

Honda 599



Above: The 599 offers no real wind protection, a serious drawback, if high speeds are part of your everyday riding. And, although the instrumentation looks basic, it is complete and very readable. Note the rectangular backbone tube connecting to the steering head, basic but effective.



Above: The two-piston front brakes stop very well and give good control feel but suffered from chatter during testing.



Above: The seating is well shaped but reasonably comfortable for no more than 100 miles.



Right: A single high-mounted muffler gives lots of cornering clearance. The steel box-section swingarm saves money, while the fat 180/55 tire was added for the American market.



Left: The headlight looks basic, but is actually a clever dual lens design, using two 55w bulbs, for surprisingly good illumination and longer life. The blunt shape of the lens actually provides some rider wind protection at elevated speeds.

TESTERS' LOG

It's good to see more choices become available in mid-sized bikes. Honda's reworked-F3-powered 599 has some nice features and is very refined in many aspects, but misses the mark in others. It fits me reasonably well, and allows you to feel a part of the bike—at the cost of an almost sportbike-like tight fit between seat and pegs. I personally found the seat good for many comfortable highway miles, its slight buzz in the handlebars not objectionable and the images in the mirrors are reasonably steady. What vibration the 599 does have is manifested mainly in the seat and pegs. With my riding ranging between sea level and 3,000', I found the carburetion spot on. It's amazing what can now be done with sophisticated carbs. But I was surprised that the 599 got consistently better fuel mileage than the fuel injected FZ6—a big plus in its favor for me. My biggest disappointment was the mediocre suspension, front and rear. I don't expect suspension with infinitely adjustable pre-load and compression damping settings on this type of bike. But, it would be nice to have a front fork that didn't behave as if it were clapped out. While the 599 is,

for the most part, a pleasant, reasonably well behaved bike, I have a tough time justifying the additional \$600 price tag without the additional features found on the FZ6. —Walt Fulton

Honda's 599 is a terrific motorcycle in my book. Its handling never fails to bring a smile to my face, and its power is more than adequate to deal with any passing situation. And I could tell, just riding it to the shop for its dyno testing, that it would have more mid-range than the Yamaha. It's very smooth running, too, with less overall engine vibration. Plus, its transmission and seat are clearly superior to the FZ6's. And, despite the complete absence of any windshield, it isn't insufferable to do 50 miles on the freeway at high speeds running side-by-side with the FZ6, either.

But, why Honda chose to charge a \$600 premium for a bike that should cost less, and isn't as fully equipped, is beyond me. I really like the 599, but I just can't recommend it at that price. My advice: Keep an eye out for dealer discounts in the future.

—Dave Searle

2004 Honda 599

SPECIFICATIONS AND PERFORMANCE DATA

ENGINE

Type: Liquid-cooled, DOHC inline four, four valves per cylinder
 Valvetrain: ..shim under bucket tappet
 Size:599cc
 Bore/stroke:65.0mm x 45.2mm
 Comp. ratio:12.0:1
 Carburetion:4 x 34mm flat-slide CV
 Exhaust:4-1

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission:6-speed
 Final drive:#525 chain
 RPM @ 65 mph/redline ..5160/13,000

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase:55.9"
 Rake/trail25.0°/3.9"
 Ground clearance:5.2"
 Seat height:30.5"
 GVWR:825 lbs.
 Wet weight:446.0 lbs.
 Carrying capacity:379 lbs.

SUSPENSION

Front:41mm-slider telescopic fork, non adjustable, 4.3" travel
 Rear:monoshock, 7-position preload adjustable 5.0" travel

BRAKES

Front:..Dual full-floating 296mm discs with two twin piston, single action calipers
 Rear: single 220mm disc with single piston, single action caliper

TIRES & WHEELS

Front:120/70ZR17 Michelin Pilot radial on 3.50" x 17" wheel
 Rear:180/55ZR17 Michelin Pilot radial on 5.50" x 17" wheel

ELECTRICS

Battery:12V, 9AH Maintenance Free
 Ignition: ..Computer-controlled digital with electronic advance
 Headlight: single 55/55W

