



The Quick Way Through Customs
Hand-Made for more than 20 years

California
1100



2 Year Warranty • California's start at £6750.00 excluding OTR tax PDI and Delivery

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Castrol are the recommended lubricants for Moto Guzzi in the U.K.
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* Second year applies to engine and drive train.

Design Austin Colle - Main photo Kevin Raymond

added weight and power of a motorcycle not then even a twinkle in Guzzi's designer's eyes. Used alone the California's footbrake just about coped with anchoring the half-ton gross of bike, rider, pillion and luggage under ordinary usage, but if time was pressing and the miles ahead still great, the added power of the second front disc proved vital. Then, all was well and the big twin could be hauled back hard enough to stress the forks, although thanks to its immense drag, the engine itself proved much more useful than most in losing speed.

Critics of Honda's system are numerous, including at least one of the *MCi* team, who typically preferred braking to be left wholly to his own discretion. In the event, though, no amount of discussion could put a name to any tangible performance disadvantage. Cleverly, Honda has arranged the less powerful footbrake and the more powerful handbrake to resemble orthodox brakes. Used so, a rider is simply aware of unusual

braking power so he or she could continue braking in innocence of the coupling. Alternatively, it is possible to use one of other of the systems depending on circumstances. Whichever, only once a fair mile-age has passed did recognition of the greater braking efficiency dawn. In some respects it resembled appreciation of BMW's Telelever front suspension by making an impact only once a transfer was made to another machine following a day's ride on the new bike. Far from simply adding power, the Honda coupled brakes improved braking dependability, predictability and rider confidence.

CBR's seat, of questionable long term rider comfort.



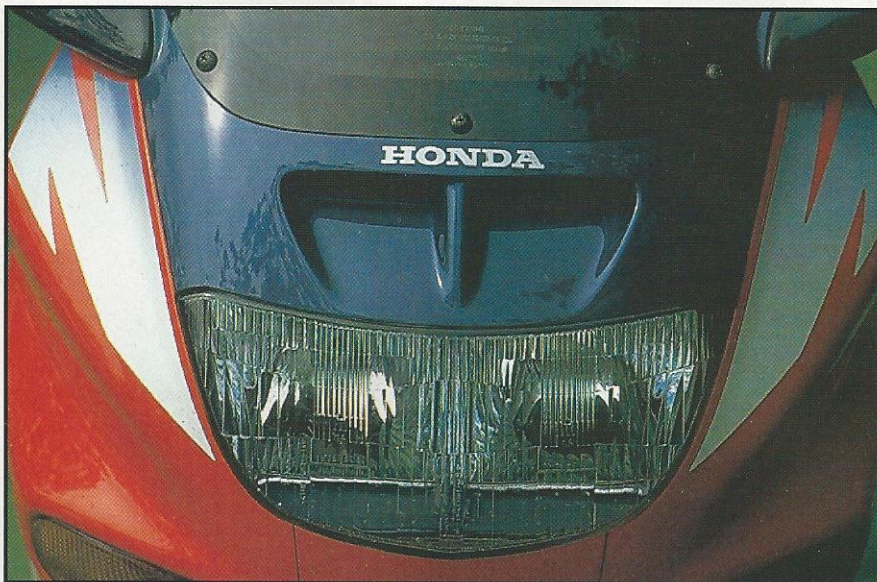
As an experiment, attempts were made to lock the rear wheel. It was impossible, at least under average road conditions, from whatever speed. ABS is gathering criticism to itself for a couple of valid reasons: possibly coupled brakes with a pressure release valve to the rear wheel is the answer. Most control systems are improved by machinery - gear changing, ignition advance, starting, mixture control, lubrication, brake adjustment and suchlike. It's hard to believe that the braking imbalance forces of even the best motorcycles could not be better disciplined by machinery, than by the often twitchy fist and feet of rampaging scratchers.

