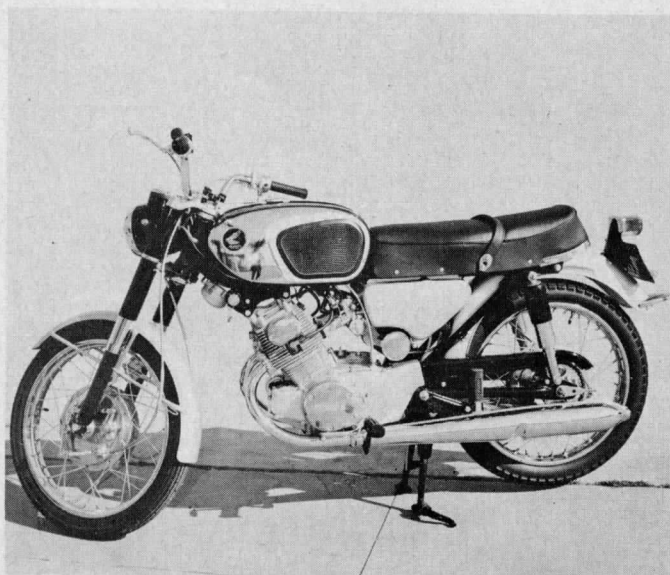
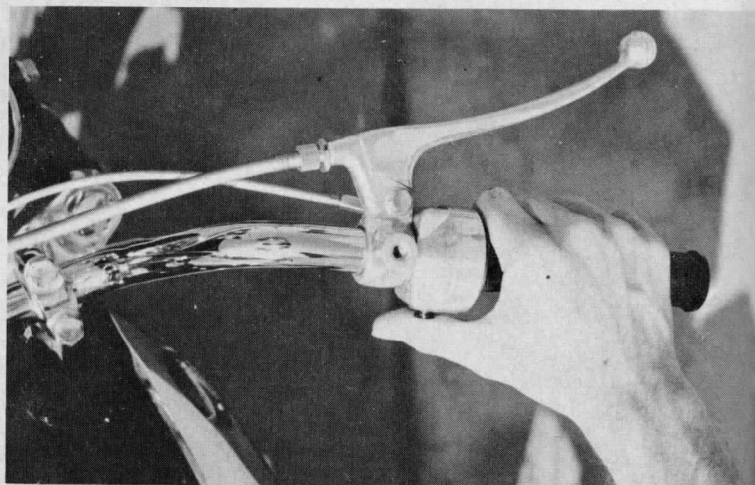
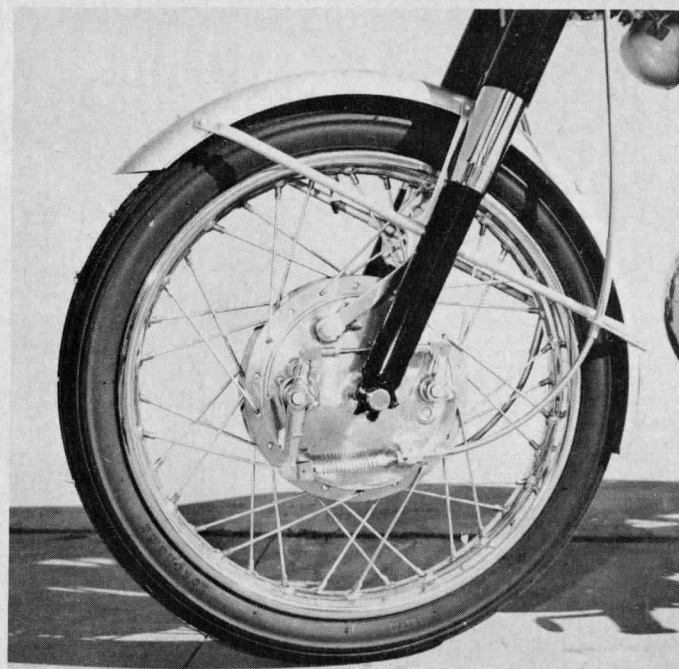
