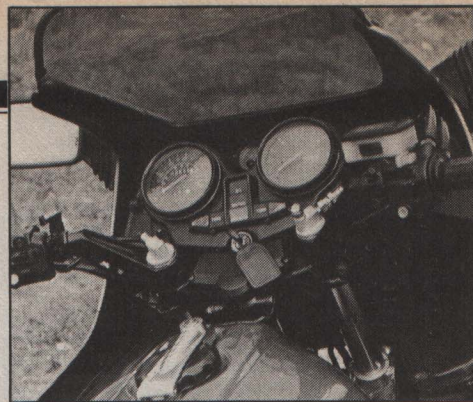
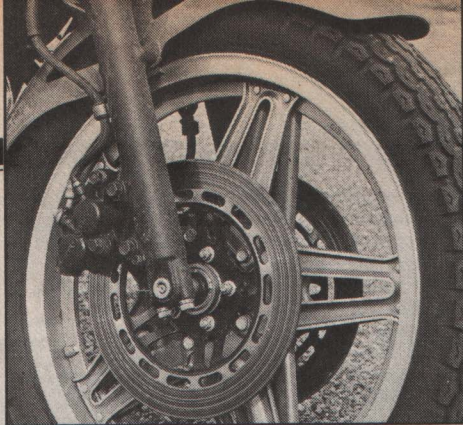


*Right: Magnificent anchors. The twin discs and twin calipers really pull the bike up, wet or dry.*



*The pilot's view. Clip-on bars are wide. Fairing is very effective but you have to lean forward to make the most of the low screen.*

# ALL DRESSED UP...

NEW skin for the old ceremony seems to be the ethos among the world's big bike manufacturers this year. Witness the Katana Suzukis, mostly last year's bikes with supposedly futuristic styling grafted on to bring their appearance up to date. Honda, in a less radical manner befitting their role of market leaders, have gone the same way with the CB900F2B.

They've taken last year's CB900, glued on a very handsome fairing and offered it with a tasty two-tone colour scheme, either grey and white or red and white. No mechanical

