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## 1971 Honda CB750 Buyer's Guide

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# 1971 Honda CB750

## Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

*IronHead single-year guide · Model year 1971 (CB750K1) only*

### KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1971 only (CB750K1). Honda released the K1 on 21 September 1970, so early K1s carry 1970 build dates — verify by the VIN plate's month/year, not the title year.
- **Designation:** CB750K1 ("CB750 Four"). Production code **300**, carried over from the K0 — the K1 is a running refinement of the original, not a new code.
- **Engine:** 736 cc air-cooled SOHC inline-four, two valves per cylinder; **61 mm × 63 mm** bore × stroke; 9.0:1 compression; **67 bhp @ 8,000 rpm**; 60 Nm (44 lb-ft) @ 7,000 rpm. Dry-sump lubrication, 3.5 litres oil capacity.
- **Redline:** 8,000 rpm — introduced on the K1. The 1969–1970 K0 redlined at 8,500 rpm, so 8,500-marked gauges do not belong on a 1971.
- **Serial range:** frames from **CB750-1044650**, engines from **CB750E-1044806**; the K2 block begins at CB750-2000001. Frame number is stamped on the right side of the steering head; engine number on the elevated part of the right rear crankcase.
- **1971 colors:** Candy Ruby Red (R-4C), Candy Gold, Valley Green Metallic, Candy Garnet Brown — all candy/metallic finishes; fenders were chrome from the factory.
- **Exhaust:** HM341 four-into-four mufflers — a 5-chamber (later 7-chamber) design, quieter and more restrictive than the K0's HM300 glasspacks. Correct mufflers are a key 1971 originality tell.
- **Controls:** dual throttle cables (pull-open / pull-closed) — the push-pull throttle arrived with the K1.
- **Bodywork:** slimmer side covers with no slots on the leading edge (the K0's intake-styled covers are incorrect on a 1971); rear shocks lengthened from 12.8 in (K0) to 13.1 in.
- **Brakes/wheels:** 296 mm front disc with single-piston hydraulic caliper; 180 mm rear drum; 3.25-19 front and 4.00-18 rear tires.
- **Dimensions:** 1,453 mm (57.2 in) wheelbase; 17-litre (4.5 US gal) fuel tank with ~3 litres reserve; ~218 kg (480 lb) dry.
- **Ignition:** battery-and-coil with two sets of contact-breaker points (cylinders 1-4 and 2-3) and centrifugal advance — breaker-point ignition, not electronic, on every 1971.
- **Production context:** Honda built more than 550,000 CB750 Fours over the nine-year SOHC run; 1971 is regarded within the marque as the largest-production year of the early bikes. No audited model-year production split has been published — treat any exact "K1 production total" with suspicion.



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> ***Year chosen: 1971.*** *The CB750K1 is the year the original superbike grew up. The 1969–1970 K0 was the shock — the 736 cc SOHC four that made everything else look ancient overnight. The K1, released September 1970, is the refinement: quieter HM341 mufflers in place of the K0's glasspacks, an 8,000 rpm redline in place of 8,500, slimmer side covers, a push-pull throttle, and new colors. It sold in enormous numbers — the largest-production year of the early 750s, by marque consensus — which is exactly why it matters to restorers: more K1s survived, more K1s were modified, and more "K1s" on the market are really parts-bin assemblies wearing the right badges. A 1971 CB750 must be verified by its serial numbers, its build date, and its detail changes — not by its tank badge.*

## 1. Manufacturer history: Honda

Soichiro Honda founded **Honda Motor Co.** in 1948, after a pre-war career that began with his own piston-ring design — a design Toyota first declined, which decided him to start his own company instead. Honda's early years were scooters and small motorcycles; by the mid-1960s the company had won all five classes of the motorcycle constructors' world championship (1966) and was the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer.

The CB750 project began in **1967**: a team of about 20 engineers under project leader **Yoshiro Harada**, with engine design by **Masaru Shirakura** (engine design work started February 1968). The brief was a high-speed reference machine — safe, comfortable cruising at speeds the British twins could not sustain. What arrived in **1969** was the transverse 736 cc SOHC four with an electric starter, a front disc brake, and a five-speed gearbox: the machine the Discovery Channel later named among the "Greatest Motorcycles Ever" and the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame lists among its Classic Bikes. It is routinely called the first superbike, and the term stuck because nothing else on sale in 1969 combined that performance with Honda reliability.

