



*Rex Staten showboats for the
DB cameras on the works OW41.*

DB TESTS A WORKS YAMAHA

• I can remember way back to when I was a feverish lad of 16 or so, and I saw a particularly spectacular actress on the screen of my local theater. Lordy! My popcorn went uneaten and a Jujufruit slipped from my slackened jaw to fall to the sodden theater floor with a dull "plop."

She had bosoms out to . . . here. Maybe further. The fact that she couldn't act her way out of a Glad Bag had no effect on me. At 16, the glands do odd things to your values. Anyway, before I stray much more off the beaten path, let me get the point of this whole sordid tale across to you.

You see, as I walked home, I actually entertained a bizarre thought in the darkest corner of my mind. What if . . . what if I called up this voluptuous actress on the phone and asked her for a date? The worst she could do was say no. And maybe, just maybe, she'd be curious about the nervy caller on the other end of the line and agree to meet him for a discreet cherry coke somewhere on Saturday night.

Sadly, I never made that call. Who knows what might have happened? Honesty forces me to tell you that I had very little in the way of nerve way back then.

Time has a way of changing things

and now I have a lot more nerve than common sense.

That's why I never even hesitated to call Yamaha up and ask for a works bike to test. After all, the worst they could say was no. And the best they could say was yes.

They said yes. After going through the public relations office and Kenny Clark, Yamaha's bulldog Racing Manager, we got the OK to test the OW41 works bike . . . with surprisingly few strings attached. The word was this: Ride the bike as much as you want, measure anything externally that interests you and ask any questions. Just don't take the bike apart.

Fair enough.

Long-time friend and Yamaha factory rider, Rex Staten, showed up to assist us with our YZ465 test and brought his practice works bike along with him. Rex was very honest about the bike: "Oh, this one's good, but my Number One bike is even better."

We raised an editorial eyebrow.

After checking out the OW41 465 works bike and putting in a hard half hour of riding, Rex turned the bike over to us . . . with some polite warnings. "Look, you sort of have to roll it on when you come out of the turns. If you just punch it, you might get into trouble. You see, the bike responds . . . right away. No hesita-

tion. No slack time. You turn the handle and things happen, whammo!"

A squeeze on the clutch lever and we thought for a moment that someone forgot to connect the clutch cable. It was incredibly light; a true one-finger pull. Later, we learned from Rex that the actuating arm was about 3/4-inch longer than a stocker. If you want to make the clutch action on your stocker just as light, all you have to do is extend that arm a bit and you're in business. Of course, the arm on the works bike was a handsome piece carved out of a slug of aluminum billet, extremely light, and strong enough to do the job.

A stab at the gear-shift lever (folding tip) gets us low gear. In this case, however, low gear is actually second. You see, the works bike is a four speed unit. Low gear is simply removed from the gearbox and neutral is relocated between second and third.

Rex, and most other riders, usually start in second gear with the works bike. This is equal to starting in third gear on a stock 465. Before we actually got out on the track for a few hot laps, we made a half-dozen burn-out starts from the gate. It was pathetically easy to get out of the hole in second and with just the right

WILD DREAMS AND FLYING MACHINES

*Are You Man
Enough to
Keep It Up?*

By Rick Sieman



WORKS YAMAHA

amount of clutch work and rpm selection, a third gear start would not be out of the question on a dry and slippery start area. This would be numerically above a fifth gear start on the stocker.

After the burnout frenzy, we got down to the business of trying to understand the bike. One thing, we found out almost immediately, was that the OW41 was the most neutral bike we have ever ridden. This bears some explanation. Let me try.

Consider a turn . . . any turn, right or left. Now, here you are, on an OW41, and you're storming into this here turn. You scrub off some speed with the killer brakes and catch a gear or two down. Then, you set up for the turn, slide forward on the saddle a bit and nail it. Everything is working just fine, until you lean your head back a hair and maybe straighten up your trunk a fraction. All of a sudden, the front end is no longer biting like a snake . . . the rear end takes charge. In desperation, you drop the hammer to bring the front end around but, because your weight is fractionally too far to the rear, the bike goes where the rear wheel is pointing and you blast through a snow fence, sending wooden slats flying.

