

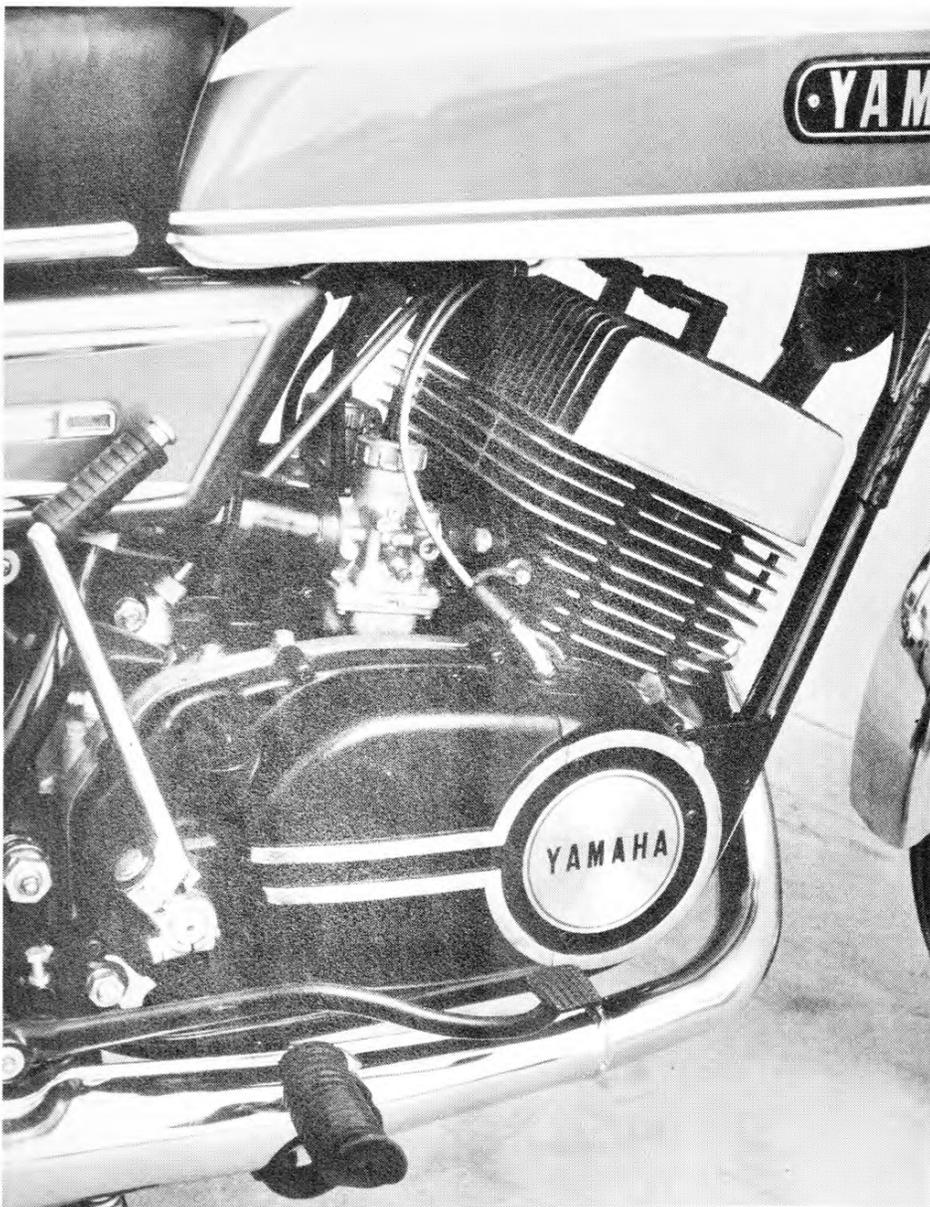
CYCLE GUIDE

TEST ●
REPORT



A LOVE AFFAIR

They've done their homework



The stylists have done a great job with the powerplant. It's amazing what some black paint and a little polish will do.

How's this for a rear tail light? Every year they get bigger. You can see this one for a long way off.

It's rather obvious to us that the people at Yamaha have been very diligent about doing their homework. Their past efforts in medium displacement roadster category have been fairly good. But the new R5 just goes to prove exactly what hard work (not to mention money) will produce. Right at the outset we're going to stick out our neck a mile to say that the Yamaha 350 R5 is, in our opinion, the finest all around medium weight touring machine we have ever had the opportunity to ride. This is regardless of cost, or anything else.

The older R3 model, while it was fairly fast, it did have an engine that was fairly peaky. Not so with the R5. The new 350's power spread is a good deal broader and as a result, the rider doesn't

spend nearly as much time shifting gears as he used to. This is pretty nice for the person using his motorcycle to go to work or school. Also, the clutch lasts a lot longer. It's faintly reminiscent of four stroke power which in itself is saying a lot, at least about the low end performance. Two strokes have never been able to match four cycle power down at the lower rpm ranges, although the new R5 comes as close to this as any we've ridden. And of course, once the revs are built up, this new powerplant really comes into its own. A full 28 foot pounds of torque are developed at 6500 rpm, although you can really feel the old suds coming in at about 3500. As a matter of fact, we found it possible to run the engine down to 2800 to 3000 in top gear, and then screw on the throttle hard and pull away smoothly. Of course, the acceleration is less than impressive. Once the revs are built up to 4000 however, things start to happen fast. One thing we noticed almost immediately, because of the low mechanical noise level, plus the quiet exhaust, you generally turn a lot more rpm than you're really aware of. It took us a little while to become accustomed to this fact. Yamaha claims that the maximum power is developed at 7000 rpm and on more than one occasion we found ourselves unwittingly exceeding this.