For the restorer, two things about this history matter. First, the CB750 was developed at speed and revised constantly — the K0-to-K1 transition alone carries running changes in carburetion hardware, tank profile, shocks, mufflers, and instruments, and the early production years saw parts crossed over between specifications as Honda shoved bikes out the door to meet demand. "Correct for 1971" therefore means verified against serial numbers and detail changes, not against a single brochure. Second, the knowledge base is unusually deep: the SOHC/4 forums, Honda4Fun, David Silver Spares, CMSNL's parts fiches, and the factory CB750K1 shop manual have documented the line down to carburetor-body stampings. A 1971 K1 can be authenticated — it just takes work.

## 2. Model history: the CB750 SOHC

The CB750 Four (SOHC) ran from 1969 to 1978 in K-series form, with the F-series Supersport from 1975 and the Hondamatic from 1976:

| Year | Model | Notable |
|---|---|---|
| 1969–70 | CB750K0 | Launch. Production code 300. Die-cast cases (after the first ~7,400 sand-cast bikes); HM300 glasspack mufflers; 8,500 rpm redline; slotted intake-style side covers; Candy Blue Green / Candy Ruby Red / Candy Gold. |



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| Year | Model | Notable |
|---|---|---|
| **1971** | **CB750K1 — this guide** | **Code 300 carried over. HM341 mufflers; 8,000 rpm redline; slimmer unslotted side covers; dual throttle cables; 13.1 in rear shocks; new colors (Valley Green Metallic, Candy Garnet Brown added). Released 21 Sept 1970.** |
| 1972 | CB750K2 | Code 341. Unique scalloped seat; revised tank; continued detail evolution. |
| 1973 | CB750K3 | Code 341. Mid-year tank revision cured the K0–K2 high-speed fuel-feed weakness. |
| 1974 | CB750K4 | Code 341. Flake Sunrise Orange / Freedom Green Metallic / Boss Maroon Metallic; black headlight shell. |
| 1975 | CB750K5; CB750F0 | Code 341 (K5). First Supersport F0: rear disc, black engine, different seat/cowl. |
| 1976 | CB750K6; CB750F1; CB750A | Code 341 (K6). Hondamatic A introduced. |
| 1977 | CB750K7; CB750F2 | Code 405. Longer output shaft; different sprockets/chain. |
| 1978 | CB750K8; CB750F3 | Code 405. Last of the SOHC line; DOHC CB750K (RC01) from 1979. |

The K1's production code **300** is shared with the K0 — Honda did not issue a new code for 1971, which is why serial numbers, not codes, separate the two years. The F-series (1975–78) and the Hondamatic (1976–78) are distinct models and out of scope for this guide.

# 3. What is unique about the 1971 CB750

## 3.1 The K1 detail changes — and how to spot them

The K1 is not a new motorcycle; it is the original CB750 refined. Every change below is a 1971 originality check:

- **Redline: 8,000 rpm.** The K0's instruments were marked to 8,500 rpm; Honda introduced the 8,000 rpm redline with the K1. A 1971 with 8,500-marked gauges is wearing K0 instruments (or a later swap) — check the gauge faces against the build date.
- **HM341 mufflers.** The K0's HM300s were glasspacks that burned through to near-straight-through in ~10,000 miles and sounded throatier. The K1's HM341s are a 5-chamber (later 7-chamber) design: quieter, more restrictive, more "serene." They are also the correct muffler — a 1971 wearing HM300s (or the ubiquitous aftermarket 4-into-1) is not factory-correct, however good it sounds.
- **Slimmer side covers, no slots.** The K0's side covers carried intake-styled slots on the leading edge; the K1's covers are smaller and smooth. This is one of the fastest visual K0/K1 tells.
- **Dual throttle cables.** The K1 throttle is a push-pull system — one cable pulls open, one pulls closed. A single-cable throttle on a 1971 is incorrect.
- **Longer rear shocks.** 12.8 in (K0) → 13.1 in (K1), part of Honda's narrowing of the tank/seat/side-cover interface to make the bike feel less tall between the rider's knees.
- **New colors.** Candy Ruby Red and Candy Gold carried over; **Valley Green Metallic** and **Candy Garnet Brown** were added for the K1.
- **Carburetor actuation and hardware** changed from the K0 (the one documented engine-area running change), while the engine's architecture — 736 cc, 61 mm × 63 mm, 9.0:1, 28 mm Keihins — is unchanged.



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**Running-change caution:** the early production years were chaotic. Forum research on factory practice documents at least three K0 tank variants, petcock, carb, oil-pan, casting, horn-location, and gauge-cluster changes inside the first model year, with parts crossed over between specifications as Honda met demand. A very early K1 (late-1970 build) wearing a K0-surplus detail is plausible factory practice, not automatic proof of a swap — but it is the exception, and the burden of proof is on the bike.

