

## MVX250



**Oddie Find Himself A Little Surprise...**

**One** of the great things about working on Grey Bike is the little surprise you find every so often tucked away in dealer's corners. I don't profess to know every model produced in Japan - I discover some of them as I go along - and it's just as interesting for me to wander around the importers as a potential writer as it is for you as a potential buyer. To stumble across a bike you've never heard of before should be a buzz for anyone...

Take this little MVX250. It was slotted into the back row of bikes in Fastline's showroom, looking quite attractive in its traditional Honda red, white and blue livery (including a coloured vinyl seat, which seems to predominate on Jap home market models of the era - I've even seen early SRX250s with yellow seats for example...). Now I'd never heard of an MVX, but close inspection revealed a neat little mid-eighties two-stroke triple, not too expensive, and just right for a jaunt round the Lancashire lanes to see if it was actually any good.

From cold you need two, perhaps three prods on the kickstarter, or invariably just a single one when the motor's warm. Such minimal effort rewards you with that deli-

ciously unique rasp of a multi-cylinder stroker, the three expansion boxes and their end cans cackling into the still spring air.

Perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised, but I didn't expect the MVX to produce such smooth power. You can set off from rest with less than three grand on the clock, the light clutch isn't too grabby, and there's no need at all for the handful of revs I was expecting to have to dial in. There's a little bit of a rough patch at around 3,500rpm, but it's smoothed out again by four grand, and the MVX can be ridden in the most docile manner

without complaint from engine or transmission (it will even pull top from around 3,000, albeit a little uninspiringly). Certainly it'll burble around town easily and inoffensively all day, making it a pleasantly competent commuter bike if called upon to perform such mundane duties.

But it makes power proper at around 5,000, and really comes into its own just short of seven grand. Yippee, away we go! Suddenly the MVX is transformed into a little racer. Keeping the revs up, playing tunes on the light, positive, and easy to use six speed gearbox,

and swinging through the back country lanes makes the MVX real fun, while listening to that funky two-stroke exhaust rasp is an added bonus. I found the MVX surprisingly quick as well - it'd probably give a 250LC a good run for its money - and with no noticeable power drop off right through to the 10,500 redline, that extra cylinder gives you a really wide, useful powerband for a 250 stroker. It's not the most environmentally friendly motor - redline it through the gears away from the lights and be swiftly reminded of the air-cooled stro-

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### SPEC:

**Engine: V-3 cylinder, water-cooled 2-stroke**

**Capacity: 249cc**

**Gearbox: Six speed constant mesh**

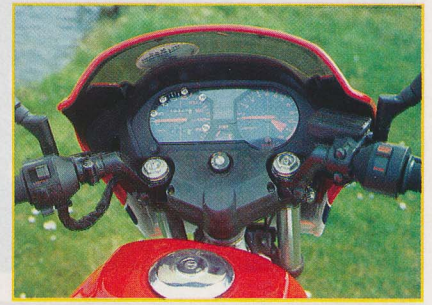
**Weight: 138kg**

**Power: 40ps/9,000rpm**

**Torque: 3.20 kgm/8,500rpm**

**Brakes: Drum rear, single inboard disc front**

**Tyres: 100/90/16 front, 110/80/18 rear**



kers of the seventies by the swirling blue smoke trail you leave behind you. But then, to be fair, the MVX had stood for a while, and it did become less of a low-flying Red Arrows display as the test wore on.

There are no surprises with the steering, which is as nice and light as you'd expect, and reassuringly neutral when you start to push into bends - the almost Seeley-style twin loop, steel tube frame keeps everything nicely together and never feels stressed. There's a slight vagueness when compared to the modern high-tech race reps - the 16" front wheel size is well superseded by now - and a touch of drop-in on corners (itself not necessarily a bad thing). But although the MVX might not be as stable or surefooted as its younger cousins, it goes where you point it all the same, and isn't inclined to shake its head or tankslap, not even if a jaded and middle-aged roadtester were to get carried away in a flood of teenage two-stroke delinquency and rattle up to over the ton on the A583 Blackpool Road for a while (not that I did, of course...).

The MVX isn't a bad little scratcher on the back roads. It feels a little front end heavy, as though it were years ahead of its time, and hence the back end wanders a little when you push it hard, but it can be nailed well enough, and it has

enough handling characteristics to make it enjoyable - it's not a perfect-but-bland machine. Suspension at both ends is good enough, nothing special, but firm without being uncomfortable, despite leaky fork seals on the front.

Stopping the MVX isn't too much of a problem either. The rear drum is a little lacking in feel and effectiveness, and needs a good stomp to get it working, and I didn't reckon Honda's absurd single inboard front disc would be up to much either, despite its twin-piston caliper, but it turned out to be surprisingly effective, working well to slow the little bike down. You don't get the 'slammed against a wall' stopping of 90s race reps, but the peculiar set-up is still more than adequate - which is just as well, since there's bugger all in terms of engine braking...

The riding position is a good compromise between comfort and control. Nothing too radical, but with enough forward lean to make bend-swinging fun,

and give a nice, natural, relaxed posture which should make distance work no problem.

The bikini fairing is also high enough to be more than just a styling gesture, pushing most of the wind blast over the rider's head for a change.

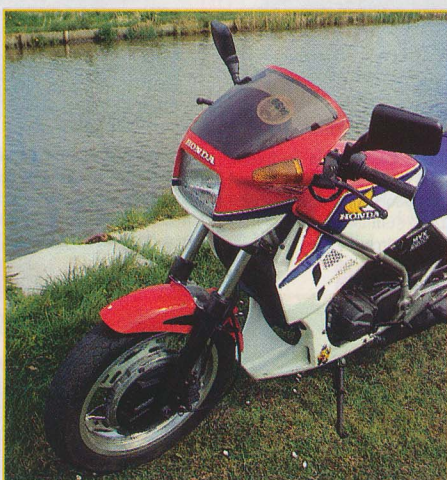
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Honda's other two-stroke triple, the NSR400, they are entirely separate models, with virtually nothing interchangeable between them. But the 'two-forward, one-upright' cylinder configuration does make for a compact power unit, whilst keeping the centre of gravity low, and for smooth, broad power, on a bike like this three pots will almost always be better than two, hence Honda's foray into triple-land.

The MVX is a genuinely competent all-rounder. The styling is reasonable, and certainly unusual; the indicators smoothed into the fairing and rear light cluster are neat, the triple 'spanny boxes and cans look cool, and okay, the radiator shrouds look a bit like something off Blake's Seven, but who's perfect? On the whole, it's an attractive little bike, reliable by all accounts, different enough to get attention, and not desperately expensive to buy. I suppose I sort of liked it, really...

Oddie

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**Model - MVX250. Year - 1983(Y). Mileage - 6,404. Price - £1295. Test Bike Supplied By Fastline.**