*Honda show the world how to make knee protectors look high fashion on the F2B.*

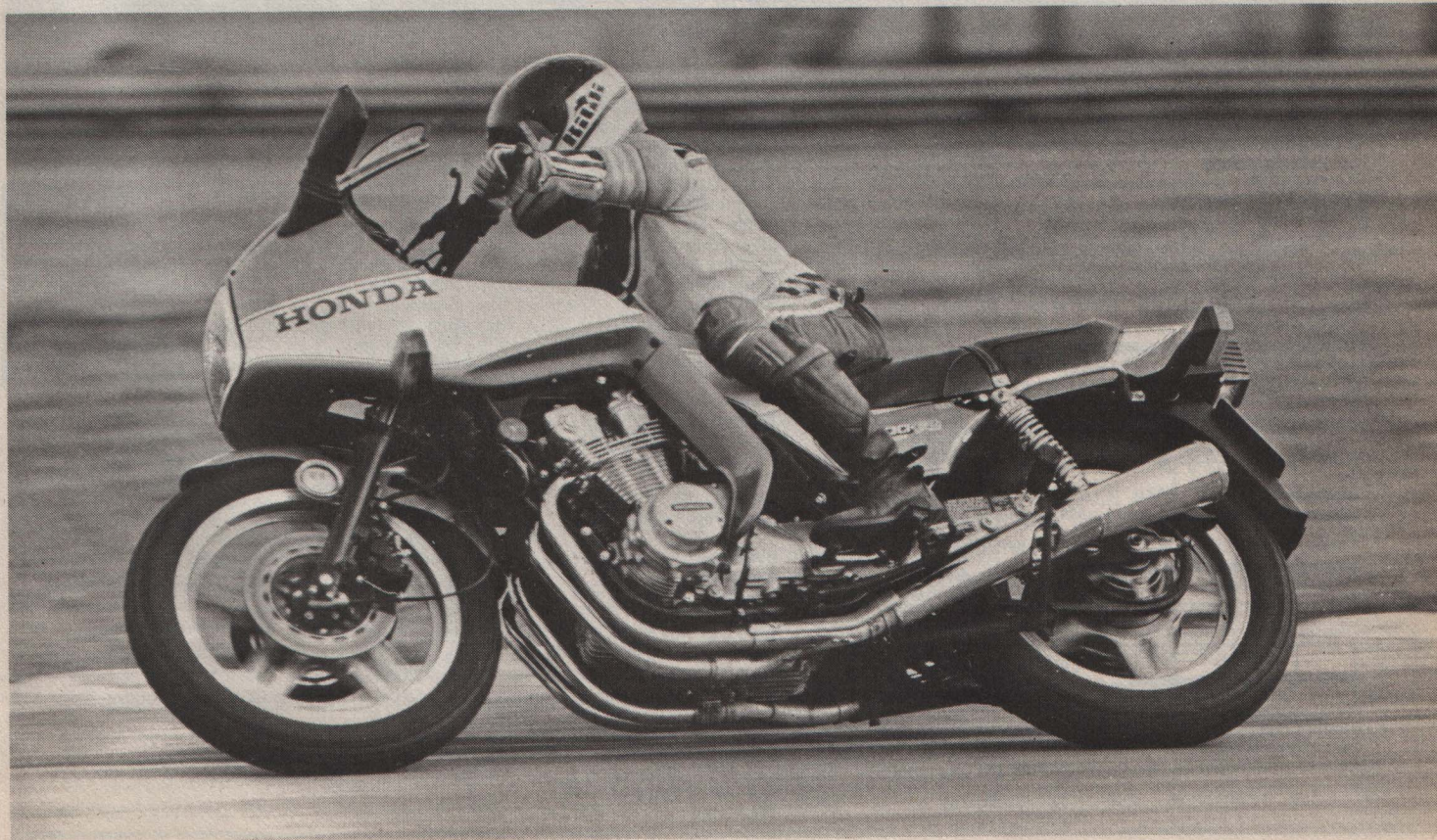


changes have been made.

Some people would argue that this is a good thing and I would be inclined to agree. Like a large number of you, I find the economics of galloping obsolescence annoying and disturbing. Change for change's sake is never a laudable route to follow and hopefully, the big men in Japan have run out of ideas for the time being (if you discount the latest folly of turbo-mania that is).

The CB900 has always been a good iron, enough power for most people's needs and indulgences with almost enough handling to match. The addition of the fairing has improved it both practically and cosmetically. You'd have to be some sort of weirdo to say that the bike in its latest guise doesn't look good and a seven foot freak not to realise the benefit of buffet free cruising offered by that vast windbreaker.

Most of the time the bike was in my possession was spent on a two up trip to Scotland where it proved itself a competent if not brilliant tourer. For the boring sections of A1, I tucked down behind the fairing, wound it on to an indicated 100mph and just



# On test **Honda CB900F2B**

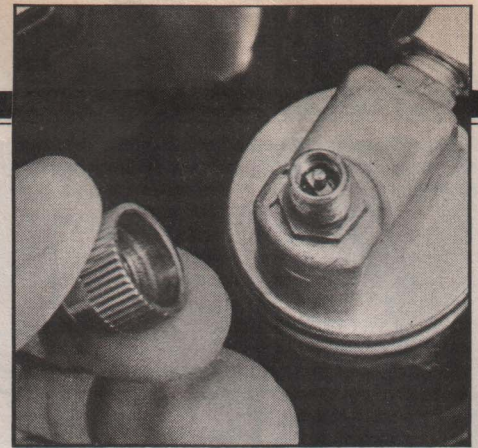
relaxed by counting off the miles. You have to tuck in well behind the screen though. Try and maintain a more normal posture and you'll end up feeling like you've just gone the distance with a world class heavyweight. Ideally, the screen should be either slightly higher or given more rake, then it would be perfect.

