

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. NBP-0243

# REVIEWS

MOTORCYCLE NEWS

Inside the **SIX HOUR**

ROAD TEST:  
**HONDA CX500EC**

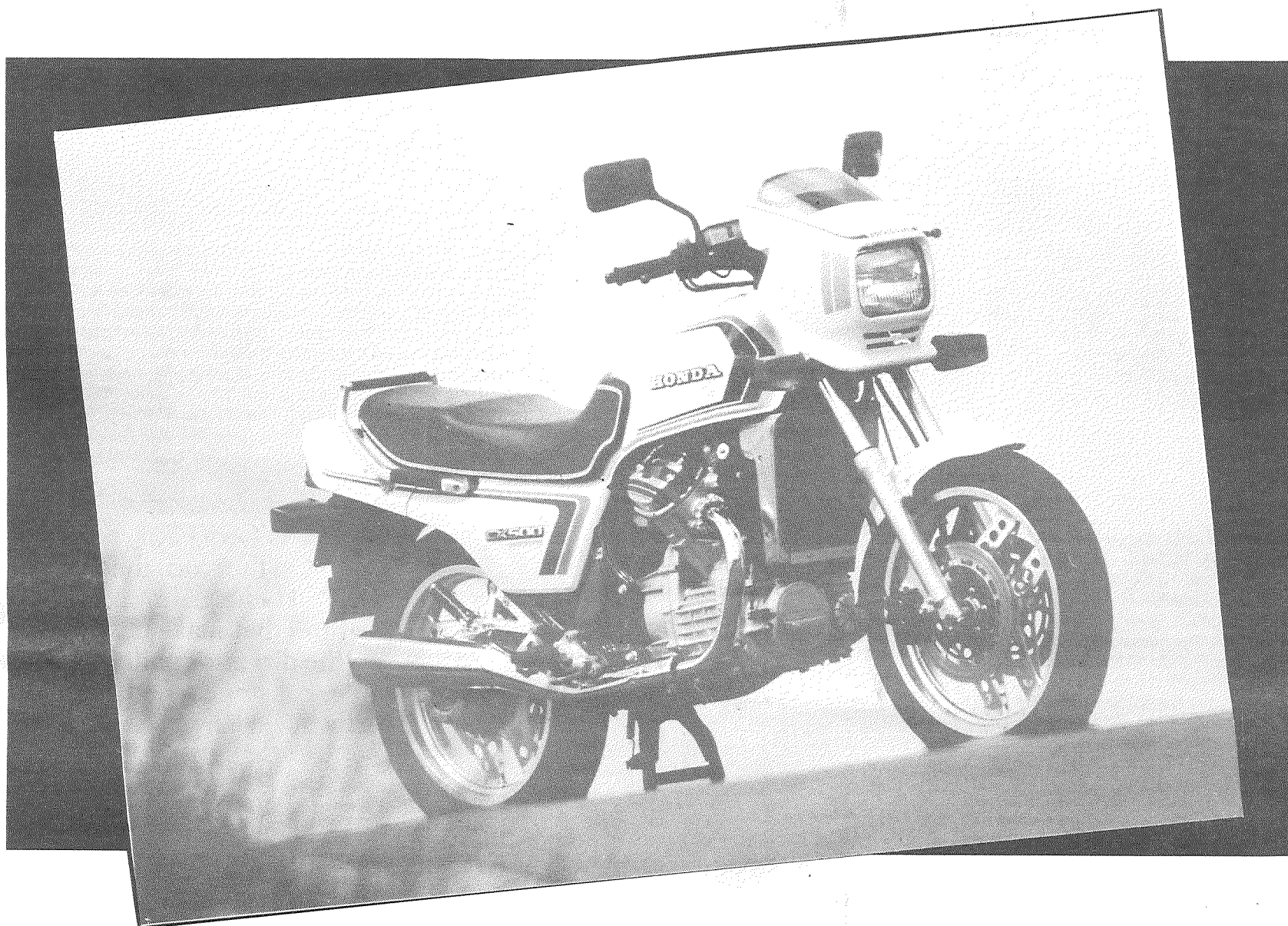


**Australian  
Dirt Track  
Championship**



## ROAD TEST: Honda CX500EC

# NEW CLOTHES



# FOR AN OLD FRIEND...

**S**INCE its release nearly five years ago, Honda's CX500 has earned itself an enviable reputation for reliability and ease of maintenance, gaining a wide acceptance among long distance riders as one of the best touring machines, regardless of capacity, currently produced by the Japanese.

Anyone who still doubts the viability of this V-twin pushrod motor would surely have to become believers after its choice as the basis for Honda's first turbo-charged motorcycle, and the extension of the design to include 650 cm<sup>3</sup> models next year.

It is understood the 'Euro-sports' model will sell along side the older style CXs, so rather than being a replacement model, the EC is an addition to the range. What will happen to the CX500s, when, next year Honda release the CX650s and the VT500 is at this stage not certain.