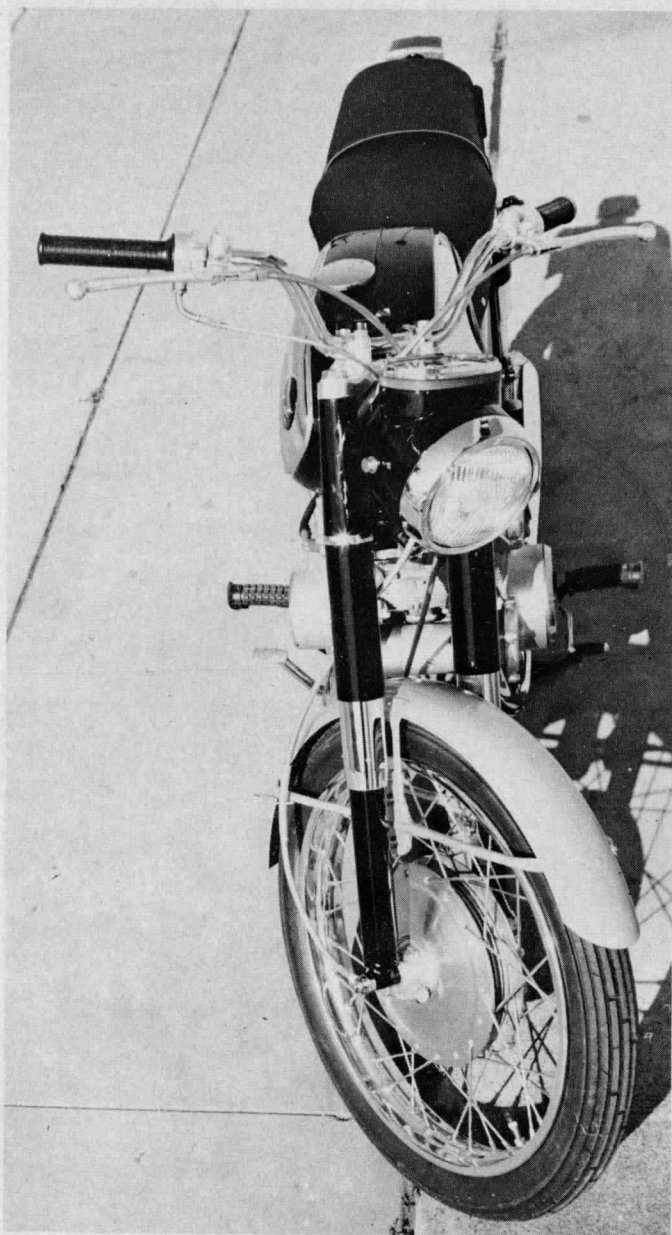
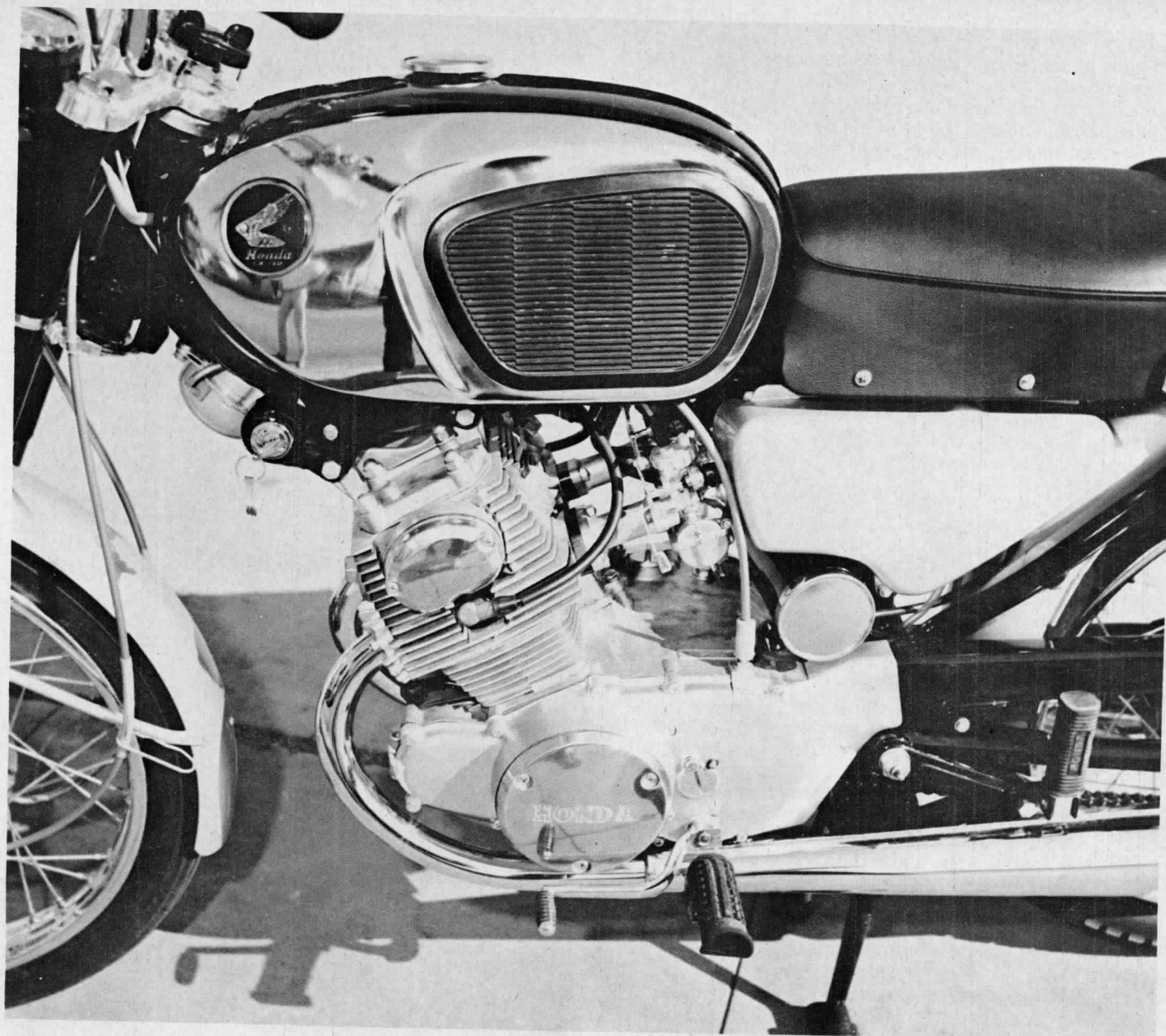




