

HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEST



PROJECT HONDA 700XX

Powered by
Duncan Racing

By the Staff of Dirt Wheels



PROJECT 700XX

□ Honda's 700XX is a beast. It's hard to compare this monster to anything else on the planet. It has lots of ponies and more than a handful of torque. It's comfortable and capable of going almost anywhere. However, it doesn't do anything great. If you ask the winner of the last two Baja 1000s, Wayne Matlock, you might get a different story. But, on the other hand, we wonder if Matlock will choose the big beast this year when Honda doesn't have a say in the matter because they will not be his sponsor.

In Baja, the beast is good. The 700XX is at home on long, straight, dirt roads and over nasty, rocky terrain. Baja—well, SoCal, Nevada and Arizona—has a lot of that. When we embarked on this project, we didn't want to build a machine that could win a big desert race, we wanted a machine we could use for exploring Baja and beyond. It has to be fast and powerful for high top speeds and high-altitude travel. It needed to be comfortable for long hours in the saddle with bulletproof suspension. We also wanted it to have a long range, good lights for night travel and a GPS for navigation.

DUNCAN RACING

To massage the Honda engine, we called on Duncan Racing for two reasons. The first is they know how to increase the horsepower and torque of any powerplant without creating a hard-to-ride animal. The second reason is for reliability. Duncan Racing builds some of the most reliable race and play engines on the planet.

For this project, they left the internals of the motor alone. What they did do is install one of their \$599, complete Fat Boy 4 Exhaust systems. This



The heavy 700XX even works well in the sand with the Duncan Racing upgrades. We slowed down the slow speed compression on the rear Elka shock to make it perform as well as a straight axle machine. You can see a complete test of a sand dune-equipped 700XX at www.dirtwheelsmag.com.

system has a large aluminum muffler and stainless steel head pipe. To match the increased airflow exiting the motor, the Duncan crew installed a Pro Design Pro Flow intake and air filter kit. This aluminum adapter plate increases airflow and allows you to clamp on any air filter you wish. The Pro Design filter unit is an easy-to-clean, foam style.

Now, you are not going to get more horsepower from increased airflow unless you increase the fuel supply as well. For this project, the machine was equipped with a \$799 programmable, multi-map-carrying Vortex ECU. On the pricey side, this thing is like a mini computer. It can change fuel and ignition timing, depending on the engine modifications you have done and type of riding you are doing. It also is equipped with a toggle switch that allows you to store two different ignition maps that you can try on the fly, which is perfect for

changes in altitude. The list of Duncan products on this beast also includes a chrome front bumper (\$179), steel braided brake lines (\$109), parking brake block-off plate (\$15) and brake line holders (\$40).

LONG DAY IN THE SADDLE

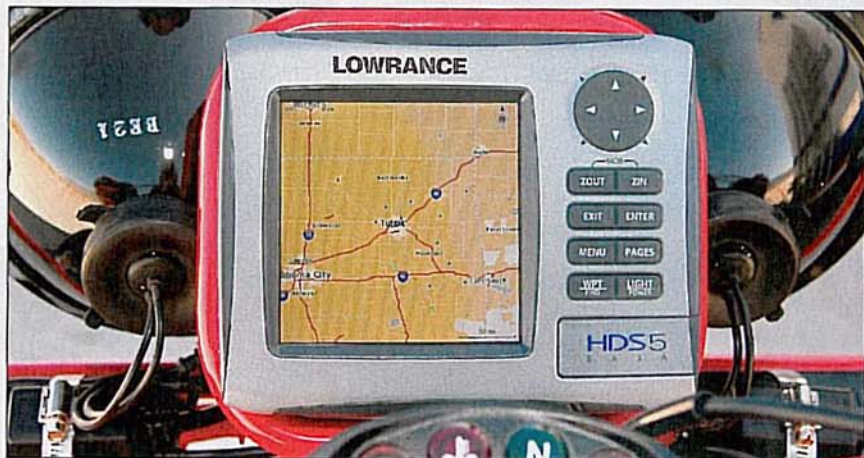
No matter if you are racing or trail riding, having a comfortable quad will make any riding experience



IMS tanks can be ordered with a standard, twist-on gas cap or with a dry brake, quick dump system. On this machine, it was pretty easy to install since the stock fuel pump is located outside of the tank.



In stock trim, Honda's 700XX has decent power. With the Duncan Racing Fat Boy 4 system, more ponies were unleashed without making the machine too loud.



We equipped this 700XX Trail Explorer with a huge Lowrance GPS unit. We could watch speed and track distance all while riding, day or night. This is the same unit many Trophy Trucks use in Baja racing. The mount was installed on the back of our Ricky Stator lights.

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CONTACT LIST

DUNCAN RACING(866) 379-7223,
www.duncanracing.com
ROLL DESIGN(760) 731-5920,
www.rolldesign.com
ELKA SUSPENSION(800) 557-0552,
www.elkasuspension.com
GPR(619) 661-0101,
www.gprstabilizer.com
IMS(800) 237-9906,
www.imsproducts.com
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DWT.....(800) RACERIM,
www.dwtracing.com
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www.omfperformance.com
MTA.....www.mta-la.com
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www.pwr-performance.com
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www.rickystator.com
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www.worksconnection.com
MOTION PRO.....(530) 642-9488,
www.worksconnection.com



The most unique thing about the two-wheel-drive 700XX is its independent rear suspension. Duncan Racing widened it by adding two-inch, aluminum wheel spacers and wide DWT wheels. During our testing, the extra ground clearance allowed us to dominate a local desert race.