FROM THE SADDLE

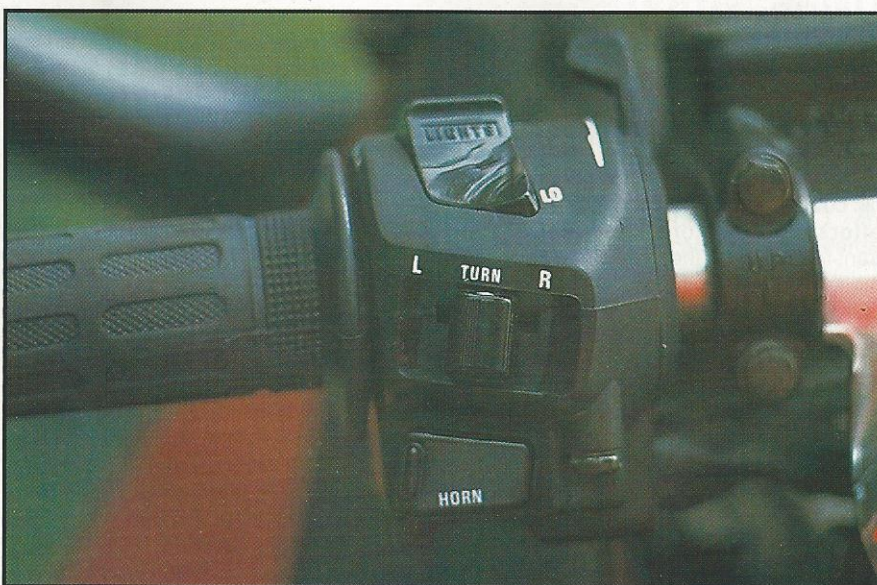
If either manufacturer had used its grey matter in the way a motorcycling god would have intended, both they and us would have been better off. Guzzi, as mentioned, has been careless about the easily remediable business of windscreens, but Honda's mistake is more serious. It has become confused over the role of the sports tourer.

Had cheapskate car makers of the Sixties not corrupted the Grand Tourer (Gran Turismo) concept by blithely slapping 'GT' badges on tin boxes with nothing added but a second carburettor, we would be still using this term. What GT originally signified was a car capable of carrying two people and their luggage in luxury at express speed over trans-continental distances. This is precisely what the role of the CBR1000F is, or could, or should, be. Confused, perhaps, by the 'Sports Tourer' label, Honda has kitted its contribution to the genre with the screen, footrests and bars of a sportster, and the rest of it is a tourer, of the fast sort. It can scarcely blame journalists who thus report on its dullness, its lack of sporting nature, its grey character. The thing has the inbuilt steering and ride characteristics and power style of a true GT - distant horizon stuff - yet it feels as though it should handle like a sportster. To cap this sad state of affairs, the cramped riding stance enforced becomes distinctly uncomfortable after the second tank refill. If only the handlebars were an inch higher and more rearward, and footrests an inch lower and more rearward, life aboard the good ship Cee Bee Are would be a great deal better. And if the screen was just a tad higher, well life would be perfect indeed. The bike would lose nothing in terms of image or handling and would gain a great deal in long term performance.

We use the term 'uncomfortable' to describe various pains caused by poor anatomy. In this case, exactly what do we mean? Quite simply because the rider ►



Superb headlighting on the big Honda.



Honda dip switch tumbler was less thumbable than appearances suggest.

was forced to sit with hands too low and feet too high, only the rounded underside of his buttocks were on the seat. No thigh support was possible. Because of this all his weight was concentrated into this one (twin?) spot. A faint ache started at around 90 miles (150 km) and by 200 (320) has become painful. The seat itself was well designed, firm and supportive, but the foam interior, being subjected to pressure from twin bum bones squashed upward between them, creating a feeling best not described but doubtless familiar to those poor souls ignorant of the relief available from a high fibre diet. Funny to read, but on a long road it was no joke at all.

For all its rotten aerodynamics, the further the California was ridden, the more comfortable it became. Few, if any, touring motorcycles could be more comfortable. Luxury is rare in motorcycling, but the big touring Guzzi had it in generous portions and it contrasted wonderfully with the sheer zest of the bike's cornering style. Unlike the stately Honda, this one scampered through bends, plainly exemplifying road's end for the old tube steel frame setup. Frankly it made not a scrap of difference to cornering speed: the teles chopped a bit, the rear end yawed a mite, but not by much. Just enough to put hairs on your chest, to convince you that you really were one hell of a rider – holding down that wicked motorcycle.

The Guzzi was not smooth. Unlike its smaller capacity forbears, it vibrated. Not with the finger-numbing, barely perceptible high frequency tingle of so many modern machines, but with an undeniably combustion related thudding, especially in top gear under 4000rpm and when under load. Guzzi acknowledges this in its spring-mounted footboard pads which, if forced to collapse, vibrate. However, future California owners, do not despair. All Guzzis need a long running-in period before they smooth out. If you get the chance, try one with at least 10,000 miles (16,000 km) under its wheels and you'll be pleasantly surprised. Find one with triple that mileage and you'll be amazed at the transformation.

