

2010 Honda NT700V First Ride



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His insatiable thirst for life is only surpassed by his monthly fuel bill. Whether rocketing on land, flying through the air, or jumping the seas, our Associate Editor does it all and has the scars to prove it.

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Honda imports another popular European motorcycling offering for 2010. Say hello to the 2010 Honda NT700V.

First it was the Honda SH150i (read about it in the [2010 Honda SH150i First Ride](#)), now Honda continues its trend of importing popular European motorcycle and scooter offerings into the U.S. with the introduction of the 2010 Honda NT700V. Known as the **Honda** Deauville in Europe, this compact touring-style motorcycle is the epitome of affordable and reliable two-wheeled transportation.

From its flat, understated lines in an equally uninspiring but quality Metallic Red or Metallic Silver paint; to the understated performance of its liquid-cooled 680cc V-Twin engine and its simple but effective chassis, to its fully www.honda-deauville.nl

integrated storage solutions, the underlying theme of the NT700V is efficiency.

Pushing it off the centerstand and slipping into the elongated saddle, its 31.7 in. seat height is near to the ground and the bike feels slim between the rider's legs—a key design afforded by the ultra compact architecture of its 52-degree V-Twin engine.

The engine is identical to the power unit in Honda's European Transalp dual-sport bike and the DN-01 scooter/sportbike crossover machine, minus the CVT automatic transmission. It features 4-valve cylinder heads operated by a single chain-driven camshaft as each piston works through an 81 x 66mm bore/stroke and compresses fuel to a ratio of 10.0:1. The engine receives petrol via Honda's proprietary programmed fuel-injection system, which incorporates twin 40mm throttle bodies paired with 12-hole injectors. Exhaust is then evacuated via a sleek, albeit heavy-looking chrome exhaust terminating on the right-hand side of the machine. Engine power is transferred to the rear wheel via a 5-speed gearbox and a low maintenance shaft final drive. The powertrain is further augmented by a conventional cable-actuated clutch.

Punch the throttle and the engine responds by chugging forward at a leisurely pace—a boon for riders with less experience and ideal for riding in the rain or other limited-traction situations. Experienced pilots worry not, for as the revs pile on and the motor gets spinning up to 5000 rpm, the engine cranks out enough acceleration force to allow for safe passing of fellow road warriors heading to their nine-to-five. From there the engine continues to pull you forward in a linear fashion until the 8500 rev redline.





(Above) The cockpit of the NT700V is engineered for the rider looking to pile on the odometer miles. (Center) A liquid-cooled 680cc V-Twin engine and 5-speed gearbox is utilized. (Below) Both saddlebags are fully integrated into the motorcycle and offer 7-gallons of storage capacity.

Engine vibration is muted and can rarely be felt in any of the control surfaces aside from a gentle pulsation emitting from deep underneath the steel fuel cell. Equally pleasing is the lack of powertrain noise even during wide-open acceleration. There is some powertrain whine during low-speed deceleration.

Cruising down the road at an indicated 60 mph reveals slightly over 4000 revs on the tachometer in top gear. The transmission meshes between gears without fault, but the 'box does have some play at the shift lever. Finding neutral at a stop is uncomplicated and clutch lever pull is almost weightless while still delivering a sensible degree of feel.

While outright engine performance isn't spectacular, fuel mileage is. The engine has been tuned to sip fuel and delivered an indicated 48.5 mpg average during the course of our 130-mile ride. Afterwards, the fuel gauge displayed slightly over half-a-tank, so we'd estimate range to be right around 200 miles based on the capacity of the 5.2-gallon fuel tank.

On the road the suspension does a fantastic job of mellowing out the harsh effects of rough pavement. Of all the motorcycles tested recently, this particular machine stands out for its excellent ride quality. While suspension componentry is rudimentary as compared to the adjustable pieces on other high-end touring bikes, it just plain works. Up front is a non-adjustable 41mm telescopic fork. At the rear a single hydraulic shock absorber is used and features a remote preload adjustment knob with 40-click adjustability to compensate for another passenger, or extra cargo.

