

# PUZEY XTR4 500CC MOTARD

## The South African 500cc Thumper R45 490



**PUZEY**  
MOTOR CORPORATION

By Donovan Fourie

It has often been suggested that Mike Puzey never sleeps. It is surmised that this genius with an aeronautical engineering background can't, on account of ideas and computations running constantly through his mind. We believe that Leonardo Di Vinci had a similar problem.

Back in the bad old days, when Chinese bikes were absolute rubbish, Mike imported a few Chinese pit bikes. After a weekend of riding, he found that they were somewhat lacking. Bits broke, rattled, wobbled and generally didn't work.

A normal person would declare that to be that and say no more of it. But Mike, on the other hand, looked at the bits and bobs and said "if we simply takes this and make it like this, and make that thicker, and redesign this, then it will be much better."

Thus he would disappear into a world of Auto Cad and wouldn't come out for days until he had completely redesigned said pit-bike to work properly. Then he would send the Auto Cad to the Chinese factory with the simple instruction - "build it like this". And so he produced pitbikes that looked good, rode well and actually worked.

As we said, this man never sleeps, thus it didn't stop with pitbikes. Soon he had big 250cc offroad bikes, motards, scooters, monkey bikes, Chappies and the famous Evo boards - the skateboards with handlebars and motors.



The XTR4 has plastics from Polisport, the famous Spanish plastics company, and looks brilliant. This motard version is fully road legal, with lights, flickers and even rear footpegs.

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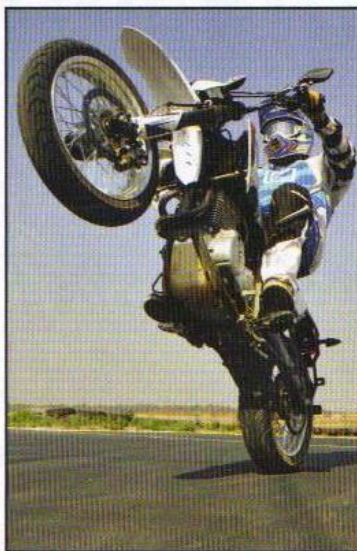
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All this is very commendable, but it has all been culminating into this one new model. For more than a year now, Mike has been talking about it – the big 500cc Thumper.

It uses a 500cc, air-cooled single engine that was originally used by Cagiva back in the 70's, but was later used by Honda and Yamaha in their famous XR's and XT's. Many a veteran biker will probably be scratching his chin at this point, as memory of their old thumpers come flooding in.

Indeed, the XR's and XT's will probably go down in history as some of the most unrelenting motorcycles in history. They could be thrown into oceans, off buildings, through earthquakes or dropped into giant chasms that reach into the centre of the earth, and could still be dragged out and, with a touch of Q20, started. If they did, per chance, break in the middle of the bush in Kenya, their simple workings could be fixed on the side of the road using a piece of wire from a fence and a rock.

It is with this in mind when Mike set to work with his new 500cc XTR4's. When riding, the motor has a very smooth and constant gruntiness about it, like it doesn't understand what a powerband is, thus it just keeps on supplying power. It weighs, fuel-less, 144 kg, and has long travel suspension and motocross bars, so slipping through traffic is a matter of a tug and a pull. The extra torque of the engine makes everything all the more effortless, but it is the ability to go on the freeway that gives this bike true superiority over its compatriots, most of which are out of steam at around 110 km/h, but this new monster sets new markers in



Chinese bikes are not renowned for their power. Bike SA's intermittent, voluntary stunt rider, Damien Hall, shows how different things are with the 500. The soft, offroad suspension means a comfy ride, and the ability to hop over pavements, potholes, street cones, sign boards and the odd pedestrian is essential in South Africa.

Many an old school reader will be looking at this picture and saying "I know that engine!" It is a 500cc, air-cooled, 4 valve, single engine that was originally used in a Cagiva back in the 70's, but was later used by Honda and Yamaha in their famous XR's and XT's. It produces more than 40 hp, more than 42.3 Nm of torque and has a six speed gearbox.



Designed as a motard, it has wide 'bars making it very easy to steer. The adjustable suspension and road tyres also help. Note the footpeg dragging on the ground.

the world of Chinese speedsters – 160km/h! On the freeway, after it is run in, it will cruise happily in sixth gear at 140 km/h with the option of screaming up above 150.

In places like Europe and Asia, people are quite happy living on top of each other in hamper cages, and distances travelled each day can be measured in mere metres, thus a little scoot that does 80 km/h is fine. But we Saffers enjoy our space, thus live in multi-roomed "mansions". When travelling 30 km to work, we want something that has the legs, but without the price tag; and being a good R20 000 less than the Japs, this may be exactly what we are looking for.

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