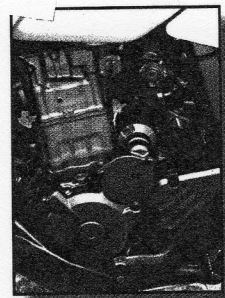


# What

where & how?

You want answers? We've been inundated with DRZ400 questions



**N**o matter how much you write about something, you always seem to miss things. We've clocked up a fair few keyboard hours discussing Suzuki's DRZ400 in the last few issues, but still the questions come. Luckily, we know some of the answers.

## ON FUEL

How is the fuel economy and what is the fuel range with the stock tank?

The DRZ is as frugal with the fuel as they come, short of fitting injectors. With the dead-stock jetting our bike will easily deliver 150ks or more per 10-litre tank. On one road ride, on which it was throttled near to death in a battle with multi-cylinder road bikes, it managed 170ks before stopping. In the bush, look for between 14 and 17kpl, and even better figures are possible if you ride conservatively.

Did you need to alter the jetting when you fitted the Barrett muffler?

Now this is a weird thing. This is the fourth DRZ400 we've played with, and we've never touched the jetting on any of them. Stock muffler, free-breathing muffler, no baffle ... it's all the same and the bike runs perfectly. This makes a sensible person wonder if re-jetting the bike would produce even better figures, and that is possible. You may be able to go leaner with the stock muffler, but we doubt there'll be any real benefits because the bike makes good power and gives exceptional economy as it is. 17kpl and 45hp with the Barrett tells us that the jetting is pretty much spot-on.

What sort of fuel do you run?

We prefer to run our bikes on standard unleaded, for the simple reason that you can get it anywhere. The Suzuki loves the stuff and there's no significant improvement in performance or economy using premium. Other bikes do need to run premium when stock though, and where this occurs we attempt to jet them to run best on unleaded. Not very flash, we know, but setting up a bike to run on exotic fuels is no good when you're into remote riding.

## THE AIRBOX

Is there any value in opening up the airbox, as is recommended with Yamaha's WRs, to improve breathing?

No. Both the DRZ250 and the DRZ400 will actually



suffer a drop in power if you open the airbox up, unless of course you increase the gas flow through the head. If you leave the ports and valves in standard trim, it is best to leave the airbox alone, which will help keep water, dust and mud at bay. We're actually going to look at experimenting with the airbox snorkel, though, because it concentrates dust onto one area of the air filter, leading to localised clogging. Getting a bit more swirl happening in there would be a good thing.

Is there any benefit in replacing the stock air filter with a Twin Air or Unifilter filter?

We hope so, because that's what we've done. We're actually going to go into this in some detail in the next issue, but briefly, we prefer to run a dual density filter because we believe it both breathes more freely, and gives more protection against dust penetration. We'll be putting different filters and filter oils to the test in the next issue, so time will tell.

## ON MUFFLERS

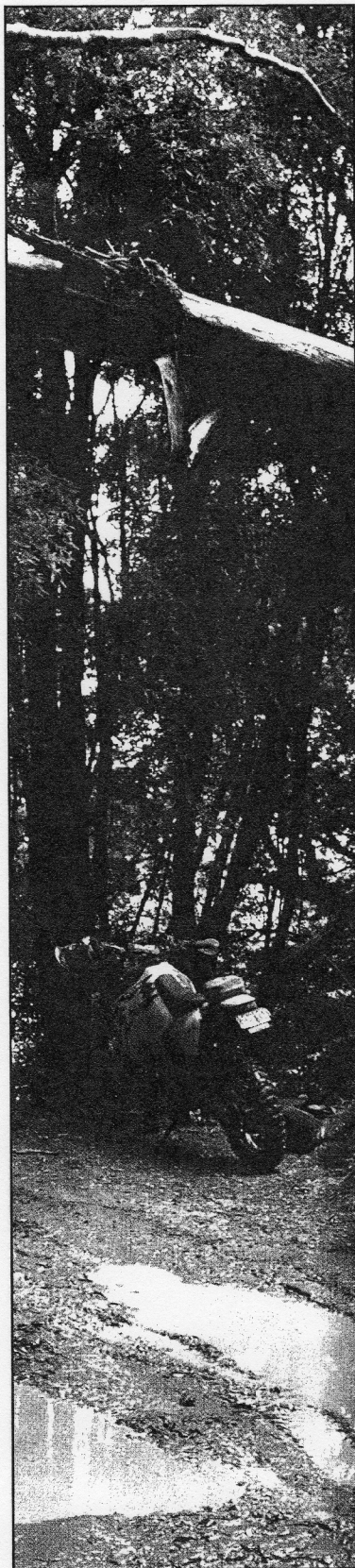
Every man and his hearing-impaired dog wanted to know about this. Colin Redway covered most of it with this question.