In brief, the CX500EC differs from the earlier models in the chassis rather than the motor; the frame is like that of the turbo CX, while the rest of the cycle parts

appear all new. There have been minor changes to the motor but these are limited to a relocation of the crankcase breather and some cosmetic alterations to the rocker covers and other external motor parts.

For those not familiar with its design, the CX motor is notably oversquare with its single pin crankshaft lying in line rather than across the frame. A chain driven camshaft lies above the crank and operates four overhead valves on each of the two cylinders.

Its 80 degree V-angle is 10 degrees less than that known to be ideal for primary balance of the reciprocating masses but was chosen to keep the motor as compact as possible. In the interest of keeping the motor more compact is the non-alignment of the cylinder porting with the crankshaft. By rotating the rear of the heads in 22 degrees toward the crank, the carburetors are effectively kept out of the way of riders' knees.

The engine is liquid-cooled, the system sealed with a remote overflow and recov-

ery tank, a thermostat and electric fan. Somewhat uniquely, the transmission lies adjacent to the crankshaft rather than behind it as is the BMW and Moto Guzzi practice.

One of the most outstanding features of this motor is the easy accessibility and adjustment of the valve clearances. This feature in particular makes the CX, unlike four cylinder machines, an easy bike to service at home. The rest of the routine maintenance is also straight forward; the ignition is electronic and generally doesn't need service, the oil-filter couldn't be easier to get to and the cam-chain adjustment is a five minute task.

On the road, too, the motor pays dividends. Without the middle and sometimes high rpm tinges of a four-cylinder machine or the more pronounced vibration of a parallel twin or big single, the V-twin is in many ways the ideal motorcycle power plant. Bigger twins certainly feel like *real* motorcycle motors, as do singles, yet with the 90 degree vee layout there is none of the vibration usually

associated with these other classic designs. With its 80 degree V-angle, the CX is not completely smooth but what vibration it exhibits is rarely intrusive.

While not being in the performance league of the current class quickies (GPz550/CBX550) the CX is by no means a slow motorcycle. In the top-end it will run to 165 to 170 km/h before it starts to run out of puff and will eventually wind out to around 180 km/h. More importantly, it will run tirelessly all day at 140 km/h and it is this characteristic that makes it a stronger tourer than its meagre 500 cm<sup>3</sup> would suggest.

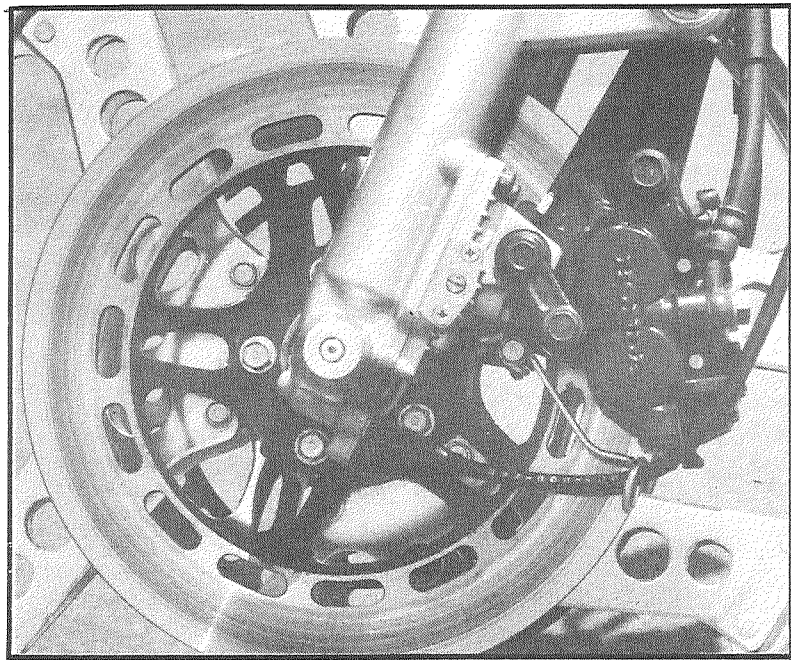
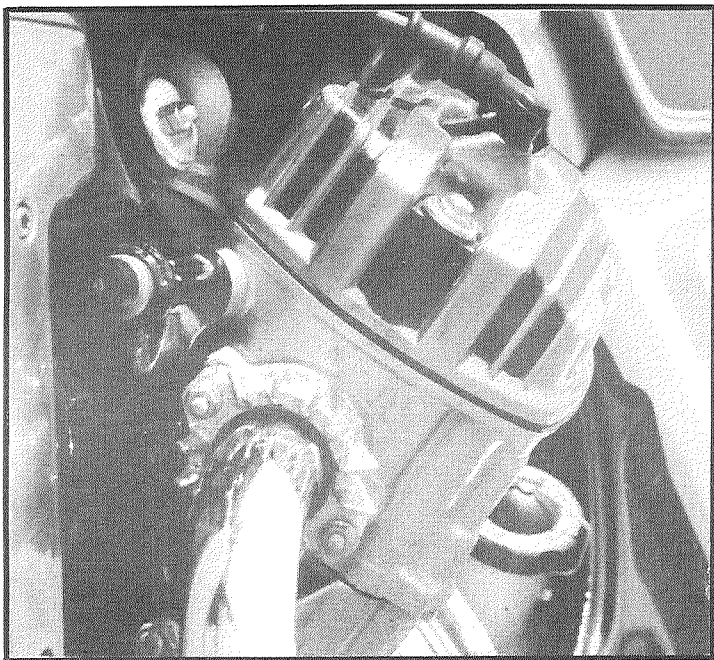
Considering the CX's strong top-end the power available at low to middle rpm is surprisingly good. There is no noticeable 'power band', just a proportional rise in power as the engine speed increases.

