

OWNER'S REPORT ON HONDA CB500X



A friend of mine, **Steve**, had just bought a new **Honda CB500X**, as a down-size from his previous Suzuki V-Strom.

He changes bikes fairly regularly – because he does a lot of riding!

He offered to do a review of the new bike when he'd clocked up a few kilometres on it, which he now has; so here is his very comprehensive review of the bike.

I've traveled 2,055kms on the Honda CB500X so I feel I'm in a position to comment on it now.

I find the lower weight a bonus for me (being a decrepit old pensioner of 70) and the bike feels more nimble. Funnily enough I found I was pitching it into corners a little bit "hard" as I wasn't allowing for the lower weight. Strange.

Handling and braking have met my expectations. My riding style is fairly conservative these days (note decrepit old pensioner comment above) but both front and rear suspension and brakes are fine for my 95kg weight, the luggage I carry on my travels, and the rough back roads I often traverse. I presume the upside down forks and second front disc may have improved these aspects over previous models but I have no basis for comparison as I've not ridden an earlier model. I have ridden it on some rough and winding roads already and was able to keep up with my riding companions who were all on larger machines.

Luggage carrying is now sorted. I had a Ventura Rack fitted before I collected the bike and I bought a new Ventura bag as well. I have a large roll top Black Wolf bag which straps to the passenger seat and The Child Bride (also known as Ann, my wife of 50 years) helped me work out how to fit my antique set of Gearsac Trailbike throw-over soft panniers.

The next matter to be dealt with is engine and power. The power is fine for my requirements. Less than some of my recent machines (2 X Suzuki V-Strom 650s and a Yamaha MT09.) but I'm quite happy. I have also owned another 22 motorcycles ranging from a Honda 90 to a Kawasaki 900 during my 53 years of motorcycling. The engine revs about the same as the DL 650 XT but feels a little "busier"; perhaps explained by the fact the Suzuki was red lined at 10,000 rpm while the CB500X is red lined at 8,500 rpm. The Honda has managed to pull itself up all the open road hills that I've encountered so far in top gear so I'm satisfied with that aspect. I have also ridden on the M1 and the bike seems happy enough to cruise at 110kph. I suspect it will be able to overtake slower traffic without drama as the engine would only be turning over at 6,250rpm at 135 Km/h. Not that I have done, or would do, those sort of highly illegal speeds.

The Honda is not so good at "traffic light drags". 1st gear is quite low, no doubt to assist off-road, so I find that an issue after filtering to the front of the queue. This is not necessarily a bad thing as it is causing me to ride a bit slower. Mind you I do miss that one aspect of the MT09: I never lost a "traffic light drag" against a car on it! One other pleasing aspect is fuel consumption and fuel range. I

appear to be achieving about 26 to 28 kpl and with a 17.5 litre tank I should be able to travel a comfortable 400 plus kilometres on a tank.

Riding position is good for me. The 500X offers a more spacious riding position than the other models in the range. The seat is not overly comfortable but no worse than the MT09 and V-Stroms. Unfortunately it is also no better. Still I seldom ride more than 350 to 400 km per day now and it is fine for that distance.

The dash layout is adequate and contains the usual odometer, 2 trip meters, tachos (one digital and one analogue), fuel gauge, a clock, gear-position indicator, engine temperature gauge; and probably a few other features I haven't explored yet. The dash isn't overly large but I have no trouble reading it unless sunlight strikes it at a certain angle, when it does become difficult to see. Unlike the V-Stroms, the features on the dash can only be operated by the 2 buttons on the dash itself and not from buttons on the switch-blocks. A little inconvenient.

Services are every 12,000 km after the first service at 1,000 km. I plan to run fully synthetic motorcycle oil in the motor and change oil and filter at 6,000 km intervals. This machine is actually built in Thailand and my mechanic tells me parts are cheaper than for Japanese made bikes. Bonus!

The exhaust note is not very exciting but I won't be changing the muffler. In view of the places I travel I had a radiator guard and headlight protector fitted and engine protection bars (*we don't like to call them "CRASH" bars!*) seemed like a good idea. I also elected to add a centre-stand for convenience when servicing.

Well, that's about it. I usually keep my bikes for 4 or 5 years and in that time I usually do around 75,000kms; so I'll see what happens during that period.