From minimum to maximum rpm, the engine is delightfully smooth with no vibration annoyance whatsoever. Yamaha claims a top speed of 104 miles an hour on this new R5. There was no way we could even get close to this. The best speed we could turn was 91 miles an hour, although drag strip performances were rather impressive. ET's in the low





Although the front brake worked, we felt it would be better to have more stopping power. It's the double leading shoe type.

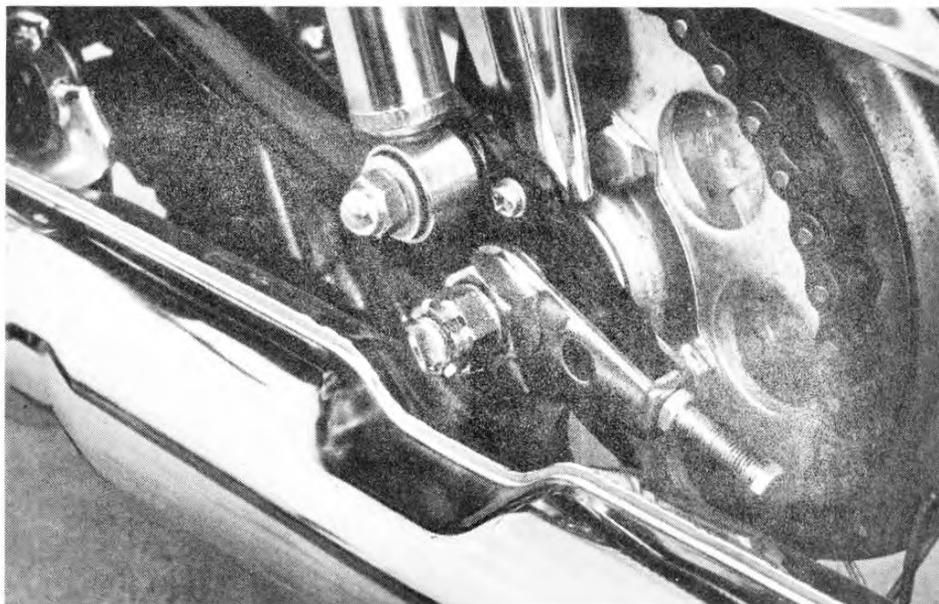
This notch in the muffler is to provide clearance for the rear axle. It makes it easy to remove the wheel this way.

14's were common place, and one trip through the clock produced a timing slip of 14 seconds flat. This however we were never able to duplicate. 14.10 to 14.20 was average. While top speed may only be 91, our feeling is now, and always has been, is that this is more of an advertising tool than an absolute necessity. It's a simple matter to take any motorcycle that has a top speed of 75 or 80 miles an hour, hang more gear on it, and thereby be able to produce a true 90 miles an hour (or better) clock-

ing. Acceleration is what's important, not just top speed. In this area, the R5 more than fills the bill. While low 14 second ETs are not exactly something to set the world on fire, for a fully equipped 350cc roadster, this is more than just respectable.

The stylists have a field day with powerplant design. It would appear that as much effort has been spent on improving the outside appearance of the engine, as getting more go out of the inside. The durable black finish on the case, cylinders, and covers are enhanced by the polished areas thereby creating a beautiful contrasting package. The R5 does not have an electric starter, nor does it need it. Regardless of how long we let the bike sit between rides, it never failed to start with one kick, no matter what the temperature. The starting drill is ridiculously simple. You push down the choke lever, turn the key on, and one stab at the kick lever wakes up all those bumble bees inside. Unlike a lot of other two strokes, the warm up period is very fast. It never took more than a few minutes to get the engine to operating temperature.

The new R5's footwork will dazzle you. Not only has the powerplant been completely redesigned, but so has the chassis. We were rather astonished to find that Yamaha had gone so far overboard in producing what we considered an outstanding handling package (this bike should be a real contender for those interested in production class racing this year). The basic frame itself is quite similar to the TR2 road racers and even before the factory instituted the use of this type frame on their already legendary 350 road racers, the frame had proven itself, since this is the type of tubing structure that was used on the record setting RD56 factory road racers. Thus, we have a natural evolution with the RD56 frame being passed along to the TR2, and the TR2 racer passing it along to the R5 roadster. Here is one





example of how racing research gets passed on to the customer over a comparatively short period of time.

