

**EXCLUSIVE TEST!**

**Works Suzuki 4-Stroke MXer**



# DIRT RIDER

WORLD'S NUMBER-ONE OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLE MAGAZINE

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building a  
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# THE NEXT GENERATION

In the May 2000 issue of *Dirt Rider*, we did a story on Mike Kiedrowski's works Suzuki DR-Z400 and titled it "The World's Trickest Dirt Bike." It consisted of a basic stock chassis loaded with titanium and carbon fiber, a works Showa suspension and a Yoshimura-modified motor. No doubt about it, Kiedrowski's bike was very trick. When the Brown brothers from BBR Motorsports read about Kiedrowski's bike, the wheels in their heads were doing burn-outs! BBR is known for building the most unreal hybrid four-strokes in the world. Brothers Duane, Chris and Brent have been building bikes from the ground up since they were kids. They started out building BMX bikes and then quickly made the jump to full XR75 frames before they were even in high school. With Chris' computer science degree, Brent's business degree and Duane's auto body and welding expertise, the Brown brothers decided 1990 was time to build bikes full time. Their main business was

Ripping in and out of berms is a breeze on the BBR DR-Z400 hybrid motocrosser. It has the light, flickable feel similar to an RM250 but with 400cc four-stroke torque. It's a blast for everyone including fast pros like Rich Taylor.

The ride position is improved and the overall feel of the bike is much narrower with the aluminum BBR fuel tank and RM250 subframe.

PHOTOS: KEN FAUGHT



IFACTJ In 1998, Doug Henry became the first rider to win an AMA National Motocross title aboard a four-stroke.

building CR80R/XR100 hybrids. Their first national exposure came in 1996 after they saw a picture of Honda's aluminum-framed '97 CR250R, measured the frame the best they could from the pages of a magazine and built a carbon copy by hand. They then threw an XR400R, and later a Husaberg 501 four-stroke, motor in it. Voila! BBR was suddenly known as the hop-up shop that builds the world's trickiest four-strokes. Since then BBR has built many hybrid, handmade, aluminum-spar-framed four-strokes ranging from XR100s to YZ400Fs. BBR also builds a variety of trick aluminum aftermarket parts such as gas caps, kickstarters, rear brake levers, subframes and swingarms, and is now working on a complete aluminum spar frame that you can buy in a box. It can be ordered to accommodate XR80, 100 or 200 motors as well as Yamaha's TT-R 225cc motor. The chassis kit will employ Honda CR80R Expert suspension and running gear. BBR should stand for "Big Boys' toys R us."

## GOODIES

That brings us back to the headline "The World's Trickest Dirt Bike." Duane and his brothers were on a mission. They knew that it would be impossible to compete with Kiedrow-



Stadium-style whoops would normally be the DR-Z's biggest nightmare, but Taylor proves that with an RM250 fork and shock, the bike is capable of tackling the roughest terrain.

ski's Yoshimura motor. It is a full-factory effort and the bike is equipped with too many one-off, handmade works parts. They did the next best thing: They sent the motor to Yoshimura, which builds and does most of the development for Suzuki's four-stroke off-road and road race teams. Due to the fact that Yoshimura is still in major development with the DR-Z, BBR was only able to obtain a piston kit, an MJN carb kit and a "Yosh" cam to go along with a titanium exhaust system. The pipe cuts 10 pounds off of

the stock unit and increases horsepower considerably. Yosh has many more products in development that will soon be available to the public.

## EXPERTISE

Motorcycle chassis innovation is where the Brown brothers really shine. They knew they could make the stock DR-Z400 chassis slimmer, lighter and much more rider-friendly. They started out by chucking the stock airbox, footpegs, fork, front and rear brakes, gas tank, rear fender, seat, shock, sidepanels, subframe and triple clamps.

An RM250 airbox, rear fender, seat, sidepanels and subframe were then modified to bolt directly onto the stock DR-Z400 frame. A special aluminum plate was built to adapt the DR-Z airboot to the RM airbox, which is considerably bigger and allows for much more airflow to the motor. Applied Racing's custom 21.5-offset RM triple clamps (stock RM clamps are 24.5 and will bolt right onto a DR-Z frame) along with an RM250 inverted fork replaced the stock conventional units in the front, and a slightly modified '00 KX250 shock did the duty in the rear. A-Ride Suspension valved the fork and shock to near perfection. The brakes were then replaced with a Braking oversize rotor in front, and a dual-piston-caliper and oversize rotor in the rear. Pro Circuit supplied the footpegs, and an Answer ProTaper bar



This isn't your daddy's trailbike! Even though the BBR kit was designed for motocross, it works well for off-road, too.

