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Yamaha yz125 history

YZ450F (2021) With engines, “more power” is often treated as the golden rule for success. He was hired, along with Danny Turner, to take on Smith, and what resulted was one of the most epic battles in the history of American MX. It remained in production with dual shocks (but eventually laid down, at least) for a couple more years before Yamaha nixed it. First Ride 2018 Yamaha YZ125 two stroke Manuals Yamaha YZ125: manuals, parts, microfiches. Everything changed in 1976 with the coming of Bob Hannah. In regional Supercross, the YZ125’s most notable highlight came in 1989 when it gave Damon Bradshaw his only championship. 1986: An all-new motor came. The fork improved dramatically, and today, the YZ’s suspension remains its strongest asset. That’s incredible, considering the price of big four-strokes. torque 25,5 Nm (2,6 kg-m) / 10000 rpm Acceleration 0 to 100 km/h (0-60 mph) Top speed CARBURETION SYSTEM Type Carburetor, 1x Mikuni TMX38 Carburetor, 1x Keihin PWK38S - 2022+ ID DRIVE TRAIN Clutch Wet, multi-plate, cable operated Transmission 6-speed Final drive Chain Primary reduction 3.368 Final reduction Gear ratio I II III IV V VI 2.385 1.933 1.588 1.353 1.200 1.095 ELECTRICAL Ignition CDI Alternator A.C. magneto Battery capacity Images Yamaha YZ125: images, gallery. But at the same time, not having enough power means not enough speed on the straights, and that forces the rider to try to compensate for it in corners. … The forks look like they don’t have enough travel but come off handling pretty well after you have experienced them.” We also praised the YZ’s handling because “it never spit off anybody hard,” which isn’t a bad criterion when deciding whether a motorcycle handles well or poorly. 1996 YZ125. Now that the U.S. got the white and red color scheme that had been common in other markets, there would no longer be any confusion between YZs and RMs. The ’85 model got a number of interesting features, including the B.A.S.S. valve, which connected the rear shock valving to the rear brake. This extra pull at the top that the engine achieves becomes a serious weapon in the hands of the rider, as it gives them the option to keep the throttle open that little bit more instead of shifting gears. It doesn’t seem to be quite as fast as the Honda when they both get all wrapped out in top gear. And the best was yet to come. 1979 YZ125. At the distributor level, Yamaha assembled a few of these under the AT-1 MX name. Hannah was supplied with the OW27, a water-cooled works Yamaha 125, and he used it to dominate the first races of the year. He won three straight 125 National Championships for Yamaha before moving up to the bigger bikes. The years between 1976 and 1979 saw Yamaha’s greatest success in the 125 Pro class. Some years were better than others, but the bike was never a powerhouse. 1996: Someone set off a fire alarm at Yamaha and everything changed. That was the only race in 1975 that Marty Smith didn’t win. It was not offered to the general public, but a dealer in good standing could submit a rider resume to the importer and hope to obtain a semi-works bike. From the start, it was more of a people’s bike and remains the 125 most likely to win at the local level to this day. YZ450F (2023) YZ450F (2023) Class: motocross Production: 1974+ Models Yamaha YZ125 (steel frame, telescopic fork) (Europe, North America) 1988 Yamaha YZ125 (+ inverted fork) (Europe, North America) 1989 Yamaha YZ125 (+ aluminum frame) (All markets) 2005 Yamaha YZ125 (1988) Yamaha YZ125 (1989~) Yamaha YZ125 (2005~) Models Yamaha YZ125 (+ petal brake discs) (All markets) 2007 Yamaha YZ125 (+ front brake disc 250 → 270 mm) (All markets) 2017-2021 Yamaha YZ125 (All markets) 2022+ Yamaha YZ125 (2007~) Yamaha YZ125 (2017~) Yamaha YZ125 (2022+) Models Yamaha YZ125 Monster Energy Yamaha Racing Edition (All markets) 2022 Yamaha YZ125 Monster Energy Yamaha Racing Edition History History Year Country Name / Frame / Engine 1974 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125A 1975 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125B 1976 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125; Yamaha YZ125X Code: YZ125C 1977 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125D 1978 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125E 1979 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125F 1980 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125G 1981 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125H 1982 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125J 1983 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125K 1984 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125L 1985 USA Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125N 1986 USA, Europe Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125S, 