Wilk then tightened the power-valve tolerances and altered the ignition timing. A Dynoport pipe and silencer improved mid- and top-rpm power, and a Boswell carb boosted the mid power.

The suspension work was more straightforward. Wilk installed the Dicks Progressive Damping System (PDS) fork internals. The PDS replaces everything inside the fork but the cartridge tube. It offers easy, no-tools external adjustments with truly progressive damping. All the internals are handmade for accurate tolerances. The shock received a multistage compression stack, stiffer spring and trimmed shock bumper.

DETAILS, TIMES TWO

Wilk dialed in both bikes with a variety of Acerbis plastic, invaluable Scotts Steering Stabilizers, Answer ProTaper bars, Tsubaki O-ring chains, Guts seat foams, DeVol seat covers and guards, Braking rotors and pads (for the KTM) and special front-brake master cylin-

plush initial suspension stroke, excellent bottoming ability and superb high-speed handling traits, mated to just the right amount of cornering agility.

The bike's inoffensive riding position was accentuated with super-easy throttle pull and an equally smooth clutch. Wilk fits a Nissin front-brake master cylinder and brake line (more powerful than stock, and offers better feel), Pro-Tapers, good saddle foam and a gripper cover for added comfort. The suspension improvement on the KTM, which I consider to be very good in stock condition, is worth the price of admission; add the ergos, widgets and tidbits, and you have a package that rocks.

But Richard took particular care with the 360 power plant this year. He basically built a ballistic piece of rocketry that happened to have two knobby tires attached to it. We tested the day before the event, and I burned a brand-new Dunlop K695 into garbage in just 16 miles! How is this possible?

Wilk takes the KTM 360 motor, which he says has been dramatically

Big drops equal no worries! While the Dicks Racing's Katoom has plush suspension, its bottoming appeal remains stellar. We ran the fork compression eight clicks out and the shock only four clicks in. Dunlop's four-ply K490 front and K695 rear did a marvelous job handling the traction chores. Dicks fitted each with a Dunlop crescent mousse (a foam insert with a small tube), keeping the machine flat-free.

improved this year (most importantly with the longer rod), then reshapes, hogs out, mills, ports, carbs and pipes it into the turbo zone.

My first test loop (Boswell-powered) was shocking. The bike was so explosive as to be nearly unridable on Laughlin's tight, twisty razorbacks and technical terrain. Wilk said (and I agree) that the Boswell was a pain to jet and dial in, but once attached, made for a monstrous midrange wallop in the KTM's powerband.

We took off the Boswell and went back to Wilk's favorite—a TMS flat-slide Mikuni. I raced the bike so equipped. The Mikuni maintained the bottom, smoothed out the midrange

ATK RACE TEST: KRAMER

I've never raced Laughlin before, but I don't plan on missing it again. I loved the technical, rocky terrain and the ridge-running ups and downs, but it was a tough, physically demanding race for me. I've said before that I wouldn't mind racing an ATK LQ, but on the way to the race, I secretly wished Tom would let me ride the KTM 360. After our initial test rides, though, I was more than happy to race the ATK (and Tom secretly wished for it, I'm sure).

The modified LQ felt about twice as strong as a stocker, but was easier to ride and boasted more power throughout the powerband. The monster midrange produced by the Boswell (which made the stock engine feel positively limp) will only be worth the big chips to dead-serious racers, however. The stock ('97) Mikuni TMS performed well in itself, generating power quite a bit like a new, well-running KTM 250's. The engine was both responsive and tractable in the tight rocks, but had the power to pull sixth effortlessly in the one fast, deep sand wash. Unlike the stocker (which we geared much lower) the Dicks ATK feels as if it could easily pull more gear.

The Dicks shock is a nice improvement over stock, creating the best nonlinkage bike I've ridden in the rocks. The inverted Dicks PDS WP fork, though, was amazing. It performed the unusual, being plush and controlled, and resisting bottoming simultane-

ously. It is, hands down, the best off-road fork I've ridden with.

The combination of the compliant suspension and the Scotts steering stabilizer allowed me to ride with relaxed hands on the bar, whether in the rocks or wide-open in sixth gear through a deep sand wash. Pretty amazing to me. I topped my class and finished eighth-overall Amateur (excellent results for me). I give all the credit to the bike. It sported great ergos for my height, the suspension positively coddled me, the Scotts stabilizer conserved my energy, and the Dunlop crescent mousse inserts instilled in me the confidence to go for it in the rocks and cacti without worrying about flats.

Race an ATK? Anytime, anywhere—if it's this one. It was totally reliable and it looked and ran perfectly even after the race.

DR



DONNIE BALES

Dicks Racing fitted the KTM 360 with gray Acerbis plastic that garnered instant kudos from everyone who eyed it. A DeVol Guts seat kit, including its seat cover, proved excellent, as did the Henry-bend ProTapers fitted with Acerbis Rally guards.

and enabled an impressive, uncharacteristic rip-it-to-the-stars top-end pull.

To be honest, this was way too much bike for the Laughlin terrain. It snarled, snorted and ripped, while the finesse trails screamed for luggable, torquey power. It beat me up hard. By the end of the race, I had a blister on my clutch finger and forearms that bulged for three days. But for a normal desert race? Yahoo! Moto? I can see holeshots out the moon and power pulses demanding that everyone in my class wear two chest protectors for fear of roost abuse. Once again Wilk built a showpiece—a wicked-fast one. I smiled all day long and yearned for fresh loam or a monster hillclimb to conquer.



The much-touted Boswell carb (left) is big chips and requires a special manifold (far right), but gives the KTM's midrange a major boost. The cheapest alternative is to bore the stock Keihin (center) to 40 millimeters. It helps, and for the race we ended up preferring the Mikuni TMS40 for its smooth delivery and excellent power.

PRICE LIST

LABOR

KTM fork mods (plus parts)	\$195.00
ATK/KTM shock mods (plus parts)	110.00
KTM motor mods (plus parts)	375.00
Keihin carb mod	90.00
Bead-blast ignition and clutch covers	40.00
ATK WP PDS fork mods (plus parts)	395.00
ATK motor mods	425.00
Sprocket alignment mods	50.00

PARTS AND SUPPLIES

KTM

Mikuni TMS carb kit	\$245.00
Boyesen float bowl	79.00
Boyesen RAD Valve	165.00
Carb-vent kit	30.00
FMF pipe and silencer	260.00
Thermostat eliminator	29.00
Acerbis gray plastic front fender	17.00
rear fender	20.00
shrouds (set)	43.00
sidepanel (set)	43.00
Pros Choice Rad graphics	50.00
Works front master cylinder and line	359.00
Braking brake rotors and pads (set)	185.00
Answer ProTaper handlebar	99.00
Applied top triple clamp	159.00
DeVol frame guards	49.00
Titanium-nitride fork-tube coating	400.00
FMF Cobalt sprocket	85.00
Tsukaki O-ring chain	89.00

ATK

Special master cylinder (fits KTM)	199.00
Rear fender and side decals	40.00
Boswell carb and cable	525.00
FMF Ram Valve	90.00
Dynoport pipe and silencer	260.00
Front fender and number plate	70.00

BOTH BIKES

DeVol Guts tall seat foam and cover	160.00
Acerbis Rally guards w/extenders	85.00
DeVol Rad guards	85.00
DeVol skid plate	69.00
Dunlop crescent mousse insert (front)	120.00
(rear)	130.00
Dicks rear and side graphics	45.00
Scotts Steering Stabilizers	399.95

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