

REVIEW: Honda Silverwing 600



REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

Forget everything you know about scooters and come with me, and let's check out the Honda Silver Wing, one of the coolest scooters on the planet, a tool for the biker with an open mind. Let's ride.

I'd define a scooter as a two-wheeled motorized vehicle with a clutchless transmission, hand controls only (no foot controls) and a step-through chassis. Most scooters feature integrated, long footboards. The Silver Wing adheres to my definition of a scooter, and blows up the concept in the process.

The Silver Wing doesn't look like a scooter from the front or from the rear. With a rider aboard and underway, it doesn't even look like a scooter in profile the rider's legs hide the step-through,

presenting one continuous mass. Full plastic bodywork disguises Silver Wing's bones scarcely a hint of the full steel frame is visible to the naked eye. The components that do peek out are intriguing bits of suspension hardware.

Some textures and materials onboard are a little on the plastic side, the chrome and metal bits, like the big muffler, sparkled with rich quality. Silver Wing's seat height gave me the option of swinging a leg over (early in the day) or using the step-through to mount in a more sophisticated fashion (later in the day). The broad flat seat is well-cushioned, and comfortable enough for all-day riding. The passenger pillion is slightly elevated above the rider's perch, and is also broad and comfy. Without adding any accessory trunks or panniers, the Silver Wing can swallow an amazing amount of cargo. I wear a size XL helmet and even that fits in the Silver Wing's underseat storage area along with a leather riding jacket and a pair of riding gloves; I can tell you that Silver Wing could easily handle 80% of the requirements for my daily errands.

I took the Silver Wing out for rides at every opportunity during my three-day test period in and around Midrand. I even took it on a trip to Vereeniging to brave the early-morning traffic and experience it on a longer trip and much to my astonishment, it turned out to be one of the best highway bikes I've ridden for a while. It starts with power hidden under all that plastic is a 582 cc parallel twin-cylinder engine with fuel injection, double-overhead cams and four valves per cylinder. The Silver Wing easily out-accelerates most cars (and many motorcycles), and has the ability to cruise at highway speeds, which can reach up to 160km/h easy.

If the Silver Wing was an old-fashioned scooter with tiny wheels; that would be a terrifying thought but with a 14" front and a 13" rear tyre and great aerodynamics, Silver Wing is dead stable at speed. Silver Wing's slim profile, upright riding position and manoeuvrability at low speed make it an ideal lane-splitter in slow or stopped traffic. When the road turns rough, the Silver Wing's suspension does a great job of smoothing things out. Though the 41 mm hydraulic fork up front is not adjustable, the rear dual hydraulic shocks have a five-position preload adjustability.

I have to admit that Silver Wing's setup works fine, just twist the throttle and go, no clutch needed. Let off the throttle, and engine braking helps slow you down. If you need to stop faster, then the standard ABS will not be disappointing. At a stop, there's no tension in the system, once you adjust, it all comes natural. The automatic felt just right for the Silver Wing.

I never thought that I'd be a candidate for scooter ownership, but after spending 3 days with a Silver Wing, I am seriously convinced otherwise. I won't give up my motorcycle but I just might have to add a big scooter to the fleet; why not a Silver Wing. Thank you Honda SA, for a great experience!!

PRICE: R79 999.00 - Incl. 14% VAT



Tel: (031) 580 7900
15 Meridian Drive
Umhlanga Ridge



Tel: (031) 714 3600
110 Old Main Road
Pinetown



Tel: (031) 797 4894
Alumina Alley, Alton
Richards Bay



Tel: (033) 345 6287
290 Boom Street
Pietermaritzburg