1LX, 1LX0 1987 USA, Europe Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125T, 2HG 1988 USA, Europe Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125U, 2VN 1989 USA, Europe Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125W, 3JD1 1990 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125A, 3SR1, 3SR2, 3SR3, 3SR4 1991 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125B, 3XJ1, 3XJ2, 3XJ3, 3XJ4 1992 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125D, 4DB1, 4DB2, 4DB3, 4DB4 1993 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125E, 4EX1, 4EX2, 4EX3, 4EX4 1994 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125F, 4JY1, 4JY2, 4JY3, 4JY4 1995 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125G, 4PE1, 4PE2, 4PE3, 4PE4 1996 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125H, 4SS1, 4SS2, 4SS3, 4SS4 1997 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125J, 4XM1, 4XM2, 4XM3, 4XM4 1998 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125K, 5DH1, 5DH2, 5DH3, 5DH4 1999 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125L, 5ET1, 5ET2, 5ET3 2000 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125M, 5HD1, 5HD2, 5HD3, 5HD4 2001 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125N, 5MV1, 5MV2, 5MV3, 5MV4 2002 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125P, 5NY1, 5NY2, 5NY3, 5NY4 2003 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125R, 5UN1, 5UN2, 5UN3, 5UN4 2004 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125S, 5XE1, 5XE2, 5XE3, 5XE4 2005 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125T1, 1C31, 1C32, 1C33, 1C34 2006 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125V, 1C35, 1C36, 1C37, 1C38 2007 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125W1, 1C39, 1C3A, 1C3B, 1C3C 2008 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125X, 1C3D, 1C3E, 1C3F, 1C3G 2009 All markets Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125Y, 1C3H, 1C3J, 1C3K, 1C3L 2010 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125Z, 1C3N, 1C3M, 1C3P 2011 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125A1, 1C3S, 1C3T, 1C3U 2012 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125B1, 1SR1, 1SR2, 1SR3 2013 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125D2, 1SR5, 1SR6, 1SR7 2014 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125E2, 1SR9, 1SRA, 1SRB 2015 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125F2, 1SRD, 1SRE, 1SRF 2016 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: 1SRH, 1SRJ, 1SRK 2017 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125; Yamaha YZ125X Code: YZ125H2, 1SRN, 1SRM, 1SRP; B1B1 2018 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125J2, 1SRS, 1SRT, 1SRU 2019 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 Code: YZ125K2 2020 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 2021 North America, Europe, Japan Name: Yamaha YZ125 2022 All Name: Yamaha YZ125 2023 All Name: Yamaha YZ125 2024 All Name: Yamaha YZ125 Specifications Yamaha YZ125 (2005+): specs. From each year onward, development focused on making the abundant power provided by the forward-positioned intake/rear-positioned exhaust layout as manageable as possible. Yamaha would finally surpass the unchanged Honda CR125M, but would have a new rival in the form of the first Suzuki RM125. On top of that, the bike is likely to lack good acceleration out of the corner. power 39,0 hp (28,7 kW) / 11500 rpm Max. From this point on, the only other 125s were European; bikes like KTM, Husky, TM and Gas Gas. Also, thanks to a completely new crankcase and a thorough review to shave off weight throughout the entire machine, the latest YZ450F is a healthy 1.1 kg lighter than the outgoing model while being even more compact. In that period the highlight for Yamaha was Tim Hart, who gave the works version of the YZ125 its first national win in the final race of 1974, then followed it up by winning the soggy season opener in 1975. While Gary Jones, Pierre Karsmakers, Jimmy Weinert and Marty Tripes rode works versions of the YZ250 and YZ360, the 125 was seen as more of an amateur bike. Similarly, the path traveled by the YZ450F’s powerplant has been a bumpy one, like blazing forward over a set of whoops. Few bikes have made such a great impact on the careers of so many riders as well as on motocross itself. The shock location was also changed to a more conventional vertical orientation with Honda-like linkage. Specifications DIMENSIONS Overall length 2135 mm / 84,1 in Overall width 827 mm / 32,6 in 825 mm / 32,5 in - 2022+ Overall height 1315 mm / 51,8 in 1295 mm / 51,0 in - 2022+ Seat height 997 mm / 39,3 in 975 mm / 38,4 in – YZ125 (2015+) Wheelbase 1443 mm / 56,8 in 1440 mm / 56,9 in - 2022+ Ground clearance 386 mm / 15,2 in 365 mm / 14,4 in – YZ125 (2015+) Dry weight Curb (wet) weight 