

2008 Kawasaki KLX™ 250S

Q & A with Product Manager Karl Edmondson



Q: Why did the engineers stick with a steel perimeter frame, instead of a KX™ motocross type aluminum twin-spar design?

A: There are actually two reasons for using a steel box-section frame on the KLX™ 250S. First; a steel frame –and its smaller cross-section spars– gives a more comfortable ride on pavement, thanks to its natural vibration damping abilities. In other words; this frame is smoother and more-comfortable than a stiff twin-spar aluminum motocross setup. Second, the use of steel box-section spars is more-efficient for mass production and therefore less expensive than a cast/extruded aluminum design. This helps keep the total price low, for buyers in this segment.

Q: Isn't 250cc small for a streetbike?

A: Yes, 250cc is smaller than the average street motorcycle. Please remember this is dual-sport that can also be ridden off-road, where small size is often a plus. However, the KLX250S has plenty of performance for use in the real world, with enough power to keep-up on the highways, backroads and around town. Kawasaki already has the larger KLR™650 dual purpose model for riders seeking extra power or payload, so the 250S is targeted directly at those who want a more nimble and easy to handle machine. Its compact size and light weight, compared to some other dual purpose bikes, makes the KLX250S well-suited for transporting in a truck or RV and then riding-off to explore new areas, or to ride into town for camp supplies.

Q: Why the redesign, didn't Kawasaki already have a competent 250cc dual purpose machine?

A: Yes, the previous KLX250S was a good choice for those seeking a lightweight dual purpose machine. However, since it was not certified for use in California, it was unavailable to a significant number of potential dual sport buyers. So, when the decision was made to update the KLX250S, Kawasaki took the opportunity to not only improve its function and appearance, but also ensure it would be eligible for sale in all 50 states. With all of these mechanical and cosmetic changes, this new model represents a significant upgrade from the previous 250S.



Q: Tires play a big role in the overall competence of a dual-sport bike. What can you tell us about the tires on the new 250S?

A: To answer that question, we really need to include the wheels. Most DOT legal dual-sport tires deliver a less-precise feel on pavement, because their open-tread design allows more “squirm” in the tread blocks. Some of that squirm is unavoidable, but the effect can be minimized by making the wheels more rigid. Kawasaki’s engineers accomplished this on the '09 KLX250S by increasing the spoke diameter by 1/2mm. Not only does this reduce unwanted wheel flex, it also makes them more durable on rough surfaces. Ok, back to the tires... in a further effort to reduce “squirm” on pavement, the engineers decided to switch to Dunlop 605s with smaller tread blocks. These new tires work with the stiffer wheels to offer a significant on-road handling improvement, without sacrificing the KLX250S’ excellent off-road ability.



Q: Stiffer wheels, better tires, and 50-state street legal? Sounds great, but what else does the new model bring to the table?

A: Without covering the entire features & benefits listing on Kawasaki.com, I'll mention some of my personal favorites: The new all-digital instruments offer a ton of added functionality and are easy-to-read, even in direct sunlight. The new swingarm is stiffer, which helps improve handling in unison with those new wheels and tires, and I especially like the re-tuned suspension on the '09. Finally, the firmer urethane in the seat makes the bike much more comfortable on longer rides.