PHOTOS: KEN FAUGHT

# THE NEXT GENERATION

IFACTI Frenchman Mickael Pichon became the first non-Suzuki rider to win a 125 Supercross race in 1995 at the Atlanta round of the series.

gave the bike that Team Suzuki feel. A Billetanium hydraulic clutch was used in place of the stock lever, and EBC KX500 clutch plates replaced the stock DR-Z400 frying pan plates. A 19-inch anodized Excel rear rim and a handbuilt aluminum gas tank externally identical to a stock RM tank concludes the list of BBR goodies. The tank is probably the trickiest item on the bike. With all of BBR's mods, the bike weighed in at just under 245 pounds: 20 pounds under the stock dry weight.

## MOTO FRIENDLY?

The first thing we noticed when throwing a leg over the bike was how narrow the BBR DR-Z400 is. The gas tank is actually a bit slimmer than an RM250 tank, which makes the overall feel incredibly thin and light. The stock seat is very oddly shaped, which makes it difficult to get your weight over the front of the bike in turns. But the RM seat/tank junction is nearly perfect. It makes catching inside lines in corners a snap. We did experience a bit of decel headshake on very rough sections under heavy braking, but we found that running a bit less ride height (100-105mm) pretty much cured it.

The motor has a nice, smooth powerband with lots of torque. Unfortunately, the DR-Z400's stock ignition only allows the bike to rev out to about 10,000 rpm before hitting the

rev limiter. That means that you must short-shift to keep the motor in the meat of the powerband. Easier said than done under motocross race conditions. We opted to go with a Sunstar 46-tooth rear sprocket (stock is a 47) that allowed second and third gear to pull longer, so the rider doesn't have to shift perfectly everytime. Yosh is working on a black box that will let the motor rev to 12,500 rpm, making life much easier.

Our entire staff was very impressed with the BBR DR-Z400. Pro test rider Rich Taylor saw a picture of the bike the week before we got to test it. He was so stoked that he convinced the BBR guys to let him race it in Phoenix at the opening round of the AMA Four-Stroke series. When Taylor raced the bike, it didn't have any of the motor mods except the Yosh pipe, and he put in a very unlucky, but impressive ride. A first-moto front flat put him out of the race on the first lap, but the second moto saw Rich work from a back-of-the-pack start to fourth place at the finish line. Not bad considering the power he was giving up to the YZ-Fs and KTMs. He later commented that if the motor had been as good at the race as it was when we tested it, he would have been battling for the win.

## AND THE WINNER IS...

So is the BBR DR-Z400 as good or even better than Kiedrowski's bike?

Well it's tough to compete with a factory effort, but chassis-wise the BBR takes the cake. It's much slimmer, turns better and is easier to move around on, but the team bike is still considerably lighter (at an estimated 228 pounds) and much faster. We say bolt all the titanium, carbon-fiber parts and the entire factory motor onto the BBR chassis, let us have it for the year, and that would be the world's trickiest dirt bike. **DR**

## PRICE LIST

For the conversion, you must also purchase a 2000 Suzuki RM250 seat and airbox.

BBR custom aluminum gas tank and powder-coating.....	\$1495.00
BBR custom RM to DR-Z airbox adapter .....	149.95
BBR custom aluminum subframe .....	319.95
BBR frame mods and powder-coating .....	200.00
BBR graphics and seat cover kit .....	119.95
BBR billet gas cap .....	69.95
Billetanium hydraulic clutch .....	399.95
Acerbis rear fender .....	24.95
Acerbis sidepanels .....	40.95
Excel rear rim with nipple kit.....	182.34
Buchanan's custom spokes .....	59.40
Yoshimura titanium exhaust.....	695.00
Yoshimura MJN carb kit.....	159.95
Yoshimura DR-Z cam .....	NA
Yoshimura piston kit .....	NA
A-Ride fork kit with oil and shims (springs are extra) .....	165.00
A-Ride shock kit with oil and shims (springs are extra) .....	150.00
Applied RM triple clamps top .....	152.20
Applied RM triple clamp bottom .....	140.70
Answer ProTaper handlebar .....	99.95
Pro Circuit footpegs .....	100.00
Braking oversize front brake kit.....	199.00
Braking dual-piston caliper and oversize rear kit .....	389.00
2000 RM250 fork.....	2289.00
2000 KX250 shock .....	650.00
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$8252.19</b>

## MANUFACTURERS

- ACERBIS** 800/659-1440
- ANSWER RACING** 661/222-7170;  
www.answerracing.com
- APPLIED RACING** 760/743-8190;  
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- A-RIDE SUSPENSION** 630/493-9216
- BBR MOTORSPORTS** 253/631-8233;  
www.bbrmotorsports.com
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- EBC** 818/362-5534
- FTM ENTERPRISES, INC. (Excel)**  
760/732-3161
- PRO CIRCUIT RACING** 909/738-8050;  
www.procircuit.com
- YOSHIMURA R&D** 909/628-4722



Can it get trickier looking than this? BBR's world-famous fabricators took a box-stock DR-Z400 and made this radical motocross conversion. Price is steep at \$2350.75 for the chassis kit, but it definitely changes the personality of this new machine.