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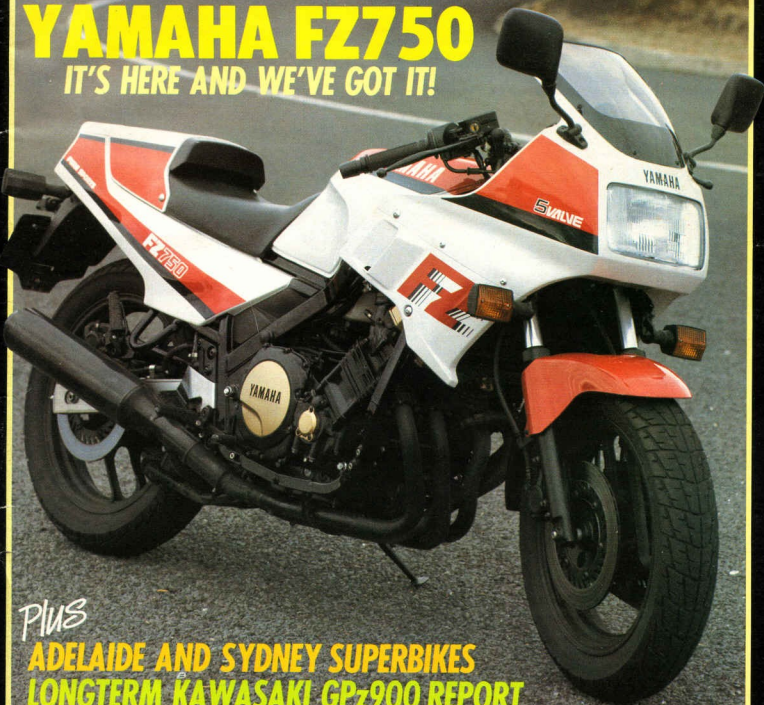
**TEST: XJ900**  
**-THE SENSIBLE ALTERNATIVE**

**BATHURST:**  
**WHAT WENT WRONG?**

**IN-SERVICE:**  
**YAMAHA'S 250/350 STROKERS**

## YAMAHA FZ750

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**LONGTERM KAWASAKI GPz900 REPORT**

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# National Industry Association formed

The formation of the Australian Motorcycle Industry Association has been announced by the Australian Automobile Chamber of Commerce.

The aim of the new association is to give the industry a stronger national voice. Based in Melbourne, the new organisation will operate as a division of the AACC, run by elected committee members from each state.

The Executive Director of

the AACC, Mr. Kingsley Dignum, summed up the reasons for forming the association by saying: "For too long, the motorcycle industry in Australia has been unco-ordinated, it's contribution, position and problems unheard of at national level. I believe the formation of the AMIA will prove a vital step towards correcting this situation."

The AMIA will allow industry members the opportunity to voice their opinions

on, and supply information about, issues affecting the industry such as the proposed ADR N 1-designed to introduce lower noise levels for production bikes.

Membership of a state association will entitle any motorcycle related business to make use of the AMIA facilities. Currently operated by a steering committee, the AMIA is scheduled to meet for the first time in Melbourne in June.

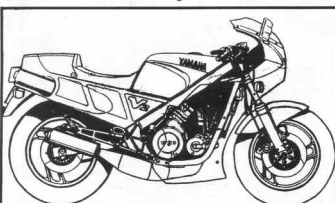
## V-twin RZ250/350!

1985 will see the release of Yamaha's replacements for the popular RZ 250/350 series. The new bikes are to employ much of the technology employed in the RZ500.

Due to be launched in Japan this July, the bikes feature completely revised motors and chassis. The engines will be V-twins using reed valve induction and Yamaha's YPVS exhaust system. The 250 is expected to produce 45hp, and the 350 around 60hp. Those figures compare with 34hp and 43.5hp respectively for the current RZ's.

