



Now that's what we call headlights. The Wing's four large beams light up the road like the landing lights from a 747 jumbo jet.



The Wing's highly-functional dash not only provides a lot of information, note how everything is well recessed and shaded from sun glare.



The GL's switchgear is not only easy to read and operate, but includes the extra switches for added, optional equipment, and features muted backlighting for use in the dark.



Top: The Honda's optional CD changer pops up out of the trunk floor for loading, then hides away, using up no packing space. Bottom: It may be the best-looking touring saddle in the world, and it's pretty darned good, but the LT's is even better.



TESTER'S LOG

I like the tractor-like 1800cc engine, complete with plenty of tractable, low end power. It's no wonder that riders tow trailers and add a third wheel to the Wing; with plenty of power, the Wing probably doesn't notice the increased weight. The windshield offers much more protection than the LT, but I'm disappointed that the height adjustment is not electric. The saddle is very Corbinesque, that is, hard as a rock, a real detriment to making miles. It also seemed that no matter how I adjusted the rear suspension, the ride was very harsh. On average, I recorded 6 miles less per gallon of gas with the Wing than I did with the LT, which limits the range to less than 200 miles. The compact, well-hidden, 6-cd changer is a nice touch; it never skipped a note. Lighting on the Wing is vastly superior to the Beemer.

All in all, the Gold Wing is a fine touring bike, but the Beemer is a little more refined in the areas that are important to me. If Honda improved the suspension and saddle, offered an electrically adjustable shield, and increased the economy, the choice between the two would be simple.

—Walt Fulton

Except for the windshield vent and switchgear backlighting (borrowed from the old SE model), the GL1800 hasn't changed, but the competition has. Although I really enjoyed riding the big Wing, and I liked the feeling of its lower center of gravity, its hybrid sportbike/luxury tourer personality is betrayed by its lack of cornering clearance. Even with the rear air suspension set near max pressure, it still had my boots dragging on the ground at lean angles the LT could do easily without touching.

If Honda feels the need for a revision, I'd suggest freeing a few more horses from the corral. That should be relatively easy. Then I'd give it an adjustable seat height and find a way to narrow the footpeg area for more lean angle. Also, I'd let more air flow up under the windshield so it doesn't create so much noisy turbulence.

Although 850-lb. behemoths aren't exactly my cup of tea, with the temperatures around here in triple digits, the simple addition of air conditioning would be certain to win me over. What's another 40 lbs?

—Dave Searle

2004 Honda GL1800A Gold Wing

SPECIFICATIONS AND PERFORMANCE DATA



ENGINE

Type:liquid-cooled, horizontally-opposed six-cylinder
 Valvetrain:SOHC, 2 valves per cyl., adjusting shims under buckets
 Size:1832cc
 Bore/stroke:74.0mm x 71.0mm
 Comp. ratio:9.8:1
 Carburetion:PGM-FI fuel injection with automatic cold starting
 Exhaust:6-2

DRIVETRAIN

Transmission:5-speed + reverse
 Final drive:Shaft
 RPM @ true 65 mph/redline 3100/6500

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase:66.6"
 Rake/trail:29.25°/4.29°
 Ground clearance:5.0"
 Seat height:29.0"
 GVWR:1303 lbs.
 Wet weight (as equipped):881 lbs.
 Carrying capacity:422 lbs.

SUSPENSION

Front:45mm forks w/anti-dive, 5.5" travel
 Rear:Single shock, electrically-adj. preload, with two memory presets, 4.1" travel

BRAKES

Front: dual 296mm full-floating discs, LBS 3-piston, single-action calipers
 Rear:316mm ventilated disc, LBS 3-piston, single-action caliper

TIRES & WHEELS

Front: 130/70ZR18 Bridgestone G704 on 3.50" x 18" cast alloy wheel
 Rear: 180/60ZR18 Bridgestone G707 on 5.00" x 17" cast alloy wheel

ELECTRICS

Battery:12V, 20AH
 Ignition:3-D digital-mapped with computer control
 Headlight:55W H7/55W H7

