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# Test Ride

## 2019 Honda Forza 125 & 300



# MAY THE FORZA BE WITH YOU!

*Motorcycle Sport and Leisure* has been to Nice on the south coast of France for the launch of Honda's updated Forza 125 and 300 – taking the chance to put the pair of premium scooters through their paces.

WORDS: **Ross Mowbray** PHOTOGRAPHY: **Honda Europe**

**F**irst introduced back in 2000, the Forza has cemented itself as a powerful force in Honda's two-wheeled line-up. The first 300 model was the one that set the template – with its lively ride, abundance of storage, innovative (for the time) combined braking system, and premium feel, designed specifically with the European scooter market in mind; for customers who demand style, presence, performance and top specifications from their two-wheeler.

While retaining its trademark mix of sporty styling and urban usability,

the Forza 300 has constantly evolved – but 2018 marks the unveiling of a radically revised machine. Essentially, it's following in the hugely successful wheel tracks of its little brother, the Forza 125 (which has sold more than 30,000 units in Europe since 2015) – and as a result, the 300 is lighter, smaller, smarter and sportier than ever before.

### SCOOTER SIBLINGS

The Forza 125 and 300 share a surprising amount of features and characteristics. In fact, their styling, equipment and chassis are all pretty much identical. Of course, the main

difference is their respective 125cc and 300cc powerplants – which, as a result of some slightly different layouts, translates to a 20kg difference in weight.

From an equipment perspective, they're well specced. The clever Goldwing-style electric screen is arguably the Forza's pièce de résistance (none of the competition comes with an electric screen). It adjusts smoothly over 140mm of travel, and is designed to provide wind protection (with airflow directed around and over the rider's head) to help reduce wind noise and buffeting. I'm fairly tall – standing



## Specification

### HONDA FORZA 125

**Engine:** 4 stroke-4 valve  
liquid-cooled 125cc

**Max Power:** 14.8bhp @ 8500 rpm

**Max Torque:** 9.2lb-ft @ 8250 rpm

**Fuel Capacity:** 11.5 litres

**Fuel Consumption:** 42.7km/l

**Seat Height:** 780mm

**Kerb Weight:** 162kg

**Suspension:** (F) 33mm telescopic  
(R) Twin shock

**Wheels:** (F) 15 inch (R) 14 inch

**Tyres:** Michelin City Grip (F) 120/70-15  
56P (R) 140/70-14 68P

**Brakes:** (F) 256mm, single disc  
(R) 240mm, single disc

**Price:** £4689

**Contact:** [www.honda.co.uk/motorcycles](http://www.honda.co.uk/motorcycles)

just over 6ft 1in, and I found the screen more usable in its lowest setting, with the wind deflected into my chest, rather than at my head. Regardless, it's a really nice touch on a commuter-oriented scooter – and that helps the Forza stand out from the competition.

Its seat height is 780mm, which should help make the Forza accessible for most. And I found it really comfortable too, even after a full day in the saddle. There's plenty of room for a pillion – and there's a decent bit of storage too, with room for two full-face helmets under the seats. In addition, the front left inner fairing pocket is lockable, and also houses a 12v-1A charging socket.

There's an analogue speedometer and rev-counter dials on either side of a digital display that can switch between three separate modes (controlled by a switch on the left handlebar); it displays odometer, range remaining and current fuel consumption; trip meter, average fuel consumption and timer; or ambient temperature thermometer and battery sensor to help you stay well informed.

### FORZA 125

The important parts of the Forza 125 remain hugely unchanged for 2018 after being brought in line with Euro 4 regulations in 2017. It's still got a punchy four-stroke, four-valve engine with an 'Idling Stop', a lightweight chassis, LED lights, a Smart Key, storage for two helmets, riding comfort for two – but for 2018 it comes with a new adjustable electric screen, a revised instrument panel, LED indicators and an extra 5.5 litres of under-seat storage.

The Forza 125 is powered by a four-valve water-cooled SOHC

powerplant, which delivers 11kW at 8500rpm, with peak torque of 12.5Nm at 8250rpm. Although they may not sound like impressive figures, the Forza 125 is one of the quickest small capacity scooters I've ever ridden. It accelerates rapidly, allowing you to get the jump on the traffic, offers sharp mid-range power for responsive roll-on performance around town – and most impressively, it's got a top-speed of around 75mph, meaning it'll comfortably handle some motorway miles too.

It also comes with Idling Stop technology, a clever bit of kit that automatically stops the engine after three seconds of stationary idling, when the brakes are applied – and instantly restarts when the throttle grip is twisted. It's seamless – and helps the Forza 125 return impressive fuel consumption figures. More specifically, the Forza 125 is capable of returning close to 500km from its 11.5 litre tank.

**BELOW:** Forza's new display combines analogue speedo and rev-counter, with switchable digital display.



Suspension comes in the form of 33mm telescopic forks at the front, and twin shock absorbers at the rear – which are actually adjustable through five-stage spring preload. On the road, it's very capable, balancing comfort and performance with ease – soaking up the bumps and lumps while allowing you to wind the throttle open and make some real progress with confidence.