FUEL

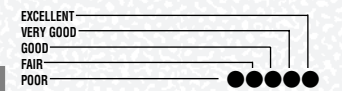
Tank capacity:4.5 gal.
 High/low/avg. mpg:51.0/43.6/47.7



PERFORMANCE

Measured top speed136.2 mph
 0-1/4 mile11.57 sec.
 @ 115.51 mph
 0-60 mph3.71 sec.
 0-100 mph8.64 sec.
 60-0 mph116.5'
 Power to Weight Ratio1:5.55
 Speed @ 65 mph indicated60.5

M/C RATING SYSTEM



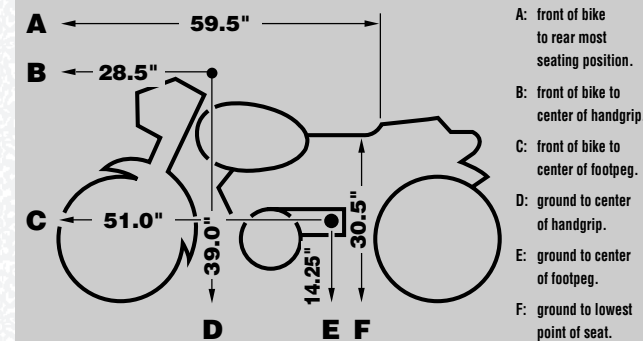
Middleweight Standard

Engine	●●●●○
Transmission	●●●●○
Suspension	●●●●○
Brakes	●●●●○
Handling	●●●●○
Styling	●●●●○
Riding Impression	●●●●○
Instruments/Controls	●●●●○
Attention to Detail	●●●●○
Value	●●●●○

OVERALL RATING



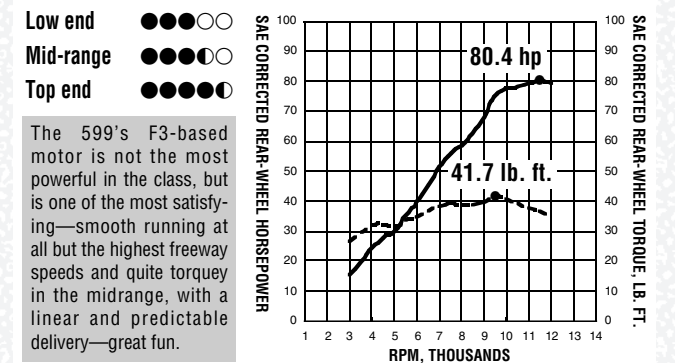
ERGONOMICS TEMPLATE



MISCELLANEOUS

Instruments:.....Analog speedometer, tachometer, water temperature, digital odometer, tripmeter and clock
 Indicators: ..Neutral, oil pressure; low fuel, high beam
 MSRP:\$7099
 Routine service interval:.....4000 mi.
 Valve adj. interval:.....16,000 mi.
 Warranty: one-year unlimited mileage, plus one-year membership in Honda Rider's Club
 Colors:Asphalt or Yellow

DYNAMOMETER DATA



TEST NOTES

PICKS

- Excellent handling
- Great around town power and surprisingly strong mid-range
- Great fun to ride

PANS

- Lack of wind protection at higher speeds
- Suspension that's a little bouncy and underdamped
- Too expensive compared to most of its competition

STANDARD MAINTENANCE

Item	Time	Parts	Labor
Oil & Filter	0.3	\$13.19 + \$9.95	\$18.00
Air Filter	0.4	\$33.72	\$24.00
Valve Adjust	4.0	\$52.48	\$240.00
Battery Access	0.2	MF	\$12.00
Final Drive	0.2		\$12.00
R/R Rear Whl.	0.4		\$24.00
Change Plugs	1.0	\$48.00	\$60.00
Synch Carbs	1.2		\$72.00
Totals	7.7	\$157.34	\$462.00

Note: MCN Labor rate changed to \$60/hr. from \$54/hr. in May 2002