Once more.

Same turn. This time, you keep the weight forward. Whups. Too far forward and the front end tucks under! Dammit!

Once again. This time, you keep your body in the right place at the right time and you absolutely rocket through the corner! Rocket, I say. You've ridden this track a million times and you know how that corner would feel, but, by the Great Hairy Ball of Zeus, you flat smoked through that turn compared to anything you've ever done before.

Hot damn, shucks and gee whiz! So this is what it's like stuffing a works bike through a turn, eh?

Try it one more time? You bet.

Zloooooom. Ker-bammm! Through the snow fence again.

Look, what it boils down to is this. The works 465 Yamaha is such a sensitive machine to rider input, that you must have your act together to make the thing work.

An inch or so too far to the rear and the front end will not bite. Too much, and it'll tuck under. Get it

right, and you feel like a magician.

Think that's all? Wrong-O. There is also the matter of throttle response. You see, on most stock bikes, no matter how crisply they're jetted, you'll find a slight lag between a twist with the right hand and an equal reaction at the rear wheel.



Intimidated DB staffer actually gets the OW41 off the ground.

Not so with the works bike. A twitch of the wrist translates into the rear wheel churning . . . instantly. We've become used to nailing the throttle on most any bike. When we did this on the OW41, we were doing nothing but correcting from a wildly waving rear end. One must learn discipline with the right hand. You *must* roll the throttle on. Lots of thought and foresight is required. At first, you'll find that your lap times on a works 465 are slower than those on a stocker. You begin to wonder if anyone needs *that kind* of response on any motorcycle! Have you suddenly found the mystical world of Too Much?

Stop for a while. Go in to the pits. Take a drink of water. Cool down. Think. Then re-think what you're doing. Rest a while. Then head back out to the track, this time with a bit more respect for the machine that you're riding.

The same turn that's spit you off twice looms up. This time, you use your head. Go in deep, squeeze both brakes hard and late and let the bike shudder while it slows down at an

alarming rate, then go down one gear, slide forward just the right amount and roll, roooooo! the throttle on. The OW41 will leap out of the turn with a minimum of wheelspin, with the rear wheel hooking up like a leech on a plasma bottle. Weight back will get you a wheelie. Tilt your torso forward and the front will just kiss the ground and the bike will track like a falling safe.

The more time you spend on the OW41, the more you realize that you must spend an *enormous amount of time* on this sort of a bike to even begin to tap the potential.

As you digest this, the truth suddenly rams itself home: You are not a good enough rider to do justice to the works bike. It's too sudden. Too much. Too everything for your limited skills.

Pushing those depressing thoughts aside, you head out for another half hour on the track, showing a great deal of patience and respect.

Now, the OW41 seemed to settle down and behave. Once it got our respect, things seemed to sort out. The bike got easier to live with.

We were able to blast through ruts and bumps with not much more than a casual thought. Whoopers were taken in stride. You just set up for them, with your weight well back, rolling the throttle on, and they were gone before you felt them.

Strange. While you were riding the bike, the vibration never even occurred to you. In neutral, at the starting line, yes. On the track, no.

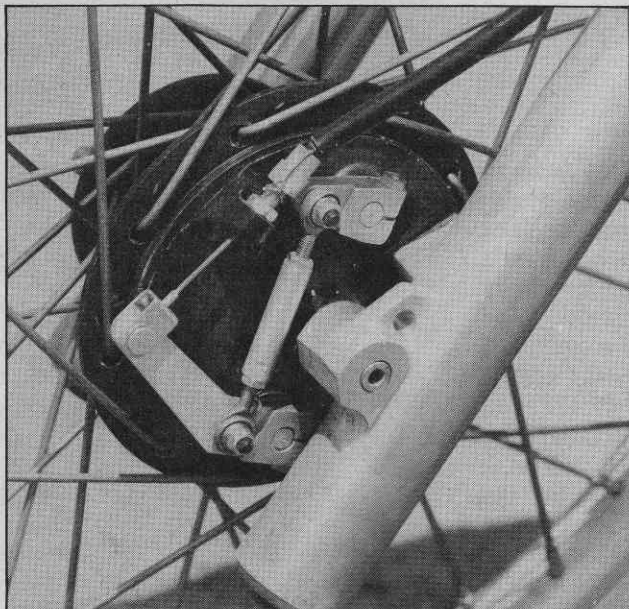
Well, then, what's it like riding a works bike? Actually, it's like everything you ever dreamed about, and a little bit more.