A former colleague of mine in another rag slugged off the fairing for its poor weather protection. Maybe he was standing on the seat or something because we had (as it usual) quite a few rainy days in Scotland but I didn't once have to stop and put on an oversuit.

On the twistery of Scottish back lanes, the

900 had nearly enough handling to keep pace with the performance. Sure it did let go once or twice, but never seriously. Part of the problem, I suspect, was my enthusiasm on damp roads. The slant-eyed Dunlops are fine in the dry but still a bit suspect when the going gets moist.

For a heavy brute, it corners well. As long as your bottle stays put, you can heel it over to silly angles with no wobble or slip but it helps to play with the damping beforehand to get the spring and rebound settings right. Incidentally, the rear springers have a lever at the bottom topped by the legend 'Damping characteristics'. Now maybe my backside is no more sensitive than a block of



Air forks are linked so that only the right leg carries a valve.

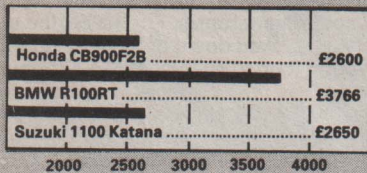
## Test specifications Honda CB900 F2B

Recommended retail price .....£2,600  
Warranty .....12 months/unlimited mileage  
Availability .....In all dealers  
Recommended servicing intervals .....3,000 miles

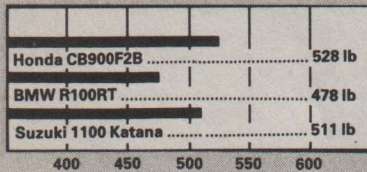
### PERFORMANCE

Top speed (prone) .....124.49mph (199.84kph)  
Standing start  
¼mile .....12.63 secs at 107.94mph (172.7 kph)  
20mph roll-on  
¼mile .....14.8secs at 86.7 mph (122.36kph)

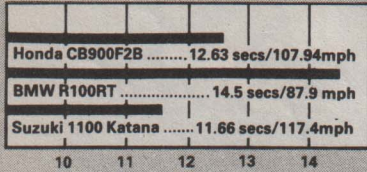
### PRICE



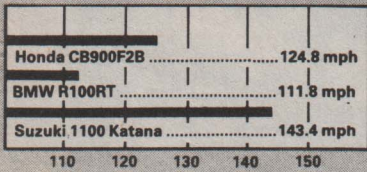
### WEIGHT



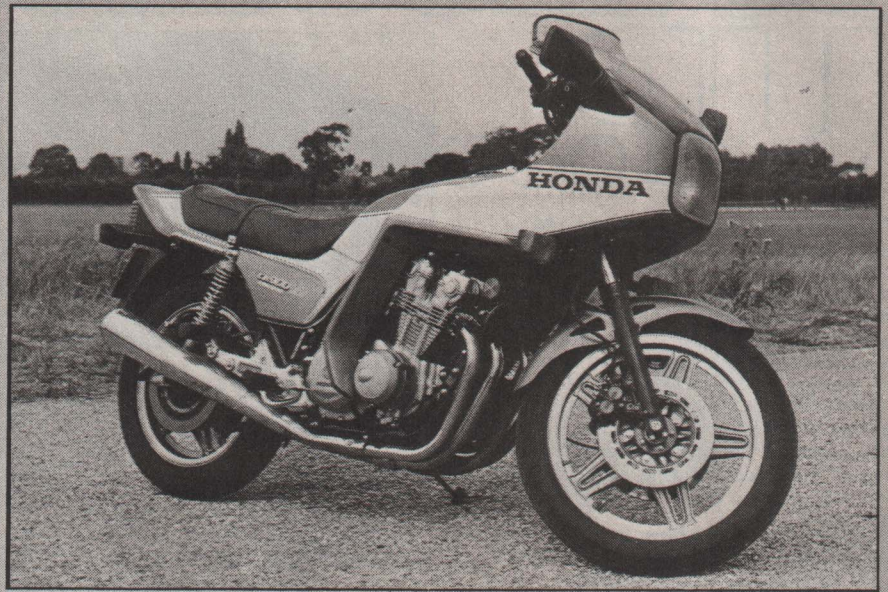
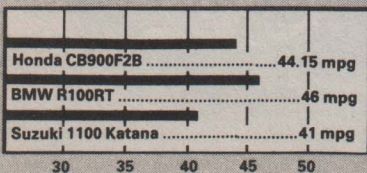
### QUARTER MILE TIME