The frames on the new models will be twin spine box section alloy items with 17 inch front wheels and 18 inch back. This unusual combination has been used on the company's 500 GP bikes.

Yamaha is also said to be working on a new TZ250 using half the 500's race engine.



Above: The new Yamaha RZ250/350. Its features include a new V-twin motor based on the RZ500, plus a completely redesigned frame to handle the substantial power boost.

## Rider killed at Oran Park

The first race of the day at Oran Park on May 19 was marred by the death of Canberra racer Ian Roberts.

Roberts was in the leading bunch of five riders when his Ducati 600 slid out from under him. He was hit by two following riders who were unable to avoid him. The accident occurred on the slowest corner of the course during the B grade 1000 race.

The 26 year old racer worked as a technician for the Defence Department, and was well placed in the Marzocchi Formula European series.

AMCN extends its sympathies to his family and friends.

How far did you have to go for your copy of AMCN?

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the

## Yamaha's 250 &

Owners of Yamaha's water cooled sport two-stroke twins are a keen bunch — that's one thing that came out of AMC's first small bike in-service test. Most bought their bikes for their performance and handling, most do their own servicing and nearly all were quite definite when it came to listing the strong and weak points of a design that, in its basic form, has been around for two decades.

In total we received 210 replies to the survey, making this by far the largest to date. Some of the replies covered two models, giving a total of 215 machines. Of these, just over 60% bought their bikes new, while of the second hand buyers 44% bought from a dealer.

Choice of dealer was influenced primarily by location (81 responses) with price a close second (72) and a large number of respondents indicating that it was the combination of the right price and a nearby shop that clinched the deal.

Service was an important consideration for 57 owners — 34% of those who bought from dealers — with 21 citing personal good experience with the particular dealer.

The overall impression given was that though LC and RZ owners were inter-

ested in getting as much as possible for their motorcycling dollar, the majority were enthusiasts who valued a good dealer if they could find one. Not that dealers make much out of servicing the Yamaha twins — but that's another question.

### Why an RD/RZ?

Three riders mentioned the dealer's racing involvement as a reason for buying from him — including one who said the dealer was now his sponsor — and when it came to reasons for buying the model 25% of owners mentioned racing success. Presumably this was felt to be a good guide to performance and handling — an important factor for 25% of riders also.

However RD and RZ owners seem to be an impecunious lot, with 75, or 36% of the survey, having chosen their machine because of what it offered for the price.

How did they know what it offered? 28% found out from reading magazine road tests, while 12.4% listened to advice from friends or dealer or both — though only seven owners had taken a test ride before they bought. A further 9.5% (20 individuals) had owned an earlier model RD and liked it enough to replace it with another.

Behind performance and price, but still a major factor with 47 responses, was an expectation of practicality, reliability and overall economy of running.

Unfortunately we haven't the time or facilities to accurately cross reference

# HERITAGE

## twins

### 350 strokers

responses to the survey, but for many owners it was the combination of stimulating performance from a relatively simple, low cost, easily maintained machine that attracted them to the model. RZ and RD owners enjoy riding (19 listed simply 'fun' as their bike's best point) and many obviously saw the bikes as offering the maximum enjoyment from the minimum outlay of either hard-earned cash or time spent in the garage keeping their steeds running.

Eleven owners bought their machines specifically for racing, while fifteen said they were 'Two-stroke lovers' — three of these adding that they bought the 350 model simply because it was the biggest two-stroke available at the time. For ten people, looks and styling had an important influence on their choice.

#### Low mileages

The average total mileage of the surveyed machines was, at 19,100km, one of the lowest recorded in AMCN's in-service

tests. Predictably the LCs had covered a lot more miles — more than double in fact — than the RZs, but even their total was relatively low. Also down was the number of miles travelled per year, averaging around 12,000 across the range.

Splitting the different models, we received replies from 52 LC250 owners (average mileage 27,000, per year 12,000) and 65 LC350 owners (average 24,750, per year 13,400). RZ replies were made up of 28 RZ250s (average 11,700, per year 11,500) and 70 RZ350s (average 11,000, per year 10,770).

