

SPECIAL TRAILRIDERS GUIDE!

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2-WHEELS vs.
4-WHEELS:
WHICH
YAMAHA
200
IS THE
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HOT NEW MINI STAR:
SCALING DOWN THE
SIZE & PRICE OF AN
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10

□ There are two distinct philosophies regarding new products. One is to constantly change and technologize the product. The other follows that old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" The team of engineers of the off-road vehicle division of Yamaha has produced examples of both philosophies with the high-tech WR200 off-road two-wheeler and the low-tech four-wheeled fun machine we are familiar with—the Blaster.

While the Yamaha WR200 is state-of-the-art in two-wheeled technology, with electronic power valve, cartridge forks, long-travel suspension and ultra-modern styling, the Blaster is a low-tech, simple, meat-and-potatoes approach to off-road enjoyment.

2 WHEELS vs. 4

Anyone interested in off-road riding has at one time or another been confronted with a decision: two wheels or four. Some of the staff here at *Dirt Wheels* have extensive two-wheeler experience, while others have only known the joys of four-wheeling their entire careers. Since anyone walking into a dealership today has to make the choice between two wheels and four, we thought we'd take a look at two different approaches and machines.

Yamaha's Blaster is a proven, versatile, fun-to-ride four-wheeled ATV. It uses an air-cooled 195cc, two-stroke, oil-injected engine in a rugged chassis with average suspension and is a low-tech, low-cost approach to off-road riding. Outside of graphic changes, new colors and minor updates, it has changed very little since it first debuted in '88.

The WR200 is an all-new "enduro" off-road two-wheeler being released as a '92 model by Yamaha. It uses a liquid-cooled, 199.7cc, case reed, electronic-power-valved, two-stroke engine. Long-travel suspension,

YAMAHA BLASTER VS. YAMAHA WR200

High-tech vs. low-tech

By the decidedly semi-tech staff
at *DIRT WHEELS*

cutting-edge styling and suave good looks make it stand out from the crowd in the two-wheeled world.

Both machines have striking similarities and obvious differences. They both share similar versions of the engine from Yamaha's DT200 (a dual-sport model not available in this country). While the Blaster uses the older, low-tech, non-liquid-cooled version of the DT200 engine, the WR200 uses the latest electronic-power-valved, liquid-cooled DT200 motor.

The WR200 has state-of-the-art suspension with cartridge upside-down forks offering 11.8 inches of plush travel up front. On the back end of the WR, a single monoshock offers up 12.2 inches of travel. Against this, the Blaster has dual A-arm front shocks and a single monoshock rear shock offering 7.1 inches of travel front and rear. With five inches more travel, the two-

wheeled WR200 would seem to clearly outmatch the Blaster in the suspension department.

Weight is another area in which the Blaster would have to give ground to the two-wheeler. While the Blaster weighs in at 320 pounds dry, the WR claims 225 pounds. That's nearly a 100-pound difference! With both a front and rear disc brake, the WR would also seem to have the edge in braking action.

RIDE REVIEW

To evaluate these two machines we had our esteemed staffers, Dennis "Ketchup" Cox, a longtime veteran of two-, three- and four-wheelers, Bill "WBGO" Lanphier, a four-wheeler enthusiast exclusively, and Brand "X" Johnson and Jimmy Lewis from the *DW* test corps, do the testing. Brand is an experienced two- and four-wheeler off-roader, and Jimmy Lewis is an accomplished two-wheeler enduro racer and four-wheeler rider. Their comments:

Ketch: *Surprisingly, the Blaster and the WR aren't as different as you might think. I've always enjoyed riding two-wheelers and the WR is very easy to ride, handles great, and is very torquey. The Blaster is also very easy to ride, handles pretty good and seems to rev out a bit further than the WR. The suspension on the WR, especially the front forks, is far superior to the Blaster's wimpy front shocks. I'd say the Blaster is a much more versatile machine. It fits a much wider cross-section of riders, it's a vehicle you could teach mom, dad and the kids on, yet still enjoy taking it out for a spin yourself.*

Wild Bill Lanphier: *Ketch and I did quite a few impromptu drag races and, while the Blaster was close at the start, as soon as you hit third gear the WR would pull away big-time. No question about it, the two-wheeler is the quicker of the two*



In the battle of two-wheelers versus four-wheelers, *DIRT WHEELS* pitted Yamaha's popular Blaster against its two-wheeled cousin, the all-new '92 WR200. We were somewhat surprised at the final results.