94 kg / 207 lbs 95 kg / 209 lbs - 2022+ FRAME Type Semi double cradle (aluminum) Front suspension, travel 48 mm inverted telescopic fork (fully adjustable), 300 mm / 11,8 in Rear suspension, travel Swingarm with mono-shock (fully adjustable), 315 mm /12,4 in Front tire size 80/100-21 51M Rear tire size 100/90-19 57M Front brake Single disc, 250 mm, 2-piston caliper – YZ125 (to 2017) Single disc, 270 mm, 2-piston caliper – YZ125 (2017+) Rear brake Single disc, 245 mm, 1-piston caliper Single disc, 240 mm, 1-piston caliper - 2022+ Fuel capacity 8,0 l / 2,1 US gal 7,0 l / 1,8 US gal - 2022+ Trail 105 mm / 4,1 in 109 mm / 4,3 in – YZ125 (2015+) Fuel economy / consumption ENGINE Type Liquid-cooled 2-stroke Cylinder arrangement Single cylinder Bore & Stroke 54,0 x 54,5 mm Displacement 124 cm³ (4,19 cu in) Compression ratio 8.6~10.7:1 8.2~10.1:1 - 2022+ Valve train reed-valve inducted (YPVS) Max. 1981: Almost five years after temping the world with a glimpse of Bob Hannah’s factory OW27, Yamaha finally came out with the goods on a production bike. What the YZ125 achieves in down-low ease of use it partially gives back in top-end power. The most interesting features of the ’76 model were the large air canisters on top of each fork leg. It was, in fact, very similar to the MX125 and MX100, which Yamaha offered concurrently. 1973: Although very few were actually made, Yamaha did produce a YZ125 in 1973. The KTM 125 was showing signs of catching up. Wheelies were a cinch.” The YZ’s suspension was better than we thought it would be, but it was far from perfect. The bike made its debut in 1973 as a 1974 model for $819. It still had far superior suspension, handling and reliability. In the early ’90s, they were real dogs, and by now they’ve become old dogs. Finally, Yamaha was able to take on Suzuki. Creative, yes. Our 1974 Yamaha YZ125 test bike even made the cover. Yamaha aimed this machine at women and young riders who might have trouble with a kickstarter. 1989: New styling came, which was good. The YZ was still limited in production at the time, and the less expensive MX version was more common. 2015: Yamaha give the bike new body work and new suspension. 1983: This was a much better bike. Kawasaki and Suzuki would follow later. The YZ125 continued to improve. 1991 YZ125. Unfortunately, the first liquid-cooled YZ was a flop. Otherwise, it seemed like the same motor and the same chassis. By comparison, the MSRP on a Yamaha YZ450F head is over $700. If even a single thing sticks out, that cohesion is broken. We complained that the YZ was too loud. That changed in 1974 when the AMA gave the 125 class its own official championship. Effective, no. The most significant feature of 1982 was YPVS, the first power valve. The head area was downsized to a millimeter scale for greater mass centralization, and more magnesium components used for the head cover to further reduce weight for the cylinder head assembly. Cycle News reviewed the first Yamaha YZ125 in late 1973/early 1974. 1975 YZ125. The dished rear sprocket sold for nearly $50 alone. And with the 2023 model year, its development has reached yet another new high point. These and many other refinements were done over the years to provide an excellent balance of power and ease of use. With a light make-over in 2015, the little YZ sits in Yamaha’s line as the perfect bridge to the big leagues, as well as being an excellent final destination in anyone’s moto career. The bad news was that the motor wasn’t very fast. That sells for $350 on the Internet. When it was all over, Yamaha earned its first 125 National Championship. Stay away from any YZ125 that isn’t blue. You won’t have to shift as much, either. There was a little rear wheel hippity-hop when you got on the brakes, but it ‘wasn’t nothing bad’ as one literate tester noted. YZ450F (2020) YZ450F (2020) In the world of motorcycle racing, there is one thing that never comes—an end to progress. Even better, the production bike was beginning to see some influence from Yamaha’s racing success and was improving rapidly. Some things haven’t changed. The YZ125 sold for $110 more than the MX and had more peak horsepower and a number of lighter parts. It got a plastic tank, a radial fin head and an offset front axle. All the engine advances and refinements mentioned so far were done in tandem with similar changes to the chassis, based on a strong awareness of the need to enhance the overall performance package. 