

By Pete Peterson • Photos by Ray Gauger, Karel Kramer and Pete Peterson

2007 CHRISTINI CRF250X AWD #1

We gave this Christini all-wheel-drive bike a favorable review in its test (November '07). Since then we've seen these drives shine at extreme events (EnduroCross Series, Last Man Standing), but we wanted to see how it would hold up in long-term real-world testing. So far, the little bike has been making friends and earning smiles, but it has also had a few hiccups.

A fork seal replacement job had mechanical-savant Karel Kramer doing the unspeakable—reaching for an owner's manual. Partially removing the drive spline added more time to a somewhat routine job.

Jesse Ziegler raced the bike at the Pismo Beach WORCS event, a one-hour race entirely in deep sand. The stock 250X engine, even riding the rev-limiter, didn't have a chance on the long straights, but Jesse was grinning ear to ear as the Christini was able to hold inside lines where the sand was smooth and pass back the 450 riders who had been picking on him in the horsepower sections. Jesse wanted me to emphasize he passed back *all* the riders that got him on the straights while giggling uncontrollably.

Shortly after Jesse's abuse, Steve Christini dropped by the office to inspect the drive with a few tests that really point out the new frontier this



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bike is forging. With the engine off he turned the bar to lock, pulled the front brake and tried to turn the bar back to straight. A properly working drive will bind up at about straight ahead. Our bike had one front hub sprag bearing fail this test, so the front wheel came off. With the wheel removed, the second sprag bearing felt notchy and was replaced as well. This sprag system is being replaced with a new, more durable design on future models and Christini is retrofitting all the existing bikes, free of charge.

Steve also checked the torque on the drive's clutch by trying to force the front wheel backward, again with the engine off. Someone of average strength should just barely be able to rotate the wheel. Ours wasn't moving at all, so Steve reset the clutch's torque. This clutch torque adjustment can also be used to fine-tune

the bike's feel. Before he left he made sure we greased the spline drives, a simple task with the supplied grease gun, and lubed and adjusted the AWD chain.

Karel took the freshly adjusted bike to one of his favorite riding areas. He got higher on hillclimbs than he'd ever gotten on a 250F but felt guilty wringing the bike out for so long in first gear. He also detected some clutch slip, so some new plates and maybe an auto clutch are soon to go into the AWD bike.

A couple of valves have tightened slightly but have not yet needed adjustment. The abused little bike has only been given two engine oil changes and one transmission oil change over its short but hard life thus far. Now we're going to see how it responds to some modifications, such as the auto clutch and a few other ideas we have. Stay tuned.

Running Tally**Hours on Bike: 36.5****Maintenance and Repairs: \$42.55***(not including tires)*

- 2 engine oil changes
- Silkolene Pro 4 SX 10W-40: \$13.55 per liter
- 1 transmission oil change
- Silkolene Comp Gear 10W-40: \$13.55 per liter
- Stock fork seal: \$15.45
- Sprag bearings (warranty)
- Maxxis tires, Maxxcross SI 80/100-21 front: \$80.95
- Maxxcross SM 110/100-18 rear: \$86.95
- Maxxcross SI 110/100-18 rear: \$88.95