### TOP SPEED



### AVERAGE FUEL CONSUMPTION



Maximum speeds in gears at 9,500 rpm  
redline .....1st-52.04mph (83.26kph)  
.....2nd-74.78 mph (119.64 kph)  
.....3rd-94.96 mph (151.93 kph)  
.....4th-116.52 mph (186.43 kph)  
.....5th-132.3 mph (211.68 kph)

Engine rpm at 60 mph in top gear .....4800  
Fuel consumption .....Best-48.7 mpg (17.13 km/litre)  
.....Worst-39.6 mpg (14.06 km/litre)  
.....Average-44.15 mpg (15.53 km/litre)

Average tank range .....160 miles (256 km)

### ENGINE

Type .....4 cylinder dohc  
Bore and stroke .....64.5 x 69mm

Piston displacement .....901 cc  
Compression ratio .....8.8:1

Exhaust system .....four into two

Lubrication .....wet sump

### TRANSMISSION

Gears .....five-speed  
Clutch .....wet multiplate  
Primary drive .....Hy-vo chain  
Final drive .....roller chain  
Gear ratios .....1st-2.533 2nd- 1.789  
.....3rd-1.391 4th-1.16 5th-1.00

### CHASSIS

Type .....twin downtube full cradle frame  
Suspension .....front-telescopic forks, air-assisted with 4.8inches (121.9mm) of travel.  
.....rear-swing arm with two adjustable dampers and 3-1

Front tyre .....in (78.74 mm) of travel  
.....325 V19 Bridgestone tubeless  
Rear tyre .....400 V18 Bridgestone tubeless  
Front brake .....two ten-inch (254 mm) discs  
Rear brake .....one 12-inch (304.8 mm) disc

### DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase .....59.6 ins (1513.84mm)  
Length .....88.2 ins (2240.8 mm)  
Seat height .....32.1 ins (815.34 mm)  
Seat width .....10 ins (254 mm)  
Footpeg height .....8 ins (203.2mm)  
Ground clearance .....6.5 ins (165.1 mm)  
Weight .....528lb (240 kg)  
Fuel capacity .....4.4 glns (20 litres)  
Oil capacities .....7.9 pints (4.4 litres)

### ELECTRICS

Generator .....260W 12 volt alternator  
Battery .....12 volt, 14 Ah  
Ignition .....breakerless electronic  
Headlamp .....60/55 H4 8-ins (203.2 mm) halogen

### INSTRUMENTS

Includes: speedometer, odometer, trip counter, rev counter, quarts clock, battery condition indicator, warning lights for high beam, turn, neutral and oil pressure