## 3.2 Numbers: what matches and what doesn't

Unlike the British bikes, **Honda frame and engine numbers do not match** — they run in separate sequences with different starting points (frame CB750-1044650, engine CB750E-1044806). Do not reject a K1 because its numbers "don't match"; do reject it if the numbers fall in the wrong blocks.

- **Format:** frame `CB750-XXXXXXX` stamped on the **right side of the steering head**; engine `CB750E-XXXXXXX` stamped on the **elevated part of the right rear section of the crankcase**. The "E" is simply Honda's engine prefix.
- **1971 allocation:** frames begin at **CB750-1044650**, engines at **CB750E-1044806**; the K2 block begins at **CB750-2000001**. A frame number below 1044650 is a K0; at or above 2000001 is a K2 or later — whatever the tank badges say.
- **VIN plate build date.** The steering-head VIN plate carries the month and year of manufacture (e.g. 1/71). Because the K1 was released 21 September 1970, legitimate 1971-model K1s carry 1970 build dates (10/70, 11/70, 12/70 are all plausible). Verify originality details (Section 3.1) against the *build date*, not the registration year.
- **Replacement cases.** Honda supplied blank dealer-replacement crankcases (die-cast style number pad, unstamped). A K1 engine with a blank number pad is a replacement-cases engine — price it accordingly and do not stamp a number into it.

## 3.3 1971 buyer cautions

- **The 8,000 rpm redline is a system, not just a gauge face.** The K1's lower redline reflects Honda's revised view of the engine's safe sustained speed. Sustained 8,500 rpm running on a K1 — especially with the HM341's extra backpressure — is not what the factory specified.
- **Cam-chain tensioner is manual and routine.** The SOHC four's cam chain is adjusted by a manual tensioner (set with the engine positioned correctly, then locked). It is part of the factory 1,500-mile service rhythm — oil, cam chain, valves — and a rattling chain on a "freshly serviced" bike means the service was not done.
- **K0 fuel-feed weakness carries into the K1.** The early tanks' fuel feed could starve carburetors 1 and 2 at sustained high speed (then-high Interstate limits), burning exhaust valves — worst on reserve. The K1 tank kept the weakness; the cure did not arrive until the K3's mid-year tank. A 1971 ridden hard on original tank and petcock deserves a fuel-flow check, not just a jetting check.
- **Chrome everywhere — and chrome fails from beneath.** Fenders were chrome from the factory. Fifty-plus years on, original chrome pits from the underside; a shiny top surface over pitted wells is a re-chrome bill waiting.
- **"1971" on the title proves nothing.** Titles follow registration, not manufacture. The serial blocks and the VIN plate's build date are the year — everything else is paint and persuasion.
- **Parts most often missing or swapped.** On a real 1971 K1 the frequently-lost originals are: the HM341 mufflers (swapped for HM300s or 4-into-1s), the unslotted side covers *with their badges* (K1 cover tabs crack, and replacements are model-year-specific), the 13.1-inch rear shocks (replaced with generic or modern gas units), the 8,000 rpm gauge faces, and the stock airbox with its paper element (pod filters mean a rejet and an incorrect build). Price every missing item before you offer — originals are obtainable, but not cheap.



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# 4. Technical restoration data — 1971 Honda CB750

## 4.1 Frame and engine numbers (1971)

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Frame:  CB750-1044650  ~  (K1 block; K2 begins CB750-2000001)
Engine: CB750E-1044806 ~  (K1 block; E = engine prefix)
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*Worked example: reading a K1 frame number.* A frame stamped CB750-1045123 breaks down as follows: "CB750" identifies the model family; "1045123" is the sequential frame number. Because 1045123 sits inside the K1 block — at or above CB750-1044650 but below the K2's CB750-2000001 — the frame is a 1971-model K1. The next step is the VIN plate: its month/year stamp (say, 10/70) would make this an early K1, built in October 1970 — legitimate for a 1971 model, since the K1 was released 21 September 1970. Only then do you run the K1 detail checklist (Section 3.1) against the *build* date.

- **Stamping locations** (per the factory shop manual's machine-identification page): frame number on the **right side of the steering head pipe**; engine number on the **elevated part of the right rear section of the engine**. A riveted VIN plate on the steering head carries the month/year of manufacture.
- **Numbers are not matched.** Frame and engine sequences start at different numbers (1044650 vs 1044806) and diverge. Close-but-different is normal on an untouched bike; wrong-block is not.
- **Ordering parts:** CMSNL, David Silver Spares, and marque specialists key parts to model code (300) and serial number. Always quote the full frame number.
- **Carburetor ID:** carb bodies carry their own identification stamping on the left side of the carburetor body — useful when checking that a bank of four is a matched K1 set.

