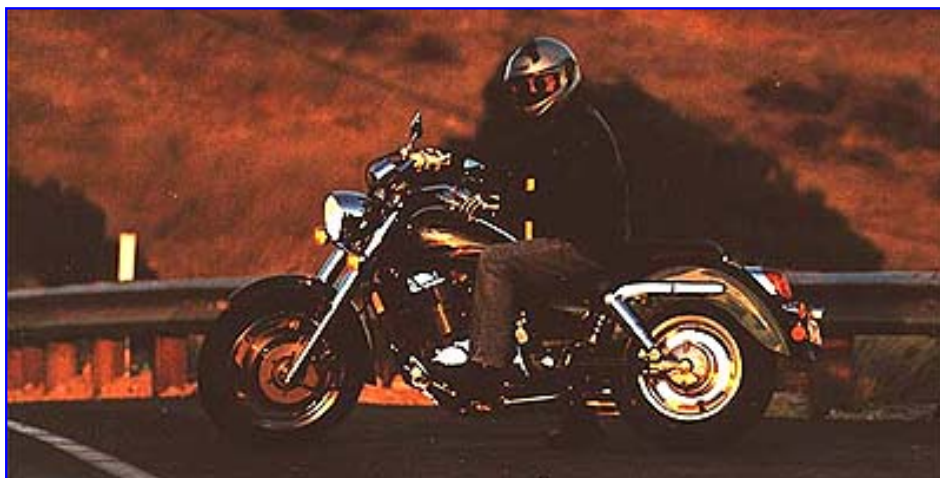


2000 Honda Shadow Sabre



By [Motorcycle Online Staff](#)

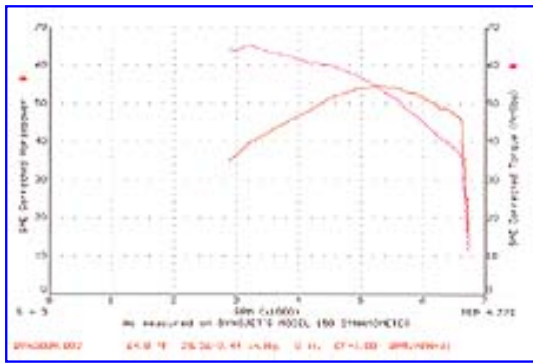
Los Angeles, January 12, 2000 -- Let's face it, the Year 2000 Honda Shadow Sabre's 54 horsepower at the rear wheel and 65 foot-pounds of torque, while very respectable, is not exactly the stuff upon which 21st Century high-performance dreams are built.

Let's put these numbers into perspective: The power figures for the liquid-cooled, 1099cc dual-offset-pin V-twin engine are comparable to the output from other powerplants 400cc larger. A 1998 Suzuki Intruder 1500 LC we dynoed pumped out 57.8 hp at the rear wheel, and the carbureted 1998 Kawasaki Vulcan 1500 ran a 53.6 hp at 4500 rpm. While it's fair to mention that the Vulcan now offers a fuel-injected model that probably boasts higher horsepower figures, the basic 1500 Classic is still carbureted and the Intruder hasn't undergone any significant mechanical upgrades since its introduction. What this means is that the new Honda Shadow Sabre, while down on displacement, will run with the big boys.



The Sabre won't shy away from a spirited ride in the twisties.

The Sabre is tuned for top-end horsepower and mid-level grunt, with 65.1 lbs/ft of torque at 3200 rpm and 54.5 bhp at 5300 rpm. The rubber-mounted, three-valves-per-cylinder, SOHC engine is the same as the Shadow Sprint's (identical bore and stroke, compression ratio and carburetion), the boost in power resulting from adjustments in ignition and valve timing. Essentially the Sabre, which replaces the Shadow ACE, qualifies as Honda's performance custom, the Valkyrie



Max horsepower: 54.5 hp @ 5300 rpm.
Max torque: 65.1 lbs/ft @ 3200 rpm.
Dyno courtesy of Crago Racing.

notwithstanding. While the engine breathes through somewhat restrictive pipes that make the Sabre too quiet for a custom, it moves. With a relatively light claimed dry weight of 573.2 pounds, the 54.5 ponies give the Sabre a little giddy-up: We got the Sabre up to 115 mph indicated on the speedometer before prudently backing off. Even so, the motor felt like it had some room for a little more.

With a wheelbase of 64.6

inches, the Sabre has neutral handling characteristics, turning more like a standard than a custom. The seat height is 27.2 inches, the lowest of a Shadow 1100. The drag-bike-style seat and handlebars contribute to a sportier look and feel. Ground clearance, often minimal on customs, is excellent. And, you'll need the additional clearance because the Sabre can be ridden aggressively through corners. The chassis and suspension consist of a traditional tubular steel frame, a non-adjustable, 41mm front fork with 4.7 inches of travel and preload-adjustable, dual Showa rear shocks with 3.9 inches of travel. The Sabre strikes a good balance between handling and comfort. The ride is plush and the handling is tight, particularly for a custom. Also assisting with the handling characteristics are the wide, 18-inch, 120mm tire up front and a 15-inch, 170mm tire out back. Granted, this isn't a sport bike, so the Sabre doesn't exactly flick into turns and stay tight throughout, but for a cruiser-styled motorcycle, this is one of better handing stock customs we have ridden.



