

Honda CJ360T



THE old CB360 was arguably one of the worst bikes that Honda ever built. Their most recent middleweight, the CJ360T could have been a restyled version of the same thing. On the face of it the 360T isn't that much different, but, like the smaller CJ250T it is of a completely new generation.

One of the small, yet major, differences is in the suspension. The way the old 360s used to progress down the road it was impossible to tell whether they were powered by pistons or by a large spring. A 90mph bike needs some confidence in its roadholding and the CJ has it.

The earlier six-speed gearbox has lost one ratio and like the first 350 and 360 models, the CJ has the same styling as the 250 version; apart from the bigger holes in the barrels and more performance in proportion, it could quite easily pass as a 250.

The CJ360T is at its best as an everyday, ride - to - work machine. It does everything it's supposed to do promptly, with no fuss; it is simple and everything about it is reliable. Its size, handling and performance make it ideal in traffic and although there is nothing particularly outstanding about the machine, it has very few faults.

It usually started on the first prod of the kickstart, rarely needing the starter jet which operates on one carburettor only, and then after a moment of uncertain throttle response the motor would be warm enough to go. It gave us 54 to 56 mpg in a variety of typical runs through traffic, along country lanes and main road cruising at 60 to 70mph, dropping to 49mpg at the track. You could expect better economy — I'd guess at the mid-60s — if you were to make

a continual, conscious effort but it's not easy to ride the high-revving bike that way. At low engine speeds the motor is flexible enough, but flat; crisp power begins a long way up the rpm scale and once it has begun it goes on and on. Most of the time it is too tempting to use the free-running twin's inexhaustible supply of revs and so fuel economy suffers.

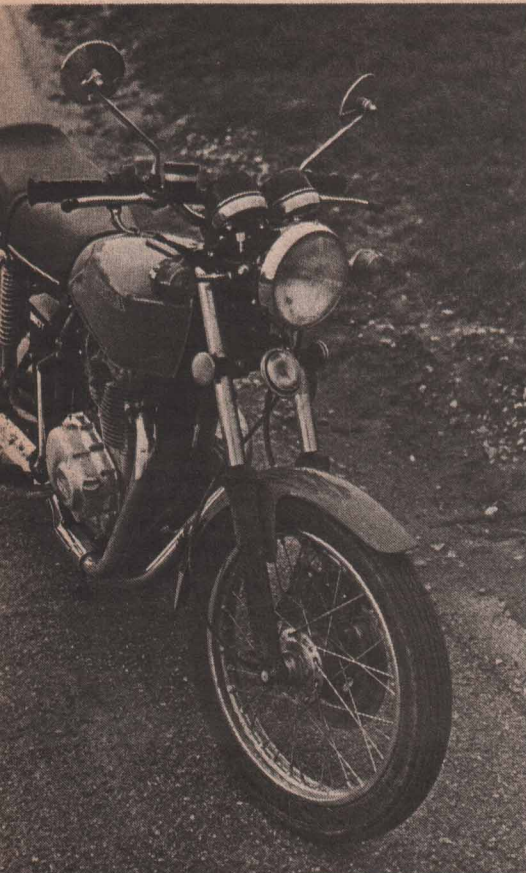
The 360 feels light and small with a comfortable, soft seat and a good riding position. The short, flat handlebars create only one problem — Honda are still using the same mirrors as on wide-bars and the stalks are now at elbow width and elbow height. Thus the rider gets the impression that he is being pursued by a pair of elbows.

Better suspension and the improved riding position blend to make the 360's handling and roadholding very pleasant. The rear springs are still a bit bouncy and when the front goes light over the brow of a hill the handlebars are eager to flap about but compared to the old 360s, the new suspension is rock steady and it still gives a comfortable ride.

