

# TESTING THE Pitster Pro X4R

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAN NAVARRETE

When Pitster Pro first appeared on the pitbike scene several years ago, Pitster's head honcho, Gary Goodwin, told us that he was committed to creating some of the best products possible. Over the years, we have seen the Pitster's line evolve and improve, which in return has created a loyal following for the Pitster brand. For 2008, Pitster has once again managed to evolve and improve all of its products, including one of its more popular models known as the X4R. So what all has been changed on the 2008 X4R, and are the improvements really that much different from the 2007 model? To put it briefly, the 2008 model definitely has some changes aside from bold new graphics and different-colored plastics, and yes, the improvements are most definitely noticeable.

## Assembly & Ergonomics

Our X4R arrived well packed and unscathed in its shipping crate. Compared to other pitbikes we have assembled, the X4R required more assembly than usual, which was a good thing considering it provided us the opportunity to really get the bike dialed in. While we were going over the nuts and bolts, all of the fasteners turned out to be properly tightened, but the chain was on the overly tightened side. Because the X4R is based off of a midsize frame, the bike came equipped with white KLX-style plastic, which was a nice departure from all of the black pitbikes hitting the market. The plastics for the most part checked out to be thick and pliable, but we did have an issue with the abnormal rear fender cracking. Thankfully, Pitster is adamant about providing superior customer satisfaction, and after placing a single call, a new fender was promptly sent out.

Once the X4R was assembled, the oversized handlebar provided plenty of leverage as well as a good amount of leg clearance. Only the tallest of test riders mentioned that they would have preferred to have a taller handlebar in place. Although the handlebar was not equipped with folding levers, the conventional-style levers were of much better quality than what we are used to seeing on pitbikes in this price range. The quarter turn throttle assembly was based off of the Joker Tornado throttle and was fairly stiff, so we ended up cutting three coils off of the throttle spring, which made it much smoother. Yet another attribute that made the X4R comfortable to ride was the low peg mount height combined with the oversized, stainless steel footpegs. Furthermore, the over-the-top-style brake pedal and folding shifter were both within easy reach from the footpegs. The only thing we would like to see added to the controls is a brake snake to help keep the brake pedal from bending or snapping.

## The Frame

The chrome-moly frame on the X4R is one of the better frames we have tested. The frame is well constructed and heavily braced where it needs to be. The welds found throughout the mainframe are clean and free of spatter, and the lower portion of the frame incorporates a unique, cradle-style design. Should you find a need to pull the motor from the frame, the upper engine mount is removable. Like the mainframe, the removable subframe is rock-solid once bolted into place and is also cleanly constructed.

Not surprisingly, the X4R frame held up great throughout testing. Thanks to its robust design, the frame managed to survive several rough or severely overshot landings that would have easily bent or broken lesser-quality frames. After logging several hard hours on our test bike, we found that our frame is still holding up great and shows no sign of throwing in the towel anytime soon.

## The Motor

Now here is where things get interesting. For 2008, the X4R comes with an all-new GPX 150cc motor that is a cross between a Honda 50 bottom end and a Kawasaki 110 top end. For some reason, the intake is reversed and points toward the rear of the motor like a Honda top end. Attached to the intake is a Chinese copy of a Mikuni VM26 complete with



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a 110 pancake-style air filter. The motor appears to be a lot beefier than some of the older Chinese motors, and the mounting points appear to be reinforced as well. Like the old GPX motors, the new GPX "KawaOnda" 150 has a four-speed transmission with an all-up shift pattern and can be started in any gear once the clutch lever has been pulled in. To help keep the motor cool, a large oil cooler with high-volume oil lines comes standard. Due to the placement of the oil line fittings, the left oil line was exposed more than we would have liked, while the right oil line was extremely close to the header. And speaking of the header, the two-piece exhaust system utilizes a big-bore header while a slip-fit muffler takes care of keeping the motor noise to a reasonable level.