Why the low figures? One thing that immediately springs to mind is the models' sporting orientation and small capacity — the relative lack of touring miles would certainly help keep the yearly averages down.

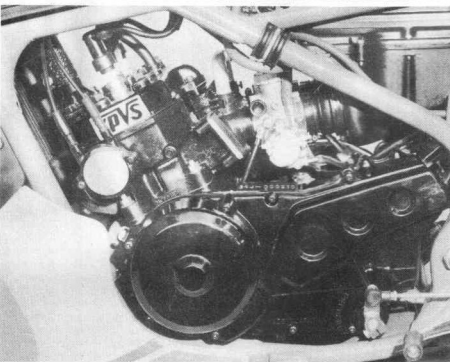
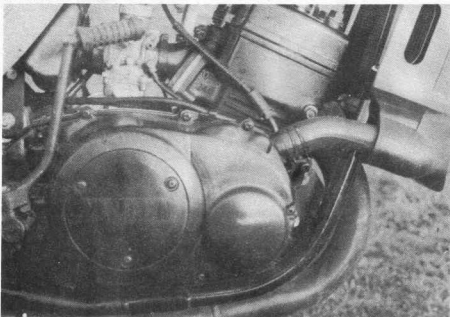
Still, the LCs in the survey are anything up to six years old, yet the average mileage recorded is barely twice the yearly average for the LCs. As well, there is a distinct lack of high mileage

examples in the survey — only five (four 250s and one 350) have recorded more than 50,000km.

One possible reason is that few owners of high mileage LCs bothered responding to the survey. More likely though is that the bikes just have a short lifespan — either because of rapid wear or simply because few people are interested in owning an old one, with the majority of the machines ending life prematurely at the wreckers.

Prematurely, because it seems the bikes will do longer distances if looked after. The highest mileage machine in the survey was a 1979 model 250LC owned from new which had clocked up 108,552.3km, according to its owner.

Despite a series of holed pistons during the warranty period, discovered to be due to lean carburetion but not cured until the owner changed dealers, the owner reported himself happy with his machine's performance though he said both running costs and maintenance



The RD LC motor (top) gained Yamaha's YPVS system and a few extra horses to become the RZ motor (bottom).

had been high. No minor problems were reported but the bike had suffered a cracked steering head and crankcase and a complete shorting out of the electrical system which, combined, kept the machine off the road for nine weeks and three days in six years of ownership.

The owner doesn't say, but it is likely his machine had more than one rebore and several sets of piston rings in that distance. A specific question on rebore would have been an interesting one for this particular survey; in its absence we can at least say that the lowest distance recorded for a rebored machine

— apart from those due to a problem with the machine rather than wear — was 28,000km, while the lowest mileage bike that had replacement rings had covered 12,000km.

### Servicing

While on the subject of rebore, how did the bikes fare in the service department? Extremely well, with an astounding 98 percent of owners agreeing that regular maintenance tasks were easy to perform. So easy, in fact, that 75 percent of 250 owners and 85.5 percent of 350

owners said they do all servicing and maintenance themselves.

Of those who left servicing to the dealer, half took the bike back to the dealer they bought it from and half went elsewhere. We received a few caustic comments about particular dealers, some the result of single incidents, others expressions of dissatisfaction with the dealer's attitude. These accounted for about half the 21 riders who took their machines elsewhere — the remainder either went to friends, to a closer dealer, or to a two-stroke specialist with racing involvement.

Tasks which even do-it-yourselfers left to dealers included carburettor tuning and simply 'tuning' — but even then only 10 percent of riders relied on a specialist to get the best out of their bike.

Other areas seen as tricky were oil-pump adjustment (nine responses), and servicing of the YVPS power valve components on RZs (six responses).

