

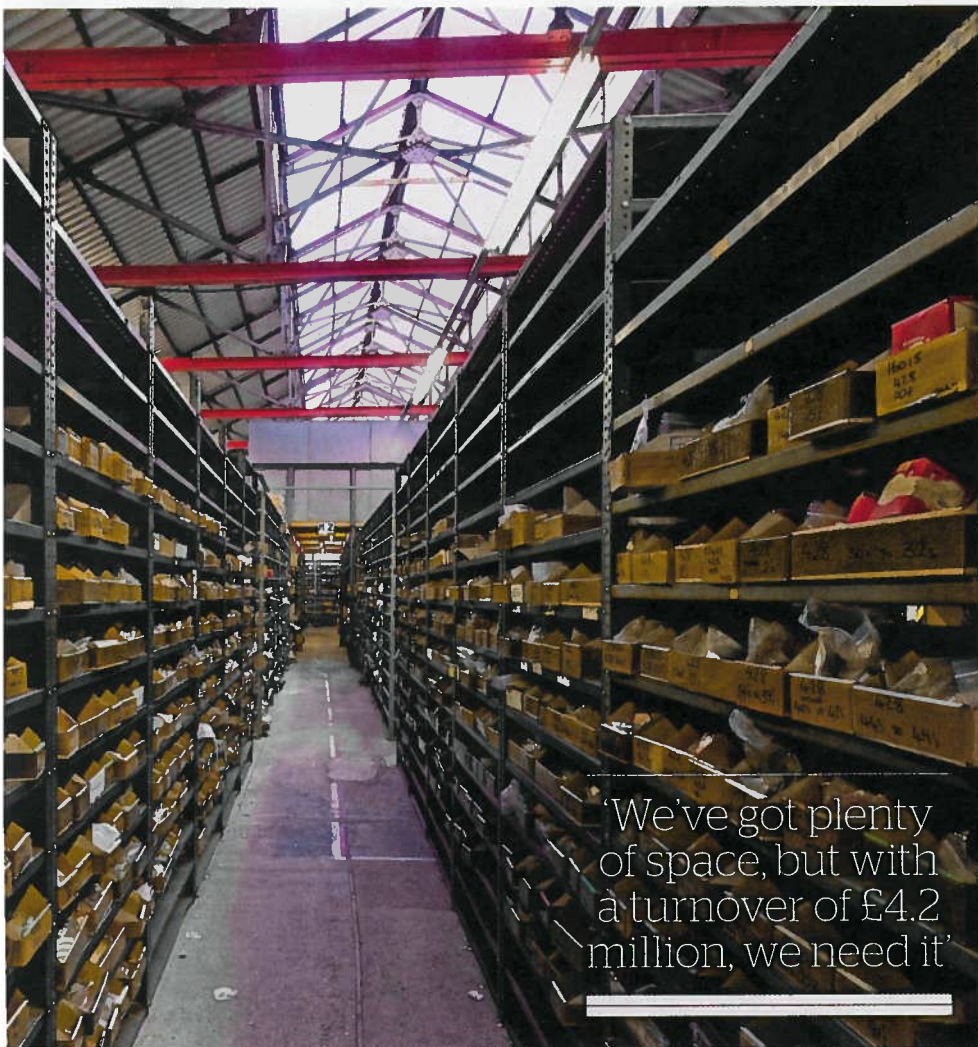
A man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a bright red zip-up jacket and dark pants, stands in the center of a long, narrow aisle in a warehouse. He is holding a large cardboard box with the word "HONDA" printed vertically on it. The aisle is lined with tall metal shelving units filled with various boxes and parts. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of depth and scale. The ceiling features a complex network of dark structural beams.

INSIDE

David Silver Spares

40,000 square feet, 90,000 different parts and one man's big idea.
David Silver makes owning classic Hondas a breeze...

By Gez Kane Photography Adam Duckworth



'We've got plenty of space, but with a turnover of £4.2 million, we need it'



