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Honda CX 500 Turbo: A series-production prototype

Lead

The Honda CX 500 Turbo should have been the spearhead for a new generation of motorcycle. Nevertheless, the CX500 Turbo proved to be one of the biggest flops in Honda's history...

The turbocharged two-wheeler was a typical child of the 80s: experimental, yet in practice somewhat erratic. After some investigations into supercharging, Honda's engineers turned to the automotive tonic of the 80s – turbocharging – to increase the excitement provided by the 500cc engine. 'Excitement' was one way of putting it; another was perfectly summarised by a journalist of the time: "The power comes on so suddenly that you'd best be pointed in the desired direction, because THAT is where you'll be heading with great alacrity." Needless to say, the lag-laden early days of turbocharging were no more forgiving to machinery with one driven wheel than they were to those with two or four.

However, when pointed true, the CX turbo was blisteringly fast on boost, and capable of 125mph without objection. With a capable rider astride who was fully aware of its quirks, it could put many sports cars of the time to bed – although the complex fuel-injection system reportedly had an insatiable thirst when tickling the tachometer.

Though fewer than 1,800 customers bought into the concept at the time, today the CX500 Turbo seems a more sensible proposition: while it was deeply flawed, and should by rights have stayed a prototype, therein lies its true charm and desirability.

Useful Links

A Honda CX 500 Turbo can currently be found in the stock of motorcycle specialist Motorrad Fuchs in the [Classic Driver Marketplace](#)

Photos: Motorrad Fuchs

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