

REVIEW: '12 Honda NC700X



What do you see when you look at the 2012 Honda NC700X? An adventure-style bike? An urban assault commuter? A country road explorer? A two-up getaway machine? Or perhaps all of the above?

Whatever your personal vision of the NC700X may be, colour it fun because this is one bike that offers a perfect blend of style, handling and power for tackling whatever the day's agenda may hold. Credit its long-travel suspension, abundant torque and more, plus a six-speed gearbox; the automatic Dual Clutch Transmission with a Combined Antilock Braking System is not available in South Africa. So whether you're new to the sport, a long-time rider or just getting back into the riding scene, the NC700X offers the comfort, ease of use and practicality of an everyday motorcycle that's also surprisingly affordable. And to make things even better, a large selection of available accessories allows you to add just the right combination of capabilities to suit your individual preferences.

Further confusion might stem from the short little windshield and the "fuel tank" that flips open to reveal a storage compartment big enough for a full-face helmet or your mother-in-law.

The NC700X's very affordable price ensures it doesn't suffer the fate of another Honda oddity, the DN-01. But how do the NC700X's oddities make it potentially compelling to buyers... and more importantly, what exactly is it? Let's take a closer look and find out.

The Honda NC700X is powered by an all-new liquid-cooled, 8-valve 670cc parallel twin power-plant that's equipped with an engine balancer. It's neither a particularly gutsy nor technologically advanced motor; in fact, the motor is shared with the new Integra maxi-scooter but in this case, it's all about positioning.

The engine is tilted 62 degrees forward, resulting in several benefits. For starters, the positioning allows near vertical mounting of the throttle body for better intake port

positioning and shaping. The strong long stroke engine also facilitates better mass centralization thanks to its low angle, aiding handling and manoeuvrability.

The NC700X comes standard with a traditional six-speed manual gearbox, but those inclined to wanting the DCT/ABS model, which incorporates a dual clutch gearbox and anti-lock brakes will have to settle for this 6-speed manual transmission version.

The result? Critics may call this a scooter, but the seamless passing will come in handy for commuters.

Look beneath the NC700X's enduro-style bodywork, and you'll find a whole lot of nothing up top. Specifically, this bike's diamond-shaped steel frame is shaped so it has a low centre of gravity and a 214kg kerb weight. The seat height is a comfortable 830mm which will host the average rider of today.

Another added benefit of the setup? The mass centralized arrangement makes room for a storage compartment in place of where the fuel tank would be. Very cool feature! No more tank-bags, no more back-packs; just flip it open, dump your goods in there and off you go. Open this compartment where people are standing and you'll turn heads for sure.

It may not have superbike underpinnings, but the NC700X's mass centralization and high clearance help aid handling. The 41mm front fork isn't adjustable—after all, what were you expecting with such a low price? The its 152mm of travel help ensure versatility when it comes to street surfaces. The spring preload-adjustable Pro-Link rear single shock has 150mm of travel.

OK, it's not totally new—Aprilia's Mana has a similar setup—but the NC700X's 21-liter storage compartment is big enough to swallow a full-face helmet. The tank however holds 14-litres of fuel, don't let that upset you; I would expect most riders with little effort to be rewarded with up to 24.8km/l, although I achieved 22km/l on my performance testing that day. The tank is good for a typical 350km.

And speaking of storage, the NC700X offers a 45-litre top-box and 30-litre panniers. Other touring options include a tall windscreen, 12-volt power socket, LED fog light kit, and centre-stand. Service intervals are every 12 000km and the NC700X carries a 2-year/unlimited km warranty.

The NC700X, the perfect buy, just right in every aspect.

Priced at R64 999.00 - Incl. 14% VAT

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