One-upmanship? Brand "X" shows off his version of a two-wheeled quad, while Jimmy Lewis does his impersonation of a Uni-cycle. Now cut it out, guys!

in a straight-up drag race. It looks pretty good, also. I like the high-tech look and feel of the WR, but the Blaster is more user-friendly. You'd have a hard time teaching a newcomer the basics on the WR. It's not a machine my mom or grandparents could ride. When it comes to cornering, there's no question that the four-wheeler is much easier and more fun to ride. You can literally BLAST through the corners on the Blaster. I found myself backing off in the turns on the two-wheeled WR. It seemed fast in a straight line and over rough terrain mainly due to the longer suspension travel on the bike, but I felt I could go almost as fast on the Blaster overall.

Jimmy Lewis: Since I probably have the most two-wheeler experience, I naturally liked the WR200. While it isn't the fastest enduro/trail machine around, it is easy to ride and torquey. The WR200 is tall with a seat height of 39 inches [the Blaster's seat height is 29 inches], but once you're aboard the WR it doesn't feel overly tall because the long-travel, softly sprung suspension allows you to sink into it quite a bit. The WR is highly maneuverable, and you can flick it back and forth in tight trails quite easily. The suspension felt great, and overall I'd rate the WR as a great entry-level enduro scooter. The Blaster is also easy to ride, handles pretty good and, in a word, is fun. For a new rider, or someone who doesn't have any two-wheeler experience, the Blaster can't be beat for its versatility and the wide range of riders it can accommodate. I like them both.

Brand "X" Johnson: I like bikes and quads, but I'd have to say the Blaster is better suited to more riders than the WR200. Even though the WR is high-tech and it would be nice to see that liquid-cooled engine on the Blaster, I don't know if it would make that much of a difference. The Blaster's air-cooled engine actually

1992 YAMAHA WR200



Engine type . . . Liquid-cooled, single-cylinder, case reed, electronic power valve
Displacement 199.7cc
Bore and stroke 66.8mm x 57mm
Carburetion 30mm Mikuni
Transmission 6-speed, manual clutch

Reverse No
Starter Primary kick
Fuel tank capacity 2.6 gal.
Wheelbase 57.7 in.
Ground clearance 14.2 in.

Suspension:

Front KYB inverted cartridge forks, 11.8 in. travel
Rear Monocross, Showa shock, 12.2 in. travel

Brakes:

Front Single disc
Rear Single disc
Final drive Chain
Weight claimed, dry 225 lb.
Intended use Sport/recreation
Country of origin Japan
Suggested retail price \$3499

Distributor/Manufacturer:

Yamaha Motor Corp.
 6555 Katella Ave.
 Cypress, CA 90630
 (714) 761-7300

1991 YAMAHA YFM200 BLASTER



Engine type Air-cooled, single-cylinder 2-stroke
Displacement 195cc
Bore and stroke 66mm x 57mm
Carburetion 26mm Mikuni
Transmission 6-speed, manual clutch

Reverse No
Starter Primary kick
Fuel tank capacity 2.38 gal.
Wheelbase 43.3 in.
Overall length 66.7 in.
Overall width 40.7 in.
Ground clearance 4.7 in.

Suspension:

Front Double wishbone, 7.1 in. travel
Rear Swingarm, monoshock, 7.1 in. travel

Brakes:

Front Dual drum
Rear Single disc
Final drive Chain
Weight claimed, dry 320 lb.
Intended use Sport/recreation
Country of origin Japan
Suggested retail price \$2499

Distributor/Manufacturer:

Yamaha Motor Corp.
 6555 Katella Ave.
 Cypress, CA 90630
 (714) 761-7300

felt a little stronger than the high-tech WR's liquid-cooled mill. Where the WR stands out is in its superior suspension and brakes. You can really attack whoops and hit the brakes hard on the two-wheeler. You also only have to pick one line through the ruts and bumps instead of two, like on a four-wheeler. I liked the stylish lines and look of the WR. It definitely looks rad and bad. The Blaster's cool but could stand a bit longer chassis, better front suspension and maybe a restyle on the plastic for the '90s. I'd still pick the Blaster as a better all-around off-road vehicle, especially since it's about \$1000 cheaper.

SUMMATION

There you have it. Our test consultants, while impressed with the high-tech look and feel of the two-wheeled WR200, still felt the lower-tech four-wheeled Blaster was a better overall buy. The fact that the

Blaster appeals to a broader cross-section of young, old, big, small, male and female riders at a substantially lower cost shows that sometimes a low-tech solution can be more successful than the high-tech alternative.

While we would like to see an all-new Blaster sometime in the immediate future, maybe items like liquid cooling and long-travel suspension aren't the way to go on this popular and fun entry-level sport ATV. To tell the truth, we'd rather see upgrades such as a longer swingarm, better front shocks and standard accessory items such as a speedometer/tripmeter, handguards and more power instead of gizmo-like electronic power valves, liquid cooling and a higher retail price.

High-tech is nice, but it isn't always the best and only answer to making a better quad. □