Adequate city progress can be had with 3000 to 4000 rpm; normal highway use requires 5000 to 7000 rpm while if you are in real hurry the CX makes good power all the way to 10,000 rpm. Not bad for a push-rod motor!



# ROAD TEST: Honda CX500EC

RIGHT: Water-cooled push-rod engine has won favour among touring riders as an easily maintained, reliable unit.  
FAR RIGHT: New front-end features twin piston brakes, anti-dive and air forks.



Push the bike along however and you'll pay a price with heavy fuel use. The consumption can rise as high as 6.5 to 7 L/100 km and in this regard the CX is not as economical as some of the more frugal bikes in its class. Moderate speeds however produce relatively better results. Over one two-day, 1000 km run that constituted just one part of our test the fuel consumption averaged out at just below 5.0 L/100 km at speeds around 110 to 120 km/h.

This is slightly better than what we have come to expect from the earlier CXs and could be a result of the aerodynamic changes to the EC. Those changes amount to the addition of the small fairing, a smaller diameter front wheel and a neater front guard. With its 19 litre fuel tank the EC is better served than the earlier CXs, which with their 17 litre tanks, were a little short on touring range.

Like the earlier CXs, the EC is blessed with an exceptionally light clutch although, again like the earlier bikes, the transmission requires positive shifting to ensure correct engagement of the next gear. Torque reaction from the longitudinally mounted crank is barely noticeable but the shaft-drive-induced rear-end rise and fall is not so well masked.

Most of the criticisms of the earlier CXs centered around the chassis, in particular the 'fade very quick' rear suspension struts and the just adequate front forks. These shortcomings affected the bike at higher speeds and especially on poorer roads but could be partially cured by fitting quality after market units, a regular change of fork oil and, for more heavily laden touring, air-assistance to the forks.

Even with these changes though, the CX was still never a particularly confidence inspiring bike at low speeds; its obese 200 kg weigh-in and high centre of gravity robbed it of this joy although in

this day and age of over weight bikes, it was hardly an exception to the norm.