Roll Design was the original aftermarket company to make A-arms and chassis for desert racing. On this machine, they supplied front arms, a steering stem and footpegs. These products provided a supple ride and a stable platform. The Baja-winning Elka shocks did an amazing job smoothing out our rough test area. ➤

more enjoyable. In stock trim, the 700XX is comfortable but comes at a cost to the handling department. The stock shocks are not fully adjustable, so finding a happy medium between a soft, supple ride and good cornering is impossible.

To correct the issue, we replaced the stock front A-arms with a set of two-inch wider Roll Design A-arms (\$1600) and a pair of Elka's fully adjustable shocks (\$1670). On the rear, two-inch MTA, aluminum wheel spacers (\$179) were added along with another pair of Elka shocks (\$1670). At the outer four corners, we used ITP XCT rubber mounted on DWT/OMF beadlock-equipped wheels. The wheels and tires are both bulletproof, but come at a price. The wheels and beadlocks alone run \$250 each for the rears and \$230 for the front pair.

The ITP tires were not as expensive. We used taller 23x7-10s up front at a cost of \$105 each and 22x11-10s out back at a cost of \$137 each. You might be wondering how we got away with running a ten-inch tire in the rear instead of the stock 11-inch size. The deep offset of the wheel along with the two-inch wheel spacer allowed for enough clearance for the 11-inch rear wheel.

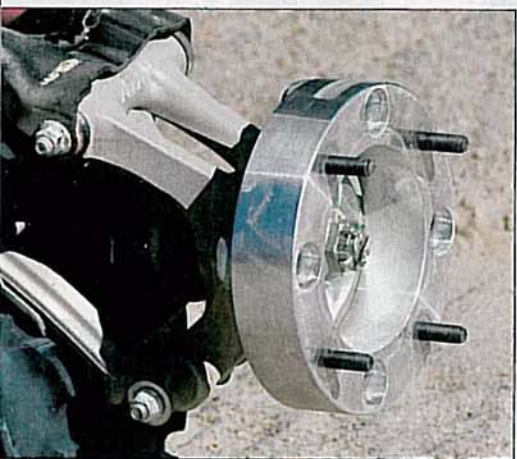


MORE

For the saddle, Quad Tech was commissioned to build an entirely new seat for this animal. They supplied the plastic pan, thicker foam and non-slip cover for a cost of \$350.

The seat butts up to a huge, 4.8-gallon IMS fuel tank priced at \$280. That's a big advantage over the stock tank that only carries three gallons. This tank is much easier to install than other fuel-injected ATVs like the Yamaha Raptor or KFX450, which use an in-tank fuel pump. On the Honda, the fuel pump is located on the chassis just in front of the engine.

For more chassis upgrades, we installed a set of \$200 Roll Design footpegs and \$200 aluminum heel guards. This is one of the best combos you can buy for any quad. The platform for your feet is huge, and the net heel guard keeps your foot in place no matter how rough the terrain is.



Two-inch-wide aluminum wheel spacers were installed on the rear of this machine to widen its stance. The Elka shocks added preload to offset the increased leverage.

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Forward of the aforementioned fuel tank, we installed a \$329 Roll Design steering stem and a GPR steering stabilizer. The new stem now accepts oversized handlebars with rubber mounts, so we installed a \$95 Rental ATV bend bar and ditched the stock steel bars. A Motion Pro twist throttle (\$70) was installed on the right side, and a \$125 Works Connection clutch perch and lever was installed on the left side. Both sides were protected with a set of Power Madd hand guards at \$70.

Any expedition we do always includes riding at night. We had Duncan Racing build a custom light bar to house a set of \$895 Ricky Stator eight-inch, HID lights. The \$900 light bar is a two-piece design, so you can remove the large lights for daytime riding if you wish. You would hate to ruin an expensive set of lights tooling around camp and crashing.

That light bar also housed a \$628, Lowrance HD-5 GPS system. This big unit can be read even while you are riding. It displays maps, speed, mileage and a variety of other functions. While racing, we glance down at it to make sure we are on the right trail or to see how many miles we are from the next pitstop. On the trail, we use it to mark exciting trails or other points of interest we want to tell others about.

EXPEDITION

We not only rode this machine on all of our usual trails, we entered it in a small desert race to see how it would fare being ridden at a competitive pace. The results were good. We dominated the small field at the www.altavistaevents.com California City, California, race. The biggest asset the 700XX had over the field was straight line speed, stability and ground clearance. We made several passes in a very rough, rocky section that had most other riders slowing down and dodging obstacles.

On the trails, the machine is holding up great. We are able to get about 75 miles out of a tank of fuel at high speeds. Those speeds are well over 80 mph with the motor improvements.

The quad is still a beast. We didn't shave any weight off it for sure. In fact, we added about 100 pounds with lights, beadlocks, heavier tires and a thick, \$125, aluminum, AC Racing belly pan. We set up the Elka shocks for comfort. The machine is pillow-smooth and still corners like a straight axle quad. Plus, it soaks up

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unexpected G-outs with total confidence.

Traction on this beast is better than any 2WD quad on the planet. The independent rear suspension and ITP XCT tires allow it to climb anything. It also works well in sand without wandering. After about 500 miles of testing, the tires are hardly worn and have yet to allow a puncture.

About the only thing that is missing on this machine is additional storage for tools, tire repair kits or even a bottle of water. We wish the aftermarket would come up with some creative ways of adding storage to sport machines. Until they do, we will just have to rely on a hydration pack or backpack.

Whether you are into racing Baja or exploring the desert or even the woods, this machine is capable of doing it at high or low speeds in total comfort and is ultra-reliable. Duncan Racing can do this with your Honda 700XX or other brand sport machine. Contact them by calling (866) 379-7223. You can also see their parts catalog online at www.duncanracing.com. □