Both bikes had good lights, the California's array of rear lamps closely resembling a truck's. Its big round headlamp projected a beam of useful spread and penetration and it swivelled with the bars for a change. Its dipswitch was only fair, being too easy to miss at night during the sudden panic on a fast night run when faced by unexpected headlamps. One nice little touch on the warning light panel was one which signalled the dip beam and which could be seen in bright sunlight: useful for daytime headlamp use when necessary. Despite the comments about vibration, both mirrors reflected a clearly visible image at all times.

The Honda's headlamp was one of the best yet experienced. Its twin bulbs threw an intense beam, with perhaps a slight excess of scatter, but it was comparable with the twin lights of a car. Night riding was a pleasure. Its switchgear was almost identical to the California's, being Nippon Denso.

In both cases while the turn signal tumbler was suitable for a flick with a summer gloved left thumb, it was much less convenient, especially when zeroing was attempted with heavy gauntlets in cold weather.

BACK SEAT RIDING

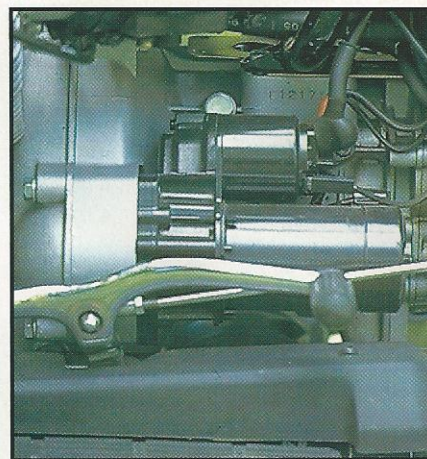
Those unsung heroes, the map-reading, pannier-packing, toll booth paying, silent-suffering pillionists will like both machines. Both gave a thoughtfully designed, very comfortable pillion ride. Some slight criticism was made over the height of the Honda's pillion seat, which lifted the passenger's head into off-screen blast, but that was all. Compliments were paid to the pillion footrest positioning and the robust, comfortable pillion rail behind. The seat covering gripped clothing nicely, which gave a secure and relaxing ride up behind.

Pillionists do not judge by rider's standards. They rarely care much about handling, acceleration, power delivery and ground clearance. They need security of tenure over long distances; they need to feel good about not being in control. If you are partnered to one, they matter a great deal. Our pillionists fell in love with the California. Against it, they claimed, all others were as nothing. The seat was big and nicely contoured and padded to perfection. It had a back rest, which meant that even under hard acceleration they did not have to hang on, and even if they did there was a handle placed just so – either side for each hand. And the pillion footrests, oh those pillion rests, placed so the legs bent gently, with the feet on big, fat, solid rests. The seat was not so high that the passenger was lifted into excessive slipstream or turbulence, and they enjoyed sitting upright, close to their partner up front, rather than being forced to uncomfortably follow their forward bended partner up front. For pillionists the California was sheer bliss.

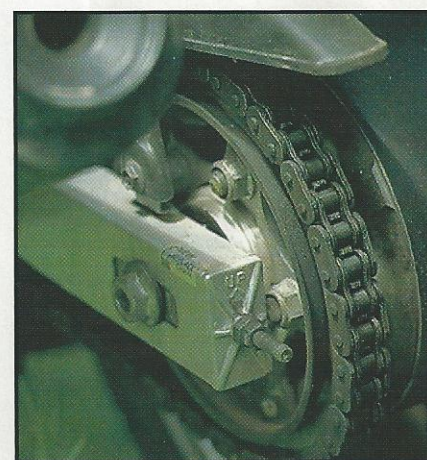
LIVING WITH IT

It remains to be seen how long term reliable the California's digital electronic and coupled ignition and fuel injection systems will be. If recent history is any standard of judgment, they should far exceed the reliability and durability of their non-electronic counterparts. The exchange of carburettors for injectors lies behind the transformation of the previously staid old model. Because of the old fashioned layout of the model, the 1100i must now be about the simplest of all big bikes to maintain at home. It's the sort of motorcycle which will in all probability engender unusually long ownership periods among a small but dedicated coterie.

Certain features were particularly endearing, such as what must be the best side stand in the world. It could be kicked down from the saddle and it remained firmly down. It was long and strong and was curved so it rested some of its length on soft ground



Above: Car-type starter motor and solenoid in full view on the Californian



Above: CBR's orthodox yet neat rear chain adjuster

to resist the already big foot against sinking in. Perfect, just perfect. It was partnered by a massive centrestand, which is not intended as a roll-on option but is an uncompromising servicing jack.

The other big attraction to seriously practical types proved to be the massive, car sized battery. It was located under the ignition key unlatched rider's seat (the pillion is separate) and could be simply lifted up and away one-handed thanks to its strap in one blessedly easy, tool-less exercise.

