

YAMAHA IT465J

With 1982's car manufacturers has come a new phrase: The "J" model. It refers to Everyman's Car, a cheap form of reasonable transport which will appeal to most people in the market for a new car. Yamaha's IT465J fits neatly into that niche. This year, if you're most enduro riders or casual trailriders, you should own an IT465. And that's that.

Up ahead, the boulder strewn hill loomed above the trees. After several hours hard riding with only two stops it would have been better to come out on a tar road than have to tackle a nasty hill, but there was only one path to our fuel stop and the hill was on it.

At the base, the trail carved its way around a big tree, then it was a non-existent run up at the hill. The big IT idled quietly around the tree, straightened up, and the throttle was wound smoothly open. Not a lot. Just enough to get the 465 going and take a few big bites with the huge rear tyre.

Then it was up over all the loose rocks, slipping in the sandy base, bouncing off ledges and balancing as the bike was threaded upwards. The engine kept up its deep-throated staccato rhythm, never missing a beat. Past the point where any normal engine would curl up and die, the IT kept plugging away at an rpm low enough to keep traction with the rear wheel. It was just like all the ads said it was.

Unstoppable.

What's more, the bike had handled the rocks so well it was instantly king of the rockheap. Not a lot of bikes handle rocks as well as the IT465.

At the top it was time to pause. Sometimes, initial impressions of a bike can be misleading. Sometimes not. Our first test of the IT465 was with the H model in a comparison with the PE400X. The IT hadn't fared as well as the people from Yamaha had thought it would. But

today, after several hours non-stop riding, a different impression was forming.

You've heard the expression 'Just like a faithful old hound dog?'

That was what the IT was starting to resemble.

Mind you, some of our first impressions were still valid. It still didn't like instant direction changes and it was still a bike to be cornered with the throttle as much as the handlebars. But the only real change to the IT465, the YEIS bottle running off the intake manifold, had changed the whole personality of the engine. Much the same as on the IT250H.

This new 465 was much smoother in its power delivery, even with the stock jetting. It would pull way down past a low idle, then make good usable power all the way to the top of the rev range. The powerband is as wide as the Nullabor and just as flat, we figure.

What the YEIS did to the 465 was make it a more relaxing bike to ride. Gone was the need to pay attention to the power delivery. This was complemented by the suspension: a revised spring rate in the forks has only added to the plush ride the IT's suspension provides, even with the stock monoshock spring.

