

Bikes! Yikes!

It's been almost 4 years since I had anything to do with bikes, my "last ride" nearly being my last-anything as I was hit (and run over) by a car on Labor Day 2002.

I went bike-shopping Saturday, all-makes have shops within walking distance, all "discount aggressively".

But I really wanted to see the Kawasaki KDX-200 (2-stroke) bike. Well, here it is...



This bike is *huge!* And wow clearly this is a woods-flyer. Look at me sitting on the bike (34" inseam). I had to compress the bike 3" for this pic. Wow 11" of suspension travel! I question the bike in really rocky terrain (the pipe is exposed) but I can live with that.



The bike has a gel seat (neato). The sales-guy told me it could be kitted for street-legality (I am suspect of this claim, I'll know Monday, but this is a State-issue mostly).

Old-timey woods guys (me) drool over 2-strokes (light, powerful, indestructible).

In the background as I was dirt-shopping was the coolest cruiser I'd ever seen. No hype. "Awesome". It turns out to be the newly-redesigned-for-2006 **Mean Streak**. Honestly if I didn't have an accessibility problem (there is absolutely no-way to get back into Marina del Rey without encountering super-dense, super-slow/dangerous traffic) I would have bought it. The sales guy said the cage traffic was killing sales. The bike was heavily discounted (\$11.5K out-the-door, a steal). Check the inverted forks! This baby is fast, and can handle nearly-equal to a "road bike".



Next door was the Yamaha shop... Had to see the Dual-sport XT-225 (4-stroke single). This is a much smaller bike than the Kawasaki, 100% street-legal and the most "flickable" trail bike I've ever sat on. Amazing.



I don't see a better beginner/novice bike than this. A bike that anyone could enjoy. I don't doubt that this bike is a better (street-legal) woods bike than anything I've ever owned. For me, I'd need stiffer fork springs and shock-springs too. But fundamentally this bike is a hoot. (It is *not* competitive w/the Kawasaki; two completely different bikes).

Now, as far as "going through the rough"... The #1 driver-aid is "pedaling" where the rider pushes along with his legs as he grinds forward in 1st gear. For newbie riders, in slow

terrain, this is really effective. *Can't do this w/the Kawasaki, it's too tall; You must "ride it" everywhere.*

I swear on the little Yammie I could "pedal it through anything".

Tucked in a corner of the Yamaha shop, I spy a new, lonely-looking (very attractively priced) **V-Max!** This is a must-have bike for my collection. The "cat-shot of motorcycles". Woo-Hoo!



Yeah I already know I need a fork-brace and Holeshot swingarm, plus new fork/shock springs (\$500 for all; so what?).



Preacher, this was a very uplifting afternoon. From the bike-shop I phoned-in a pizza order (pizza is next to the bike-shop!). Then came home and caught the Kentucky Derby (I try to watch this one race every year). Excellent!

It occurred to me that, should I desire, I could have bought all 3 bikes for cash... the Mean Streak, the V-Max, and a dirt bike.

Only the neighborhood stops me...

Cheers!

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