So by now you are most likely wondering how the "KawaOnda" 150 runs. Simply put, it flat-out rips! Although I still don't quite know why this motor was configured as such, what I do know is that it makes great power and is a night-and-day difference when compared to the old "industry standard" GPX 125. To begin with, the motor hits hard right off of idle and manages to pump out very usable power in a linear fashion. Whereas the old GPX 125 motors had a tendency to sign off a little past midpoint, the GPX 150 continues to pull hard until the motor is flat-out screaming. It's no big secret that the GPX 125 did not really have much of a top end, and thankfully, the new GPX 150 has more than enough to help clear the largest of jumps. Like the motor, the transmission held up great and did not miss or jump out of gear even when the trans was being borderline abused. About the only problems we encountered while testing were with the chain and the muffler. Thanks to the abundance of torque, the chain managed to stretch like rubber very quickly. That said, an aftermarket chain would certainly be a worthwhile investment. The other problem we had was with the muffler making contact with the rear tire. As a result, the muffler would come loose or fall off when the

bike was being ridden aggressively. We simply spaced out the muffler with the help of a few washers, which made for a quick (and cheap) fix. According to Pitster, this was an intermittent problem on some models and has already been addressed. Pitster also informed us that it would be carrying a full line of upgrade parts for this motor and that this motor was very capable of producing high-horsepower numbers. So for those of you who plan to race this bike or simply desire to have a blazing-fast X4R, you may want to keep a close eye on Pitster's website for new product releases.

### The Suspension

The X4R comes equipped with a genuine, fully adjustable Marzocchi fork with 8 inches of travel. Unlike some other companies that are trying to sell pitbikes equipped with Chinese copies of these forks, Pitster has gone the extra mile to make sure that the X4R is set up with what is arguably the best fork on the market. Not surprisingly, the X4R front end felt plush right out of the crate. As for the rear suspension, the X4R is equipped with a Pitster piggyback-style shock, which is compression-, rebound-, and preload-adjustable. To further help dial in the rear end, the long-travel swingarm provides up to 8 inches of travel and features interchangeable shock mounts to help dial in the perfect ride.

Before logging several hours on the bike, we found that the front end felt plush while the rear end appeared to be initially a little stiffer than we would have liked. Once more, hours were logged on the bike, the suspension started to break in and the bike began to feel much more plush and balanced. Although we were a little skeptical about the Pitster shock being able to keep up with the Marzocchi fork, hours and hours of testing have proven otherwise. Thanks to well-balanced and supple suspension components, all of the testers felt that the X4R suspension was very confidence-inspiring. Even when pushed to the limit, the suspension managed to soak up whatever was thrown at it without punishing the rider. More importantly, the suspension held up great throughout testing and did not show any signs of excessive wear and tear.

Yet another trait worth mentioning is that the X4R suspension has a wide range of adjustment and could be set up to accommodate a broad variety of riders. Thanks to external adjusters, the fork settings could easily be changed while the adjusters on the shock also provided a wide range of settings to choose from and were just as easy to access. Although this bike's suspension is designed with adult-size riders in mind, the suspension could be set up to accommodate the weight of a younger/lighter rider.

### Wheels/Brakes

Like a typical midsize bike, the X4R comes equipped with a 14/12-inch combo. The CNC aluminum alloy hubs on the X4R were some of the nicer



that the brakes were not prone to fading, even when being used aggressively. While testing, we had to keep an eye on both the front and rear spokes, as both of the wheels managed to loosen up over time. However, after adjusting them a few times, the wheels finally started to set in and remain true. Overall, we were very satisfied with the wheel and brake setup on the X4R, as all of the components managed to hold up great regardless of how hard they were being used and abused.

