

A full-page background image showing a rider on a yellow Suzuki RM250 dirt bike performing a wheelie. The rider is wearing a blue and white jersey with 'HJC' and 'HIDE RACING' logos, white pants with 'HIDE RACING' and 'HIDE CRACKING' logos, and a red and white helmet. The bike has '14' on the front and side fairings, 'RACE TECH' on the front fork, 'VERTEX' and 'DUNLOP' on the rear fender, and 'DIRT BIKE' and '14' on the side fairing. The background is a blurred forest scene.

OFF-ROAD TEST

OLD YELLOW

Giving an RM250 an off-road attitude

> The late '90s to mid-2000s Suzuki RM250 two-strokes might just be the best used motorcycles out there. They feature a strong engine and a great handling package that makes the bikes fun to ride. This is probably why we don't come across many for sale; the people who have them want to keep them. Thankfully, we met Ross Summers, a farmer from Tremonton, Utah, who had been able to purchase a 2004 Suzuki RM250 and was interested in doing a rebuild.

Of course, he knew the machine had some issues; what else would you expect from an almost 20-year-old piece of machinery? Since this was going to be an off-road build, reliability and function were at the top of the list. It didn't

take us very long to find out what was wrong with the engine. The piston had broken into pieces, sending shrapnel down into the lower end. Even though the rod and bottom-end bearings seemed to be fine, we decided to tear it down completely and rebuild it. It's almost impossible to get all the broken pieces of a piston out of the bottom end, and even if you do, the damage may have already been done. Better safe than sorry. Ross just happens to have a really good friend who works at Syndicate Development, so he took care of all the engine details. A Wrench Rabbit kit, featuring a full Hot Rods bottom



PROJECT: 2004 SUZUKI RM250



Syndicate Development in Utah took care of our RM250 engine with some help from industry-leading companies.



end, gaskets, bearings, piston, rings, wrist pin and circlips, was used to rebuild the engine. While the engine cases were split, the transmission was ISF polished for smoother shifting characteristics. Once the engine was reassembled, Syndicate Development also dyno-tuned the engine, installing a complete JD Jetting kit in the carburetor.

The chassis was in slightly better shape than the engine, but it was far from what we would be comfortable throwing a leg over. The main frame was sent off to be stripped down and powdercoated for a clean look. All

the chassis bearings were replaced using bearing and seal kits from All Balls. These kits come complete with bearings, seals and races when needed. Although each kit comes with a small tube of grease, we

recommend using more than what is supplied.

The stock Suzuki wheels had seen better days and needed some attention. Collin and the crew at Faster USA removed the old spokes, rims and bearings, leaving only the OEM hub. The hub was cleaned up in a blast machine, and then a multi-layer bronze Cerakote finish was applied. Once the Cerakote was heated and cured, new bearings were installed in the hub. The refurbished hubs were attached to a set of bright, Suzuki-yellow Excel rims (18 inches in the rear for off-road use, of course)

via stainless steel spokes, bringing the wheels back to life.

Race Tech tackled our suspension needs. We have to admit, this RM250 had seen better days and showed signs of neglect, but the Race Tech crew commented that they had seen way worse. With this being an off-road build, they went slightly softer overall with spring rate and valving specs for comfort. They also replaced all the seals, bushings and oil.

During the reassembly phase, we really got to see our off-road vision take shape. An IMS, natural-colored oversized tank was installed for increased fuel capacity, which equals more trail time. Larger IMS Super Stock pegs replaced the 15-year-old OEM units. We used a few products from Fasst Company, including

its rear-brake clevis, wraparound handguards with replaceable plastic deflector shields and Flexx bars. To run the oversized Flexx bars, we used a set of Applied Racing handlebar mounts instead of replacing the entire top triple clamp.

When preparing a bike for off-road use, protection is key. P3 Carbon, Topar Racing, TM Designworks and Works Connection all make bolt-on

items that we used on this RM250 project. Trust us when we say a kickstand is a great addition to any off-road build. It will come in handy way more often than you think. Naturally, the RM250 didn't come stock with this option back in 2004, but Pro Moto Billet makes a version that bolts right on and tucks up out of the way. A complete UFO plastics kit wrapped in custom-designed graphics from Nic at

Decal Works topped off the build.

With the build complete, it was time for our favorite part—the trail testing. With these types of off-road two-stroke rebuilds, it's not about comparing them to new-model off-road bikes, although they are probably in the same ballpark. These builds are all about the process and

the feeling the owner gets being on the bike. If smiles and bench-racing material are the result, then it is a successful project in our books. Ross Summers' 2004 RM250 is a blast to ride, with great handling and power that is easy to use. Everything you need to spend a long day having fun on the trail is included on this RM250. We are just sad to see the bike leave our possession and start its journey back to Utah where Ross lives. □

The custom graphics from Decal Works made this build literally sparkle. Look close and you will see what we are talking about.



PROJECT: 2004 SUZUKI RM250



The build process was long but well worth it when the finished product looks and runs like our RM250 does.

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