Seven people mentioned crank rebuilds and three reboring — the remainder presumably didn't consider these tasks 'service aspects', for it is unlikely that many owners would have private access to a boring bar!

One 250 LC owner said he did all his own work on the bike with the exception of setting the valve clearances and adjusting the cam-chain. We assume the reply was tongue-in-cheek — but the rest of his form was filled out with such seriousness that we can only wonder whether his dealer is onto a good thing!

The general attitude to servicing on the model can best be summed up by a quote from another RD LC owner. 'If you can't work on an RD,' he wrote, 'you shouldn't be on a bike.'

### Exhausts, clutches

That being said, what did owners feel to be the most serious design faults on the model? By far the greatest number of complaints from LC owners stemmed from their machines' exhaust systems.

Comments such as 'bloody exhausts' and 'shits me' were representative of how owners felt about this part of their machines, with complaints including poor sealing between exhaust and head (14), broken internal baffling (13 — all from LC 350 owners), cracked pipes (7) and removable baffles popping out while riding (8).

One owner claimed that his exhaust gaskets last 'about 2,000 km'. Another said he had repaired the internal baffling — an operation which requires cutting and rewelding of the pipes — five times in 41,000km, while another reported doing the job three times.

Yamaha seems to have cured the problem with the RZ series though, with only one exhaust related complaint re-

ceived from the 95 RZ owners who responded to the survey. The RZ however has a weak point of its own — its clutch.

Admittedly the clutch only got seven mentions — not a great number considering the size of the sample — and of these two owners admitted bringing their troubles on themselves by a propensity for wheelstands! On the other hand, six reports concerned total clutch failure and this was the most quoted reason for RZs being taken off the road. Complaints came from both 250 and 350 owners, at distances ranging from 6,000 to 31,000km.

Clutch problems were also reported by five LC owners — four on 250s and one 350. Only two of these were cases of failure (the RZs included three cases where clutch plates had actually broken), the other two referring to mild slippage and premature plate wear.

In all, 23 of the 95 RZs had spent time off the road, but the only other consistent problem was the YVPS system. Three machines (all 250s) suffered failed servo motors and one a broken cable, with time off the road varying from one to twenty one days.

The remainder of serious RZ problems only cropped up once or twice each. There were two cases of worn steering head bearings (at 7,000 and 31,000 km) and two cases of worn swingarm pivots (at 12,000 and 15,000).

Problems which occurred once each included unspecified gearbox rattles, ignition failure, handling problems from new and a jammed rear brake master cylinder.

As well there was one reported case of oil pump failure (at 20,000 km and resulting in a total rebuild), one of a blown left hand side crankshaft bearing (at 13,600 km) and one of a holed left side piston (at 14,500 km). The rider whose bike holed a piston said he knew 'personally' of five RZs with the same problem — however his was the only case that cropped up in our survey.

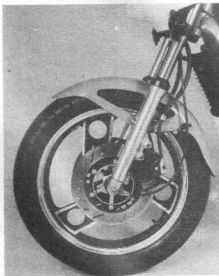
With more than double the average odometer reading, the LCs in the survey could be expected to have been off the road more frequently than the RZs, and this was indeed the case. Of the 115 owners to reply, a total of 40 (16 250s and 24 350s) had been taken out of service for repairs.

As with the RZs, the LCs exhibited a collection of isolated problems rather than a few serious faults — the exception in this case being in the oil pump.

In all, five LCs (two 250s, three 350s) spent time off the road due to oil pump failure — though in one case the failure was said to be due to an 'air lock'. Again, not an enormous number considering the



*In the search for better braking and improved looks, the LC's (top) wheels were swapped for new units (below) and slotted discs were fitted.*



size of the sample — but oil pump failure is a particularly nasty thing to have happen to a two-stroke engine, resulting in, at best, a rebore and at worst (as in two of the above cases) a total rebuild of the engine.