Rarely seen these days was all the California's brightwork. Its chrome plated steel should be as durable as most modern plating is. Other brightwork, such as lamps and even the glinting boomerang cover over part of the rear subframe, appeared to be chromed plastic. Be warned, such stuff rarely retains its diamond finish for long. The painted parts looked good and with regular waxing should last for years.

Unusually the side panels were painted glassfibre and the full, deeply valanced mudguards were steel. They, incidentally, having an unbroken underside around each wheel, really did keep the spray down well over wet roads.

Few tool kits are this good. It was big, tough and comprehensive. Only a foolish journalist would dare claim anything is the equal of BMW's formidable spanners but Moto Guzzi are pretty hard on the heels of the Bavarian masters.

In complete contrast to the naked California, the CBR1000F was fully encapsulated. It proved to be the easiest motorcycle imaginable to clean, demanding nothing more than a wash leather and bucket of wash-wax water to bring it up to gleaming clean within ten minutes at most.

As far as could be judged, the finish of the CBR was as good as could be had on any modern motorcycle. Naturally, all the body-

work was plastic, but it fitted like a dream and its paint was mirror-fine. It sported no brightwork, apart from some handsomely turned aluminium top yoke and handlebar clamps. These could not be raised or lowered but swivelling was possible.

If a danger exists over the CBR1000F's long term cosmetics it probably lies under the skin. In common with all too many bikes, the Honda sports a nominal front mudguard for appearances' sake alone. Spray from this must inevitably penetrate inside the bodywork, where unless some kind of occasional cleaning is arranged, deterioration must inevitably occur too early in life from nasty British winters.

SO ALL IN ALL

An odd pair to partner? Superficially yes, but after consideration far from it. Both are intended by their makers to cover big

mileages in comfort. Honda describes its Executive Express as offering '...continent-shrinking power and relaxed cruising ability...'. Guzzi, with typically stubborn Italian refusal to hire a native English copywriter, makes a very similar claim, with a hint of the old time GT to boot: 'This Grand Touring bike looking like a Custom finds its home on the long distance rides.'

Interpreted it means that while the California has some of the style of a custom model, it is actually a Gran Turismo. What you have here is the same target tackled from opposing ends. Fascinating, eh?

If you want bravura with practicality in the classic style, think California. If you prefer to target distant horizons in subtle sophistication, think CBR1000F. Both motorcycles are lightly flawed gems requiring slight owner modification to bring them to perfection. ●

Specifications Overleaf



CALIFORNIA 1100i

ENGINE

air cooled transverse 90 deg V Twin
1064cc
92 x 80mm
9.5:1
pushrod ohv, 4 valves

Weber 40mm injectors
Marelli electronic
one piece cast aluminium, separate gear-box
one piece steel forging, 2 bush main bearings, 2 split shell big ends
high pressure gear pump, full flow filter, independant splash feed gearbox

electric only

TRANSMISSION

none
mechanical dry twin plate shaft, reduction 4.121
5, overall ratios 10.19, 7.07, 5.33, 4.43, top 3.82:1

CHASSIS GROUP

twin loop duplex cradle steel tube n/a
41mm clamped stanchion tele-fork, rebound damped
swinging fork, twin units adjustable for preload and two-way damping
wire spoked aluminium rims
Metzeler Laser tubed radial front 110/90 VB18, rear 140/80 VB17
front Brembo semi-floating 300mm (11.8in) twin discs, 2 piston calipers, rear 270mm (10.6in) single semi-floating disc, 2 piston caliper

ELECTRICS

crankshaft mounted 350 w alternator
12 v x 30 ah
1 x 190mm (7.5in) 60/55 W qh
speedometer + trip, rev' counter, usual warning lights

ANCILLARIES

centre & side stands, turn signals, pillion back-stop and handles, windscreen, foot-boards, rocking pedal gear lever, steering damper, crash bars, mirrors, and steering, tank & helmet locks

CAPACITIES

steel, 22.5 lit (5 gal) inc 4 lit (.9 gal) res
3 lit (6 pint)