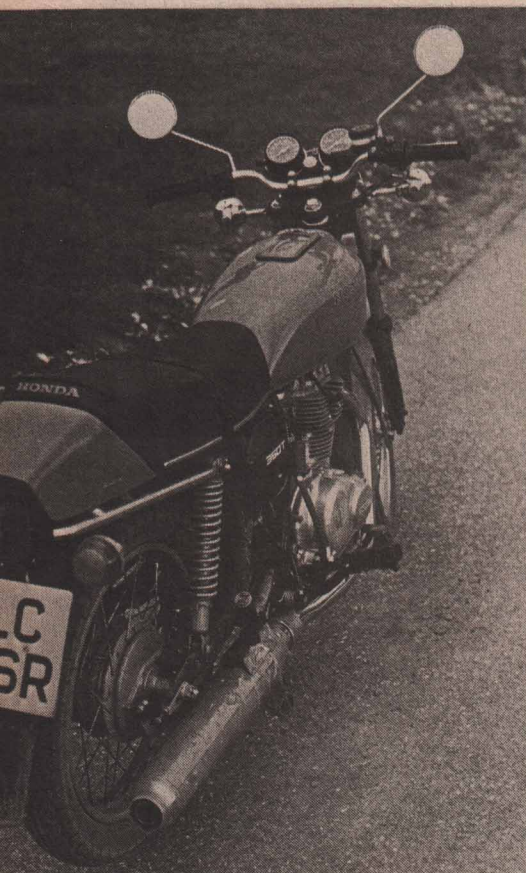
Vibration is cut to the odd tingle and although the twin will pull a wide throttle from very low speeds it gets progressively smoother as the revs and the power go up — at peak power, as the tachometer goes into the red sector the only sensation from the engine is of a precisely balanced shaft whirring round.

This sort of motor, with peak torque close to 8,000 rpm and peak power at 9,000 and trying to run on to 10,000, gives the 360 lively performance up to 70 or 75 mph. Then, as the motor goes over the top in fourth and you shift into top, power is

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From the front the 360 looks pretty much like any other Honda twin, but the view from the rear is not a pretty sight.



already dropping fast and the bike goes flat. It's almost as if it had been designed with speed limits in mind; sitting up and wearing an oversuit, you'd be lucky to see more than 80 to 85 mph but the Honda will reach 75 with no sweat and hold this cruising speed just as easily. Wearing leathers and getting flat on the tank will coax the speed up to just over 90 mph but by then the motor is well into the red band.

Around country lanes the Honda is nimble and fun to throw around, as the power runs out in one gear you shift up and the next gear takes over precisely where the old one left off. Or as you shift down you can feel the power stacking up ready to propel the bike away as soon as you ease the throttles open. There are no flat spots or hesitation in the Honda's performance and somehow the brakes and handling find the same kind of harmony. In traffic, when you're concentrating on other things, these values show up in another way — the bike is just very easy to ride. You don't have to worry about what it's going to do, just what other people are already doing.

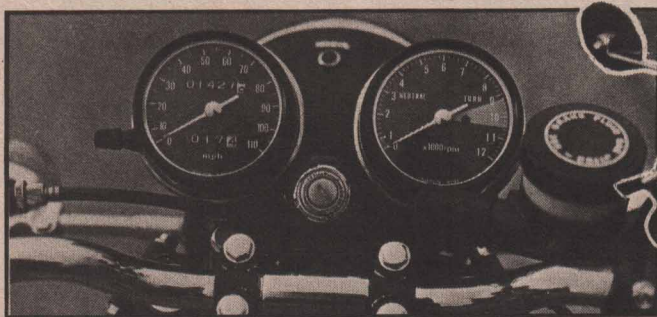
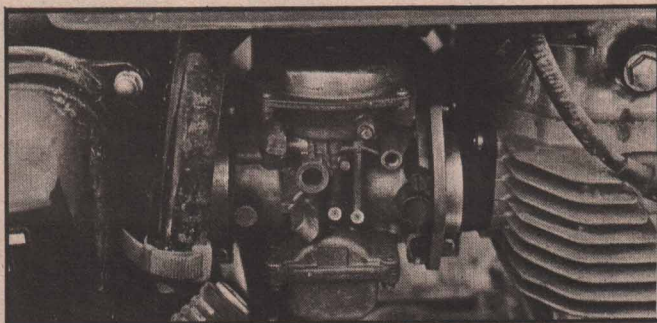
The brakes are powerful and controllable

and in the wet the front disc only lost its edge, keeping its predictability. Because of a streaming wet surface we didn't take any braking figures but I'd guess that on a dry road the 360 would pull up from 30 mph in just under 30 feet.