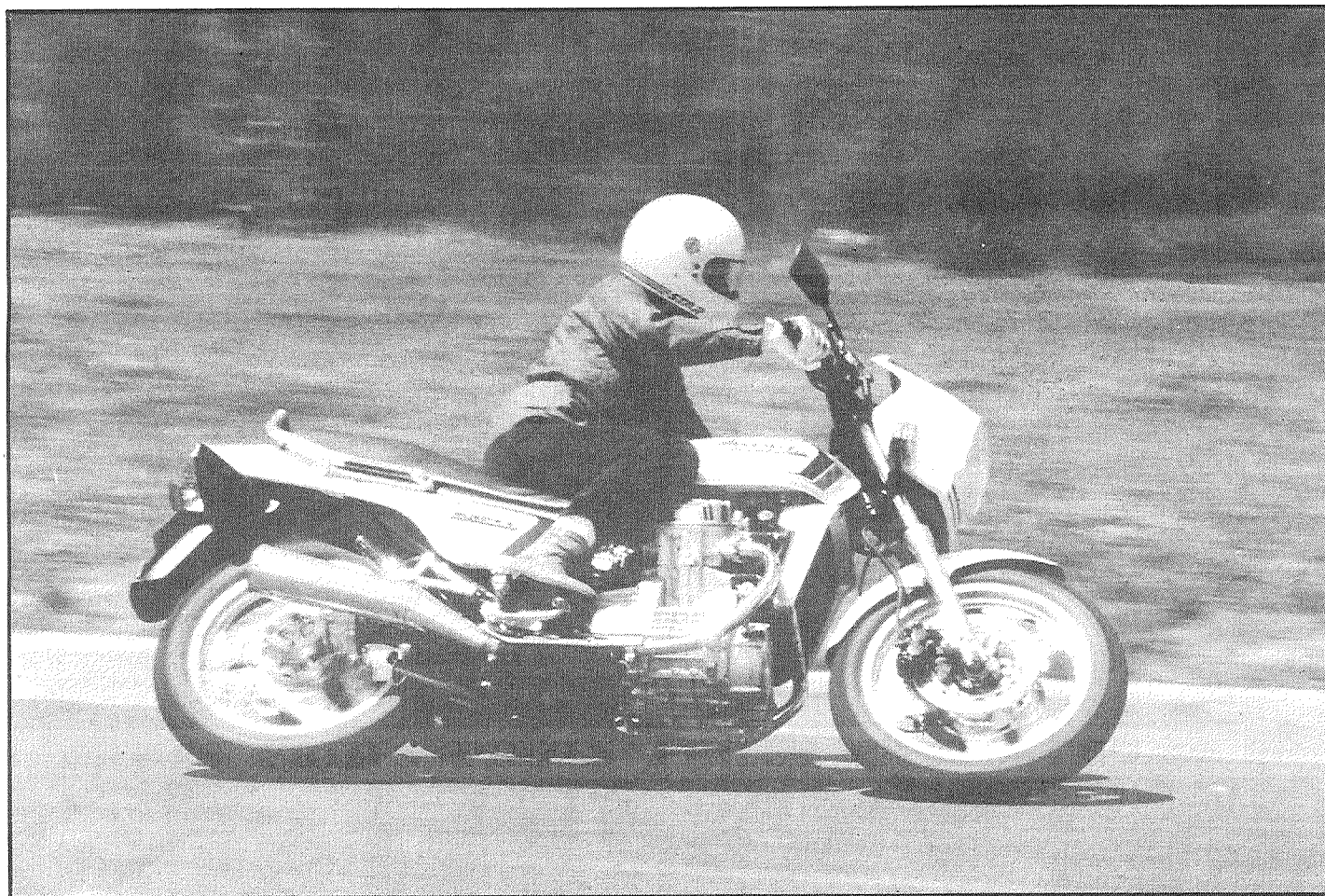
In specification at least, the EC answers most of these criticisms (the excessive weight aside) with a frame lifted from the turbo, a Pro-Link rear-end, larger diameter forks (37 vs 33 mm) and completely revised front-end geometry. An 18 inch front wheel replaces the 19 inch hoop of

the older bike, trail has been increased from 100 to 105 mm and the rake from 26.5 to 27.5 degrees. In addition, the forks now sport anti-dive and the brakes have twin piston floating calipers. The rear drum has also been replaced with a disc.

In practise, these changes to the CX benefit the bike at higher speeds while detracting from it at lower speeds. But the

overall change is still a move to the better. This new bike is six kilograms heavier than the older CXs and while this weight difference in itself is not noticeable, the bike feels more top heavy than did its forerunner.

Steering at low speeds is heavier and not as confident as that of the earlier machines, although, like most character-



\* THE BEST SERVICE  
THE BEST PRICES

\* YOU DON'T BELIEVE ?  
'RING ME'

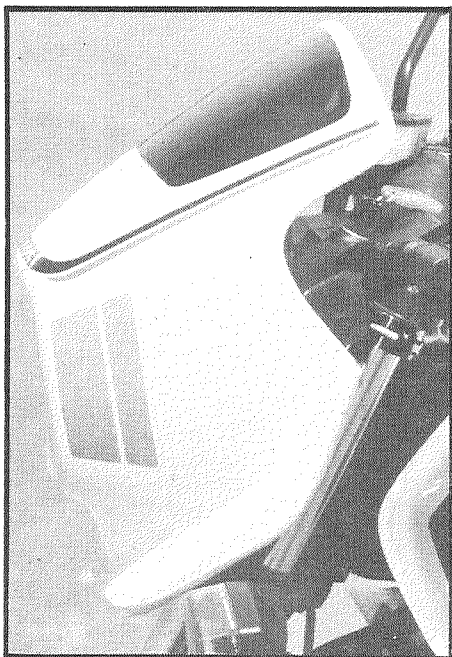
938 4777

100 NEW & USED BIKES

NEW HONDA & SUZUKI, FREE TYRE FITTING, ALL BRANDS, HELMETS, BOOTS, JACKETS, RACKS, NYLONS, JUMPERS, GLOVES, MX GEAR, SOX, UNDERPANTS, FREE MECHANICAL QUOTES, REGO CHECKS A PLEASURE.

ALAN HALES MOTORCYCLES  
40 ROGER ST., BROOKVALE, NSW.





New bikini fairing is much tidier and pleasing to look at than old nacelle.

istics of this nature you tend only to notice them after coming from a different machine. After riding the EC for some time you become more familiar with its characteristics and in time become more confident with the machine.

It is out on the highway that the new chassis gives its best with tidy handling and good road shock isolation over all but the very worst road surfaces. The bike is still not in the sportster league being too heavy and lacking the agility that sportsters, by definition, require.