The 'air lock' problem occurred very early in the bike's life — at just 6,000 km. Of the remainder, only two mentioned mileages and both were high — 50,000 and 45,800 km. We don't want to start a panic among Yamaha two-stroke owners, but pump replacement or at least reconditioning would seem to be a good move once the machines start to age.

A further two owners reported problems with crimped or blocked oil lines, one admitting that he had crimped the line himself when replacing the oil tank. A silly mistake perhaps, but it resulted in a seized motor, and caused the owner to point out that though there is a light to

warn of low oil level in the tank, there is nothing to warn of oil not getting from the tank to the moving parts. Something for Yamaha (and other producers of two-strokes) to think about on future models?

Three other owners mentioned piston seizure — all at fairly high mileages. Two (at 19,000 and 44,000 km) were unexplained. The third (at 49,500 km) was reported as due to a piston ring snagging on a port. There was also the owner whose problems with holed pistons were mentioned earlier in the report.

Four cases of bearing failure (two big-end, two main), were reported to the LCs — three occurring on the 350cc model. There were also two cases of electrical shorts and three of worn crankshaft seals.

The remainder of LC difficulties, apart from a dozen mentions of rebore or ring jobs due to normal wear and tear, and the already dealt with exhaust and clutch problems, occurred only once each. They included a faulty ignition pick-up, worn gear selector shaft, blown first gear, faulty ignition switch, snapped clutch drum pinion, a fuel tank rusted through in 14 months, a faulty rear shock repaired under warranty and a broken kickstarter return spring.

Average time off the road for those RZs and LCs that struck problems was 9.75 days — including the rebore.

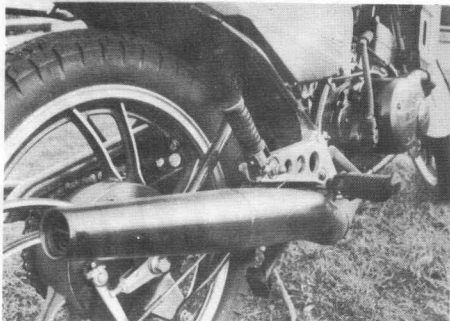
## 'Less serious'

Forty seven percent of RZ owners and fifty seven percent of LC owners reported niggles not serious enough to take their bikes off the road for repairs. Again, there were a couple of recurring areas on each range, with the remainder occurring only in isolated cases.

The most frequently mentioned minor complaint with the RZs was tacho and speedo cables vibrating loose — and even this worried only seven owners. Less frequent, with five, but more serious, was stripped teeth or breakage at the rear suspension adjusting belt.

Four owners experienced minor faults with their machines' YVPS — two failures of the electronic sensor and two cases of leaking seals. Five complained of blown bulbs. Three N-model owners complained of cracks to the fairing or brackets. Two owners experienced failed tachometers, two blown base gaskets and two corroded rear disc master cylinder pistons.

Aside from the LC's exhaust problems, only one minor problem on the LCs got more than four mentions — and that was breaking clutch cables with six. Faults to receive four mentions were heavy plug use, blown bulbs and broken



*Left: Exhausts caused a few headaches for L.C. owners, but were fixed on the RZs.*

speedo and tacho cables. Two owners reported leaky coolant drain bolts.

The only other problem worth mentioning was leaking engine seals — a total of six reports if taken together but it seemed that each owner experienced leakage in a different area, including the water pump, kickstarter, countershaft, and gearshift shaft.

One owner said his pillion peg mount snapped when his bike fell over and the peg was down. 'It would be interesting to find out if this happens on most bikes,' he wrote. Well we can say that no-one else reported it.

Overall the range appears to have few real design faults but owners can expect one or two minor niggles. They should

also expect to rebores the motor somewhere between the 30,000 and 50,000 km mark.

It also appears that little work is required to keep the bikes in tune — as one owner said: 'It used to start perfectly until I started fiddling with the mixture.'