1984 YZ125. But, in model years, the YZ125 will officially celebrate its 50th birthday this winter. The road to making a powerful yet exploitable engine is by no means a smooth one. The greatest part about used 125s is that they are cheap to repair. The YZ’s reed-valve induction can claim credit for some of the down-low help. A shift at the wrong time won’t lose you as much ground. Even more amazing is the YZ125’s current run as king of the 125s, which has continued for about 15 years. Click here for more Yamaha motorcycle reviews and news. And it just so happens that the Yamaha YZ125 is the king of the 125s. The powerband was that easy to deal with. Through repeated test runs and follow-up changes, developers do their utmost to bring the bike and its power delivery as close as possible to what “feels” right, something that cannot be boiled down to numbers. Yamaha finally got the radiator off the steering crown where it adversely affected handling. 1977: Big new look for the YZ. Not a great way to enter your life, but the YZ125 held its own against the CR. It is still in Yamaha’s lineup, just as it was called back then—YZ125. A six-speed gearbox has a nice sound to it during a bench race, but it isn’t always an advantage, and the five-speed is likely to be stronger, too. 1982: Yamaha responded to the full Floater by grafting a suspension link between the shock and swingarm, but retaining a nearly horizontal shock orientation. 1985: Yellow Yamahas officially became a thing of the past. In the horsepower department, Yamaha was beginning to fall behind again. Until this point, the YZ125 had never been fast. The 125 still wasn’t on the same level as the bigger bikes and didn’t have nearly as many exotic parts. 2008: Yamaha was suddenly alone. 1980: Without any real explanation, Yamaha decided to reverse the motor, moving the output shaft to the right-hand side. From 1981 until 1992, the YZ125 and its works cousins had little impact in pro racing. Actual production numbers are hard to estimate, but the YZ125 and 250 have had the longest production runs of any dedicated dirt bikes, starting in 1974 and continuing to this day. Subscribe to nearly 50 years of Cycle News Archive issues The Yamaha YZ125 is a motocross racing motorcycle with a two-stroke 124.9 cc (7.62 cu in) displacement single-cylinder engine made by Yamaha since 1974. But now it was Honda’s turn, and the new CR125 would be formidable through the rest of the ’80s. When creating a motorcycle, Yamaha does not treat the engine, chassis, electrics, exterior design, and other items as separate, individual elements. Internally, the YZ125 was somewhat souped up compared to the MX125. Still, these sizeable 450cc engines can at times become a double-edged sword when riding off road. But in most situations for most riders, the Yamaha has the edge.” We were impressed with the YZ’s controllable power. The 2002, 2003 and 2004 models have a much lighter, better-handling chassis, but are saddled with the five-speed. The fork, in particular, was upgraded to essentially the same one that came on the YZ250F four-stroke, but with different valving and a smaller axle. Yamaha YZ125 Yamaha YZ125 Yamaha YZ125 Videos Yamaha YZ125: video. Still, Suzuki was the biggest competition. At the time of the YZ125’s arrival, it had several class rivals, most notably the Honda CR125R, Kawasaki KX125, and Suzuki TM125 (the Suzuki RM125 didn’t show up until 1975). In 1996, that began to change. Then came a long period when Yamaha was pushed to the background in the 125 class. You have to use some discretion, but it’s all pretty controllable in and out of turns. For a detailed account of that year’s battle, go to www.mxworksbike.com. As for the Yamaha MX125, its days were numbered as soon as the YZ appeared. 1989 YZ125. “The wider powerband is matched by a five (instead of the Elsinore’s six) speed gearbox. 2002: This was a year of both good and bad for the Yamaha 125. The Yamaha YZ125 two-stroke might be the number one motocross bike in the world. We said, “The rear shocks might be special because we didn’t have as many qualms about them as we expected, but we wanted a bit more from them in rough stuff like stutter-bumps. It handled great. 1988: Yamaha finally found some power. Just in a mirror. It still was the best 125, but it was close. It is available to the public. For him, it would be a much better bike than the Elsinore, and when he gets good, it will still be fast enough to win.” The 1974 YZ125 was the first and last YZ125 with dual rear shocks. There’s no arguing with the practicality of any 125. This eventually morphed into the Yamaha 125MX. We said, “Take an MX125, stick on a bigger (28mm) carb, a different pipe, shorter rear shocks with different springs, Akront-type alloy wheel rims, and that red and silver (Yamaha of Japan racing colors are red and white) looks-like-Hakan’s gas tank that straps on, and you have the external differences.” Hakan refers to GP racer Sweden’s Hakan Andersson, whose exotic works YZ was painted silver and red, and how can we forget those leather straps that held the fuel tank in place? Overall, it sounds like we were impressed with the very first Yamaha YZ125 back in 1974, signing off with: “We used the YZ for a lot of things. Depending