

**GIANT 2-STROKE ISSUE:**

**THE BEST OF THE BEST**

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# 300 TWO-STROKE SPECIAL

## TM E300ES

TM Motorcycles used to have a reputation for being expensive, exotic and rare. Now that small European makers have become the norm in the 300 class, all of them are expensive, exotic and rare. For 2019 TM gave its 300 a new motor, complete with electric start. The cylinder is new. The cases are new, and the five-speed transmission is new. It already had an electric power valve, an aluminum frame, a KYB fork and a shock made in-house at TM. Interestingly enough, the bike was designed around Transfer Port Injection, similar to the system on the KTM 300XC-W TPI. This particular bike has a Keihin carb.



### STRENGTHS

The new motor is incredibly smooth and torquey. TMs in the past were hard-hitting, pro-level bikes, but this one has a gentler side. The power is sweet and the jetting is clean. This is one of the lighter bikes in the class, at 225 pounds without fuel, and it still has a kickstarter. The KYB fork is good. The hydraulic clutch has a medium pull, and the Nissin brakes are as good as anything in the class.

### WEAKNESSES

TM recommends that race fuel is to be used in the E300ES. That can get a little tiresome. This is the only 300 that uses an aluminum frame, and it feels very rigid. The rear suspension, in particular, can feel harsh.

### BOTTOM LINE

We were surprised and pleased to see that TM has tamed the beast. The 300 was a brute in the old days, feeling more like a motocross bike than an off-roader. That's not the case any more as far as the motor goes, but the chassis still has a very motocross-oriented feel.



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## 300 TWO-STROKE SPECIAL

# THE BEST OF THE REST

*Other members of the 300 club*

There are more. The 300 class is large and healthy in America. Here are some of the bikes that we have yet to test in 2019.

**BETA 300RR RACE EDITION:** This is a competition-oriented version of the 300RR. It doesn't have oil injection and weighs a few pounds less. The fork is upgraded to a Sachs closed-cartridge system with more aggressive settings. The standard footpegs are swapped out for machined aluminum versions. It gets hand guards, and the price is still less than most other 300s. **MSRP: \$9299.**

**GAS GAS XC300:** Gas Gas offers this model to appeal to western riders and those who simply don't want to pay for a headlight or odometer. The XC is stripped of those items, but is otherwise the same bike as the EC300. The price is \$300 less. **MSRP: \$8999.**

**KTM 300XC:** This is KTM's racier 300. It has a chassis that's very similar to the 250SX motocross bike's, but with a 300cc six-speed for a motor. Unlike the 300XC-W TPI, it has a Mikuni carburetor. The Husky TX300 mentioned earlier has the same frame, engine and suspension, but with some differing components and Husky bodywork. It shares most of the same weaknesses and strengths. **MSRP: \$9499.**

### SHERCO SE300

**RACING:** We rode this bike in France earlier in the year and found it was very similar to the upgraded SE300 Factory mentioned previously. This model has a WP fork instead of the KYB unit. It doesn't get the FMF exhaust system or a skid plate. The price is \$600 less. **MSRP: \$9300.**

**SHERCO SC300 CROSS-COUNTRY:** To appeal to cross-country racers and motocrossers, Sherco offers a stripped version of the SE300 Factory. It has all the upgrades of the Factory model but with stiffer suspension settings. **MSRP: \$9700.**

**TM EN300i:** Apparently, TM had access to Transfer Port Injection technology prior to KTM's involvement. The TM 300i fuel-injected two-stroke has been years in the making. We were hoping to have the result in time for this story, but these things take time, especially for a company this small. It still should arrive as a 2019 model. **MSRP: TBA.**

**TM MX 300 ES:** TM is the only company to offer a 300cc two-stroke motocross bike in America. The MX300ES is similar to the EN300 tested in this issue but with more aggressive motor and suspension settings. It keeps the electric starter. **MSRP: \$9295. □**

BETA 300RR RACE EDITION



GAS GAS XC300



KTM 300XC

SHERCO SC300 CROSS-COUNTRY



SHERCO SE300 RACING



TM EN300i



TM MX 300 ES