## Sportsters or commuters?

If you think most of these lightweight two-stroke powerhouses are used for primarily sports riding you're wrong — and right. Our survey showed marked differences in usage between LCs and RZs, with the RZs getting significantly more sporting action. We assume this reflects the shift to a more sporting profile with the RZ range.

Answers to the question on usage were as follows (average): LC250 34% sport, 45% commuting, 21% touring; LC350 31% sport, 51% commuting, 18% touring; RZ250 41% sport, 39% commuting, 20% touring; RZ350 42% sport, 37% commuting, 21% touring.

Given the figures, what did owners feel were the range's best points? Overwhelmingly, they voted for the amount of performance the bikes offer for the

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Capacity: 150,750 Tons

8041000 Krasnodar Tur  
a.k.a. *unidentified* *unidentified*

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*Above: The first of Yamaha's watercooled two strokes, the RD LC series.*

*Left: How to make a good thing even better, the RZ's feature generous bracing around the steering head.*



money. This received mentions from 138 of the 210 respondents — 66%.

Why buy a performance machine for commuting then? The answer to that one stood out loud and clear from the survey forms — if owners were going to spend a lot of time commuting, at least they were going to enjoy themselves. Several commented that their RZ or RD made riding to work a lot of fun, while another, who marked an even mix of sport, touring and commuting on his form, commented that on one of these bikes, 'All riding is sports riding!'

Next on the 'best points' list came handling, from 39% of owners. Behind that, and reflecting the commuting side of things, was the lack of or ease of maintenance. This got 45 mentions — 21% — but if you include the 20 mentions of 'reliability', and 12 of 'simplicity' the figures rise to 77 — 37%.

From this the range's profile stands out pretty clearly — owners found their bikes to be fast, good handling and easy to own. And that is pretty much what they hoped for when they bought them!

No wonder 96% of owners said they



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## In Service Test

were satisfied with their bikes' performance overall!

Points which particularly impressed 350cc owners were the low weight and the brakes with 32 and 33 responses respectively. Owners of 250s weren't nearly so impressed with these areas — only half a dozen mentioned either — which is understandable considering the 250's single disc and the fact that its weight is almost identical to the 350's.

Nine owners, all but two of them having 350s, said their bikes' best points was its versatility, elaborating that it performed both commuting and back-road scratching extremely well, while nineteen simply listed as the best point 'fun'. Twenty said they liked the machine's good looks.

The definite statement probably came from one RZ250 owner. His best point? 'Being able to "do" European exotica on the right road!'

All right then, so what were the bad points? No doubt about the worst — 57 owners, or 27%, commented on high fuel consumption.

28 of these were RZ 350 owners, yet a quick check through those who supplied figures revealed that the bikes can be expected to return 16-18 km/l in high-way cruising. Pushing the bike along though increased consumption dramatically, with around 13km/l quoted.

Disappointing aspects (many owners said they expected the poor fuel economy) included flexing and soft springing in the front suspension (27 responses all up), and just general suspension complaints (10). Heavy tyre wear (12) and poor standard tyres (10) were criticisms that extended through all the models.

Although one RZ350 owner complained that the YPVS device was unnecessary, it is significant that though seventeen LC owners complained of poor low and mid-range power, all but three RZ owners were happy with their bike's power spread. Perhaps Yamaha could have found another way to eliminate the famous RD350LC 'flat spot' from 4500 to 5500 rpm (mentioned by several owners), but the company chose to use the power valve and most owners, it seems, are happy with the result.

Other sore points were the long warm-up period (12 LC owners two RZ owners), poor fuel range (five, all LCs) heavy spark plug use (eight), high unsprung weight (six) and the lack of a decent fairing (six) — a complaint rectified on the latest model. Five LC 250 owners were unimpressed with their bike's front brake.

## Wobbles and wallows

That about sums up the bad points — except for one thing: handling. Inter-

estingly, though handling rated second among the best points, two handling aspects featured among the worst.