Tip it into a corner and the NT changes trajectory with very little effort. As speed increases, the suspension begins to show the effects of its soft spring rate and comfort-oriented damping characteristics. At lean, the chassis remains composed but it lacks some feel which makes it difficult to explore the full cornering potential of the bike. Nonetheless, based on its intended purpose (commuting and touring) it serves up an adequate, albeit uninspiring level of performance.

Overall, the riding position is very relaxed. The handlebar offers an upright bend and the overall comfort of the seat is unbelievable. The shape of the main fairing keeps the rider's body well protected from inclement weather

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conditions. Furthermore, the height of the windscreen can be adjusted in five-positions. To do this, lift and pull up on the windscreen and it will slide into the desired position. This clever feature allows the rider to be completely removed from the wind, if desired. Conversely, if the rider feels in the mood for a more intimate riding experience, move the windscreen to the lowest setting and enjoy the wind in your face.

Instrumentation looks like it was pulled straight off a Honda Accord. It's highlighted by a set of four analog-style gauges on display from left-to-right: fuel level, speed, rev counter, and coolant temperature. In the center sits a rectangular neutral and warning light display. Above, a smaller LCD display provides the time plus odometer. Two buttons on the bottom of the display allow the rider to cycle through additional functions including twin trip meter and instant and average MPG. However, we wish there was a distance to empty function as well as an ambient air temperature and gear position indicator. It would also be nice if you could scroll through the features with a handlebar-mounted bar as opposed to the small buttons on the gauges. Overall the instruments are exceptionally easy to decipher while riding.





(Above) Steering the NT700V takes very little effort. (Center) Honda offers a full line of genuine accessories including additional storage options and heated hand grips. (Below) We're astounded by the plush ride offered by the NT700V's suspension.

The display is flanked by a pair of air vents that allow fresh air to be directed onto the rider. Below are empty sound speaker enclosures as well as small storage compartments (with the left one being lockable) and are sized to fit your mobile phone, keys, GPS, etc. Additional storage comes in the form of lockable saddle bags on either side of the motorcycle.

The bags are neatly integrated into the rear tail of the motorcycle and keep the width of the bike slim. This is perfectly suited for the rigors of lane-splitting in California. Each container offers roughly 7-gallons of storage and either bag was larger enough to hold my Oakley man-purse. And if you pack cleverly you can fit far more gear than you'd think in each container. Another nifty feature is how the containers are linked with an open ski-style pass through that allow you to wedge in lengthier cargo.

In terms of braking, the NT700V uses twin 296mm discs with triple-piston calipers at the front wheel. Out back a single 276mm disc with a twin-piston caliper controls the rear wheel. The system makes use of Honda's Combined Braking System (CBS), which links the rear brake to the front. For example, when the rear brake lever is depressed the front brake is also engaged. Conversely, when the front brake lever is engaged its effect is completely independent. Additional braking performance comes in the form of the optional \$1000 ABS system. This is one of the best features of the motorcycle and is simply a must for every rider.

The ABS system adds a degree of braking stability that makes this an excellent street bike for riders of all skill levels. Whether you're grabbing a handful of the brake lever or jabbing on the rear brake pedal, or both, the system automatically compensates for your ham-fisted control inputs, slowing each wheel with a higher level of control than your hand, foot and brain are capable of.

Make no mistake about it, the \$9999 NT700V could be the perfect utilitarian motorcycle. Sure, it's not the most entertaining motorcycle to ride, nor will it turn many heads at a stoplight. What it will do, however, is deliver the rider to where he or she needs to be comfortably and without fuss. Plus, it has a decent amount of storage and it doesn't gulp down the fuel. If you're looking for an affordable and easy-to-ride touring-style motorcycle, we recommend you check out this latest import from **Honda**.