The front forks offer excellent small bump compliance and sufficient travel to cope with most larger bumps without the machine becoming upset. They are also air-assisted but surprisingly the air-caps are not connected, requiring separate adjustment for each leg.

The rear Pro-Link is a little different from that found with most road going Hondas. It uses a coil spring as its primary medium and will operate satisfactorily without any air pre-load, although for the purposes of our test we chose to run around 25 psi in our unit. Honda recommend a range from zero to a maximum of 70 psi.

In the past we have been critical of various road bike Pro-Link systems, in particular that of the VF750 and to a lesser extent the CBX1000 and CBX550 but within the limitations of any road test it would appear Honda has come closer to the mark with the system on the CX.

Like other Pro-Links, it still feels under-damped, especially on the rebound stroke and seems to lack the full travel compliance needed to cope with larger bumps. The damping also seems susceptible to fade, especially on hotter days and over roads where the suspension is continually working hard. This characteristic indicates single shock systems require a remote reservoir somewhere out

in the cooling breeze and set up so the damping oil circulates between it and the damper unit.

The unit still works quite well and is rather exceptional at isolating small bumps from the rest of the machine and the rider. The standard Bridgestone 'Mag Mopus' tyres performed well in both wet and dry conditions but at 4500 km the rear tyre was close to worn out.

The brakes are noticeably better than those fitted to the earlier CXs, although the fitting of the rear disc seems an unnecessary and in some ways a backward step. The front brake offers both more power and response than that of its predecessor while the anti-dive produces more stable braking over bumps.

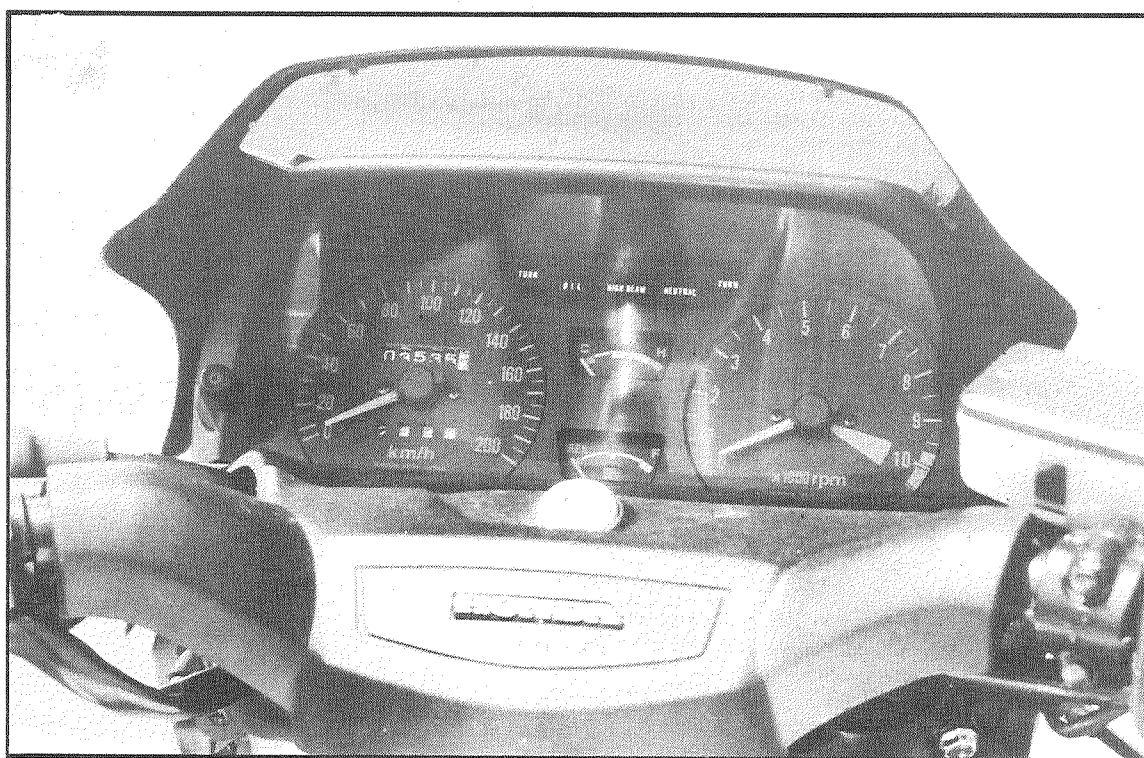
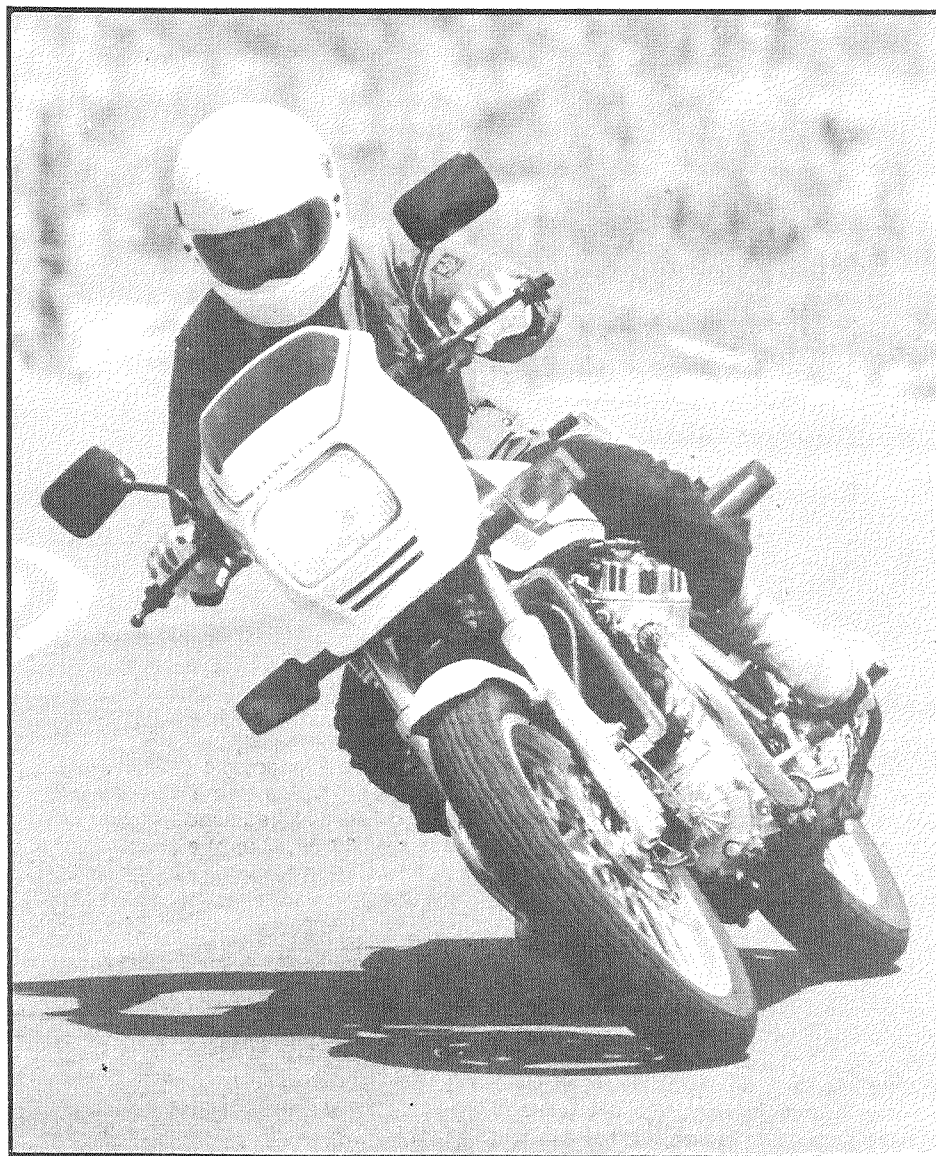
Ergonomically the bike is much changed from the conventional CX. The fairing does a better job of relieving wind pressure than did the dinky screen of the earlier bike while the riding position, which is a little more crouched, better suits high speed running. Pillion passengers are provided with a solid and well located grab rail that also serves for locating stretch straps and as a handle for lifting the bike onto the centre stand.