Three LC and seven RZ owners listed wobbles, lack of stability, or simply 'twitchiness' at high speed, while eleven included behaviour on bumpy corners among their worst points — and another five listed 'frame flex'.

In the specific question on handling, the same two points cropped up — and both LC and RZ owners commented. In all, 43 owners had something negative to say about their machines' high speed stability in the handling section, while 37 noted 'twitching' or 'wallows' on bumpy corners, particularly at high speeds.

Directly contradicting the above were two early model owners who said their machines were 'rock steady over pot-holes' and 'not upset by bad roads', and a further twelve (nine of them RZ owners) who rated high speed stability as excellent.

A couple of owners commented that careful setting up was a necessity for good high speed handling, while two more had fitted a steering damper and rebuilt shock to their RZs which they said 'makes all the difference'.

One RZ 350 owner, who said he thought the bike was top heavy, claimed: 'The only reason it handles well is its light weight.'

Yet when it came to rating the handling, a whopping 79% voted for 'good', with all but two of the remainder voting for 'satisfactory'.

Also of interest was that while 70.5% of LC owners reported good handling, the figure rose to 89.5% with the RZ range — impressive figures by any standards. In fact, although 20 RZ350 owners complained of less than perfect high speed stability, only six gave their machines less than the maximum handling rating of 'good'.

Handling points that impressed riders were the braking ability and the light weight — both categories deriving most response from owners of 350cc machines. Also primarily the province of 350 owners were complaints about the amount of fork dive under brakes. Seven RD250LC owners commented that their front brakes could be stronger.

Finally, two RZ250 and eight RZ350 owners said the handling was impressive in all respects.

## Accessories

Again one point stood out strongly in the question on accessories — RD owners like weather protection, with 55 of them having fitted some form of fairing to their machines. Other popular fittings on the LCs were clip-ons or lower handlebars, fork braces, expansion chambers, air filters and thermostats.

*Left: Success in competition decided many people on buying an RZ.*



***Another owner also mentioned the addition of NO<sub>2</sub> injectors. He also claimed to have fitted training wheels and a sun-roof.***

All but one of the nine riders who fitted steering dampers felt the device made for an improvement.

Fairings were also the most popular fitting on the RZs, but only fourteen owners had fitted them. No doubt reflecting the lower ownership period, fewer RZ owners had gone for accessories, though in general they chose the same ones. One addition was a balancer for the air forks, fitted by ten RZ owners, with several reporting great improvements — one owner even said the device stopped the forks from leaking air!

After-market reed valve systems had been fitted to six RZs and 16 LCs, the most common brand quoted being Boyeson which accounted for 17 all up. Without exception riders reported improvements in engine performance, either in the low and mid rpm range or throughout the range. One RZ350 rider also reported a 10 percent increase in fuel economy.

A few respondents to the survey said the 350s made surprisingly good tourers, and a total of twenty had fitted luggage carrying accessories, with the most popular being the ubiquitous Gearsack. An-

other sixteen had added a luggage rack — while nine had even fitted a clock.

Perhaps the most surprising accessory of all came from an RD250LC owner who said he had fitted nitrous oxide injection to his machine — though 'teething problems' had forced its removal.

Another owner also mentioned the addition of NO<sub>2</sub> injectors, but as he also claimed to have fitted training wheels and a sun-roof — and said 100 percent of his riding was 'Death defying stunts' — we decided he was kidding!

### Running costs

The running costs question brought a divided response — not surprising considering the answer is based on an owners expectations, income and previous motorcycling experience. However the majority of replies fell into the 'moderate' category.

Results were: LC250, 32% low, 18% high, 50% moderate; RZ250, 20% low, 25% high, 55% moderate; LC350 40% low, 9% high, 51% moderate; RZ350 25% low, 16% high, 59% moderate.

As you can see, the 350s fared the best, with the 350 LC doing best of all. In general, LC owners were a bit happier with running costs than owners of the later model.