Any self-respecting performance bike should offer a dual front disc option.



Damn photo scanner loses brightness and contrast in the scanning process. You should see the actual photo. It's pretty cool. Trust us.

MO is of the opinion that any motorcycle that deems itself a performance bike should come equipped with dual front disc brakes. Unfortunately Honda does not offer a dual disc set-up either as stock or as an accessory option. The Shadow Sabre comes with only one 316 mm disc with a two-piston caliper up front and a 276 mm disc with a single-piston caliper out back. Even so, the brakes are more than adequate for this motorcycle, enough for just about any braking situation. Still, remember to use the rear brake as well. The front brake alone squeezed hard might not be enough in some situations.

The Shadow Sabre's accessory package is Honda's most extensive. Standard are aluminum footpegs, three-spoke cast aluminum wheels and polished aluminum handlebar switch housing and triple

clamps. Available accessories include lots of chrome and billet items such as floorboards and footpegs, sidecovers, triple clamp covers and handlebar levers as well as a chrome backrest, leather saddlebags and more. In fact, the only significant cosmetic accessory missing from Honda's catalog is a windscreen. Also missing among the chrome and billet doo-dads are performance accessories, although that is not unusual for Japanese manufacturers. Want to make this quiet motorcycle roar like a hot-rod? Thinking of bumping up the power 10 or so ponies? Believe a two-into-one exhaust system would look oh-so-trick? Well, you'll have to look at the aftermarket.



Left side view of the bike. As if you couldn't tell.



A view from the right rear and the restrictive pipes. Imagine what this could look like with a 2-into-1 megaphone pipe. Cool.

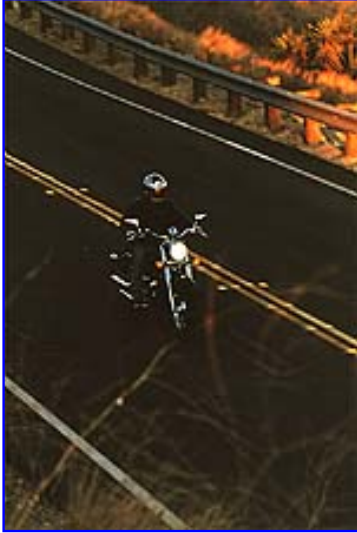
With a high quality paint job, the Shadow Sabre is a good looking motorcycle, although, in our opinion, the fuel tank decals are a bit cheesy. Honda reports that their R&D Americas department only went through 10 or so design sketches and one clay model before final mock-up of the Shadow Sabre, rather than the 50 or 60 design sketches that many model designs must undergo. While not a "parts bin" bike, the speed in which the new Sabre seems to have run through the design process shows -- it isn't exactly unique or striking, and at a distance it looks very similar to the Magna, and just about every other Japanese custom. Still, with enough accessories the Shadow

Sabre can become a very attractive motorcycle, if not necessarily stunning.

At \$8,199 USD (\$8,399 for the two-toned edition), the Sabre falls into a somewhat underserved niche -- a mid-priced performance custom. There aren't many motorcycles that fall into this niche; the Magna, the Harley-Davidson Sportster Sport and, perhaps, the Triumph Thunderbird Sport come to mind. Those interested in an affordable, reliable cruiser-styled motorcycle that moves and handles, is equally adept at commuting and boulevard cruising and won't shy away from a spirited ride on your favorite twisty road should take a close look at Honda's Shadow Sabre. What it may lack in "oooo's" from the curbside it will more than make up for in "ahhh's" on the road.

Specifications

Model:	2000 Shadow Sabre VT100C2
Engine Type:	1099cc liquid-cooled 45° V-twin
Bore and Stroke:	87.5mm x 91.4mm
Compression Ratio:	8.0:1
Valve Train:	SOHC; 3 valves per cylinder
Carburetion:	Two 36mm CV
Ignition:	Solid-state digital, two spark plugs per cylinder
Transmission:	5-speed
Final Drive:	Shaft
Front Suspension:	41mm fork; 4.7 inches travel
Rear Suspension:	Dual shocks with 5-position spring preload adjustability; 3.9 inches travel
Front Brake:	Single 316mm disc, twin-piston caliper
Rear Brake:	Single 276mm disc, single-piston caliper
Front Tire:	120/90-18
Rear Tire:	170/80-15
Wheelbase:	64.6 inches
Rake:	32.4°
Trail:	161mm (6.3 inches)
Seat Height:	27.2 inches
Dry Weight:	573.2 pounds
Fuel Capacity:	4.2 gallons, 0.6-gallon reserve



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