Has anyone done any comprehensive testing of exhaust systems for the DRZ, with hp and dB figures, comparing stock with modified stock, accessory baffles and full systems?

Someone probably has, and we know we've done a fair bit over the last four years, starting with our Safari bikes in 2000. Basically, the original stock muffler back in 2000 was quiet but restrictive. It needed opening up badly, and B&B Aluminium developed a bolt-in baffle that gave an instant 2hp boost. The actual figures vary because the output of different DRZs varies due to machining differences, and the time of the week they were assembled ...

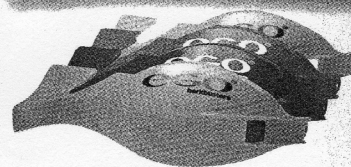
Our DRZ, with the uncomfortably loud stock baffle – the inner liner on the baffle was gone when we removed it from the crate – made 41hp. The B&B baffle gave it 1.5 to 2hp more, and the Barrett muffler brought that up to 45. We figured that was plenty and left it there. We took things further with the Safari bikes though, and found that a Staintune full system gave 3hp over the B&B, and that even more was available if the baffle was removed. This of course made the plot impossibly loud and was completely impractical, and you come back to the question of what you're willing to sacrifice to get more power. And whether or not you can make good use of those extra horses.

We ran a Yoshimura system on Kevin Schwantz's DRZ, and it was as loud as the



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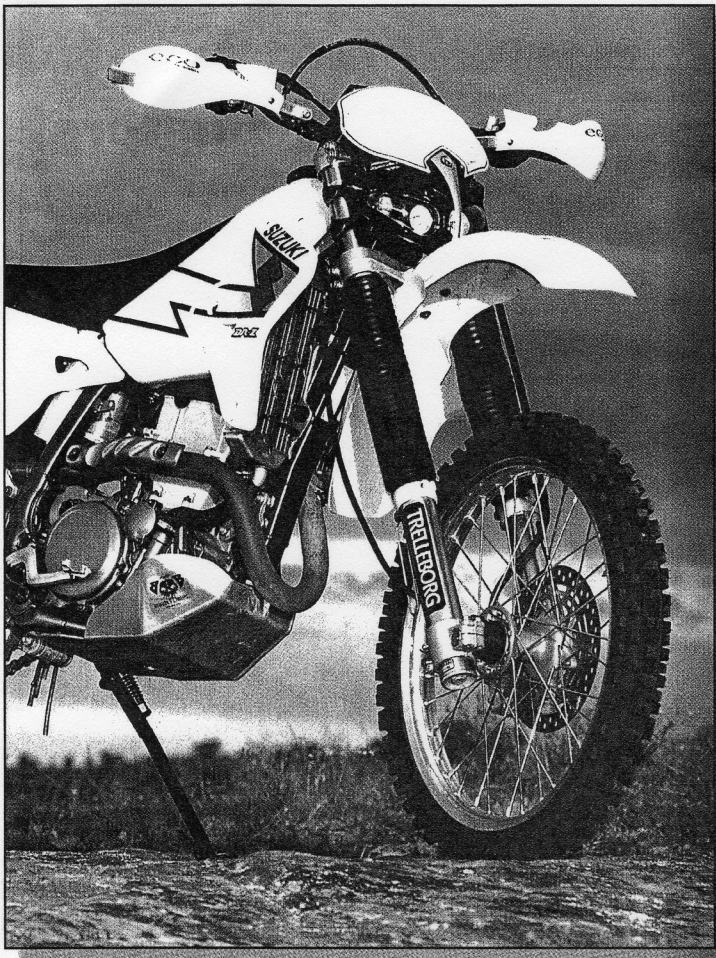
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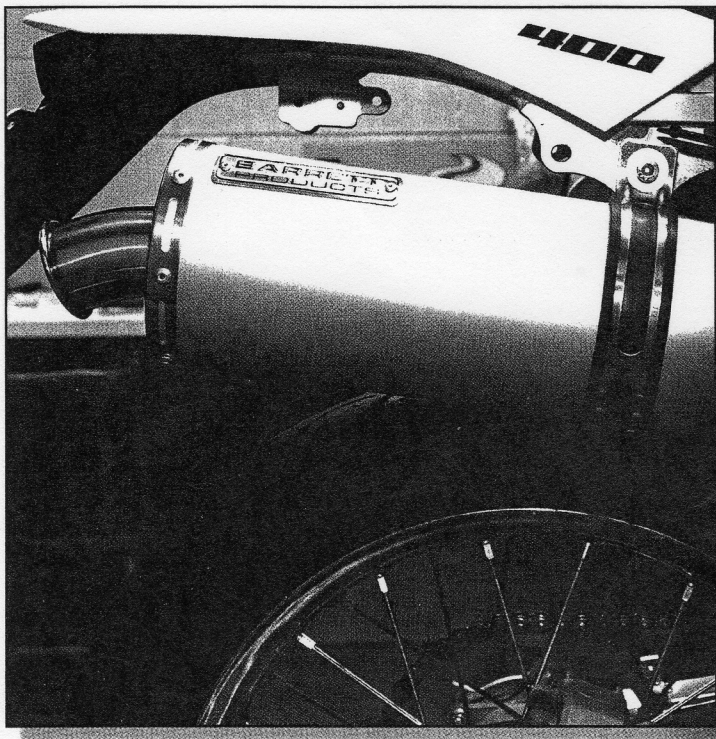