When it came to how long they would keep their bikes, owners of 350cc machines were again the most satisfied — 26 percent of them hoping to keep their bikes indefinitely, with comments such as 'for ever' or 'until it does' being common.

These responses were evenly spread among RZ and LC owners — though one LC owner did note that the resale value of his machine was so poor that he may as well hang on to it when he buys another bike.

A further eleven 350 owners intended to keep their bikes for more than three years, 27 for one or two years and ten for six months or less. Two said they were hanging on to their bikes until Suzuki's RG500 or perhaps a 350cc version of the KR250 were released.

The 250cc owners showed a more even spread, with the RZ owners in general aiming to keep their machines longer than the LC punters.

Of those who still had their 250 LCs (all 35 of them), 15 planned to sell it in six months or less, with a further seven hoping to swap it for something better (read bigger) as soon as they had the necessary funds or full licence. Five said they would keep the bike for another

*'This bike', he wrote, 'caused me to grin constantly a whole month after I bought it'.*

er year, while six would hang on to it for two years or more.

In contrast, 24 of the 28 RX250 respondents still had their bikes, with only five planning to change soon. Of the remainder, six would keep their bikes for a year, twelve for two years or more, while one owner said he would sell when his machine had done 50,000 km.

The question on whether owners would buy the same bike again caused some confusion, with a lot of owners saying they would prefer to update their LCs. But the question was intended to evaluate owners' satisfaction with the model. Perhaps it should be rephrased as 'If you had your time over again, would you still buy the bike, knowing

what you know now?' — but maybe that would cause even more confusion!

At any rate, 16 percent of RZ350 and 25 percent of RZ250 owners said 'no', while for the LC range the figures were 33 percent (350) and 51 percent (250).

Reasons given, however, nearly all referred to a desire to get something more modern, bigger, or more suited to present needs — several owners wanted to get a big tourer now that they had married, for instance.

When it came to satisfaction with overall performance, 96 percent of all owners said they were satisfied. It certainly looks as though Yamaha has got something right with the model!

## Other bikes?

So what do all these satisfied RZ and RD owners see as alternatives to their present machine? Eighteen — 13 of them RZ350 riders — said they couldn't think of anything better.

For the rest, the most coveted machine by far was Yamaha's RZ500, which drew a total of 71 responses. A lot of these though were accompanied by the qualifier 'If I could afford one.'

Next on the list came — believe it or not — the RZ350, with 32 responses, including three from early RZ owners who wanted to trade up to the latest N-model.

Well behind came the Yamaha FJ1100 with 17 responses, followed Kawasaki's GPZ900 (14), and Suzuki's yet to be released RG500 (13).

Others included Kawasaki's KR250 (11), Ducati's 650 Pantah (10) and as yet unavailable 750 F-1, Kawasaki's GPZ750 and GPZ600 (8 each), the BMW K100RS (8), Moto Guzzi's Le Mans (7) Yamaha's FZ750 (7) and Suzuki's GSX-R 400 (7). The highest scoring Honda was the VF750 with six mentions.

One owner thought the developing Lava-verda V-3 two strokes looked interesting, while three were after four stroke singles, one mentioning the SRX 600, another the mythical 'reliable' Ducati 450 Desmo.

If all this doesn't tell you all you need to know about Yamaha's water cooled RD and RZ series and their owners, the only thing we can suggest is that you buy one and find out first hand! If the 210 respondents to our survey can be believed, it is a decision you won't regret.

We'll leave you with another quote from an RZ350 owner. 'This bike', he wrote, 'caused me to grin constantly the whole month after I bought it.

'Now I only grin when I think of it!'

**Ian Baker**





*Above: Both the RD and RZ Yamahas have been popular among racers, and 25% of the respondents to our owner survey listed 'racing success' as a prime reason for buying the model. The same number listed performance and handling, but while nearly all owners were impressed by outright performance, high speed handling, particularly on less than perfect surfaces, drew much negative comment.*