



Overweight Honda Brute II gives a handle for rugged off-road use in utility work.

## The BRUTE: 2-Cycle Engine with 4-Wheel Drive

By Joe Smith

Some of us well know for their rugged, work-like look, but many people don't realize they also build their own fun. This is the case with the Honda BRUTE, recently introduced in the United States. This lightweight, Jeep-like machine could prove to be one of the most popular off-road recreational vehicles to come along in some time.

In size it's about half that of average-sized four-wheel drive vehicles and it weighs only 1,600 pounds. Power comes from a two-stroke, four-cylinder, air-cooled two-cylinder engine. It has a displacement of only 100cc, and produces 20 horsepower.

Like most modern two-stroke engines, the Brute has a separate oil tank and a system of spraying oil to the engine (called Pre-Mix). On the operator instrument panel there's an oil light that is always on. As the quantity of oil decreases, it glows brighter. When it gets really bright, you will know it's time to refill.

Starting is remarkably easy, even in cold, wet weather. Pull the choke up, step on the accelerator, and hit the key. It starts every time. It's also fairly easy to brake, you just step on a foot pedal. Honda's two-speed gearbox has three provisions for its two gears. Big

kick just says "It is for that situation, press to about a 20-percent increase."

The Brute's 20-horsepower two-cylinder gives you 10 speeds forward and two in reverse. There's the usual "always" gearbox, good for about 55 mph. Behind the primary shifter is a slightly little lever to control the two-wheel drive. It has a high and low range. High range is good for good off-road terrain, it has a 4-mph top speed.

If things get a little rougher, pull it back into low range. This is very good to climb mountains, although the top speed through the gears here is low. With gears in low it's much easier to climb hills. It's about 200 or 300-watt drive.

Steering is by front and rear tie rod springs. It's a bit, but not too noticeable. Although the lowest point of the Brute is only 35 inches above the ground, the light, air-cooled engine and other vital parts are well out of danger. This type of engine can be set high in the vehicle and does not need a muffler.

Brute's interior is well done but simple. Gauge consist of a speedometer, which can be an optional 80 mph, an odometer, and a fuel gauge. Also, there are oil and generator



Seven top and side windows keep your vision wide. Fully enclosed top is available. Roll-over protection. Brute's weight: 1,600 lbs.



Spring-loaded rubber seats are long-gone and large doors and openings in Brute's simple but attractive for a 20-hp engine.

lights, and fenders for the chain, sprockets, and belts. It looks plain but well-crafted steel is on the passenger's side.

Several rubber plugs are provided for your drinking of water. As long as the water tap is closed it's all Brute's will have right-hand drive on. It's almost certainly a changeover to left-hand drive.

While highway cruising isn't one of the Brute's strong points, and it's not intended to be—the vehicle wants more you can't do it. High gear range is given for back trails, running over hill and dale, and general fun. With the gear, four-speed gearbox there are few places you can't go. Where things get really rough, dismount the low range. It makes you really uncomfortable.

Standard tires are 400-16 "dual" type. An optional wide rim wheel combination is really effective, but the thing you'll find is the body work and will show a dirt that is not the opportunity when. An extension of the hood might be a useful add-on for owners.

Honda's Brute should find an excellent home in America. It's well made, practical, and—at a base price of \$1,200—should be hard to beat. ☐