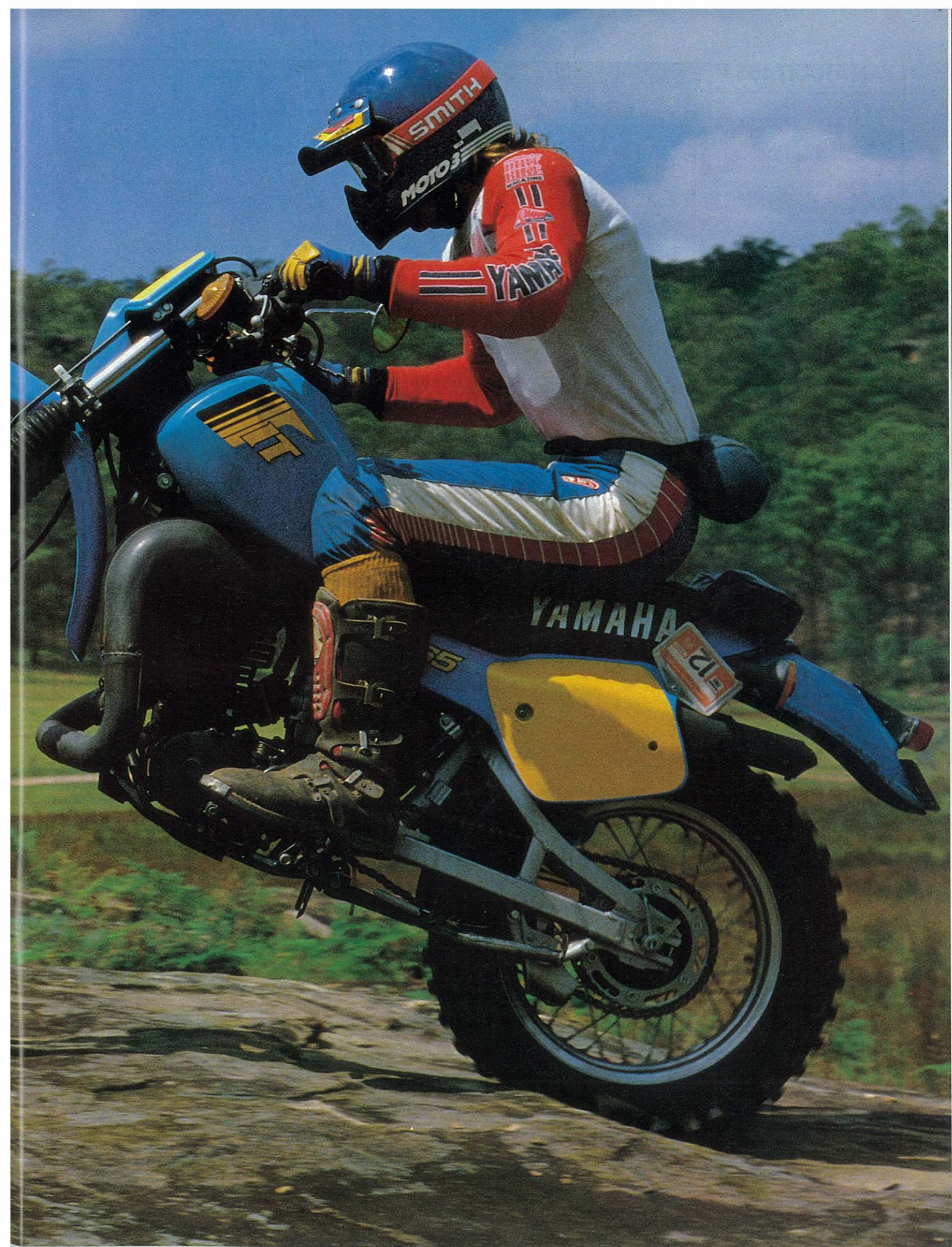
To haul the bike to a stop, its front double leading shoe brake was magic once you adapted to its power. It hardly mattered how much braking you had at the back, the front was so good.

All the levers, controls and other bodily function things were spot on, too. A more enduro-ready bike



DIRT
TEST





YAMAHA IT465J

you'd never find.

It's all adding up into a perfect machine, isn't it?

No. Not really. One thing about the IT hasn't changed.

To ride one successfully, which means fast and competitively, your attention has to be 100%. You have to fully understand every little quirk it has. Because believe us, it's got a few.

First, it's a power cornerer. That means that although the IT steers like a dream, cornering can be a different proposition sometimes. Not all the time. Just sometimes. Like when you need an instant direction change and you want to flop the top of the bike down into a berm, hit the gas and power it out. The IT's weight distribution gets in the way. The solution? Set the forks up just right, with 10 weight Bel-Ray measured 200 mm from the top of the tubes with the springs removed and the forks collapsed, no air, then set the back up so it is on the firm side to minimise sag at the rear which rakes the front out. Then learn the PROPER way to corner it.

Basically, the problem stems from the monoshock's location in the frame, plus the generally tall nature of the bike. A full fuel tank doesn't help, either. The point is, the IT465 steers really well, but it only corners moderately well, and then only if you learn the tricks.

If you do learn the tricks, then after a while you'll wonder what people are talking about when they say Yamahas aren't the best bikes in the world for cornering. As a Yamaha rider, though, you won't care a damn, because you'll have learnt how to get it around a corner with the best of them.