### OTHER EQUIPMENT

Mirrors, fairing  
Colours: two-tone red and white or grey and white

### IMPORTER

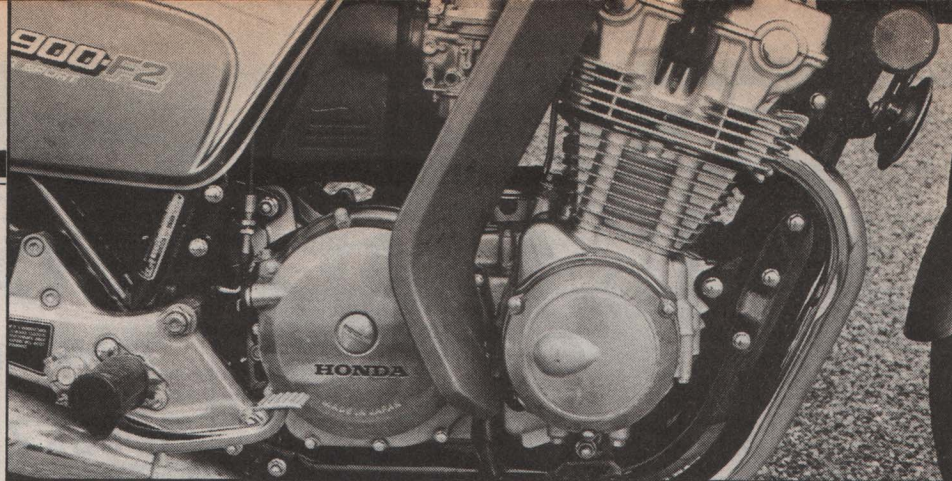
Honda UK, Power Road, Chiswick, London W4

concrete, because altering the lever to either of its two positions made no difference that I could discern. Sheer gimmickry maybe.

The fashionable but not amazingly useful air forks up front are at least linked and fed from a common valve so if you should wish to tune your suspension with an airline, you won't have much difficulty in getting the balance right. Personally, I experimented over the full range of pressures and found the differences to be minimal. Still, if you don't believe me, the ever thoughtful men from Honda provide a pressure gauge with the bike so you can check it out. If they and others are really intent on continuing to breathe life into air suspension, why don't they go the whole hog and fit a pressure gauge to the bike itself. If we must suffer gimmickry, it should at least be wholehearted.

There's nothing half-hearted about the brakes. In common with the other big meat in the Honda range, the F2B is fitted with the latest dual piston calipers and boy do they pull you up, wet or dry, with frightening efficiency. On the track at Snetterton they were almost too good. When used to the full, they had both wheels hopping and jumping on the tarmac as the Jap Dunlops relinquished the ghost of friction.

At the top end of the performance scale, the 900 is not as fleet of foot as some of its rivals. A top whack of 124mph is not much to write home about. It shouldn't make much difference but the public seem to have a fascination for silly figures to do with performance, despite the fact that most of



Lower sections on the fairing are quickly detachable. The 900 engine remains the same as the F2.

them, if they actually rode at the speeds they talk about, would most likely find when they stopped that the contents of their intestines had emptied themselves messily into their underclothing.

The torque is truly impressive. Overtaking from speeds of 40mph upwards could be done quite undramatically without having to shift out of top gear. The bike was quick off the line too as the standing quarter times show.

Generally, the level of equipment was as much as we have come to expect from Honda. Everything on the bike was well thought out. The headlight, for instance, was adjustable by a large knob in the nose of the fairing. The handlebars too could be adjusted in one plane, forwards and backwards. The fairing was a quality item, robustly made, very firmly mounted and provided with zip-up pockets to carry small items of general use.

To round off the test I took the bike to Snetterton on the occasion of the *Maniacs* 24-hour test. Out there, where the only things that count are speed and agility, it gave a good account of itself. Its only shortcoming was a lack of ground clearance that had the footrests eating away at the track on just about every corner. I doubt, however that many people would be crazy enough to corner the bike that hard on a public road.

So (pause for reflection), the Honda 900F2B is a fine example of the state of the art Japanese four-in-line motorised bicycle. It's fast, quiet, pretty and reliable, but in the end, little distinguishes it from the similarly unimpeachable products of other companies. Thank heavens for sluggish V-twins and crotchety, lumpy 500 singles. There is some variety in the world after all.

Jim Lindsay

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