/45,000 PIPE TEST: WHAT'S THE BEST?

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TWIN-CYLINDER
WE RIDE THE BANNED APRILIAS

SUPER HUNKY IS BACK!

PG 18

THE LONG HAUL
A LOOK INSIDE OUR 204-HOUR CRF450X

INSIDE FACTORY HONDA

WE EVEN RIDE THE CHAMPIONSHIP-WINNING FACTORY CRF250R

ANDREW SHORT

PG 36
THE $45,000 TEST

2006 KAWASAKI KX450F AND HONDA CRF250R EXHAUST PIPE COMPARISON

By Derek Steahly and Jimmy Lewis • Photos by Adam Campbell and Karel Kramer

What do you get when you have two CRF250Rs, two KX450Fs, two factory mechanics, four professional test riders, two days at the dyno, two days at tracks and 30 performance exhaust systems? A $45,000 pipe shootout.
**Testing Procedure**

First, an invite was sent to the pipe manufacturers, which explained that each company could send two exhaust systems per bike for a total of four systems. Our requirements for the test were as follows:

Pass a sound test at a decibel reading no higher than 99.0. If the pipe blew a reading over this level, it failed. Our sport is becoming endangered by the threat of loud exhausts, and we magazine pundits and you riders need to take responsibility to enact change.

All components of the system must be readily available for purchase.

The riders were instructed to rate the pipes with an average baseline score of 80. Any rating score above 80 means the pipe was noticeably different than stock, meaning it had a specific purpose, an enhancement of the performance (i.e., low-end torque pipe or rev pipe). When all was said and done, the testers felt that the 80 score for stock was too low because the stock pipes had such a well-rounded power delivery and made good power throughout the full rpm range. At the conclusion of the test, it was agreed upon that the stock pipes rated a score of 86–88. Remember that motorcycle manufacturers design the stock pipe with the carburetion and motor as a package with the intent of pleasing the majority of riders of all skill levels. The aftermarket, which normally has a specific goal in mind, can only redesign the exhaust. Use these on-the-track performance descriptions to find a pipe that best fits your needs rather than relying only on the scores and dyno charts. These are intended for comparison only and were not used to determine a winner.

**More on the Sound Test**

The sound test was conducted by Chris Real from DPS Technical/Chemhelp using the most advanced sound meters on the planet. A two-minute warmup was given to each bike. A series of five sound-level data points were taken. If all five readings passed under 99.1 decibels, the pipe passed. If the pipe failed the initial readings, then it was confirmed by two more series of five data points with 20-minute cooldown periods in between series. The MIC test rpm used in this test are lower than that of AMA Pro Racing, and almost any pipe can pass a 99-decibel sound test with the help of different ignition curves. This means that even if a bike is quiet during the test, it can still be very loud on the track. As sound requirements decrease, it will get harder to fake the sound test, forcing pipe manufacturers into really increasing the sound-reducing qualities of the mufflers. This is a good thing for our sport. Testers gave the exhaust tone a grade based on the tone quality and sound level on the bike.
AKRAPOVIC

**CRF250R EVOLUTION SYSTEM (TWIN)**

**PRICE:** $959.95

**CONTACT:** WWW.AKRAPOVIC-EXHAUST.COM; SEE YOUR PARTS UNLIMITED DEALER

**CONSTRUCTION:** Full titanium four-piece with carbon-fiber end-caps. Heat shield and muffler mounting brackets are carbon fiber.

**Screen-type spark arrestors.**

**WEIGHT:** 7.26 lb

**GROUND:** 93.7 db Grade: B

**FINISH:** Involved installation with a lot of pieces is time-consuming. Alignment is good, with very high-end craftsmanship and trick look.

**ON THE TRACK:** This system has very smooth power delivery with good mid meat and strong top-end. Testers had to use the clutch a little more when exiting corners. It was preferred on faster tracks.

**DIRT RIDER SCORE** 90.25

ROCKET

**CRF250R STEALTH SYSTEM WITH 29MM END-CAP INSERT (SINGLE)**

**PRICE:** $514.99

**CONTACT:** 951/471-5300, WWW.ROCKETEXHAUST.COM

**CONSTRUCTION:** Two-piece system with aluminum canister, stainless piping and die-cast end-caps. USFS-approved screen-type spark arrestor and 29mm inner diameter quiet insert.

**WEIGHT:** 6.26 lb

**SOUND:** 98 db Grade: B-

**FIT & FINISH:** All bolts had to be left loose until alignment was right.

**ON THE TRACK:** Our pro-level testers wanted more from the mellow bottom power, but it picked up in the mid with good torque. It was quick-revving but flattened out a bit up top.

**DIRT RIDER SCORE** 89.5