

EXCLUSIVE! FIRST TEST HONDA 600

*Out from under
the wraps after
a long wait*



The Honda 600 is now being sold in the United States. The only state as of this writing with distribution and sales, however, is Hawaii. For this reason, it was necessary to conduct this test where the cars are. The year 'round temperature in Hawaii is so mild that most cars are not equipped with heaters. In fact, prior to picking up the Honda 600, we rented a 1970 Ford Maverick and noted that it had no heater. Certainly even in mid-winter, none was needed, with the daytime temperature in the low 80s.

By the time this issue of ROAD TEST sees print, the 600 should be on sale in many additional states throughout the U.S. We also expect that Honda will be greatly expanding its automotive pro-

duction facilities. This will enable the company to meet the home market demand for the larger 1300 car. With this accomplished, the 1300 will then be exported to the U.S.A. In all probability, Honda will not bring the 1300 to these shores until adequate production is assured, feeling there have been too many unfortunate past examples of manufactureres releasing cars for showing before sufficient stocks were on hand to assure delivery to customers.

We first drove the Honda 600 in 1967 in Japan. (See ROAD TEST February 1968.) Honda has taken a full two years to meet all Federal requirements and standards and to work out for the U.S. all possible bugs on the 600, which will be sold on the Japanese market.

The first and most lasting impression of the Honda 600 is that the performance is surprisingly good. With only 37 cubic inches (598cc), the 2-cylinder, 4-stroke engine gives excellent performance. In Japan the small Honda has a 360cc engine. There the 600cc would be considered a big engine for this size and weight car.

The front engine, front drive unit makes for an extremely compact power plant and drive train configuration. The transmission is an integral part of the engine and oil supplied to the engine also provides lubrication for both the transmission and differential. This, of course, eliminates the need for three separate oil supplies.

The Honda picks up well even at slow