The only flaw in this area is that the passenger's seat slopes too steeply forward, with the inevitable result that the passenger slides forward onto the rider.

With the exception of a poorly located side stand, the EC, like the earlier CXs, is a very easy bike to live with on a day to day basis. It has to be the easiest starting bike **Revs** has come across in many years of testing. Instrumentation consists of a tachometer, speedometer, a typically pessimistic fuel gauge and a coolant temperature gauge all contained in one dashboard style unit.

TOP RIGHT: Out on the highway the new chassis gives its best with tidy handling and good road shock isolation over all but the worst road surfaces.

RIGHT: New instrument panel gets a fuel gauge.



**"Don't get caught with your chain down!"**

Invest in a quality  
Parts + Plus chain by NKN  
specially engineered in Japan for  
greater durability and value for money.

**PARTS+PLUS**

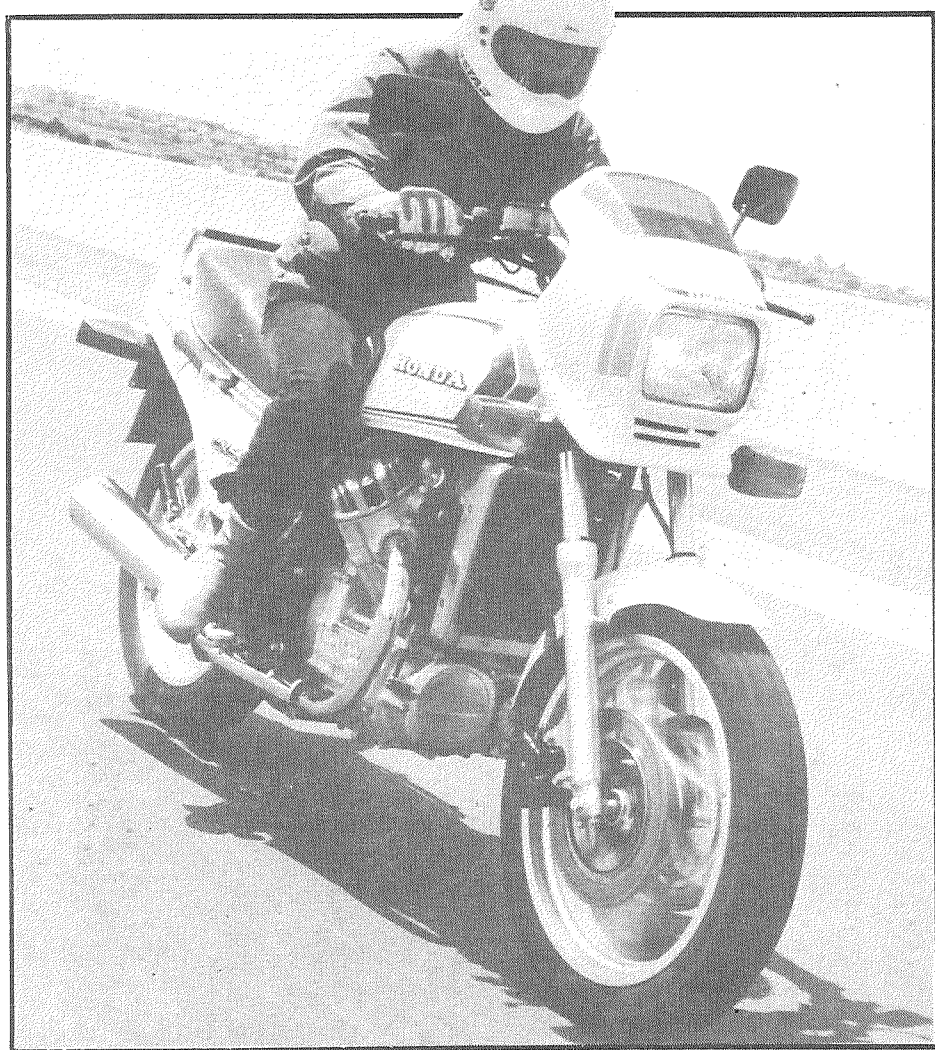


New Zealand dealer enquiries welcome.

Distributed throughout Australia and New Zealand by: — CAPRICORN IMPORTS: 64 Cambridge Street, Coorparoo, Brisbane. Q. 4151 Phone (07) 394 1211 Telex AA42568



# ROAD TEST: Honda CX500EC



In-line with the up-market image of the bike, the handlebar controls, including the thumb operated choke, are similar to those on larger, more expensive Hondas while both the horn and headlight are far better than those fitted to previous models.

Also in line with this image is the excellent finish to the paint work, engine cases and other bits and pieces around the bike. Honda generally finishes its bikes a little better than the other Japanese manufacturers and the CX is a prime example of this attention to detail.

## SPECIFICATIONS

### Honda CX500-EC

#### ENGINE

Liquid-cooled, transverse 80 degree V-twin four-stroke. Plain bearing one piece crankshaft carries both con-rods on a common crankpin. Wet sump lubrication. Single chain driven camshaft operates four valves per cylinder via cam followers, pushrods and forked rocker arms.

Capacity ..... 496 cm.<sup>3</sup>  
Bore and stroke ..... 78 x 52 mm  
Compression ratio ..... 10:1  
Stated maximum rpm ..... 9750  
Carburetion ..... 2 x Keihin 35 mm CV  
Starter system ..... Electric only  
Ignition system ..... Capacitor discharge  
Claimed max. power ..... 36.7 kW  
at 9000 rpm  
Claimed max. torque ..... 43 Nm  
at 7000 rpm

#### TRANSMISSION

Gear primary drive off front end of crankshaft through wet multi-plate clutch to five speed constant mesh gearbox. Final drive through spring-loaded drive torque damper, universal joint and enclosed shaft to spiral bevel rear hub.