### The Bottom Line

By now you have probably guessed that we liked the X4R a lot. Although we had high expectations for this bike, we were certainly not disappointed in the least. To date, this is hands down the best prebuilt midsize bike we have ridden. Apparently we are not the only ones who feel that way considering other companies are starting to produce copies of the X4R and attempting to sell them for less. While these bikes may appear to be the same, most if not all of them are simply inferior copies with no real research and development behind them, let alone a large spare parts network to support them. That said, we would much rather invest our hard-earned dollars into a company that has managed to consistently improve its products over the years and has the ability to support its products long after the sale. So unless you feel like taking a gamble on a lesser product, we feel that the \$2695 asking price for the X4R is more than reasonable when you consider all of the value this bike delivers. Trust us, this bike is the real deal and a real winner. 🏆

hubs we have seen on a pitbike in this price range and appeared to be bombproof. Heavy-duty spokes were used to lace the hubs to a set of aluminum heavy-duty rims. The X4R comes equipped with an Innova 80-100x12 rear tire while a hefty 70-100x14 graces the front end. Both of the tires have a wide knob pattern that is fairly aggressive and looked like they would provide plenty of traction. Although rear flats as a result of spinning the rim are not as prevalent as they are on a 10-inch rear wheel, we would still have liked to see the X4R come with at least a rear rim lock to help prevent this potential problem. As for the brakes, the X4R uses disc brakes front and rear with traditional-style rotors. The rear brake reservoir is incorporated into the rear brake assembly, which means one less thing to worry about.

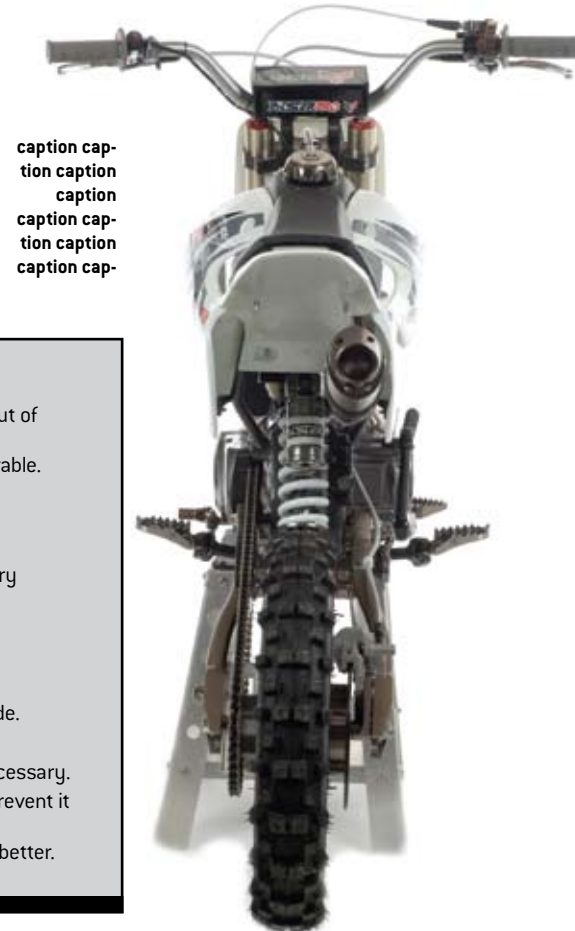
Right out of the crate, both the front and rear wheel were slightly dragging on the brake pads, but once we were able to log some hours on the bike, the dragging was reduced. Thanks to a braided front brake line, the front brake was reasonably strong (as was the rear brake) without being overly touchy. We were also pleased to see

#### Hell Yes!

- X4R is very comfortable right out of the crate.
- Frame is well built and very durable.
- Fully adjustable Marzocchi fork works great.
- New GPX 150cc motor rips!
- Rear shock is very good and very adjustable.

#### Hell No!

- Throttle spring is on the stiff side.
- Chain is made out of rubber.
- Throttle cable is longer than necessary.
- Muffler may need a spacer to prevent it from hitting the tire.
- Oil cooler lines could be routed better.



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