

before attempting to set off and nail the throttle to the stop at the earliest opportunity.

The Hornet only makes around 43bhp at its banza peak, so it isn't going to lift the front wheel into Sainsburys window, but it does deliver an OK kick around town and on tight country lanes. Top speed is probably near the ton, depending on your bodyweight, prevailing wind and the slightest incline on the road. But the fun part is maintaining momentum as you try to keep the tach buzzed crazily and exploit the ultra quick handling to the limits on the bends.

There's no problem in that department either, because the Hornet is blessed with proper sportbike wheels and tyres (the rear is a Fireblade sized 180/55 section boot) and the suspension is pretty decent for something that weighs a gnat's cock more than Kate Moss. Sure, it'll get nervous if you leap over humpback bridges and follow the odd ridge in the road, but basically you can stuff the Hornet into a corner later than you dreamed possible on a big bike in



The problem with those motorcycles though is comfort; if you need a bike that kind of does everything, but in a compact package, then the small import retro machines are much better bets. You still need to be on the average side as regards physical build, because it is only a 250, but there's room for two people to make a short hop across a city in reasonable shape. The Hornet, despite its barrel-of-screaming-monkeys engine note, is a bike for Everyman deep down.

As usual, this Honda is a well finished all-

90% of all situations... and get away with it. Lovely stuff.

Up front, there's a single drilled disc to take care of the stopping duties, which does a great job. The bike is so light that you hardly ever need to use the rear brake. The only criticism you can level at the bike is that the suspension is perhaps a shade on the bouncy side for serious trackday-type antics - but if that sort of biking is your thing, you should be looking to buy a TZR/NSR250 or indeed the CBR250RR, which is beserko.

Looks pretty good from almost any angle and the understated exhaust is a cool touch

round package, with a sensible riding position for commuting, deep paint, polished alloy and a comfy seat. It also sips petrol despite its frenetic motor. Plus it has a nice low seat height too if you're on the short side.

There aren't many about, so they seem to get snapped up fast if they're in decent condition. Expect to pay around the three grand mark for good low kilometres model, looking rather attractive in metallic silver or red. So horny, I wanted to lick it. You will too.

AJW



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