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JULY 2011

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DOIN' TIME

SAYONARA!

PHOTOS: Andrea Wilson

HONDA NT700V-ABS

WRIST: Joe "15 Amp" Neric

MSRP (2010): \$10,999

MILES: 10,052-11,375

MPG: 43

MODS: AdMore lighting kit, BikeMaster battery, Nautilus Ear Cannon horn

The time was drawing near to return my long-term NT700V to Honda, but before I did, there were still a few things I wanted to try. First on the list: an AdMore lighting kit (\$129; www.admorelighting.com). I wish I'd installed this top case-mounted brake-light kit long ago; along with the larger saddlebag lids, it's a must-have. I was surprised by how bright the LEDs are, even at high noon. Installation was a little tricky, but far easier than changing the headlight bulb. Drilling a hole in the top case made me a little nervous, but AdMore supplies all the necessary hardware, wiring and even the drill bit. I was impressed with the illustrated instructions as well, since they seem to have been written by someone who had actually done the job before.

Next up: replacing the battery. Not because it died of natural causes, but because I'm a bonehead! When the NT failed to start one morning after I'd

accidentally left the key turned on, I hooked it up to a battery charger—but forgot to set it for 2 amps. After cooking the poor thing for 12 hours at 15 amps, I'm lucky nothing exploded! Good thing BikeMaster makes an inexpensive, OE-spec replacement (\$56.95; www.bikemaster.com) that fits perfectly. All I need now is for the guys around here to quit laughing about it...

On to the horn: Like most motorcycles, the NT's stock noisemaker is weak, so I replaced it with a 139-decibel Nautilus Ear Cannon (\$40; www.aerostich.com). Just don't forget to order the Plug-n-Play wiring harness (\$24). I really wanted the aftermarket horn to fit into the same spot where the stocker sat, but that wasn't going to happen. After fabricating a bracket, I bolted it to the frame behind the front fairing. Thanks for the tip, NT forum member Amorley (www.nt-owners.org); those photos really helped. I've always suspected a loud horn would be a worthy upgrade, and now I know it is!

Am I sorry to see the NT go back to Honda? Yes and no. While it has performed very well as a daily commuter, the lack of horsepower from its 700cc V-twin engine severely limits it as a tourer, particularly two-up. But the biggest obstacle to NT ownership may be its price: Equipped with the accessory top case, heated handgrips and the wind-deflector kit, it costs more than \$12,000—halfway to a Gold Wing, and three-quarters of the way to a multi-cylinder sport-tourer. On top of that, American Honda doesn't import some NT accessories such as



Blinded by the light! AdMore's aftermarket LED lighting kit fits Honda's NT700V accessory top case and any of Givi's offerings.



The stock horn (left) is no match for the Nautilus Ear Cannon (right). With 139 decibels on tap, it'll just about blast a hole in traffic!



No need to change the stock battery unless you're a bonehead and fry it. Fortunately, BikeMaster makes an affordable replacement.

the larger saddlebag lids and the stereo, so owners will have to order those from Europe.

Another NT forum member, Phil Tarman, brought up a good point: The NT is the only bike at this price point that has maintenance-free shaft drive and upright ergonomics. Duly noted, but chains are perfectly reliable nowadays and there are plenty of comfortable alternatives out there.

Don't get me wrong: The NT isn't a bad motorcycle; it's actually a really good one. It handles well, is mechanically bulletproof and eminently practical. Captain Sensible can also get 50 miles per gallon if you behave. If gas prices keep climbing, that alone could make it a great choice.

So, what's my next long-term? I'm not sure, but after a year on a pseudo-sport-tourer, Yamaha's new FZ8 naked bike is looking pretty damn sexy. **MC**