For stopping it's equipped with a large 256mm single disc at the front mated to a 240mm disc at the rear, while there's also two-channel ABS for extra braking control on slippery surfaces. It all works well, offering ample braking performance for a small capacity scooter – allowing you to stop quickly and safely with little concern.

Its cast aluminium 15in front wheel and 14in rear wheel are clad with specialised, premium Michelin City Grip tyres which helped to offer ample grip out on the test ride – even when pushed to their limit. The Forza 125 is lightweight too, coming in at just 162kg, making it easy to manage at walking speeds, and really easy to paddle around in the car park.

### FORZA 300

Honda's Forza 300 has been completely reimaged for 2018, drawing inspiration from its 125cc sibling – with its lightweight, compact, sporty design and an abundance of new premium features including an electrically adjustable screen, full LED lighting and an optional 45-litre Smart Key-linked



## Specification

### HONDA FORZA 300

**Engine:** 4 stroke, 4 valve liquid-cooled 279cc

**Max. Power:** 24.8bhp @ 7000rpm

**Max. Torque:** 20.1lb-ft @ 5750rpm

**Fuel Capacity:** 11.5 litres

**Fuel Consumption:** 31km/l

**Seat Height:** 780mm

**Kerb Weight:** 182kg

**Suspension:** (F) Telescopic  
(R) Twin shock

**Wheels:** (F) 15 inch (R) 14 inch

**Tyres:** (F) Pirelli 120/70R15 (R) 140/70R14

**Brakes:** (F) 256mm, single disc with two channel ABS (R) 240mm, single disc

**Price:** £5099

**Contact:** [www.honda.co.uk/motorcycles](http://www.honda.co.uk/motorcycles)

top box – and, in a first for Honda's scooter line-up, it also comes with Honda's Selectable Torque Control (HSTC).

The biggest change to the Forza 300 for 2018 is its new sports styling and compact dimensions. It's 12kg lighter than the last incarnation, its wheelbase is shorter, it's not as long, and it's narrower. But, it comes with a slightly higher seat height, to help offer improved visibility and increased road presence.

The new Forza 300 shares its 279cc, liquid-cooled fuel-injected SOHC four-valve engine with the hugely successful SH300i – with its power tuned to offer an entertaining ride at low, mid and high rpm, plus excellent fuel economy. And it delivers. It's punchy, quick – and very, very capable. From a numbers perspective, it kicks out 18.5kW at 7000rpm and 27.2Nm torque at 5750rpm – which translates to a top speed in excess of 90mph. And up at 90mph, it's still remarkably stable for such a compact machine. Fuel economy has been improved too – and Honda claims its 11.5-litre tank will return in excess of 370km. Not bad, at all.

For stopping, the Forza 300 is equipped with a 256mm single disc up front and a 240mm disc at the rear – and it also comes with two-channel ABS, well up the job. I had no qualms about their abilities and within half an hour found myself pushing harder and braking later than I would typically on a small capacity scooter. But, that could be thanks to another new addition to the Forza 300's HSTC. Operated using a simple on/off switch on the left handlebar, HSTC detects any differences between the front and rear wheel speeds, calculates the slip ratio and then controls engine torque via the

fuel injection to regain rear wheel traction. Clever stuff. I tried my best to catch it out – but the little Honda handled everything I could throw at it in its stride.

Suspension comes in the form of 33mm telescopic forks up front, and twin shock absorbers with seven-stage spring preload adjustment at the rear. Of course, it's not the most sophisticated system you've ever seen – but considering the lightweight nature of small scooter it's looking after, it's well up to the job, offering ample performance and exceptional comfort. I was bobbing around into potholes, bounding over speedbumps and across drain covers – and the 300 barely flinched.

Its cast aluminium 15in front and 14in rear wheel come clad with premium Pirelli rubber, which Honda

**ABOVE: The Forza is Honda's premium scooter. You can tell just by looking at its sharp styling and top quality components.**

**BELOW: There's space under the seat for two full-face helmets – or you can partition it off to house one lid plus rain gear or a laptop.**



says helps to offer maximum traction and ride comfort. Admittedly, the weather was bone dry, the roads were in pretty good shape, and we didn't really get a chance to push the scooters right to their limits – but the tyres did help the scooter handle very well on a tight, twisty section later in the day. Regardless, it's always nice to get some decent rubber as standard.

Honda knows a thing or two about two wheels – and from a scooter perspective, its Forzas are about as good as it gets. They are well finished, high-specification premium scooters – as capable as any other 125 and 300 on the market, and they're probably quicker too.

Essentially, they sit right at the top of the commuter pile. They handle extremely well, are kitted out with an abundance of kit – and are quick. And I mean quick. The 125 got up to 75mph and the 300 got up to 90mph with room to spare.

Okay, so they're not especially cheap, and you could get a budget scooter for significantly less cash – but if you're serious about riding and you want something stylish, safe and reliable (and you can afford it), then the Forza's the scoot for you. Plus, it's a Honda – it'll run forever, will be well-looked after by the extensive dealer network and will hold its money fairly well too. If you get a chance, go and ride one. You won't be disappointed.