



Paul Lee, who owns a 1994 Honda RVF400, summed it up perfectly last month: 'Park it next to anything modern and the RVF is the one that attracts people.' So what's going on? It seems to be a backlash against electronics, excessive power and/or modern Japanese styling, and the effects of age on middle-aged blokes who want to rediscover the simplicity of old bikes, slow down and have more fun. If there's one bike that hits the

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nostalgia spot it's the Honda CB400/4. According to David Silver of Honda parts specialist David Silver Spares, parts for the pretty little mid-1970s micro-superbike are among his bestsellers. Genuine stuff causes a stampede on eBay: £15 for two headlamp bolts or £45 for a clutch cable guide are typical. Which is why David has taken the extraordinary step of buying more than 40 CB400/4s to do up. His aim? To identify the parts that are holding up people's restorations.

'We're looking at all the difficult-to-find bits and having them accurately reproduced in China. For example, we've just got 400 rear mudguards made. Also, we want to see if the bikes are commercially viable to restore en masse.' When the bikes are finished, the shop will have the world's biggest collection of 400/4s. And an even bigger queue of buyers. 'We'll sell them eventually,' admits David. 'We've had people from all over the world saying, "Let us know when it's done and I'll have one." But hopefully one effect of the new spares will be to keep prices down.' And if a thousand stalled 400/4 projects get going again, that's good for a Honda spares shop. David hopes people will use the restored bikes as fun commuters. 'Instead of, say, a new 250 you could have a classic that's practical, reliable and for which spares are readily available spares for it. And it's probably more interesting too.' Any modern bike importers who need some beer to cry into are welcome at the next OSBC meeting. **Bike**

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