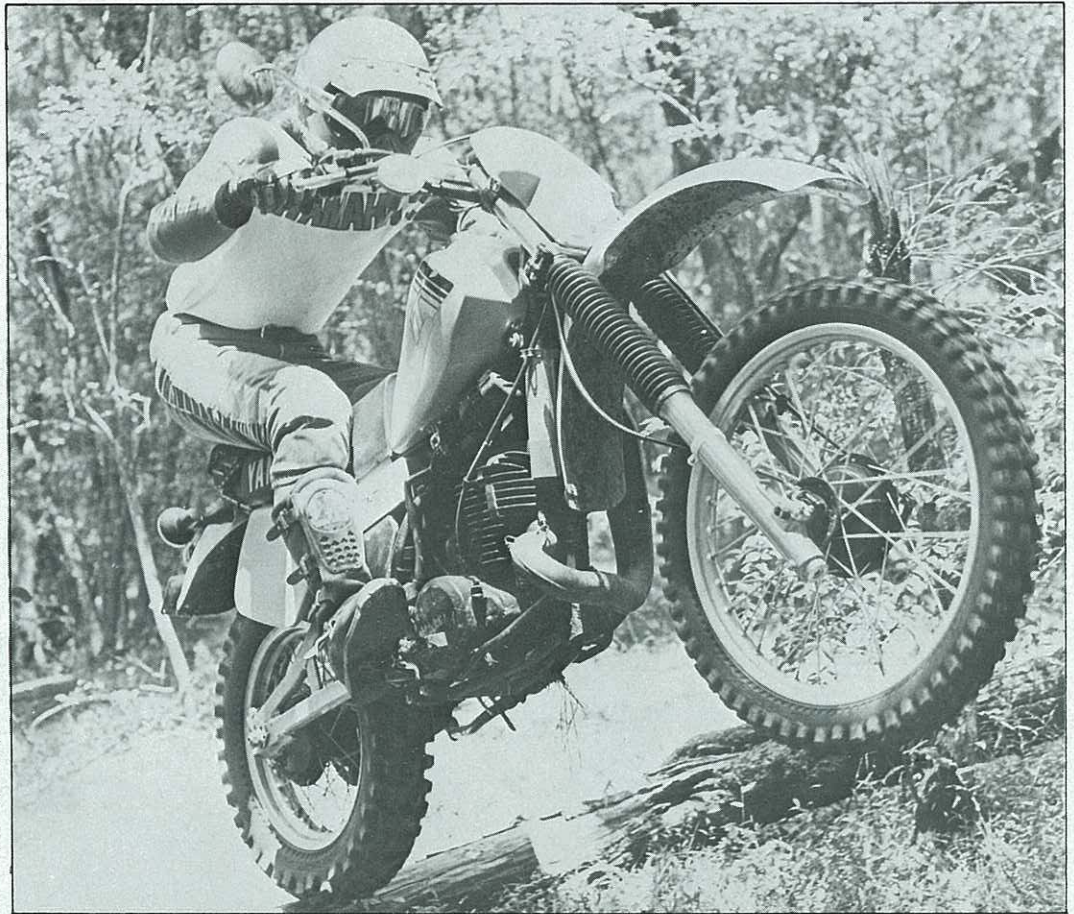
Which brings up full-on competition riding.

A Yamaha IT465J can be likened to a Husqvarna because of its dissimilar nature. The harder you push a Husqvarna, the better it performs. The harder you push an IT, the closer you get to its limit. Simple as that.

Remember that faithful old hound dog? Well, it's got its own nature, right? It'll do what **you** want 90% of the time. That other 10% of the time it will do exactly what it bloody well wants to do.

That 17" rear wheel can be used to explain what we mean. Look at it. Huge, eh? A real rubber whopper. And there you are, at the end of a gruelling 300 kilometre enduro, lined up on the start grid of the motocross special test. The official drops his hand and you power away, showering him with dirt. A 465 can be rewarding sometimes. Up the straight and into the first corner. Remember the rules, power on, seating position just so... yep! Around she goes! Down another straight and over a bit of a ridge which has a number of tyre grooves cut into it from the smaller capacity bikes which have done the test before you. Line up on one of the

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ABOVE

The YEIS definitely makes a different beast out of Yamaha's 465cc engine. The only thing we don't like about the scheme is that it's another part to go wrong. If you can manage to put a stick through an IT airbox and spear the filter element off its cage, you'll believe anything can happen. Don't laugh. It's true and we did it. Anything's possible in the wide world of ADB.