FUEL

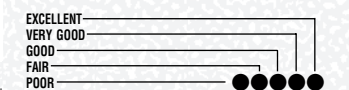
Tank capacity:6.6 gal.
 Fuel grade required:87
 High/low/avg. mpg:42.8/37.7/40.1



PERFORMANCE

Measured top speed129.7 mph
 0-1/4 mile12.71 sec.
 @ 102.90 mph
 0-60 mph4.35 sec.
 0-100 mph12.92 sec.
 60-0 mph (ABS)121.1'
 Power to Weight Ratio1.9.18
 Speed @ 65 mph (indicated)61.5

M/C RATING SYSTEM



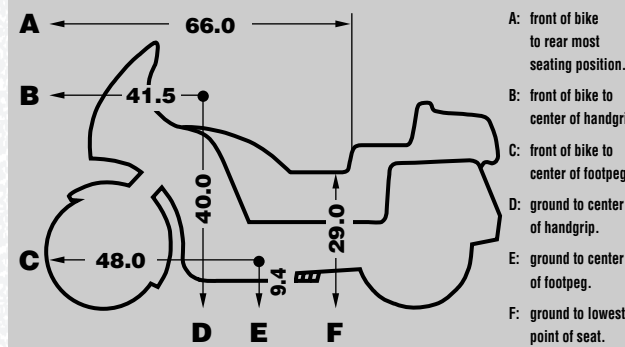
Luxury Touring

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

OVERALL RATING



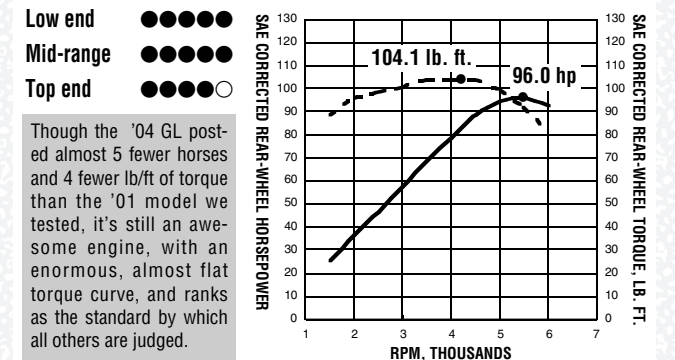
ERGONOMICS TEMPLATE



MISCELLANEOUS

Instruments: speedo, tach, odometer, dual tripmeters, clock, fuel, coolant temp., ambient temp., audio modes
 Indicators: hi-beam, t/s, neutral, reverse, oil pressure, low fuel, side-stand, fuel injection, cruise control, overdrive, trunk/saddlebag open
 MSRP:\$18,999-\$27,195
\$20,123 as tested
 Routine service interval:6,000 mi.
 Valve adj. interval:32,000 mi.
 Warranty:36 mo., unlimited miles
 Colors:Red, White, Candy Red, Candy Black Cherry, Titanium, Magenta Metallic, Black

DYNAMOMETER DATA



Low end ●●●●●
 Mid-range ●●●●●
 Top end ●●●●○
 Though the '04 GL posted almost 5 fewer horses and 4 fewer lb/ft of torque than the '01 model we tested, it's still an awesome engine, with an enormous, almost flat torque curve, and ranks as the standard by which all others are judged.

TEST NOTES

PICKS

- Electric-smooth, powerful engine
- Lots and lots of luggage space
- Enormous aftermarket support

PANS

- Stiff chassis feeds some road shock to the rider
- No trip computer or heated seats available
- Cruise control slow to engage

STANDARD MAINTENANCE

Item	Time	Parts	Labor
Oil & Filter	0.8	\$24 + \$10	\$43.20
Air Filter	0.6	\$45	\$32.40
Valve Adjust	4.5	\$42	\$243.00
Battery Access	0.1	MF	\$5.40
Final Drive	0.4	\$4.95	\$21.60
R/R Rear Whl.	2.0		\$108.00
Change Plugs	0.6	\$16.08	\$32.40
Adjust EFI	1.5		\$81.00
Totals	10.5	\$142.03	\$567.00

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