Gear ratios ..... km/h/1000 rpm  
1. 2.733:1 ..... 6.4  
2. 1.850:1 ..... 9.5  
3. 1.416:1 ..... 12.4  
4. 1.148:1 ..... 15.3  
5. 0.931:1 ..... 18.9  
Primary reduction ..... 2.242:1  
Secondary reduction ..... 3.09:1

#### CHASSIS

Welded tubular and pressed steel frame incorporating engine as stressed member. Front suspension: Telescopic forks, internal coil springs, hydraulic damping

and air-assistance. Fork tube diameter 37 mm. Rear suspension: Air-assisted 'Pro-Link'

Rake ..... 27.5/62.5 degrees  
Trail ..... 105 mm  
Front wheel ..... 2.50 x 18 Comstar  
Rear wheel ..... 2.50 x 18 Comstar  
Front tyre ..... 100/90 x 18 Bridgestone Mag Mopus L303  
Rear tyre ..... 120/80 x 18 Bridgestone Mag Mopus G510  
Front brake ..... Twin disc with twin piston floating calipers  
Rear brake ..... Single disc with twin piston floating caliper

#### DIMENSIONS

Overall length ..... 2240 mm  
Overall width ..... 755 mm  
Overall height ..... 1190 mm  
Wheelbase ..... 1495 mm  
Dry weight ..... 206 kg  
Fuel capacity ..... 19 litre

#### PERFORMANCE

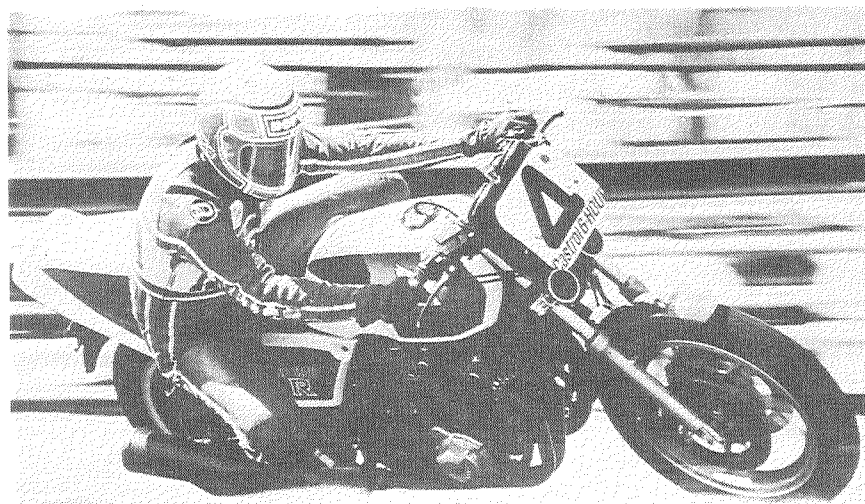
Standing start 400 metre... 14.4 seconds  
Terminal speed at end of 400 metre ..... 155 km/h  
Achieved top speed ..... 180 km/h  
Fuel consumption city ..... 5.8 L/100 km  
Fuel consumption 100-120 km/h highway ..... 5.0 L/100 km  
Fuel consumption high speed highway ..... 6.0 L/100 km  
Average fuel consumption for test ..... 5.4 L/100 km

#### GENERAL

Manufacturer ..... Honda Motor Corporation, Japan  
Test machine ..... Bennet Honda, Sydney  
Price ..... \$3492 (NSW plus on-road)  
Warranty ..... 12 mths/20,000 km

## ATTENTION — ATTENTION

On the 28th Nov '82 at Oran Park Raceway there will be conducted an advanced rider training school.



The one-day course will include such subjects as race tactics, riding skills and motorcycle preparation for racing. This course will be suitable for riders interested in either road racing or touring. Instructors in attendance will be Roy Denison and Dennis Neill.

The cost of this advanced rider training course will be \$75.

Post coupon below to: DENNIS NEILL, 35 DEVLIN ST. ASHCROFT, N.S.W. 2168.

Please enroll me in the one day advanced rider training course, on the 28th Nov '82  
Please find enclosed cheque, money order, postal note, etc., for the sum of \$75  
made out to D.N.R. Rider Training school.

Name .....

Address .....

Phone No. .... WorkHome

Type of motorcycle .....

Please enquire to **Dennis (02) 607 8366 A.H.**  
**Roy (02) 642 7050 B.H.**

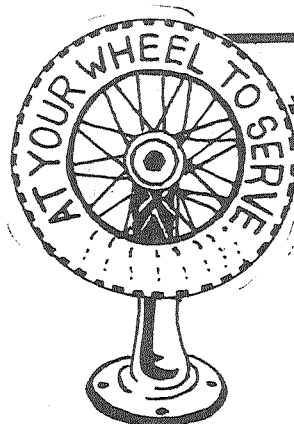
Australians  
are dying  
younger  
from heart  
disease.



National Heart Foundation.



**Gotcha  
Gregory's?**  
You're on the right track.



**ACCESSORY  
MARKET**

**LAZER HELMETS  
CITY OUTLET**

• LARGE VARIETY • SELF-SERVICE SECTION • SUPPLIER OF SPARE PARTS  
• LEATHER WEAR • WATERPROOFS • FOOTWEAR • FAST COUNTRY SERVICE

**OMODEIS**

**(02) 211-0085**

471-475 Pitt Street, SYDNEY. 2000. (Btn. Hay St & Eddy Ave)  
OVER 50 YEARS ACCESSORY EXPERIENCE