HONDA'S NEW CB-160 has frequently been described as a "Baby Super Hawk," but while it does bear a close superficial resemblance to its big brother, there are substantial differences inside. For instance: where the 305 Super Hawk has a 180-degree crankshaft, the new CB-160 has a "360-degree" crankshaft — like most other vertical twins. This would seem to indicate a certain confusion of engineering opinion around Honda, for we have been told that the 180-degree crank configuration (which has one piston rising as the other moves down) is supposed to give better balance. And, of course, it is definitely true that the 360-degree crank gives even firing intervals, while the 180-degree crank does not. It may be that balance is more important than even power pulses in the bigger engine. However, the CB-160 is exceedingly smooth; smoother than the Super Hawk — though naturally it is not pushing as much piston weight around.

Although there is a difference in crankpin orientation, the CB-160 is like the CB-77 in one regard: the crankshaft is pressed together, and runs in four bearings (three roller; one ball) with the camshaft drive leading up from between the center pair of main bearings. This drive is through a single chain, which runs up and over a sprock-



et in the center of the camshaft. The CB-77 has its camshaft in two pieces, and supported by four ball-bearings, but the CB-160's camshaft is a single piece, and runs in journal bores machined right into the aluminum cylinder head end covers.

All of the major castings in the CB-160 are of aluminum, and the block has shrink-fit cylinders. It has been Honda's practice (in the CB-77 twins, for instance) to cast an iron "skull" into the combustion chambers, and cut the valve seats in this skull. However, in the CB-160, normal inserted valve seats are employed. The cylinder head also features long manifold pipes out to the carburetors, and this seems to be the trend at Honda. The CB-77 has its carburetors bolted right up against the head, with the rubber air cleaner hoses providing the necessary tuned length; the CB-160 arrangement impresses us as being somewhat better.