ABOVE

Meet the king of enduro powerplants. Strong, broad, mellow, laid-back, subtle, devastating, torquey, exhilarating, mind blowing, hill crushing, ego-building power comes from in there somewhere. We mightn't understand the intricacies of porting and pipe design, but we can sure understand good power when we feel it.



ABOVE

The headlight/numberplate is unbreakable and can be removed in five seconds, without tools, for bulb replacement. The speedo features an easily read and reset tripmeter. Forks have air caps but we found them best with no air. Bars were a good bend, all the switches were top quality, as were the lever blades and throttle housing, and we even liked the grips.



ABOVE

Getting used to this unbelievable stopper is a must, but it doesn't take long. After a while you don't think much about using the back brake, this one is so good. Forks are oh, so plush. We love them. Tyres aren't so hot.



ABOVE

A huge three gallon unbreakable tank is fitted to the IT465. This new sticker and the YEIS bottle are the only things which externally differentiate this model from an H.



ABOVE

We thought the seat foam was noticeably harder than that on the H, but who knows? This is another example of those evasive captions you get sick of. They say seat heights are decreasing. Bull!

SETTING UP THE IT465J

When a bike has been around as long as the IT series, you expect that it has been thoroughly sorted out by the factory. In the case of the IT465J, what you buy off your Yamaha dealer is as close to enduro ready as you'll ever want.

Matter of fact, a good rider could take one of these bikes straight out of the crate and ride it successfully in the Six Day. The IT fairly bristles with enduro knick-knackery. Of every other bike in the world designed for enduro use, the IT would have the greatest offering of genuine race-ready enduro fittings. That's a big plus in anyone's language.

But, as with all bikes, there are a few little things you can do to the IT to improve it further.

First on the list would be to replace the stock IRC tyres. The first day we rode the IT, conditions were at their best, after rain overnight, and they worked, well, OK. But they can't cope with anything where true tyre performance is necessary: hard packed ground, slippery clay, things like that. Unfortunately, with the 17 inch rear wheel, tyre selection is limited. We'd recommend a Trelleborg or a Pirelli, because they're small and reduce weight. Up front, all the usual selection is available, so take your pick.

Next, fine-tune the jetting. Experience has shown that the 465 works best with either a 45 or 50 pilot jet, a Q-2 needle and the stock mainjet. Play with the position of the needle to suit your area.

In the US, where fork flex is all the rage, sponsored riders and millionaires get hold of the 43 mm YZ forks and triple clamps to replace the IT's stock 38 mm tubes. We wouldn't go so far. All you need to do is remove the fork springs and the stock oil, collapse the forks then pour in enough Bel-Ray fork oil in their 10 weight to bring the level of oil up to 200 mm from the top of the tubes. We didn't feel the need to run any air in the forks, but the option is there anyway.

The monoshock is where you'll need to spend the most money: take it out of the bike and sent it to Rob Assink at Gaythorne Yamaha, 424 Samford Road, Gaythorne, Brisbane, Qld, 4051, phone (07) 355 1097. It'll cost you around \$80, but it's the best \$80 you'll spend on the bike after tyres. For that price they slip on dual rate springs, mod-

ify the travel limiter and replace the oil. It turns the IT into the plushest enduro mount you could ever want.

Some riders fool around improving the breathing; this can be done by drilling holes in the airbox cover under the blue sidecover. Then drill some holes in the sidecover around the 465 sticker. The other thing you can do is modify the spark arrester, although Peter Payne says it is not necessary.

All the other changes you can do to the IT are hard-core enduro mods designed to minimise maintenance time. Remove the rimlocks and drill the rims on one side to accept Sun rim studs: this makes getting the tyres on and off a much quicker operation. You can go further by machining 2 mm off one side of each rim (that's radius we're talking about) and make sure you pick the right side of the front rim and the same on the rear.

Machine the little indents off the snail cam chain adjusters to allow them to slip around more easily. Throw away the retaining pins in the open ends of the swingarm, because they only use up time. The left side snail cam can be welded to

BELOW

Peter Savige has a Peter Delaney centrestand fitted, which makes tyre changing and chain oiling a far easier proposition. See the text for the phone number.