BIKE

Type
Displacement
Bore & Stroke
Nominal Compression Ratio
Cylinder Head

Induction
Ignition
Crankcase

Crankshaft

Lubrication

Starting

Primary Drive
Clutch
Final Drive
Gears

Frame
Steering Geometry
Suspension Front

Suspension Rear

Wheels
Tyres

Brakes

Generator
Battery
Headlamp
Instrumentation

Fuel Tank
Oil Sump

CBR1000F

ENGINE

water cooled inclined transverse four
998cc
77 x 53.6mm
10.5:1

chain driven dohc, 16 valves, inverted bucket and shim clearance adjustment
4 X 38mm (1.5in) Keihin cv carburettors
digital electronic
horizontally split split, wet sump, cast aluminium inc gearbox
one piece forged steel, 5 bush main bearings, split shell big ends
trochoid (eccentric rotating) high pressure gear pump, full flow filter, pressure fed gearbox
electric only

TRANSMISSION

gear, reduction 1.78:1
hydraulic, wet multi-plate
exposed 'O' ring chain, reduction 2.47:1
6 speed constant mesh, overall ratios 12.12, 9.10, 7.26, 6.03, 5.17, top 5.05:1

CHASSIS GROUP

tube steel twin loop duplex cradle
rake 27 deg, trail 109mm (4.3in)
41mm (1.6in) clamped stanchion, non-adjustable tele-fork
rising rate mono shock swinging fork
adjustable for rebound damping and preload
3 spoke cast aluminium
Bridgestone Cyrox radial tubeless, front 120/70 VR17, rear 170/60 VR17
(Front) 2 x 296mm (11.6in) fixed discs, triple piston calipers carrying sintered metal pads (Rear) 1 x 256mm (10in) fixed disc, triple piston calipers carrying sintered metal pads

ELECTRICS

350 W over-gearbox alternator
12 v 14 ah
209mm (8.25in) x 108mm (4.25in) 60/55 w twin bulb qh
speedometer + trip, rev' counter, water temperature and fuel level gauges, usual warning lights

ANCILLARIES

Centre & side stands, filler cap, steering and helmet locks, turn signals, comprehensive tool kit, retractable bunjee hooks, pillion rail, duck tail locker

CAPACITIES

steel, 22 lit (4.8 gal) inc 3.5 lit (6 pint) res
4.5 lit (4.5 pint)

CALIFORNIA 1100i

DIMENSIONS
 1560mm (61.5in)
 838mm (33in) @ footboards, pillion rests & handlebars
 764mm (30in)
 claimed dry 245kg (540lb), as tested fully equipped 268kg (591lb)

PERFORMANCE
 55kW (73bhp) @ 6400rpm
 91Nm (67lb/ft) @ 5000rpm
 theoretical at max bhp, 77 (48), 111 (69), 146 (91), 178 (111) 206km/h (128mph)

90.7kg (200lb) rider upright in oversuit
 194km/h (121mph)

CONSUMPTION
 5.5 l/100km (51mpg)
 5.7 l/100km (49mpg)
 4.7 l/100km (60mpg)
 328km (204m)
 super unleaded

SPARES PRICES (INC VAT)
 £19.95
 £30.46
 £231.47
 £107.87
 £22.84
 £105.07
 £149.23
 £22.84

SERVICE INTERVALS AND COSTS
 First service within 1000km (8000m). All subsequent services every 500km (3000m)

WARRANTY
 2 years. First year unlimited mileage. Second year engine and drive train only

PRICE (INC VAT)
 £7600

BIKE

Wheelbase
 Max Width

Seat Height Unladen
 Weight

Power
 Torque
 Gear Speeds

Max Speed

Test Period Overall
 Hard Riding
 Touring
 Range Ex Res
 Fuel Quality

Brake Lever Assy
 Mirror
 Silencer
 Side Panel
 Front Brake Pad Set
 Speedometer
 Headlamp
 Indicator Lamp

CBR1000F

DIMENSIONS
 1500mm (59in)
 760mm (30in)

785mm (31in)
 claimed dry 235kg (518lb), as tested fully equipped 258kg (569lb)

PERFORMANCE
 100Kw (134bhp) @ 9500rpm
 74lb/ft at 8500rpm
 theoretical @ max bhp, 93 (58), 124 (77), 156 (97), 188 (117), 219 (136) top
 225km/h (140mph)
 90.7kg (200lb) rider upright in oversuit,
 224km/h (139mph)

CONSUMPTION
 7.24 l/100km (39mpg)
 8.07 l/100km (35mpg)
 5.8 l/100km (48mpg)
 257km (160m)
 super unleaded

SPARES PRICES (INC VAT)
 £18.22
 £39.35
 £242.83
 £78.07
 £33.07
 £212.53
 £270.94
 £48.84

SERVICE INTERVALS AND COSTS
 After first service, every 8000 miles at local dealer hourly rates plus parts.

WARRANTY
 2 years unlimited mileage

PRICE (INC VAT)
 £8295

