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JUNE 2009

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CHRISTINI KX450F

Throwing roost with two wheels

The 2009 KX450F is an amazing machine in stock form. The fuel injection is awesome, and the suspension follows suit. The bike won our 2009 450 MX shootout without question, so why hack up a bike that works? When you are Christini, makers of two-wheel-drive dirt bikes, and a big company like Kawasaki calls requesting two KX450F Christinis, you jump at the chance to double the roost capabilities of a great machine. The catch? The bikes had to be designed and built in three short weeks.

Riding a Christini in the snow is almost like riding a normal bike on dirt. Mark Tilley gets a face full of snow roost. We hammered the KX450F off-road and on the track, and it works best in conditions that would have other bikes stuck.

In just three short weeks the stock 2009 KX450F was converted to two-wheel drive by the Christini crew. The hand-made gas tank was no easy task. Wild Wally Palmer is racing one of the Christini KX450Fs and will race one throughout the National Enduro series. He beat Mike Lafferty at a local enduro aboard one.



CHRISTINI KX450F

Our love of dirt bikes means we live to ride both off-road and motocross, but when you hand us a powerful 450 two-wheel-drive bike, we are going to head straight for our favorite off-road hill climbs. We don't get much snow in Southern California, but the Christini came at just the right time for us to ride it in the fluffy white stuff. Slippery snow makes riding a normal dirt bike next to impossible because of wheel spin. But with the Christini system, the front wheel engages when the rear wheel starts turning faster than the front, pulling straight and going where you point it. We roosted through snow so deep a normal bike wouldn't have made it 20 feet. The bike is simply amazing in snow, even without studded tires. If we lived in a colder climate, we wouldn't ride anything but a Christini!

Riding a dirt bike that drives both wheels is a cool experience, but it takes a different approach. There's nothing wrong with the bike's various traits, they're just very different from a regular dirt bike's. The KX450F Christini is easy to adjust to in open, off-road conditions, but there's a steep learning curve out on the track. Scrubbing a jump with two-wheel drive is a big no-no. The front end wants to pull instead of push, sending the bike in a different direction than expected and spiking your heart rate through the



We loved the Leo Vince system. The quality is top notch, it worked great and is quieter than stock.



Thanks to EFI, there is more room to work with, and the KX450F is the narrowest feeling Christini we've ever ridden. Heavy frame modification is necessary to fit the gearbox.



The drive shafts that turn the front wheel.



The two-wheel drive system requires a larger head tube and serious framework.



Out on the moto track the Christini shines when the conditions are horrible, like nasty mud or when the track is dry and slippery. Navigating ruts takes smooth throttle and minimal clutch work. For more info on Christini, go to www.christini.com.

roof. Attacking rutted corners with big throttle and lots of clutch doesn't work with the Christini, either; it likes to go through a corner with smooth throttle control and zero clutch. Sudden power surges don't work in ruts, because it breaks the rear wheel loose, engaging the front wheel, and the bike pulls in the direction the front wheel is pointed. If you don't have the front end aimed exactly where you want to go, cornering gets ugly. On slippery, flat corners and off cambers, the Christini shines, and it feels like it is almost impossible to slide out. The Christini is an advantage on dry, slippery tracks, and in a sloppy mud race it would be hard to beat. Just like in snow, the Christini pulls right through the mud. The nastier the conditions, the better it works.

The stock clutch on a 2009 KX450F is on the weak side, and when the stress of two wheels finding traction is added, the stock clutch goes south quickly. On our first off-road outing, we completely smoked the clutch in less than three hours. We weren't abusing it, but big, wide-open, sandy hill climbs with minimal wheel spin asked too much of the stock clutch, and once it slipped a little, it burned up quickly. Even for a stock 2009 KX450F, we recommend a quality aftermarket unit.

GRAB THE CHECK BOOK

While Christini already makes kits for KTM and Honda, this bike was a special deal for Kawasaki. But if you want to have your 2009 KX450F throw roost from the front wheel, Christini will be happy to oblige—for the right price. Money is a magical thing. Christini would probably convert any dirt bike and some household appliances to two-wheel drive if you offered enough cash! □