## 4.2 Engine specifications (1971)

| Item | Specification |
|---|---|
| Type | Air-cooled SOHC inline-four, 2 valves/cylinder, chain-driven camshaft |
| Displacement | 736 cc |
| Bore × stroke | 61 mm × 63 mm (2.40 in × 2.48 in) |
| Compression ratio | 9.0:1 |
| Max power | 67 bhp @ 8,000 rpm |
| Max torque | 60 Nm (44 lb-ft) @ 7,000 rpm |
| Redline | 8,000 rpm |
| Valve train | Single overhead camshaft, rocker arms; manual cam-chain tensioner |
| Fuel system | 4 × 28 mm Keihin slide carburetors |
| Lubrication | Dry sump, separate oil tank under the seat; 3.5 litres with filter |
| Ignition | Battery-and-coil, two contact-breaker point sets (1-4 and 2-3), centrifugal advance |
| Starting | Electric starter plus kickstarter |
| Claimed top speed | ~200 km/h (124 mph) |
| Standing ¼ mile | ~13.5 sec (period figure) |



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## 4.3 Tune-up and service specifications

From the factory shop manual and marque service data for the CB750K0–K6 engine family:

- **Valve clearances (engine cold):** inlet **0.05 mm** (0.002 in), exhaust **0.08 mm** (0.003 in). Check with the engine below 35 °C.
- **Contact-breaker point gap: 0.3–0.4 mm** (0.012–0.016 in), both point sets (1-4 and 2-3).
- **Ignition timing:** static timing on the **"F" mark** at idle (~1,000 rpm; the shop manual specifies 6° initial at 1,000 rpm); centrifugal advance brings full advance in by ~2,300–2,500 rpm. Always confirm with a strobe — and always set the cam-chain tension *before* timing, since chain slack moves everything.
- **Spark plugs: NGK D8EA** (Nippondenso X24ES-U equivalent); gap **0.6–0.7 mm** (0.024–0.028 in).
- **Idle speed:** 1,000 rpm.
- **Engine oil:** 3.5 litres (3.7 US qt) with filter change; API SE, SAE 10W-40. The dry-sump tank lives under the seat — check the level in the tank, not the sump.
- **Service rhythm:** the factory pattern is oil, cam-chain adjustment, and valve check **every 1,500 miles** — the three are one service, not three. A K1 that "just had an oil change" but has a rattling chain and tight valves did not have the service.
- **Air filtration:** stock paper element in the stock airbox. The factory jetting assumes it; pod filters demand a rejet and are incorrect for a factory-correct build.

## 4.4 Carburetion and electrical

- **Carburetors:** four Keihin 28 mm slide carbs on a common bank, actuated by the K1's dual-cable push-pull throttle. Carb bodies carry ID stampings on the left side — verify the bank is a matched K1 set, not four singles from different years.
- **K0-vs-K1 carb note:** Honda changed carburetor actuation and hardware between the K0 and K1 (documented in marque technical discussion). K0 and K1 carb banks and linkage parts do not freely interchange — check part numbers before assuming.
- **K1 main-jet running change (documented):** early K1s ran **#120** main jets; the change to **#115** came around February–March 1971; later K1s ran **#110** (SOHC/4 specialist HondaMan, from factory documentation). Needle clip position tracks the carb body: bodies stamped **B750A/7A** use the **3rd groove** from the top, while **086A/657A/657B** bodies use the **4th groove** (Honda Service Specification Manual, as quoted on the SOHC/4 forum). Do not assume one jetting spec covers every K1 — read the carb-body stampings and the bike's build date before judging a bank "wrong," and photograph everything before changing brass. All factory jetting assumes the stock airbox and stock exhaust.
- **Ignition:** two coils, two point sets, one centrifugal advancer. The advancer's springs are a wear item: weak springs give over-advanced timing at low rpm (pinging, hard starting); the full-advance marks should not be reached before ~2,300 rpm. SOHC/4 specialist HondaMan characterizes the K0–K1 quick-advance units as all-in by ~2,000 rpm, slightly ahead of the shop manual's 2,300–2,500 rpm all-in figure — another reason to strobe the actual advancer rather than assume. Overhaul or replace the advancer during any ignition service.
- **Charging:** 12-volt system, 210 W three-phase alternator, 14 Ah battery. The points ignition is battery-dependent — a weak battery mimics carburetion faults.
- **Wiring:** the harness is now fifty-plus years old; connectors in the headlight shell and under the seat are the classic failure points. A reproduction harness is cheap insurance on a rider.



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