

# HONDA'S BABY FOUR

## ***The Newest Multi from the World's Largest Motorcycle Maker.***

In the middle of January this year, the press was treated to a showing of the new Honda models for 1972. One of the all-new products unveiled at that time was the 350 four-cylinder touring machine. As yet very little technical data is available on this machine. The chance of seeing one at your local dealer before late summer or early fall is remote.

From what we have been able to glean from American Honda, plus our own observations, several things are immediately apparent. Much of the previous experience gained on the 750 is much in evidence on the 500cc motorcycle. Now along comes a smaller version with even more sophistication in evidence, which proves time and research do pay off.

Honda sets the dry weight at 363 lbs. Judging from past history plus our own observations again, our guess would be somewhere between 380 and 400. There is no question that this is more than a fair amount of weight for a motorcycle of this displacement. Even 363 is high.

The general consensus seems to be the price will be in the \$1200 region, which would certainly indicate this motorcycle is being designed for the connoisseur who wants the ultimate in sophistication and smoothness in a medium displacement motorcycle.

An educated guess would indicate the performance being somewhat down as compared to most of the other 350's now being offered for sale. Like its two larger brothers, it's beautifully finished and well detailed. One nice thing about this newest Honda is that the seat height is low thereby making it a snap for a person of medium or small stature to sit astride the motorcycle and still have both feet firmly planted on the ground. Yet there is still more than enough ground clearance.

The basic chassis itself is a conventional unit not unlike other Honda

products. The same can be said of the front end, wheels and brakes. The front stopper is a disc unit similar to those found on the 450 and 500cc models. Knowing how Honda operates, they have probably engineered this brake especially for this particular motorcycle rather than use already existing parts. The gearbox is a 5-speed constant mesh unit coupled with an equally conventional wet multi-plate unit.

This new baby four must get fairly good gas mileage since the fuel tank only holds 3.2 U.S. gallons. Engine design is a conventional (by Honda's

standards) four-cylinder air cooled single overhead cam design. The bore and stroke is 47mm x 50mm, which is rather surprising since most of today's manufacturers have a square design or one with a larger bore. Also included is the standard kick starter plus electric motor for painless starting. Supplying the sparks is a conventional battery and ignition coil set up.

Although there isn't a great deal of information available at the present time, we thought you would like to see what Honda has in store for you later this year.—*Bob Braverman*