on the situation, this not only reduces the total number of shifts needed but also gives riders more tools at their disposal, which means more chances to pass when locked in a battle with rivals. It isn’t as peaky as the Elsinore and has more low-end pull. Although each engineer is a specialist in their respective field, they cast a wide gaze across the entire project while handling their own responsibilities in order to put together one cohesive machine. THE USED MARKET Used YZ125s are the best value in the dirt bike world. It was also mild enough for a beginner. Simply packing gobs of power demands careful control of the throttle from the rider, and as this whittles away at their mental fortitude, it usually leads to fatigue. The YZ had its advantages. The 1975 YZ125 was a completely different motorcycle. The only problem was a high school kid named Marty Smith who absolutely dominated the new class on a Honda for the first two years. It arrived with Yamaha’s first monoshock rear suspension system, a new motor, new yellow/black coloring, and a muffler. Actual production numbers are hard to estimate, but the YZ125 and 250 have had the longest … Up until 2009, the YZ450F was still carbureted, but managed to win AMA Supercross and Motocross World Championship titles among a rapidly advancing field of fuel-injected 4-strokes in an impressive show of performance. Then with the 2016 model, the cam lobe profiles and valve timing were changed, along with the adoption of a launch control system. Oddly enough, its pro record never did the YZ justice. The first production Yamaha YZ125 appeared 50 years ago with dual shocks and a strap-on fuel tank. The most expensive part that you might need to replace is the cylinder. Good because it got a new chassis and slimmer bodywork. Going as far back as 1996 is safe, as you’ll get a great bike with a six-speed. Smith came back with his own exotic works Honda, but never recaptured his form from ’75. With just a few improvements in 1997, the YZ125 would win the Dirt Bike 125 shootout for the first time ever. It still wasn’t the fastest, but it was close. THE HISTORY BOOK Despite being the sole survivor of the once flourishing Japanese 125 class, the YZ has never been dominant on the pro level. The 125 class was now the property of Yamaha and Suzuki—the latter of which had just released the stunning, all-new RM125A. The radiator was mounted on the fork, just like Hannah’s had been, and there was a crazy front number plate that had a giant mouth for airflow. 1974: This was the first real year of the Yamaha YZ125, which was brought out as a companion to the much more exotic YZ250 and YZ360. It also had to compete with several non-Japanese brands, such as Husqvarna, Montesa, Maico, Penton and DKW. 1975: By 1975, the 100 class was dying off, and Yamaha started taking the 125 more seriously. “The majority of the blame for any soil-sampling expedition [on the YZ125] gets laid on the rider,” we reported. Jeff Emig put an end to the drought by winning six of the 11 races in 1992 to take the title. Unfortunately, all these models (and all two-strokes, of course) have since been ridden off into the sunset—except for the YZ125. This supplied a riding rate, but looked like (and was) a clumsy afterthought. Any 2005 and later version will command a higher price because of the aluminum frame. However rare, this goes down in the books as the first bike with the YZ125 name. Bad because it got a five-speed gearbox that didn’t match the powerband. Yamaha YZ125: Service Manual, 2005-2010 Kit Palmer | December 24, 2023 COLUMN 50 Years of the YZ125 Depending on how you look at it, 2024 will mark the 50th anniversary of the first production Yamaha YZ125 model. Once the 2010 model ushered in the forward-positioned intake/rear-positioned exhaust engine layout, subsequent YZ450F engines demonstrated its ample performance potential. The first sentence of the test went: “All that YZ is, really, is a breathed-on MX125 with a pretty tank and paint, but that’s just fine by us.” The YZ125 was a more serious motocross version than the MX125. The 1981 was liquid-cooled and virtually all new. 2013 YZ125. In its earliest years, Yamaha’s effort was concentrated on the bigger bikes. “Coming out of turns with the gas on, it is easy to keep the rear wheel only as far to the outside as you choose. 1981YZ125. It was more expensive, as well. Honda, Suzuki and Kawasaki had all given up the 125 chase, choosing to concentrate on four-strokes—a market shift that Yamaha had started. 1976: Yamaha merged the MX line into the YZ line, so the 1976 YZ125 would have the highest production numbers of any YZ so far. YZ450F (2012) YZ450F (2014) YZ450F (2016) YZ450F (2018) For 2020, the YZ450F became even more competitive through further power gains and lighter weight from an all-new engine, which featured a new piston, new cylinder head, and a more compact combustion chamber, which raised the compression ratio from 12.8:1 to 13:1. 