Going around corners, the chassis is absolutely rock steady. So much so, that the rider gets a distinct impression that the wheels are running in a slot (within a very short time, you find yourself grinding the sides of your shoe leather in what seems to be the normal course of events). To look at it, the frame itself doesn't look all that sensational. It's a very conventional twin loop affair, not unlike some other contemporary efforts, but it does work. One thing we did notice, is that the swinging arm pivot area has been greatly beefed up, thereby providing a very rigid anchor point. This is generally one area in design where some others have done a very poor job. That hinge in the middle feeling very often comes from the swinging arm flexing at its pivot point thereby giving the rider a very uneasy feeling.

Along with the new frame, the new forks and rear shocks do a much better job than the old R3 model. Regardless of how good the frame is, it is the suspension system that keeps the wheels in contact with the road and thereby maintaining traction in all sorts of circumstances. The bottom fork sliders are made of cast aluminum, with styling very reminiscent of the Ceriani units. As a matter of fact, the whole bike has a very sporty flavor about it. The fore and aft suspension system is a far cry from even those found a couple of years ago. Riders over 160 pounds,

might find the front and rear suspension system a bit too soft for really fast cornering. This however, can be remedied easily by changing the fork oil. Under 160 pound riders should find the suspension system just right.

Another often overlooked area are the tires. Most people think of the tires as merely something to put air into, and fix when they go flat. Not so. The tires are often the determining factor as to the true road worthiness of any given machine. The new R5 uses the Dunlop K81 which has long since proven to be one of the finest all around tires we have yet seen on production type tires. As a matter of fact, this same tire is used by production class racers both here and abroad in place of regular racing patterns. This speaks very highly of the rubber department. The new Yamaha 350 looks and feels a lot lighter than it really is. It feels as though it weighs about 250 when in reality it's 75 pounds more than that. Because of the exceptionally wide power range, we found it unnecessary to down shift when passing on the freeway. We merely poured on the coal, and the bike would pick up speed quickly. The excellent five speed gearbox coupled with the velvet smooth clutch (it only takes a couple of fingers to operate the clutch at any time) provides a gear for just about any situation.

The braking department was kind of ho-hum. Sure, the bike would stop, but it never felt as though there was a surplus of stopping power. Whether the linings had become glazed, or whatever, stopping from 90 miles an hour was not exactly a soul inspiring experience. This however, is very easy to remedy.

The front end of the bike looks busy. Along side of the headlight are the turn indicators. Between the speedo and tach is the ignition switch.

You'll like the choice of tires. They really hang on to the pavement and have a good sidewall bite.



What with the super bikes popping up like clock work, people have become accustomed to performance in large doses (and large displacements). This is rather unfortunate, since virtually the same performance, comparatively speaking, can be gotten from a smaller displacement such as the new 350 Yamaha without spending a whole bunch of dough and have high upkeep costs.

There were a few things that we

didn't like. Like the handlebars we felt could be further back and the styling didn't exactly turn us on, but here again, that's a matter of personal opinion.

There are a few other niceties that probably are overlooked by the majority of new prospective buyers. There is more than adequate ground clearance, and the pegs are up high enough so that the bike can be cranked over at a fairly sharp angle before anything touches. It may not sound like any big deal, but this

is a very comforting thing as compared to other similar roadsters we have ridden of late. This is one of the few motorcycles we have had to test, that we found ourselves making excuses for, so we could keep it a little longer. It's one of the most ideal all around motorcycles we have ever run across. And if this is an indication of things to come from Yamaha, the future looks rosy indeed for all motorcycle enthusiasts. *Bob Braverman CG*



YAMAHA 350 R5

ENGINE

Type	twin cylinder, piston port, two stroke
Bore and stroke	64x54 mm
Displacement	347cc
Compression ratio	7.5:1
Max. horsepower	36 at 7,000
Ignition	generator, battery
Carburetion	twin 28mm Mikuni concentrics
Lubrication	oil injection

DIMENSIONS

Seat height	31.1 inches
Wheelbase	52.8 inches
Ground clearance	7.1 inches
Dry weight	322 lbs.

WHEELS AND BRAKES

Front tire size	3.00x18
Front brake type	internal expanding, double leading shoe
Rear tire size	3.50x18
Rear brake type	internal expanding

TRANSMISSION

Type	constant mesh, five speed
Clutch	wet, multi-plate
Overall gear ratios	1st 19.57:1, 2nd 12.15:1, 3rd 9.12:1, 4th 7.38:1, 5th 6.16:1

PERFORMANCE

Indicated highest one-way speed	91 mph
Acceleration 0-60	6.1
Braking distance 30-0	36 ft.
Quarter-mile acceleration:	
Top speed	84
Elapsed time	14.20

GENERAL

Air filtration	dry paper
Battery type	12V, 6AH

CAPACITIES

Fuel tank	3.2 gal.
Fuel reserve	.5 gal.
Oil tank	4.2 pts.

FRAME AND SUSPENSION

Front suspension	telescopic, oil damping
Rear suspension	adjustable spring over shock
Frame type	tubular double cradle
Steering damper type	friction

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Turn indicators

COLORS: Gold/White

PRICE AS TESTED — \$779.00 F.O.B. L.A.

DISTRIBUTOR

Yamaha Int. Corp.
P.O. Box 54540
Los Angeles, Cal. 90054