The only thing that bothers us is this: Are you ready for a total, no-compromise racing machine? One that has more in store than you have in stock?

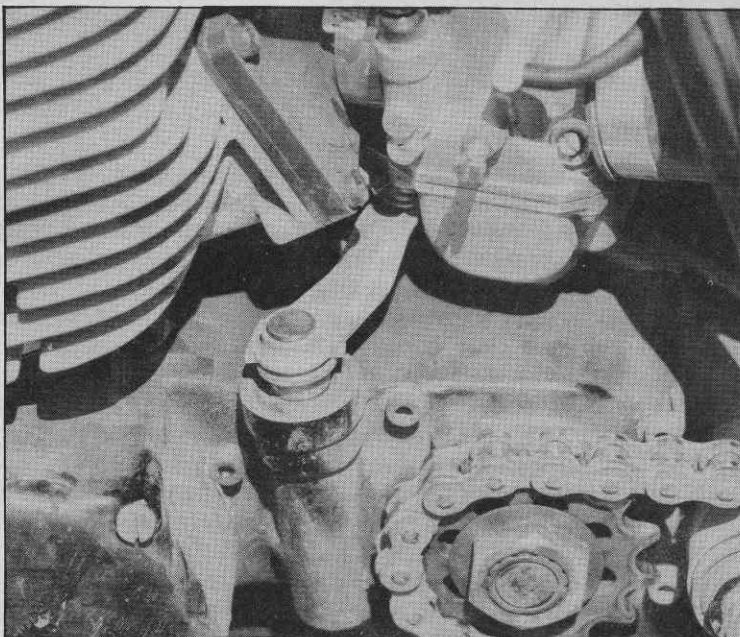
The only honest answer is no. Sure. Something better than stock is desirable, but a full-blown factory effort is beyond the skills and needs of most of us, most of the time.

I'm sorry to be the one to tell the truth. But then, what do you think you'd have done if that movie star had answered your phone call and made a date back when you were 16?

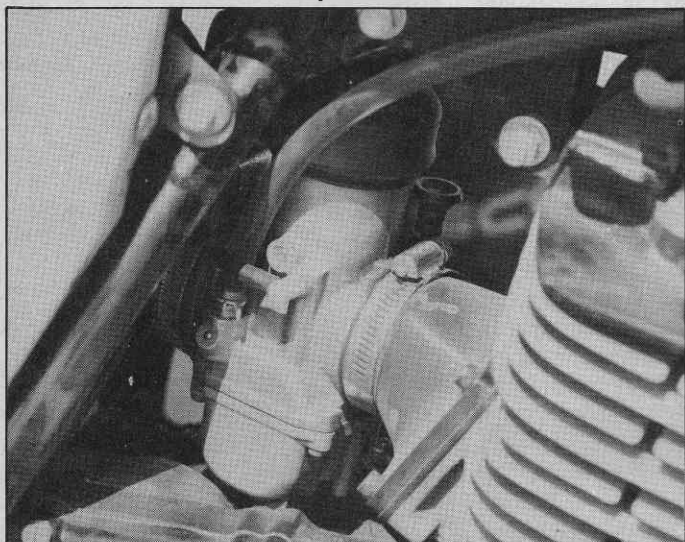
Yeah, sure. Check's in the mail, and I really do love you. □