Fork oil heights can be dialled in to suit the individual

45hp. There's more available, but how much can you use?



Staintune system without a baffle. It sounded fast, but repeated standing drags and roll-ons, complete with rider swaps, showed that the two otherwise identical bikes were dead equal in terms of speed and acceleration. Give us the quieter system every time.

## ENGINE OILS

What engine oil are you running, how much does it take, and how often are the recommended oil and filter changes?

We run Motorex's synthetic 4T most of the time, but on long trips where it might be hard to find, switch to an easier to get oil like the Shell synthetic. As a rule it's better to stick to the one oil, but finding an outback servo with Motorex would be like pulling into a pub full of netball players – possible, but unlikely. There is nothing wrong with mineral oils either, but you do need to change them more often.

Oil change intervals depend very much on the type of riding. Gentle commuting won't tax a good oil at 2000ks between changes, but one hard day's racing will have us going for the sump plug. Quality oils will cope with 1000ks of normal adventure touring, but if it comes out black, shorten the intervals. We're excessive, but we like to drop our oil when it is still looking pretty damn clear.

If you keep the oil change interval low, you can get three oil changes in before you need to replace the oil filter, but again, if the filter is dirty when you do this, drop back to two. We like to put a new filter in each time with the first two or three oil changes in a new engine, because of the risk of machine fillings contaminating the oil.

The DRZ takes around 1700ml of oil, and be sure to run the engine, then let it idle for a minute or two before checking the level.

## FORK OIL

Your bike has had fork and shock upgrades which you believe have made significant improvements. Until I can afford this, is there noticeable performance benefits in replacing the stock fork oil? If so, what are the weight and heights to use?

The best thing you can do for your bike is to get a stiffer shock spring. Do this before anything else. Fresh fork oil is always a good thing. Go for 2.5 or 5wt, and determine the height by what your bike is doing. Okay ... Measure your existing oil height and think about how all this works. The oil height determines the amount of air left in the forks, which is a measure of how much they can compress. Too little and they'll be soft and mushy, too much and they'll be harsh. Most DRZ forks feel too soft from stock, so try raising the height by 5mm at a time. Try each setting out and when you find a height you are happy with, stick with it. This height will vary, depending on rider weight, riding style, and the type of terrain you cover.

## ON RELIABILITY

Is the DRZ400 as bullet-proof as the XR4 for commuting and trail riding?

They're very much on a par, except that the Suzuki has radiators, makes more power, and doesn't need to be kicked before it delivers – win some, lose some. God help us if the XR and DRZ4s are scrapped, because they are the most durable mid-sized bikes around at the moment.