

Machine of Choice

This is about the ‘Little Boy’ dropped from Japan: the 2011 Honda CBR600RR e-CABS. It has done 5,000km mostly acquired from Club rides to twisty east, revving west and sweeper north. Hence, it is not a bad time to put some words together about the little boy.

Pathways to CBR600RR:

YAMAHA RX135: My first motorcycle was a two stroke weapon. If you haven’t ridden a two stroke you have missed out. Happy days of mixing oil in the fuel tank, pinning the throttle to the red line and keeping it there just before the piston seizes. Heaps of bling and sentiments attached. After two years of abuse, on the day I moved to Australia, I gave it a final ride and that was it. Can someone play sad music in the background?

>> Fast Forward three years of dreaming, ogling at Peter Stevens’ showroom in the city and desperation. >>

YAMAHA FZ6R: Soon after a few rides with the Club I was trying to find reasons to get rid of my Yamaha FZ6R which is actually not a bad motorcycle for a returning rider. An inquisitive Saturday pre-ride to find out exactly what “*Ride will not suit inexperienced riders; not recommended for first time Club riders*” means saw me crashing around \$1.60 on a corner. Quick steering through the road barricade pillars while going wide saw me wobbling through mud before landing on soft ground instead of bitumen. Score: rider -1 (minor cosmetics), bike – 0 (write off).

HONDA CBR600RR:

Why a 600? Call me a rev head. I like to see the tacho needle near the red range wherever possible; old habits from two-stroke riding. I would have settled for 500cc supersports if it was available so that I could rev it higher more often.

Why Honda CBR600RR e-CABS?

- Safety: the CBR is the only model in the supersports category with combined braking and ABS. Though the ABS has never kicked in, the combined braking works like a dream. I don’t have to worry about how much rear brake pressure I apply when things get too hot. I also like the idea of Honda’s electronic steering damper.
- Handling/weight: One of the nimbler bikes around. I wanted the bike to be as light as possible for effortless cornering. It’s still a tad heavy for my taste.
- Performance: the CBR has a stout midrange compared to other inline 600s and that is where most of my riding is. I love revving it above 15,000 rpm in every gear and it feels like I am going to get ripped off from the bike at any moment. Where is the seat belt?
- Ergonomics: the CBR600 has a more street friendly riding position than other 600s.
- Riders six feet tall and above will have an almost upright seating position.

I didn’t consider other factors like reliability, fuel consumption, style, wow factor, price etc.

Bling Bling Bling

It has got the stock exhaust and suspension settings. The only additions are the tank pad, crash knobs, knee grip pad, a heavy Rad guard, blind sport mirror and heaps of mud. Hardly any bling.

Disadvantages as I see it:

- The e-CABS adds around 8 kg to the bike. A titanium slip on and magnesium wheels will compensate for the extra weight gain.
- The e-CABS model only comes in black
- Mirrors, front and rear mudguard are near to useless; the designers need a whack
- No reach adjustment for the clutch lever: hey I paid \$14K for this machine.
- No gear indicator
- Need 95 RON or above
- Indicators do not self-cancel
- No dent on tank to accommodate some vital body parts. Not comfortable to hug the tank with thighs.
- It can't make coffee

Overall I am happy with my purchase and there are solutions for the above mentioned disadvantages. Well, for most of them.

How does it ride?

I think the bike is a good all-rounder, does everything smoothly, with no surprises. For me, the new riding position forces me to look where I want to go, which is good. The bike feels more confident on turns, braking distance has considerably reduced thanks to combined braking, while my average riding speed has increased. This model does not have traction control. However, on occasions where I downshifted too quickly into the wrong gear, the bike still maintained its line with slight jerks at the rear wheel.

Working through the right gears will see the bike flying like a screaming banshee. Meaty power comes from 9,000 rpm onwards. Towards the top speed of around 220 km/h onwards the front is a bit floaty and feels like it's going to take off. A front spoiler would help to provide some downward force but who rides at top speed, even occasionally?

Next motorcycle? Y2K Turbine Engine Superbike 240 kW at 52,000 rpm. Yes!

Jesvin George