



A question of taste

Honda and Hyosung use different recipes, writes **Craig Duff**

DO YOU prefer filet mignon or are you a steak-and-eggs type? The answer will dictate whether you're in the market for Honda's VTR250 naked bike or the Hyosung GT250.

They're perfectly competent learners' bikes, but they approach the task from opposite extremes.

Thiite Hyosung is a good bike at a great price and the Honda is a great bike at an average price.

And it's not a \$1000 hit on the Honda — try \$6000 against \$8500.

Build quality and a respected badge is one thing, but in such a price-sensitive market it's difficult to justify such a big premium and it's here that the VTR trails its rivals.

Make no mistake, the Honda is a better-built, better-balanced bike ... just not that much better.

The trellis frame looks smarter than Hyosung's box-section unit, the engine is a touch crisper and the chassis is more than a match for anything a novice rider should be throwing at it. But on all counts it's only an incremental improvement over the GT250 — or the top-selling Kawasaki.

And in this market you shouldn't be aiming to pay more for the last degree of lean angle or the latest friction-free fork coating.

The VTR has a lower seat than the Hyosung — 775mm to 790mm — but the seat padding feels fairly unforgiving after the first 100km. The ride for the pillion, though, is better.

The Honda's five-speed gearbox is slick, with the next cog only a toe-twitch away.

The Hyosung's lever has a slightly

longer throw to engage gears, but it's still slick. The engine is just as responsive, but doesn't feel as crisp when you wind open the throttle.

Get used to the output of these machines and you find yourself at fault more often than the bike.

These bikes will still let you correct mistakes, but with chassis/balance inputs rather than pure grunt. They encourage and reward good riding — and neither will top 5 litres for 100km.

The Honda wins on the little things, but it's difficult to overlook that purchase price. That makes the Hyosung a better buy. It's a practical, functional machine that will willingly run around town or on a 50km freeway haul, yet is still up for a decent weekend fang.



A challenge for the novice: the Hyosung GT250 and Honda VTR250 reward good riding



Inside view

Honda VTR250

Price: \$8490
Engine: liquid-cooled 250cc V-twin, 24kW/24Nm
Transmission: five-speed, chain-drive
Seat height: 775mm
We like: smooth V-twin engine, build quality
We don't like: hard seat foam, high price
Fuel tank: 12.4 litres
Weight: 161kg
Warranty: two years/unlimited km

Hyosung GT250

Price: \$5990
Engine: 249cc oil/air-cooled V-twin, 21kW/22Nm
Transmission: five-speed, chain-drive
Seat height: 790mm
We like: modern styling, value for money
We don't like: top-end vibration, big exhaust
Fuel tank: 17 litres
Weight: 153kg (dry)
Warranty: two years/unlimited km