Contain yourselves Honda freaks



Base metals are in fact gold

▶ THE CB400F RESTORATION PRODUCTION LINE

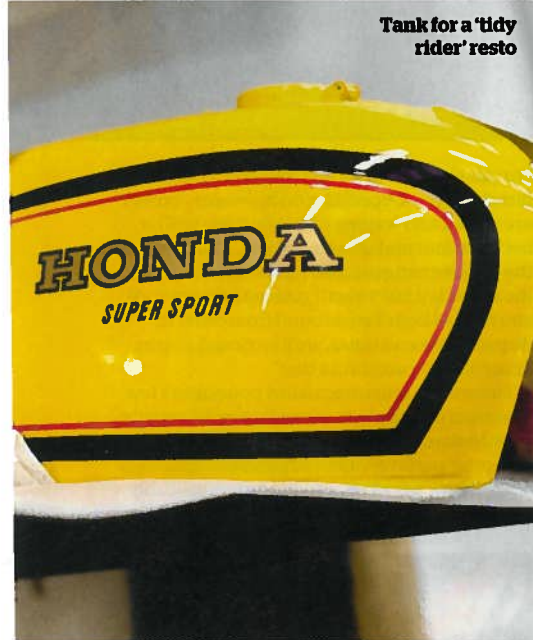
Parts for Honda's CB400F are David Silver's star earner. The model remains the most popular Honda with restorers and owners, if David's records are anything to go by. That's why he set up a production line restoration process. The project has its own dedicated warehouse and workshop space in a huge building just a few yards away from the main parts warehouses.

The idea of restoring CB400Fs on a commercial basis occurred to David in 2011. 'We have 6500 owners of these bikes on our database,' he explains. 'It seemed to me there ought to be a market for ready-restored bikes, so I started putting out wanted ads for them. I think I've bought more than 100 donor bikes so far and we've sold nearly 50 restored machines.'

A rank of donor bikes awaiting restoration line one wall of the huge warehouse building and more lurk in dark corners. There's a separate walled and roofed off section of the floor space that houses the workshop and dedicated parts store. The parts room looks like a scene from a breaker's circa 1980, with steel shelving piled with cylinder heads, barrels, engine cases, switchgear and all the other essential components of CB400Fs. Nothing is thrown away. 'Some original parts are so hard to find,' says David. 'Even rotten exhausts are worth saving. We get them repaired for people who insist on genuine parts - good genuine exhausts are hard to find and expensive.'

Step through into the workshop and the timewarp continues. On one of the two workbenches sits a yellow F2 model reaching the end of its restoration to 'tidy rider' condition. 'We restore the bikes to the level a customer asks for,' David explains. 'Some want a bike that looks good and goes well and they're not too bothered if it has a few pattern parts on it. We'll charge around £2500 for one like this, but others want a museum quality machine with all genuine parts - that'll cost around £4500.'

On the other bench, another bike is part way through a top-end rebuild. 'It smoked like a tramp steamer,' David explains. 'We're fitting new valves, guides, pistons and rings. We want each and every customer to be happy with what they've bought.'



Tank for a 'tidy rider' resto



Worth their weight in chrome-plated mild steel



Mercifully free of 'Honda Parking Only' sign

Rims all
spoken for



► THE PACKING ROOM

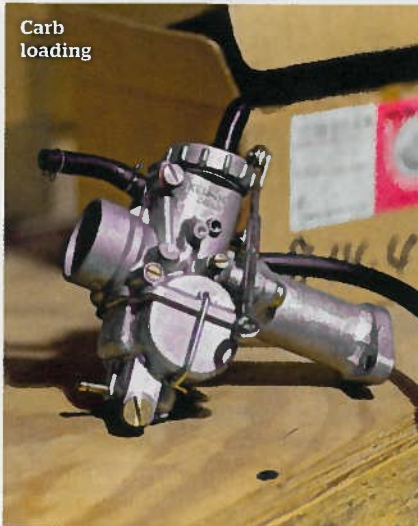
If the warehouse is on a massive scale, the packing room is altogether more homely. The radio is on and under the packing benches are piles of packing materials, flat packed cardboard boxes and reels of tape. There's a franking machine, printer and a couple of computer screens keeping track of orders. There's also a wall dedicated to the, ah, female form, lending a little levity to a pressured environment. The work is fast and furious, but the banter is non-stop.

Today is relatively quiet, according to Tris Revell, beavering away with a tape gun and a stack of Jiffy bags. 'We aim to pack at least 40

parcels each in a day - more when it's really busy,' he says. 'Depending on how many orders are picked and waiting to go out, there will be between four and six of us in here. At this end of the year we can guarantee all orders will go out the same day, but when it gets really busy, we'll aim for a 48 hour turn around from order to dispatch. At peak times, we'll pack and ship as many as 400 parcels in a day.'

Orders can range from a few pounds to a few thousand pounds in value and are split roughly 60/40 between the UK and export. 'Big trade orders for parts we have remanufactured might be £5-6000,' says Tris. 'Private orders probably average £150-200.'

Carb
loading



David
Silver IS
Honda
Britain

