TWO-STROKE PROJECT

BLING RING-A-DING-DING

The budget goes out the window

This early 2000s Honda CR125 was originally a build that we did around nine years ago appropriately named “Bling on a Budget.” We got the bike looking great but could never get the bike to run all that well, nor did we have the time to troubleshoot it correctly—until now. We enlisted the help of project bike builder extraordinaire Jay Clark and Brad from ParaPros, and it’s a good thing we did, because the final bike blew our minds.



Ron Lawson making Mark Tilley look good, just like he did in the early 2000s.

We worked with a variety of industry-leading companies on this build, like DeCal Works, FasterUSA, ProX, Wiseco, Dunlop, OMS Products, Motoseat, ODI, San Diego Powder Coating, Works Connection, Galfer, VHM, FMF, Specbolt, Uni Filters, Motion Pro, and 2SM Performance.



CR125 PROJECT







Colin and the crew at FasterUSA rebuilt our OEM Honda wheels using a grey Cerakote on the hubs, black Excel rims and stainless steel spokes. Jay wrapped the new wheels with Dunlop MX34 tires and added some ProX brake rotors.

A complete rebuild from the first rebuild was needed, and this time we decided to expand the budget. Completed almost a decade ago, we were naturally unable to utilize some of the amenities currently available that were not as common 10 years ago, like vapor blasting, Cerakoting, and some specialty suspension coating, just to name a few. These services were just starting to be introduced into the bike building scene during the last build, but have become more affordable and common to do nowadays. With the expanded budget this time around, we had freedom to explore some of these possibilities.

The main frame, subframe and swingarm were all powdercoated flat black with an added texture, giving it a rough look by Chris Johnson and his crew at San Diego Powder Coating. The texture helped hide some imperfections of the machine's abusive almost-25-year history.

Colin at FasterUSA rebuilt our OEM Honda wheels on the first go-around, but this time took it to another level by adding a Cerakote finish to the hubs, greasing the bearings, upgrading the spokes to stainless steel and installing a brand-new set of Dunlop MX34 tires.

Brandon at AHM Factory Services handled all the suspension needs on our CR125 build this time around. He went with a very simple, clean OEM look on the outside, focusing mainly on valving and specialty coatings internally to reduce friction, and get the most overall performance out of the early 2010s Kayaba suspension components.

Brad at ParaPros handled all the engine diagnostics this time once Jay Clark was able to locate all the parts we needed using Wiseco and ProX parts. This engine had multiple issues, and we probably couldn't have figured it all out without Brad's knowledge and Jay's persistence. Special thanks to moto industry icon Willy Amaridio for giving us an old Honda CR125 cylinder out of his go-kart engine parts collection; the build would have been doomed without his help.

Chris Johnson and the crew at San Diego Powder Coating blacked out the frame and swingarm for us the first time we built this bike almost nine years ago, and it still looks this good! TM Designs makes replacement rear chain guides for Honda two-strokes that are more durable than stock and are still actually available for purchase.







Brandon and the crew at AHM Factory Services handled all our suspension needs on this early 2000s CR125 build.



IMS Products still makes replacement Core pegs that offer a larger platform and a more aggressive tooth design compared to the OEM Honda units.

Left: The FMF Gold Series Fatty and Shorty silencer throws us back to the early 2010s. 2SM Performance makes billet engine covers for the late '90s and early 2000s Honda CR125s, and they are available to the public in a variety of color combinations.

Motion Pro saved us with a custom-length throttle cable and new throttle housing. Jay worked with all the right people to get the replacement Mikuni carb jetted perfectly, and we modified the rear brake pedal to make it work correctly. With these and a few more issues ironed out, we installed the semi-custom DeCal Works graphics and headed to the track.

These types of project builds can often play games with your emotions when it comes to track days. On one hand, everything can go smoothly with zero issues; on the other hand (the most likely scenario), you might spend the entire day chasing your tail trying to locate a gremlin. Luckily, this project produced all smiles at the test track, with the machine performing flawlessly in just about every category.

The only bad part about a successful build like this is, we tend to forget all the hours spent completing it, and just assume we can replicate this outcome in a few weeks. Yes, we ended up purchasing the next two-stroke project on our way home from the test track and will be slapped back into reality over the next couple of weeks. But, keep a look out for our 1994 Honda CR250 "White Lightning" project in the months ahead. ❑

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