

Bird of Prey

Without a doubt, Kevin Erion and his trick little Hawk were the fastest combination in ProTwins Modified racing. The only question was—why?

By
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SOMETIMES A MANUFACTURER TRIES hard to make a simple, ordinary street bike, but enthusiasts won't leave it alone. More than 25 years ago, Honda brought its first Hawk (the 250cc CB72) to these shores. More quickly than Superman could shuck his Clark Kent suit in a phone booth, American racers peeled off street parts and had CB72s on the track, turning 14,000 rpm.

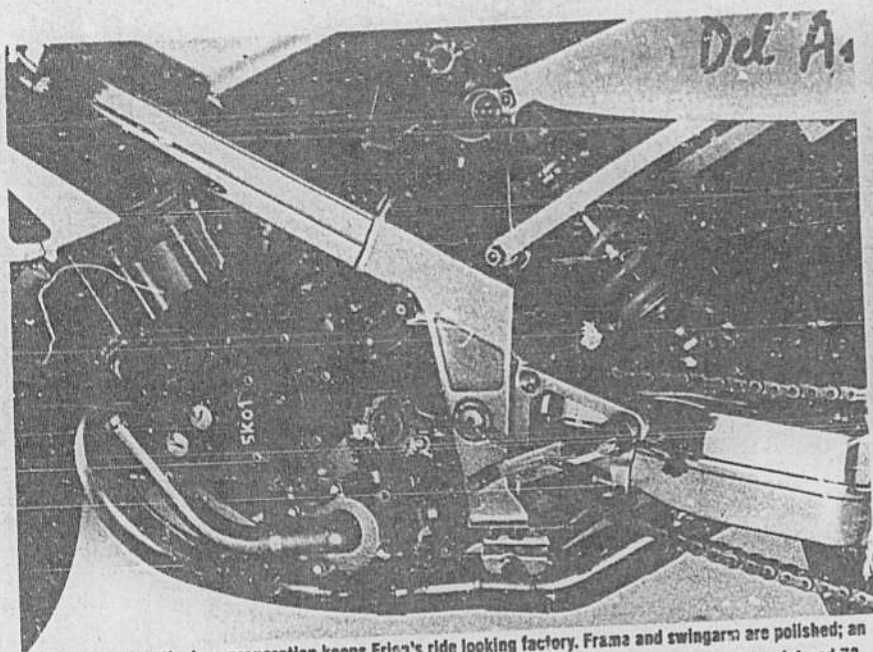
Now American Honda is importing another Hawk—this time a 650 V-twin. Billed as a general-purpose motorcycle, it carries no racy plastic streamlining, has no double overhead cams and no frills. But sit on it. Light, isn't it? And compact, too—like a 250. General-purpose motorcycle? For the majority, perhaps. But to a few of the riders who run in the AMA's ProTwins class, the Hawk GT 650 chivies and begs to be taken to the track.

Among those who answered its plea was Kevin Erion, who had won the ProTwins Modified road-racing championship in 1988 on a well-prepared Ducati. Kevin and his brother Craig

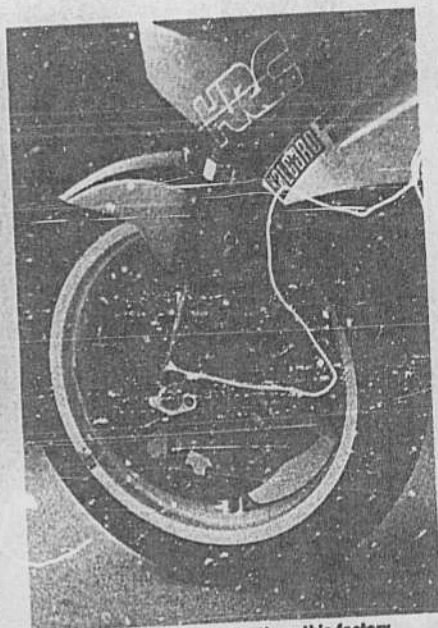


On the right, left to right: Mike Velasco, Kevin Erion, and Craig Erion.





Mike Velasco's meticulous preparation keeps Erica's ride looking factory. Frame and swingarm are polished; an Ohlins shock recently replaced a Fox used during the season. A 700cc engine similar to this one registered 73 horsepower, but who knows what truly lurks behind the HRC covers? The Hawkman knows . . .



Honda's graciously lent Two Brothers this factory Showa front end from a Joey Dunlop TT1 V-four. Two 323mm discs offer superb stopping power.

operate a construction company on the West Coast, but have another existence outside commerce as Two Brothers Racing. At the beginning of 1989, unsure of whether to continue racing or not, Kevin took one of the new Hawks—minimally prepared—to Daytona. He was impressed by its handiness and speed.

In general, there is no such thing as racing a little bit. Mike Velasco, for many years a mechanic with the currently dormant Honda racing team, had been hired by Craig Erion to build gas stations. But as the Hawk project asserted itself, Velasco inevitably became involved. By its own weight of personality, this constellation of persons was gravitating into a black hole of racing activity. More development was planned for the next National, which was at Road Atlanta.

Velasco and Erion got to work preparing more-serious Hawks. Every day, Velasco would arrive at work to build gas stations, bringing another pocketful of titanium nuts and bolts—a legacy of his years with Honda.

"Hey, that stuff is yours, man, we don't want to clean out your assets for our project," Kevin Erion once told him.

"It's all right, don't worry about it," Velasco answered.

He got out his black book, began to phone people who could help, and more hardware and services appeared.

"You're calling in all your favors,

Velasco. You might need them yourself one day."

"Never mind. I know what I'm doing."

Did you ever try to race just a little bit? It doesn't happen. Craig Erion decided to build gas stations some other way, switching Velasco to his natural habitat—the race shop; that way, he could get some sleep instead of trying to work three shifts—one at construction, two in the race shop.

The basic concept of the Hawk race engine was Velasco's, based upon his years of work at Honda Racing. The heads were ported by a respected Canadian, Rick Tomacic, and, according to Erion, flow better than factory VFR

heads. The Hawk heads also were fitted with 1mm oversize Del West titanium valves, which weigh only 60 percent as much as steel valves. Light titanium valves continue to follow a cam contour long after steel valves would have floated. A Megacycle cam, based on what had worked in Ascots, was used. Three-millimeter-oversize Wiseco domed pistons (82mm) were installed, bringing compression ratio to about 12:1. Con rods were cut from titanium billet by Crower—"really big, and 60 to 70 grams lighter than stock," says Erion.

The downdraft intake system was topped by two 39mm racing CV carburetors taken from an RC30 race kit. 1mm