All the fittings and ancillaries are typically Honda; they're all there, they're all reasonably functional and all reasonably accessible. Honda probably come as close as anyone to building machines that will tolerably fit anyone, no matter how big or small.

And that, in a way, sums up the CJ360T. Like the 500 twin it makes a fair compromise between the ideals of low cost and high performance, between simplicity and the complexity of squeezing everything into a tight package.

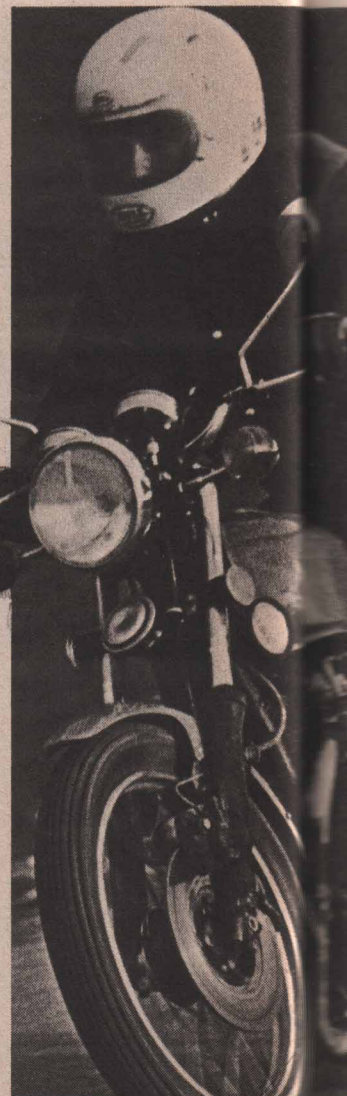
One result is that the Honda has about as much character as its emasculated exhaust note. The bike has no outstanding features, good or bad — it is the sort of machine you ride and forget. Considering its purpose in life, this is a compliment; as a means of efficient transport the 360 is always there, always ready and when needed it just gets on with the job. In its role of filling the gap



Top: The motor breathes through two 30mm CV Keihin carburetors.

Left: The ohc parallel twin motor thrives on revs.

Above: Instruments are large and easily read. The speedo incorporates a trip.



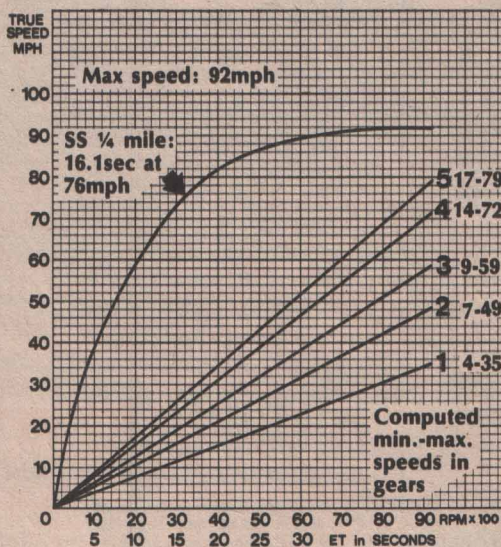
PERFORMANCE AND SPECIFICATION

between plain commuters and quicker touring machines the 360 does very well.

It is certainly competitive with the other machines which have sprung up in the 400cc category. Or to put it another way, the Japanese have standardised once again and other than the names on the tanks there is little to distinguish between the Suzuki GS400, Yamaha XS360, Kawasaki Z400 and the Honda. The Suzuki is quicker — marginally — and less economical, the Yamaha and Kawasaki probably have the edge on handling, but these are factors which won't be in great demand on such machines. And the Honda is likely to be available through a larger network of dealers, with a bigger back-up service.

In the end the choice between these machines has to come down to brand loyalty and which dealer will offer the best service. In concept and layout the bikes are so similar that even personal preference doesn't enter into it.

