



Ben's Honda CBR1000 – One Year Old

My not so new 2011 CBR1000 sits in the garage with 42,500 km on the odometer after last Sunday's great ride to Simpson. It is a year to the day since I picked up the bike on a cold and wet Friday night, six busted ribs and a damaged rotator cuff adding to the excitement of negotiating 5 pm peak hour traffic, and tram tracks in pouring rain. Stiff new clothing (boots, pants, jacket, helmet) just added to the challenge.

My 954 went to God on 18th September 2011 after I crashed it coming down Mt Donna Buang. The odometer would have indicated 251,589 km, if it wasn't stuck on 99,999 km, the odometer not clicking over to zero a feature of 929 and 954 Hondas. Luckily I was able to keep track using the trip meters and writing down every fuel fill reading. This unhappy occurrence resulted in a brand new 2011 Honda Fireblade, the last of the model run, though the 2012 seems much the same apart from suspension tweaks – big piston forks and twin tube (TT) rear shock, much like an Ohlin's TTX I surmise.

I purchased it on the 30th September for \$16,000 ride away, with 12 months reg. My last new bike was a yellow 2001 Honda CBR929 purchased for \$16,020 in December 2000. (There was a 954 in between, of course.) So in 12 years the price of bikes has gone down! Bikes are really cheap at this moment in time. Everything has improved dramatically in the period – centralised mass for better handling, overall lighter, motor is more powerful and yet more economical, radial calliper brakes, dual stage injection, suspension tweaks, electronic steering damper, slipper clutch.

But in a lot of ways not much has changed between the three models – fuel injected, in-line 4 cylinders, 4 valves per cylinder, water-cooled, aluminium perimeter frame, 4 piston brakes, 6 gears, digital everything. This 2011 model is relatively unsophisticated as it does not have traction control, ABS (an option), launch control, engine modes, or any of the lap timer functions, unlike the latest models from Japanese and European brands such as BMW, Ducati and Aprilia.

Tyres, tyres and more tyres. I keep a log, so here is a cut and paste:

	Life[km]	Odom [km]	Comment	Fitted
FRONT				
1		0	Original fitment	30-Sep-11
2	7508	2278	USA - \$125 landed	29-Oct-11
3	2991	9786	near new, ex race	16-Dec-11
1	3881	12,777	original	06-Jan-12
4	4065	14,380	USA \$140 landed	24-Jan-12
5	2043	18,445	second hand	15-Feb-12
6	5393	20,488	\$200 from 2012 Blade	10-Mar-12
7	3996	25,891	second hand	19-Mar-12
8	2342	29,787	second hand	21-May-12
9	2546	32,129	second hand	12-Jun-12
10		34,675	new USA, \$133	14-Jul-12
REAR				
1		0	190/50 (white rim)	30-Sep-11
2		2278	new 180/55 (white rim)	29-Oct-11
1	4245	5018	original fitment	06-Nov-11
3		6985	new 180/55 (black rim)	26-Nov-11
2	4818	9786	white rim 180/55	16-Dec-11
3	4821	11,864	black rim 180/55	29-Dec-11
4	8984	13,884	new 180/55 (white rim)	17-Jan-12
5	9261	22,868	new 180/55 (black rim)	30-Mar-12
6	9666	32,129	new 180/55 (white rim)	12-Jun-12
7		41,795	new 190/50 (white rim)	29-Sep-12

The current front tyre will do another couple of rides and the rear is brand new. The table is slightly hard to read as I have tyre changing facilities which allow me to reuse old tyres, hence the re-use of the #1 front and rear tyres. I have two rear rims, one black, one white. I try and use up all the half worn tyres over summer and use new ones over winter. Clearly Michelins are the flavour of the month but I am keen to try the new Dunlop Sportsmart, particularly on the rear, based on Misho's good experience. Wear rate on the rear tyres is inconsistent – somewhere in the range 4,245 to 9,666 km. Ridden hard they wear out on their sides before the middle, and MSR trips away tend to promote that wear pattern.

The bike has consumed 10 fronts (four second hand) and 6 rears in 12 months and 42,000 km, an indication of a lot of trips away: Melbourne Cup Weekend, Dargo via Omeo, Christmas Camp, Jindabyne, and Dargo again. And 500 km every Sunday.

Maintenance has been minimal as you would expect:

- Oil: 2,278, 14,380, 20,488, 32,176, 35,978 (chasing dragging clutch), 36,111 (oil additive)
- Oil filter: 2,278, 20,488
- Front pads: 14,380 (s/h – ex race), 22,868 (s/h – ex race), 29,787 (new – USA OEM \$37 per set)
- Fork oil: 13,206 and 27,144 (500 ml 10W per leg)
- Air filter: cleaned 12,777, 20,488, new 32,129 (\$46 from USA)
- Chain – adjusted 13,20, 41, and 42K; rotated front sprocket at 32,176 km.
- Rebuilt Ohlins 33,913
- Replaced cam chain tensioner: 35,441 km

Fork oil replacement is due now. It is easy enough to tip out the old and refill with new in about 90 minutes. But I am going down the Ohlin's internals, bits ordered from Steve Mudford. Steve looks after the rear shock, the standard shock replaced in the first week with an Ohlins TTX. Serviced at 34,000 km mark and now wears a black sock to keep the tar off it.

Around 19,000 km I replaced the headlight after a hole the size of a tennis ball was produced by a rock flicked up by an oncoming 4WD. I found a good second hand one locally for \$200, otherwise \$629 new. The biggest issue was removing and then refitting the fairings. What an absolute pain. It took me two sessions to get it right.

I expect to replace the spark plugs and check the shims around 50,000 km. My previous experience with my Honda CBR929 (199,000 km) and CBR954 (251,000 km) indicates that the shims will barely move in anything less than 50,000 km. The plugs are good for 100,000 km, if you believe the Pommies, but 50,000km seems a fair compromise.

Chain and sprockets may last 45,000 km based on the dreaded “red” (rust) appearing on the links at lunchtime at Apollo Bay. The chain is now requiring frequent adjustment, a sure sign the end is nigh.

Overall the bike is a fantastic piece of engineering. It is very easy to ride, very economical, and is a pleasure to get on and ride to work each day. Finally, they have got the injection right, the bike pulling strongly and cleanly from 1500 revs. The bike goes like stink and rides the bumps well, the electronic steering damper a magic invention. The bike inspires confidence allowing you to go into bumpy corners without fear.

Member Ken King has been graphing my fuel economy looking for any changes after an oil additive was added, the nominal claim to fame being an improvement in economy. It may turn out to be “snake oil” and not particularly good for copper parts according to the “web”. Nevertheless, the Excel spreadsheet allows some data analysis. Since new, after 42,327 km I have purchased 163 tanks of unleaded fuel (2,348 litres) costing \$3386 at an average of \$144.7c/l producing an average of 17.94 km/l with an average of 260 km between fills. Forty seven tanks were over 300 km. The tank holds 18 litres and the reserve warning light goes to empty at 3.7 litres, I discovered within rolling distance of the servo.

Ben Warden