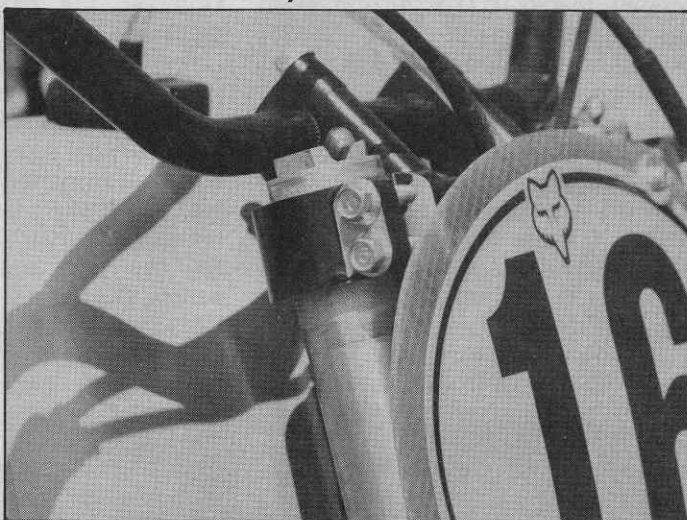
All of the little items you normally see made of stamped steel are carved out of aluminum alloy. Attention to detail on the entire bike is impressive.



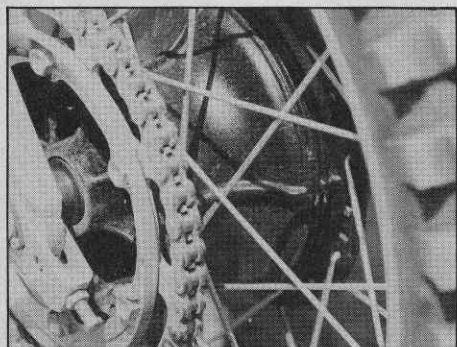
Extra long clutch actuation arm gives a very light feel to the clutch lever. You can do this to your favorite stocker.



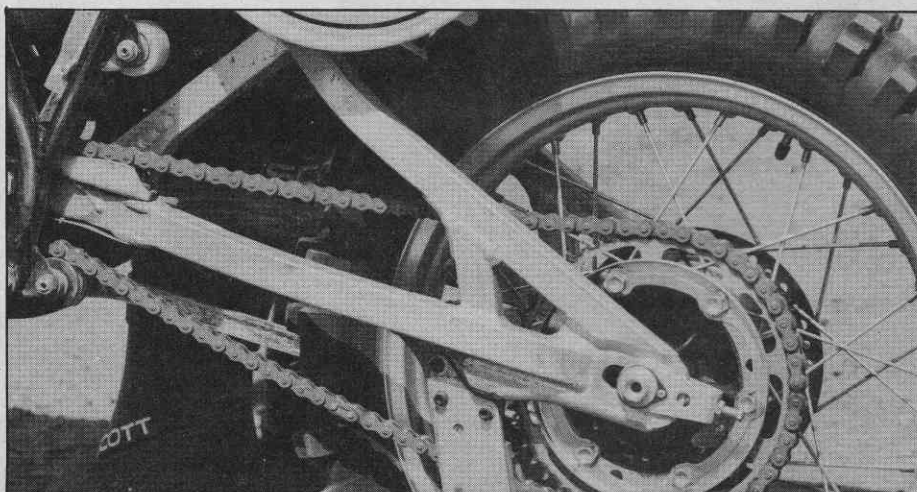
40mm Magnesium Mikuni carb is bolted up to a massive reed cage.



Massive 43mm fork tubes are knurled Kayabas and flex-free. Top triple clamp has solid mount for bars, unlike stock rubber-mounted items. Tank is aluminum and has large capacity.



Rear hub is sand cast magnesium. Circular guard over sprocket bolts keeps a tossed chain from getting locked-in between the swingarm and the sprocket. All nuts and bolts are titanium. Bolts are dished out, or hollow.



Swingarm is a bit longer than a stock YZ465, and a bit lighter.