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AJP PR3 200

Words and Photos: Paul

It's not often we test a bike from Portugal, and it's even rarer to have Tracey jumping up and down asking to be the test pilot. But when we took delivery of the AJP PR3, we found ourselves doing just that...

“It's perfect,” was her first comment. “What is it and where's it come from?” followed soon after.

We were just pulling the smart-looking AJP PR3 out of the back of the van to go into the DRD lock-up and already Tracey was chomping at the bit. I hadn't seen this much enthusiasm from her about a dirt bike since Nick Franklin came in the office and she suddenly developed a massive interest in freestyle!

But this was different. She was actually looking at a dirt bike and making noises about being sure I got her to test it, something that often happens with sharp road bikes but is unheard of when it comes to getting muddy. “Is it a Honda?” was her first guess at the origin of the white and blue bike, and although it would have been fun to get her guessing the country of manufacturer of the AJP for the rest of the afternoon, I put her out of her misery. “Surprisingly, it's from Portugal,” I offered, which resulted in a raise of the eyebrows as she took the AJP from me and swung a leg over. “Nice low seat,” was soon followed by, “Oooh, it's got disc brakes on the front AND back. That's better than those 'orrible drum brakes that you get on the other bikes like this.”

Of course, the bikes she's referring to are models like

Honda's CRF230F and Yamaha's TT-R230, which you tend to see intermediate female riders cruising around on, which both feature a disc brake on the front but an old-fashioned drum on the rear. And the truth of it is, these bikes aren't exactly ideal for the riders who you normally see on them, with a heavy girth, high seat, budget suspension and lazy geometry not exactly massaging the ladies riding skills. They aren't exactly stylish either...

EASY EYE

So what's the AJP got that the Japanese machines haven't? Well, the lack of a skyscraper saddle was one of Tracey's major raves, with the smaller wheels (19" front and 16" rear) on the AJP keeping the foam lower down and allowing her to get both feet flat on the floor without reducing the suspension travel. With a seat height of just 840mm, the PR3 is almost 32mm lower than the CRF and the TT-R, which is a major advantage for those lacking in the leg department. The usual trick of lowering a dirt bike by dropping the forks through the triple clamp and changing the linkage on the shock tends to mess up the handling. The AJP instead has a smart set of 45mm USD Marzocchi forks up front and an Ölle shock in the rear, and there's

no denying that every girl likes a bit of bling, even if it is on their dirt bike.

In fact the bling continues from there to the shiny 260mm brake disc up front and the 240mm rear, which certainly put a smile on her face, although the frame took her a bit by surprise, with the cast aluminium struts under the saddle different to the steel tubes she's normally used to. And then there was the fuel tank filler that is located in the rear of the saddle. “What the hell?” was her first comment until I explained how positioning the tank back and low keeps the weight in the centre of the bike and improves the handling. She liked that idea and liked it even more when she noticed you could see the amount of fuel in it through the clear plastic.

AJP have been making dirt bikes since 1987 but it wasn't until a move to their new factory in 2003 saw them producing mainstream dirt bikes. Popular in Europe and now in the UK, they have a range of bikes powered by either 125, 200, 240cc and 250cc four-stroke air-cooled powerplants that cover genres from supermotard to enduro. The bike we had to test was the 200cc enduro model, which felt to have plenty more pep than any of the others in the segment. The 240 version of the

same machine would likely be even more exciting and certainly suitable for trails as well as a bit of off-road competition. As it was, the 200 had plenty enough power for Tracey, which she discovered after hurriedly getting into her gear to go for a ride around 'with the children.' The fact the kids were far more interested in playing indoors wasn't going to deter Tracey, and soon they were all ripping around the paddocks and having a blast.

And then it happened, the thing that surprised me most about Tracey's first ride on the AJP; she started practicing wheelies and I'm not talking just small ones. Such was her confidence in the new machine, the way it handled, produced its power, the size and the weight, she didn't think twice about standing up on the pegs and pulling a big mono down the paddock. I almost fell over. This was the first time I'd truly seen Tracey comfortable on a dirt bike and believe me when I tell you we've been through everything there was to try to find a bike that gave her this confidence. At last, somebody is making a bike that is suited to 50% of the adult population... Women. Why it's taken a small company in Portugal of all places to finally work this out is beyond me, but the day has finally come. ▶



AJP PR3 200 TRAIL

Price: \$5,650

Warranty: Two years, unlimited mileage

ENGINE

Type: Air-cooled SOHC/2-valve, 198cc, Single cylinder 4 stroke

Bore x stroke: 69.0mm x 53.0mm

Cooling System: Air / oil cooled

Starting: Electric and kick

Fuel System: Carburettor, 30mm

RUNNING GEAR

Frame: Cast aluminium and steel double-cradle

Front Suspension: Marzocchi 45mm USD fork

Rear Suspension: Oil Damped Monoshock

Front Brake: 260mm disc with twin piston caliper

Rear Brake: 220mm disc with single piston caliper

Front Tyre: 2.75-19

Rear Tyre: 3.25-17

DIMENSIONS

Seat Height: 840mm

Dry Weight: 100kg

Wheelbase: 1320mm

Fuel Capacity: 7L

PERFORMANCE

Power: 13.2Kw @ 8000rpm

Torque: 15.5Nm @ 7000rpm



TRACEY'S TAKE

I always like bikes that are a bit different and that no one else has, so when the AJP came along and I saw it was definitely something different, I was really interested to know more and give it a go.

I've been riding my Suzuki RM125 for a while now and really enjoy it, but with my two boys now riding their CRF70 and CRF50, I'm finding the motocross bike a bit of pain to 'mother duck' them on the trails. And on the farm, moving the stock with the RM125 is definitely not the go. Opening and closing gates all the time meant I had to lie the bike down, so I made a cunning plan and borrowed Greg Power's CRF230 for the Kids Campout to ride and also used it to do training with Broxy. Unfortunately, I needed to face the fact that it is more the trail type bike I need, but the CRF is still just slightly too big and heavy.

Taking a look around the AJP as I kitted up and it certainly looked to tick all the boxes for what I required in a dirt bike. Jumping on board and you know instantly when you feel comfortable on a bike and you

know whether or not it has the potential to spit you off with one slip of the wrist. This certainly wasn't the case with the AJP and the more I rode it, the more I enjoyed it. The power was smooth and it was easy to manoeuvre due to it being quite light. It wasn't overly loud even though the exhaust can look racy, and I actually ended up using it to move my stock from paddock to paddock without causing chaos. We don't have flat paddocks so it was quite fun flying up and down the hills, changing direction quickly to catch the steers that decided they didn't want to go the way I wanted them to. It is a perfect all round machine for me at this stage of my life.

Racing around the paddock is one thing, but the real test would be out on the trails where I was interested to see if the smaller wheels would cause me a problem in the bigger ruts and holes you often find. Thankfully, the excellent suspension smoothed out all the holes and the smaller wheels didn't seem to make any difference. In fact, the AJP seemed to steer really well, flicking into turns with ease that may well be due to the smaller hoop.



I was a bit worried about the AJP having a smaller engine than I'm used to, but the 200cc motor seemed to love to rev and had more than enough go to get me up hills and blasting along straights. If you haven't guessed already, I loved it! The motor didn't miss a beat, it started with a push of the button every time I stopped and there was even all the fittings to make it road legal should I decide to go adventure riding.

Okay, I'm sure most of you out there won't know the name AJP. I didn't. But if you're looking for a bike for the wife or something the kids can step up into, then I'd certainly suggest finding a dealer and taking a look. If the rider is anything like me, they won't be disappointed. **DRD**