

YAMAHA MOTOR CO., LTD.

APRIL 1, 1998 ENGLISH

Yamaha News

No.2
BIMONTHLY

New face of the Phazer

The '99 PZ500 takes a giant leap forward in technology and styling, adding even sportier performance and fun to the 15-year run of the popular fan-cooled Phazer.



Trail-blazing sleds for '99



The annual "Snow Shoot" is the event where Yamaha unveils its new snowmobiles for the international media. This year's event was held in the tourist town of St. Donat, about 1.5 hours north of Montreal in Canada's Quebec Province. There, many of the journalists had their eyes on Yamaha's powered-up 500cc category, including the all-new PZ500, boasting sporty, high-tech performance plus ease of handling, and the VX500SX, which adds a new class to the premium Vmax SX series of front-running trail performance sleds.

New spice for the 500cc class

Every year, the international snowmobile press comes to "Snow Shoot" expecting to see something new and exciting from Yamaha. And again this year they weren't disappointed with its 22 premium machine lineup highlighted by the top performance SRX700/600 with its long travel suspension, a wide range of industry-leading Vmax series models, the all new Phazer

and much more.

What's new among the 1999 models is in the popular 500cc category, namely the Phazer 500 and the Vmax 500 SX. The Phazer 500 is an all-new model that packs exciting new performance and design touches into the very popular Phazer 485. With a new hood design and completely new engine mounted on Yamaha's current high tech chassis, the Phazer 500 will surely be a great seller this year in the market for fan-cooled machines.

(Clock-wise from upper left) 1) The high performance trail machine Vmax 500 SX, 2) a total of 22 models were available for riding, 3) the new sport Phazer 500, and 4) checking over the new sleds at the test-ride site

In the liquid-cooled category, the Vmax 500 SX is the big news for the '99 models. Following in the market-leading tracks of the Vmax 700 and 600 SX, this new 500 is an excitement-packed entry level sled in the trail performance category. Sporting the blue and white color scheme of Yamaha's factory racing machines, the 500 SX will tempt snowmobile fans with its competitive sticker price as well. Also for 1999, the Yamaha line gets a new three-cylinder engine design with a single pipe in three of the liquid-cooled sleds. This new engine increases the power band across the entire rpm range,

putting smooth, seamless power in the riders' hands.

Cool venue, warm hospitality

From late February into mid-March, members of the media from Canada, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.S., converged on the small French Canadian city of St. Donat, where the main industry is tourism thanks to the popular skiing and snowmobiling venues in the area. Organized into three groups, each lasting four days, the journalists arrived to a welcome ceremony hosted by Quebec's Minister of Tourism. Each session began with introductions of the journalists and magazines they represent, local resident hosts and Yamaha staff, followed by detailed information about local trails. Afterwards, the journalists enjoyed four days of riding on a variety of terrain including lakes, high-speed and tight twisting trails, ski slopes for climbing, and ungroomed areas for suspension testing. Those areas provided plenty of opportunities to gather impressions and do their photo shooting of all the 1999 Yamaha sleds for the coming season's editorial coverage.

Thanks to the help of Annie Hendersen of the St. Donat Chamber of Commerce and several local residents, this year's Snow Shoot was a tremendous success. Also, the local snowmobile club worked hard on the trail grooming each night so that the trails were in the best condition for the next day's riding. In the evenings, the magazine editors and Yamaha staff got together for fantastic food and friendly conversation with local townspeople.

From the mouths of journalists

Representing the U.S. snowmobile press at the event were American Snowmobiler,

Ehlert's Snow Week, Snow Goer and Snowmobile, Sno West, Snow Tech and Supertrax (U.S. and Canada), while teams from Snow Goer Canada, Hot Sled, Montoneige Quebec and Snowmobilers Television represented the Canadian media. Also attending were freelance reporters Eric Putter and Mary Sorrenson, Jim Gorant and Kevin Wing from Popular Mechanics and Larry Kaduce from Snow Connection.

From the European press came journalists for Snowmobile Scandinavia, Skoter Magazine, Moottorikelkka and Snow Rider.

The success of the event was very apparent from comments like, "This was one of the best prepared events I've seen for hospitality, trail conditions and sled performance," from Lane Lindstrom, editor for Sno West Magazine. Lane went on to say, "Everyone we met really went out of their way to make us feel welcome and help us get our work done."

As for the new 500cc models, there was high praise for their technological and economical features. According to John T. Prusak, editor of the Ehlert publications Snow Goer, Snow Week and Snowmobile, "Yamaha's impressive climb in technology appears to be continuing. From the exciting and agile new Vmax 500 SX to the renewed Phazer, Yamaha had a lot to offer at the 1999 event. And aside from the equipment, the Yamahas of today are also much more price-competitive as well."



Two new powerful 500cc sleds are coming to the '99 snowmobile market

About the new PZ500 he added, "The Phazer was an especially impressive package. Yamaha gave the Phazer its new chassis — complete with the ProAction Plus rear and trailing arm front suspension systems and a hydraulic brake — while cutting the price of the sled considerably." Prusak went on to talk about details of the Ehlert Publishing 1999 Rode Reports conducted in conjunction with the Snow Shoot.

"The extensive snowmobile trail system in the greater St. Donat area proved to be a very good testing ground for our team of editors and consumer guest riders. Combined, we tallied more than 11,000 miles (17,700 km) on the prototype and pre-production sleds in our four days of testing. We shot more than 5,000 color action photos and 19 hours of video tape. All of this will be the backbone for much of our editorial coverage for the entire year." It certainly looks like Yamaha's '99 snowmobile season is off to a dashing start.

From Scott Heath of YMUS

What makes the PZ500 new

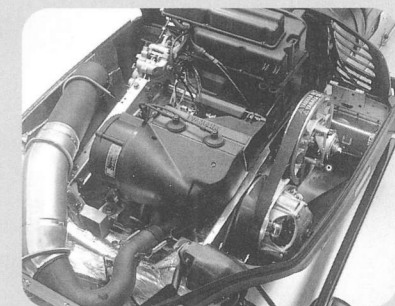
Keeping its highly-reputed features of engine durability, lightweight body and its economic advantage, the Phazer was reborn for '99 as the PZ500 under the concept of a "basic model featuring full sport components."

In order to offer a full array of sportier components, the new Phazer 500 was developed around many advanced Vmax technologies, such as a lightweight frame, hydraulic disk brakes and Yamaha's original ProAction System front and ProAction Plus rear suspensions.

The 2-stroke fan-cooled twin cylinder engine is more powerful than ever with further improvements in low to mid range power output. Also, a convenient electric starter and reverse gear are available as options for greater ease of use.

The newly designed lightweight but rigid hood in solid white delivers excellent air flow to improve engine, brake and clutch cooling.

For anyone from beginners to veteran drivers, the '99 PZ500 offers great flexibility to fit in a wide range of riding scenes.



The Phazer's powerful fan-cooled 2 cylinder engine shows further maturity with improvements in the intake/exhaust systems, throttle response and low to middle range power output