Honda has used gear primary drives before, but in the CB-160 this is a double system. In most non-racing gear-type primary drives, helical gears are used because they are less noisy than straight-cut gears, but straight-cut gears are slightly more efficient. The Honda gets the advantages of both types by having two sets of straight-cut gears, side by side, paired with the teeth staggered so that

CYCLE WORLD ROAD TEST



HONDA CB-160

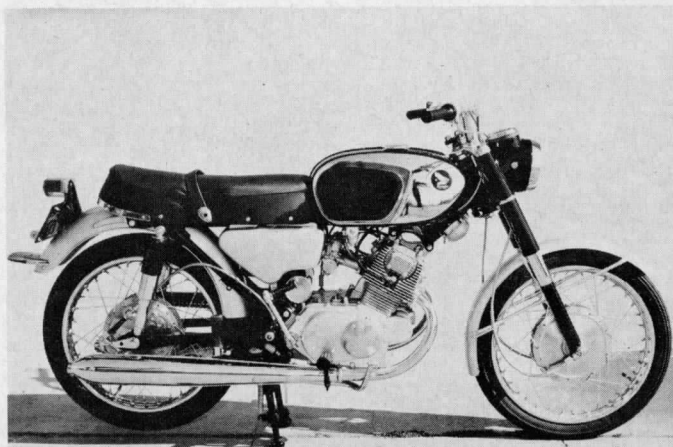
those on one pair of gears or the other are more than 50-percent in mesh. This makes the primary drive more quiet and also gives it better durability.

As in all Hondas, the transmission is in unit with the crankcase, and shares the same oil supply. The gears are in constant mesh, and moved through the engagement sequence by forks coupled to a slotted drum in the usual fashion. The ratio staging is typically Honda, and so is the transmission's occasional reluctance to drop into the right gear at the right time. Experienced Honda riders develop a knack for nursing the transmission when it develops a fit of stickiness — which is a very good thing, because such fits seem to be inherent in the breed.

Even in such things as frame design, the CB-160 shows the influence of lessons learned in racing. The CB-160 has a frame much like that of a Super Hawk, but the tubes that brace the steering head and pick up the engine's cylinder head mounting lugs are disposed in a manner very reminiscent of Honda's "duplex" racing frames. Also reminiscent of the racing Hondas is the CB-160's handling, which is really excellent. Not all touring-type Hondas have handled particularly well, and even the Super Hawk, which is very good in this respect, isn't the equal of its little brother. Some CB-160s saw action in a local (here in California) production-motorcycle race recently, and in addition to the expected comments about the machine's speed, riders were super-enthusiastic about the bike's handling. And, any motorcycle that handles well under road racing conditions must be rated as absolutely flawless for any touring use.

We cannot tell you just how impressive the Honda CB-160 is to everyone who knows motorcycles and has ridden it. Somehow, Honda engineers have gotten the engine balance factor matched perfectly to the frame, etc., and while there is a slight amount of vibration at low speeds, the bike is turbine smooth at 55-60 mph. As one might expect of an engine that has its power peak up at 10,000 rpm, the CB-160 is a trifle flat at low revs, but it turns so freely, and with such little feeling of strain, that you will not feel hesitant about using plenty of revs.

Starting is by push-button, but there is a kick-start lever as well. Cold-starts require plenty of choke, and you will find that warm-up is slow, but the engine will start, every time, and that is the most important consideration. Actually, one of the most appealing aspects of the electric starting is that if you stall the engine in the middle of a busy intersection, a poke at the start button will get you going again. No need to fiddle the transmission into neutral, kick furiously (in a great sweat of embarrassment) and finally dab into gear again before moving away; just a touch of the button and you can ride smartly away from all of those people who are already reaching for the horn. •



SPECIFICATIONS

List Price	\$530
Frame Type	tubular, backbone/stressed engine
Suspension, front	telescopic forks
Suspension, rear	swing-arm
Tire size, front	2.50-18
Tire size, rear	2.75-18
Engine type	vertical twin, sohc
Bore & stroke	1.97 x 1.61
Displacement, cu. in.	9.82
Displacement, cu. cent.	161
Compression ratio	8.5:1
Bhp @ rpm	16.5 @ 10,000
Carburetion	(2) 20mm Keihin
Ignition	battery and coil
Fuel capacity, gal.	2.5
Oil capacity, pts.	2
Oil System	wet sump
Starting system	electric self-start

POWER TRANSMISSION

Clutch Type	multi-disc, wet plate
Primary drive	dual gear
Final drive	single-row chain

Gear ratio, overall: 1

4th	9.14
3rd	11.6
2nd	15.6
1st	24.3

DIMENSIONS, INCHES

Wheelbase	51.0
Saddle height	30.6
Saddle width	10.0
Foot-peg height	11.7
Ground clearance	6.5
Curb weight, lbs.	276

PERFORMANCE ACCELERATION

0-60 mph, in seconds	12.3
Standing 1/4 mile	18.6
Speed Reached	69

**HONDA
CB-160**

