

## CHOPPERS PRODUCT TEST

# BARNETT CLUTCH FOUR THE HONDA

**GOOD AND GRABBY**

By the Editors of CHOPPERS MAGAZINE

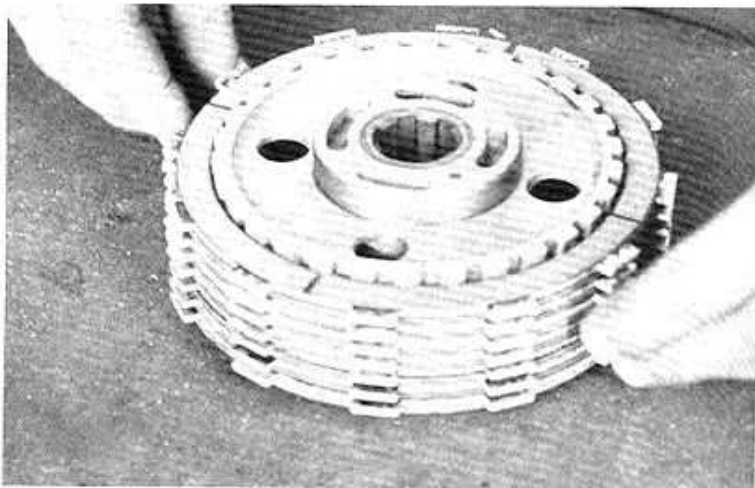
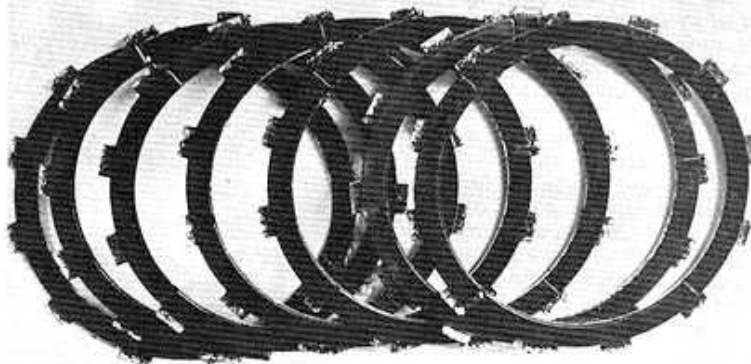
Part of building a high-performance engine is reinforcement. After all, when you start increasing horsepower, you decrease the ability of stock components to handle the increased load.

With a Honda Four, one of the first areas needing reinforcement is the clutch. Particularly the clutch springs. Honda decreased the number of coils-per-inch in 1972, so that any weak-fingered rider would have no trouble workin' through the gears.

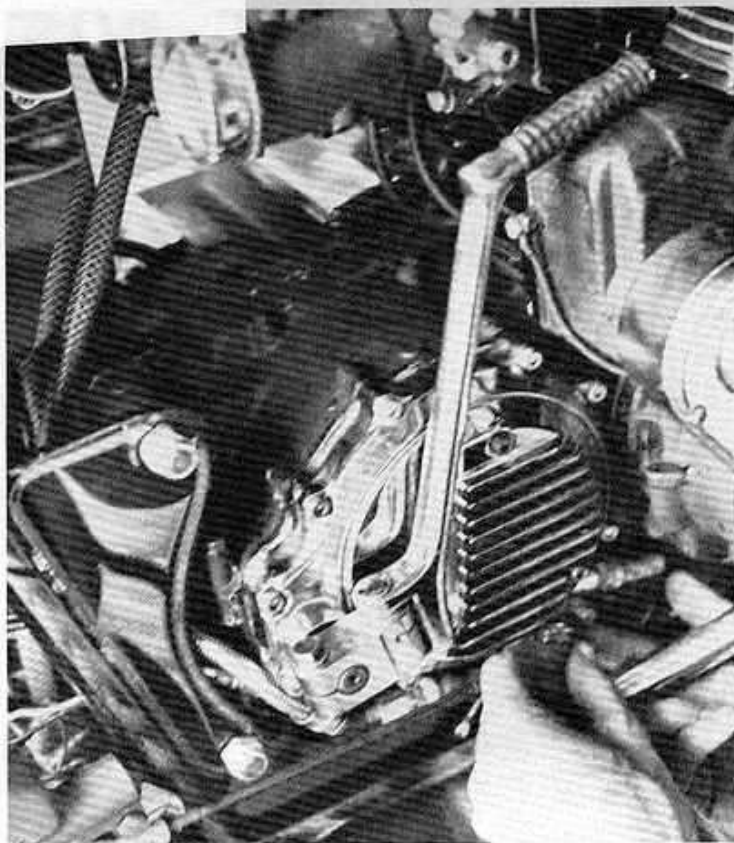
Any squirrel, though, could easily get the clutch to spinning merrily on one half, while the other sat there sullenly.

Over a year and 10,000 miles ago, we installed a Barnett clutch on our Project Honda Four. This, we felt, would compensate for the increased output of the Yoshimura 812 engine. To make sure the Barnett plates contacted the metal plates, Honda 350 clutch springs were installed.

We realized that the clutch would be under an undue amount of strain from the beginning. In addition to the hot rod engine, the rear sprocket was decreased in size from 48 teeth to 43 teeth. This was, of course, an absurd idea — a rigid-framed, girder-front-ended machine would be obviously unsafe at the maximum speed attainable with a 9000 rpm redline



*Installation of the Barnett clutch on the Honda Four . . .*



... works out to about a half-hour job — and well worth it.

and the super-low gearing.

But what the hell.

The first and only real problem came when the bike was first run. After being run for 15 minutes, the clutch plates swelled, until there was some drag. Without stopping, the clutch was adjusted out at the lever, which pulled the actuating arm over-center, and left us with half a clutch.

With no tools, the bike was

crash-boxed home. At home, the problem was corrected.

After a fairly sane break-in, the bike was subjected to daily use, ranging from hungover commuting to in-the-bag speed passes from bar to bar. It was used on weekend runs, parts-chasing, photo sessions and all the rest of the butchery a magazine machine gets put to.

The Barnett clutch gave us no

problems. It was, as expected, slightly draggy cold. But after five minutes of riding, no problem was experienced, other than one. It seemed that neutral, always a little hard to find on Hondas, was even harder. Not that we considered that a problem.

And time passed.

After 9000 miles, the clutch required its first adjustment — an absolutely astonishing degree of performance. One half-turn on the clutch rod was all that it took. Then the cover went back on, and on down the road.

At 10,000 miles, the projected period of test, the clutch was removed and miked. A brand-new Barnett fiber plate miked at .037-inch. The Barnett, with 10,000 miles of slipping off the line, was .033-inch. Projecting that figure out to the need for replacement, it was theorized that another 15,000 to 20,000 miles of hard usage in that hard-driven, hot rod bike could have been gotten before the clutch would need replacement.

We consider this superior performance on a stock engine, and truly wonderful on a modified engine. If we were Consumer's Union, the Barnett clutch would rate as a Best Buy.

**PRODUCT SUMMARY** — Fairly inexpensive unit. With larger springs, corrects one of the 750 Honda's biggest failings. Easily installed. Requires a little care in adjustment. No problems experienced during first 9000 miles of hard usage. At 10,000 miles and removal, the unit showed very minor wear. We consider the Barnett clutch pack to be **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

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