2005: Yamaha went aluminum with all its YZs in ’05. 1985 YZ125. 2015 YZ125. Cycle New tested the first YZ125 in January 1974. The YZ125 was slowly turning into the bike we have today. No other dedicated motocross bike is as old as the YZ125, except for its bigger YZ250 brother, which also debuted in 1974. We said, “The Yamaha, we feel, is easier to ride fast consistently. By now, Yamaha had returned to the six-speed and everyone loved the bike, despite the fact that it wasn’t quite as fast as KTM’s 125SX. And in that time both sold well, making them the prime contenders for the title of earth’s biggest selling MX bikes. The 1988 YZ was reasonably fast. Honda also went upside down in ’89, and Yamaha clearly did a better job. The YZ125 had to go up against the mighty Honda CR125M Elsinore when it was born. So is the YZ250. It started with revising the fuel injection settings for the 2012 model, and then came changes to the piston and intake/exhaust port shapes, bigger intake/exhaust valves, and a different exhaust pipe layout with the 2014 model. Playing around on it seemed almost as appropriate as racing it. Before the Yamaha YZ125, however, there was the Yamaha AT-1 MX125, which by 1974 had morphed into the MX125. And there’s no end in sight. The big news was the Monoshock rear suspension, but the YZ also got a new motor that was much more compact than the old AT1-based engine. The new upside-down fork wasn’t received so well. At the time, Yamaha offered a YGT (Yamaha Genuine Tuning) kit, which had a ported cylinder, a high-compression head, a carb, a pipe and a new ignition that allowed you to get rid of the battery and starter. A rod is $40 and a piston is $50. It was so loud that we wrote in the test that “Saddleback Park will require additional silencers on YZs in the future.” The YZ was not fitted with an add-on silencer from the factory, but Yamaha said the exhaust pipe had built-in internal baffling that evidently didn’t work well. The countershaft sprocket was moved back to the left side, which made more room for the shifter and less complication for the kickstarter. Next it was Broc Glover’s turn to fly the 125 flag. The YZ had a smaller flywheel, and Yamaha ditched the MX’s “autolube” oil injection lubrication system in favor of premix. It was blown out of the water by the 1981 Suzuki RM125, which was also liquid-cooled, and featured the full-Floater rear suspension with rising-rate linkage. … The Yamaha YZ125 two-stroke might be the number one motocross bike in the world. Plus, it had the cool strap on the tank. 1974 YZ125. In the years that followed, Kevin Windham, John Dowd, Stephane Roncada, Larry Ward, Chad Reed, Craig Anderson and Mike Brown all gave the production-based YZ125 national wins, but no more National Championships would come. THE YEARS 1969: Yamaha released the 125cc AT-1 shortly after the 250cc DT1. “Exiting turns, the front wheel seemed to prefer to come up if you were doing some serious wick-twisting. YZ450F (2020) However, the engine alone is not the be-all and end-all. The 2018 model gained a revised intake port and new piston design, together with a camshaft for higher valve lift. In sales, the 125 was overshadowed by the DT-1 and the wildly successful CT-1, which was almost the same bike, but with a 175cc motor and no electric starter. But even so, it’s common to find nice examples for less than $1700. To this day, the YZ continues to get the nod as the best bike in its class. In that period Ron Lechien, Keith Bowen, Damon Bradshaw and Doug Henry gave Yamaha a handful of wins but no championships. You don’t have to be as exact with shifting points on the YZ125 as with the Elsinore. It carried a price tag around $500 and actually had an electric starter. The YZ’s hubs might have looked like the MX’s, we said, but were fabricated from lighter magnesium. Yamaha would dabble with the bike for the next few years without making much progress, allowing Honda to get back in the race. At the time, Honda owned the 125 class with the CR125M Elsinore, but the two Yamaha 125s were at least in the game. Bob Hannah’s OW27. True to that, the 2023 model YZ450F came with more updates, including a new engine with further performance improvements, namely a whopping 5% more power and an additional 500 rpm to the redline. In the years since then, it has never relinquished the top spot. The shock linkage was moved down, eliminating the crude pivot above the swingarm bolt. Luckily for us, however, the YZ125 is still going strong.CN Click here to read the Archives Column in the Cycle News Digital Edition Magazine. It got a new dark blue color and a new look. In reality, the rider’s feeling is the baseline for everything.

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