JOHN ROBINSON



TRACK CONDITIONS:

Wet, no wind, ambient temperature 50 deg F

PERFORMANCE:

Maximum speed 92 mph
 ss 1/4-mile 16.1 sec at 76 mph
 braking from 30 mph N/A
 Fuel consumption: worst 49 mpg
 best 59 mpg
 average over test 55 mpg
 speedo error 5 mph fast at 70 mph
 tacho error 300 rpm slow at 7000 rpm
 power to weight ratio 0.0664 bhp/lb

ENGINE:

SOHC parallel twin, wet sump, two 30 mm CV Keihin carburetors, cb and coil ignition, 12V alternator feeding 9 a-h battery.
 displacement 356 ccm
 bore x stroke 67 x 50.6 mm
 compression ratio 9.3:1
 claimed output 34 hp DIN at 9000 rpm
 2.9 kg-m at 7500 rpm

TRANSMISSION:

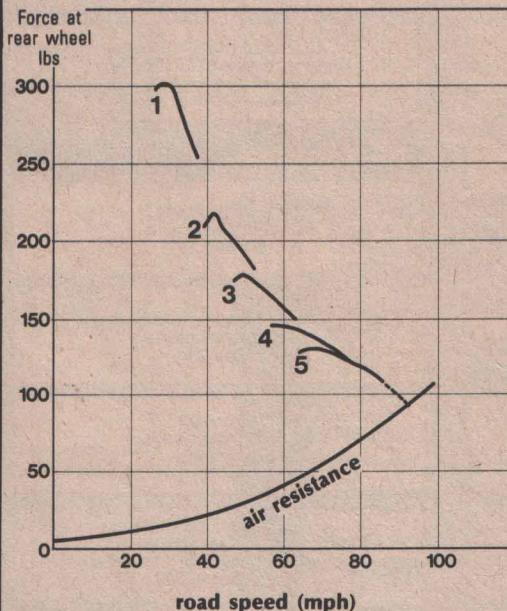
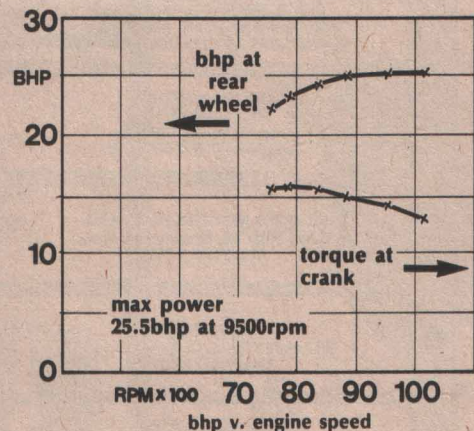
Gear primary drive, multiplate clutch, five-speed gearbox, final drive by chain.
 primary reduction 3.714
 final reduction 2.062
 gearbox ratios: 2.437; 1.666; 1.375; 1.111 and 0.965.

CHASSIS:

Single hydraulic front disc brake, rear drum brake, 5 pre-load rear dampers.
 Front tyre 3.00 x 18
 rear tyre 3.50 x 18
 wheelbase 54 in
 castor 63 deg 30 mins
 trail 3.315 in
 overall length 84.4 in
 dry weight 357 lb
 test weight 384 lb
 fuel tank capacity 3.1 gal
 oil tank capacity 3.5 pint

PARTS PRICES inc VAT

front mudguard 13.63
 handlebar 5.60
 speedo cable 1.96
 cb points 2.38 each
 exhaust system (complete) 75.53
 set of pistons/rings 20.95
 list price £739 + del £10.26
 warranty 12 months unlimited mileage
 Importer: Honda UK, Power Road, Chiswick



MODEL	Price inc. VAT & Del.	Max Speed	Av. mpg	SS 1/4	Dry Wt.
Honda CJ360T	749.26	92	55	16.1	357
Suzuki GT380	748.00	101	45	14.8	377
Yamaha RD400	764.50	99	43	14.8	346
Kawasaki Z400	758.00	90	54	16.4	375
Suzuki GS400	799.00	96	51	15.8	379
Honda CB400F	818.50	103	49	15.2	397