BELOW

We don't hold with under-the-engine bars instead of bash-plates, but the Japs obviously do. Maybe they sell more parts that way. At least the IT has plenty of ground clearance.



LEFT

Folding foot lever tips are enduro musts, and the IT has them. In fact, the IT pioneered them in Japan. Ten for Yamaha.



RIGHT

We got a lot of our competition preparation tips from Peter Payne, shown here riding his almost-stock IT465H to a Silver medal in the Italian ISDE last year. Peter says we are confirmed Yamaha haters here at ADB, but he is simply another typical Yamaha rider: he can't stand any criticism of his marque. We understand.

the axle so there are less parts to fiddle with in tyre changing. On both sides you can grind away the standard snail cam locating pins and replace them with stronger steel Allen screws, although this would only be considered going all out.

We'd strongly recommend a centrestand be fitted. None is available as an accessory from Yamaha, but there are two holes in the bottom frame rails which just so happen to be in the right position to fit one. You can get a good one from Peter Delaney, Caloundra, phone (071) 915051. It will help tyre changes and chain oiling no end. Which is another mod you can make: a chain oiler. Using a spray can, you attach a rubber tube which runs from the can, which can be mounted on the left side frame tube near the carb, down to the countershaft sprocket cover, to which you fit a little L-bracket pointing the end of the tube at the teeth of the sprocket. Trick.

A longer clutch arm can be had from Gaythorne Yamaha, too, making clutch use possible with only your little finger. Which is a good idea if ever you crash and break all your other fingers. The gearlever is too short and tends to wear a hole in your boot and toe, so you fit a TY gearlever. Looking at the vulnerability of the pipe, it would be a good idea to weld some sort of protection on it to avoid smashing it flat during an important ride.

This may all sound like rebuilding the bike, but it isn't. As we said, the IT comes as enduro ready as anything in the world. These few tips make it into an enduro winner because precious seconds can be saved, and saving a couple of seconds here and there means you won't be finishing second.





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grooves and nail it. Ooops! Uh oh!! The rear wheel has nicked the edge of the groove and sent you out into space slightly sideways! You land crooked and get into a mammoth tankslapper. Finally, because of the superb power and the suspension, you save your hide, but you've just remembered: **CONCENTRATE!** The IT rewards concentration fully in a 100% racing situation.

What the hell. At least you've finished the day. Your score turns out to be pretty good considering your ability. Better than you'd hoped for. What's more important to you is that riding the IT hasn't cost you an arm and a leg in preparation for the event or damage afterwards. And you're happy to see that the winner of your class was also aboard an IT465.

His concentration must be higher than yours.

For anything less than full-on competition, the IT is one of the best machines on the market today. In fact, you don't even have to do anything to it to ride it on any trailride you want. Out of the crate, this bike is as set up as 95% of the market would ever need. It doesn't need you to go over every nut and bolt with Loctite like a PE400 does. Nothing seems to get loose or fall off. It has superb power, even though it is a bitch to start (macho long-time IT465 riders tell us we're nothing but wimps who couldn't even start an AE80 Kawasaki). It has superb suspension, even though the monoshock contributes a little to its personality in a corner. It seems to go forever.

Yes, the IT465 would have to be our choice of trailbike for the decade.

And what of competition? It's still the best choice, we figure belatedly. Dollar for dollar, the IT can't be beaten. We have to admit we liked the J model a whole lot more than the H, and mainly because of the YEIS*, but then we could say that our time on the H model was too limited for us to get a true impression. Because as much as Yamaha people will deny it, the IT465 takes some getting used to before you can get the most out of it.

When you do, then you're going to love it.

Much the same as you'd love a faithful old hound dog.



* Our thoughts on the YEIS are that as a system it is hard to criticise. It smoothes out the power and adds torque at the low and medium throttle openings. It was a Godsend on the IT250 and works well on the IT465J as well. But we still think that any extra gadgetry bolted onto a bike and sitting out in the open is begging for trouble, whether it be damage from a crash, being hit by branches or logs, or simply failing all by itself. So while it makes the IT465J a better machine engine-wise, we still consider that it detracts somewhat from the bike's bulletproofness in a competition situation.