

# 4-WHEEL

# ATV ACTION



**WORLD'S FASTEST  
HILLCLIMBERS:  
FROM 350cc TO 1200cc**

NOVEMBER 1999

You can bet ATV Action was excited to compete at Pikes Peak with the Duncan Racing team! That's Travis Spader on the left.



# ATV ACTION TACKLES THE PEAK

## *Duncan Racing Pike's Peak Banshees*

**Y**ou better believe we get involved in the stories we do. If it's a test on a sand machine, we'll tear around the dunes on it. If it's a woods quad, we'll rip through the forest on it. Sometimes we take it one step further—we actually join a race team!

When *ATV Action* editor Bill Lanphier decided to compete in the oldest off-road race in America, the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb, he gave a holler to Duncan Racing. This team has been more successful than anyone on the famous 12-mile climb in the Colorado Rockies.

Mark Ehrhardt, riding for Duncan, won The Peak three times. With either Mark or Travis Spader aboard, the team posted the fastest qualifying time up the hill every year from '93 to '98.



Though editor Bill Lanphier was a bit outclassed in displacement, his Duncan-modified Banshee powerplant cranked out strong power for a 350. Note the 34mm Keihins, Powerhead, High-Rev pipes and polished stator/sprocket cover. Also check out the double-wide footpegs, which are becoming more common among the top racers.



# THE PEAK

## IMMACULATE!

For '99, the team consisted of two immaculate and very similar '99 Yamaha Banshees, one being a 403 Eliminator and the other a 350. Travis, obviously with a much better shot at the win, rode the 403 Eliminator. Bill piloted the 350, powered by virtually the same motor that Spader rode into the winner's circle at Loretta's Lynn's GNC motocross last year.

Both machines feature Paul Turner Powerheads, Pyramid Reeds, Hi-Rev pipes and a Duncan Racing clutch kit. The 403 uses 35mm Keihins, while the smaller 350 can get by with twin 34s.

The chassis setup for hillclimbs like Pikes Peak is unique. Like flattrack racing, there are no jumps, so the wide quads have sway bars and lowered suspension to keep them flatter in the turns. But, because Pikes Peak includes slippery pea-gravel, Duncan prefers to run Holeshot tires instead of flattrack/TT tires.

Many of the racers live near Colorado and can compete in a local, seven-race hillclimb series. For Duncan, based in California, Pikes Peak is a one-shot deal. "Lack of practice is the most difficult thing for us,"



explains Loren Duncan. "It's tough dialing in the tires, jetting and suspension with only a few hours of practice time. If all we did was race hillclimbs like some of the guys, we'd knock many seconds off our times. Plus, having more time to memorize the track would help tremendously."

Though this year's winner, Lonnie Eubanks, ran Hoosier tires, Duncan still feels that Holeshots are the way to go. "We tried Hoosiers but they heated up, got soft and went away on us. Plus, they just didn't have the trac-

◀ If there is anything more exhilarating in ATVing than screaming along a fast road on a Banshee, we'd like to try it!

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The past success of the Duncan team at the Peak speaks for itself. How about next year, Loren? "We'll see. It's a tough race and you can only do so many things!"



## EDITOR BILL ON THE DUNCAN BANSHEE

• To ride Pikes Peak on a nice machine was really a treat. Duncan set up the machine here in California, but because of scheduling, I wasn't able to even see the machine until the first of two practice days on the hill.

My racing experience on a lowered machine was limited to one race at Ascot on a Suzuki LT250R almost ten

years ago. I'd forgotten how cool it feels to sit that low to the ground. The handlebar bend and footpeg placement felt excellent.

I'm basically useless riding a twist throttle and asked Duncan to put a thumb throttle on the machine. He warned me that twin 34s would be really stiff, so I bought a hand exerciser and worked on my right thumb ten minutes a day for a month. I thought I'd be fine, but was I wrong. After only a few turns, my thumb was gone. Back in the pits, we switched to a twist and changed to needle jets with a different taper.

Because the course has no jumps or whoops, I adapted to the twist throttle right away. With the midrange cleaned up, the motor pulled hard for a 350, even at 14,000 feet. Coming out of corners, the machine hooked up very hard. Unfortunately, most of other guys were on 400s or larger, so I was down on power on the many wide-open sections.

My Roll/Axis chassis and suspension setup that Mark Ehrhardt rode to victory and set a record with in '97 was, needless to say, excellent. It was not quite as trick as the latest Lobo design that Travis was running, but for a rider like me, that's really splitting hairs.

Here again, though Travis was toying with the idea of adding a steering stabilizer to his machine, the tracking felt fine to me. The suspension travel, about five inches all around, was just enough to allow me to weight the front for steering or the rear for traction. And those dual front brake calipers (two per side) were astounding. I found myself driving into corners much harder than I ever thought possible.

Despite the +2" rear axle width (as opposed to the more common +4") and the tackiness of some sections, the machine never felt tippy at all. I was worried that the pavement sections would spook me, but I really came to enjoy railing around those turns wide open. Wild, but super fun! □