

Two's Company

What a beaut little engine! When we were looking for alternatives to our electric outboards recently, Honda Qld Manager, Ray Barnes, mentioned that he had the first of the new 2 hp Honda 4-strokes coming through.

"Would you like to try one?" he asked. "Sure would!" we replied, with fingers crossed . . . but **two** hp?

Really, would it power anything sufficiently to overcome a fast flowing current in a backwater creek or estuary? Would it have the power to run an inflatable or a tinnie in a fishing situation? We felt some real concern about the little engine's performance. Two hp? Crikey, gimme a can of baked beans, and most blokes I know can generate that much horsepower before the coffee !

Ray duly turned up with the package, and after its initial pre-delivery service, we headed for our 3.5 m Horizon fishing boat. This boat normally runs a 15 hp Johnson or Honda outboard.

In this case, a 2 hp outboard seemed ridiculously small, and there were plenty of derisive comments as we clamped it onto the transom.

We launched the boat, pulled the starter cord on the little Honda, and it



started immediately. It has that sort of flat, raspy 4-stroke sound that all these little 4-strokes have, and *whamo!* The first of the really neat technological features became apparent.

Honda have built this outboard with a centrifugal clutch. The engine thus (by definition) then starts in "neutral" (or nothing, to be more accurate) and stays there until you increase the revs, at which point the centrifugal clutch starts to take up at about 1200 revs, and away you go!

And boy oh boy ! Does this little mother go! We couldn't believe it - for a 2 hp engine, it is ridiculously

strong, and drove the Horizon 3.5 with both Ruth and I onboard to 5.5 knots - so don't worry about overcoming any current - with this little engine on the back, most inflatables are going to plane !

Design Notes: Let's quote from the blurb that comes with it.

"The new Honda BF 2 has been designed as an environmentally friendly, lightweight and extremely fuel efficient outboard. It's powered by Honda's new M4 4-stroke engine with an overhead valve design that further minimises exhaust fumes and provides

emission levels that are better than EPA requirements for the year 2006. Honda has designed it for canoes, small yachts, tenders, auxiliaries or cartoppers. It's easily stowed, light to carry and very simple to operate".

The features include:

- Centrifugal clutch for safer operation
- Economical, single cylinder 57 cc engine
- Maintenance free
- electronical ignition
- Oil level inspection window
- Self contained (integral) 1 litre fuel tank
- 360 degree steering
- Low maintenance, air cooled engine

4-Stroke Engine Benefits:

- Long life reliability
- No mixing of fuel and oil
- No oil or smoke discharge
- No pollution fouling
- Up to twice as far, per litre, compared to a 2-stroke engine
- Quick reliable starts

It's available with a short or long shaft for different transoms, and because it has a one hand control of the throttle "gearshift" and steering, it's really easy to use in those situations where you have to steer the tinnie with one hand, and fish with the other.

Because of the centrifugal clutch, it works like a dream in a fishing environment because if

Honda's grunty li'l 2hp 4-Stroker released

you let the throttle go, it automatically goes back to "neutral".

The centrifugal clutch is a fantastic idea in a tiny engine, and the only drawback we could see with it concerned (ironically!) its speed when the clutch is engaged - trout fishermen who would love to use this engine off canoes and small tinnies will find the basic in-gear speed of the 2 hp is probably a bit too fast for flat fish and very slow lures.

However, the answer is that you just drop the clutch in and out of gear by just winding the throttle on and off as you need it.

Sounds much worse than it is in practice - it really is a very sweet little engine to use and absolutely ideal for small creek fishing and trout fishing situations.

Honda Marine advise that it will be on sale throughout Australia in December/January and has a recommended retail price of \$899.

F&B



Attention to detail is excellent; simplicity the keynote. Note wide poly underbody - plastics are used extensively. It is childishly simple to use, and offers gutsy performance with quite heavy loads. Left Below: Ruth highlights the lugs it must lay on when it is stored.



and runs on less than the smell of an oily rag !