

Coloring Design for 2020 CRF1100L Africa Twin

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ABSTRACT

In 2016, Honda revived the iconic Africa Twin with three color schemes: Tricolor (red/blue/white), CRF Rally (red/black/white), and monotone (black, silver). Instead of being simple color variations, they create distinctive moods for the respective models with differing primary usage. The 2020 model has two versions: the Africa Twin with enhanced off-road riding experience, and the Africa Twin Adventure Sports with enhanced comfort for touring. In considering the color schemes, we sought to express a deeper worldview of the iconic model by linking each color scheme to its own characteristics and the model's heritage.

1. Introduction

The first-generation Africa Twin, which debuted in 1988, was an adventure model developed with feedback from the technology of the NXR750, which had won the Paris-Dakar Rally for four consecutive years since 1986. Its high off-road capability and unique styling with a full fairing won it the support of many customers in Europe and elsewhere. After going through multiple updates and model changes, including increasing the displacement, the model was discontinued in 2003.

In 2016, in response to customer requests for a revival of the Africa Twin, the CRF1000L Africa Twin was launched with the basic concept of "Go anywhere: a full-fledged adventure model that can be used from everyday commuting to riding in the vast land of dreams." As the successor to the Africa Twin, the CRF1000L Africa Twin follows the tradition of the Africa Twin, but has been updated to incorporate environmental performance and technologies suitable for next-generation models⁽¹⁾, expanding the range of enjoyment from daily commuting to weekend adventures (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 The 2016 CRF1000L Africa Twin

In 2018, the Africa Twin Adventure Sports (AS) model was added to the basic Africa Twin (STD) model with an increased gasoline tank capacity for longer distance touring, expanding the range of enjoyment as an adventure model (Fig. 2).

In 2020, the Africa Twin underwent a full model change, and its specifications were revamped to give sharp differences in the character between the two types⁽²⁾: the STD type (Fig. 3) with a slimmer and lighter body for agile off-road riding, and the AS type (Fig. 4) with a larger fuel tank and larger fairing to fully enjoy touring.

In considering the livery for the 2020 CRF1100L Africa Twin, we examined each of the three color schemes on the previous models to see how they have been received by users and what images they received.

In this paper, we describe the results of the above discussion and the method of embodiment in the 2020 model based on these results.



Fig. 2 The 2018 CRF1000L Africa Twin AS

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Fig. 3 The 2020 CRF1100L Africa Twin STD



Fig. 4 The 2020 CRF1100L Africa Twin AS

2. Color Design Considerations for the 2016 to 2019 Models

The core of the livery theme during the development of the 2016 CRF1000L Africa Twin was the “revival of the Africa Twin brand.” A total of three color schemes were selected: the model’s representative schemes, Tricolor (red/blue/white) and CRF Rally (red/black/white), with monotones added as a new value proposition⁽³⁾. The livery concepts for these three types are shown below.

- Tricolor: The symbol of the Africa Twin brand’s revival
- CRF Rally: Expressing the prowess of the latest Dakar racer
- Monotones: New value as a tourer for adults

2.1. Production (sales) Ratio by Color Scheme

First, we confirmed the color history and the color ratio of the production volume since the model’s revival in 2016 (Fig. 5). Since 80% of the total production of more than 100,000 units is for the European market, the data mainly reflects the preferences of European users. Initially, the three color options were roughly equal. The popularity of Tricolor, which was positioned as a symbol of the revival of the Africa Twin brand, was increased thereafter. The success has been significantly influenced by the Adventure Sports (AS) variation added in 2018 came only in Tricolor, which was inspired by the first-generation model (Fig. 6).

2.2. User’s Thoughts Inspires the Color Designers

Since the launch of the 2016 model, we have observed the changes in the production volume of each of the above-

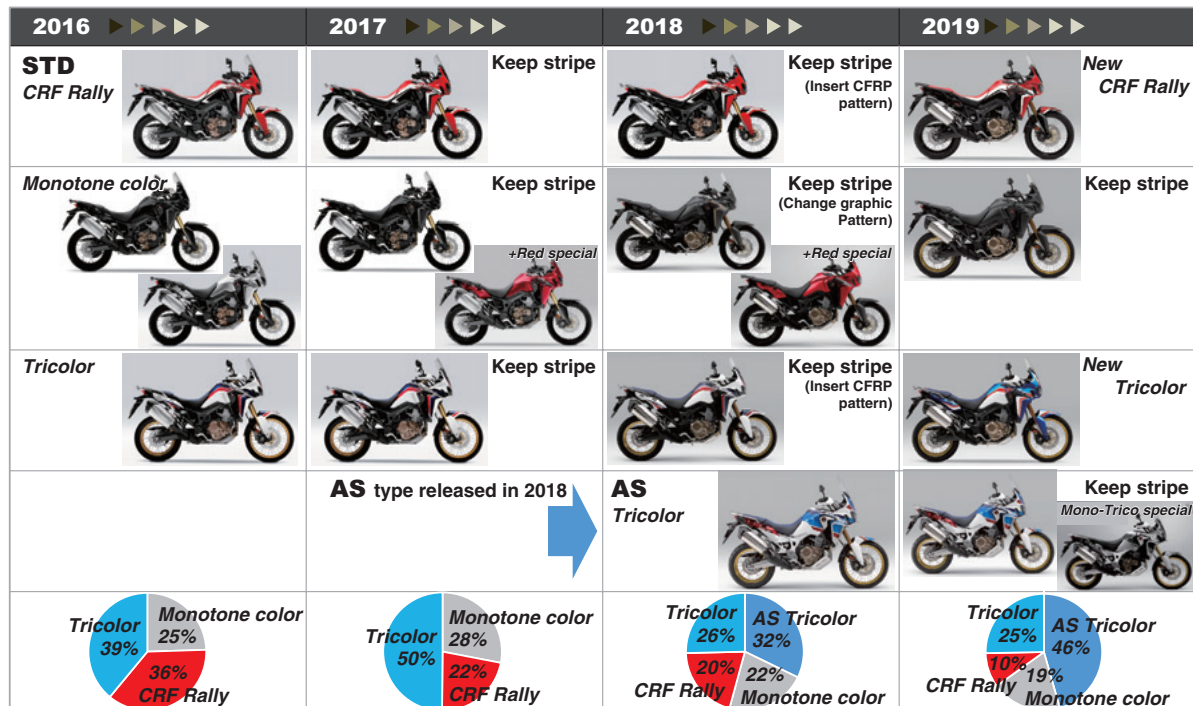


Fig. 5 Changes in color lineup and production ratio

mentioned colors and have continued to listen to the voices of customers around the world by means including the free description section of questionnaires. It was found that customers did not view Tricolor, CRF Rally, and monotone color schemes as simple color variations, but rather made their selections in conjunction with their primary use.

Since large motorcycles are highly hobby-oriented products, customers are likely to be particular about the colors they choose when purchasing. However, in the case of the Africa Twin, there was a clear and strong difference in the user's image of each color scheme, with some saying, "If it's not this color, it's not the Africa Twin," and others saying, "I love the model because of this color."

This was one of the unique aspects of the Africa Twin color variations.

2.3. Study for Each Color Scheme

2.3.1. Tricolor

The tricolor combination of red, blue and white was chosen as a symbol of the inheritance of the brand image in order to make a strong impression on the market of the revival of Africa Twin. This color scheme was worn by the original Africa Twin (Fig. 6), and in Europe, the customers have come to associate the image of the Africa Twin with the red/blue/white tricolor. We updated this color scheme to create an image that is appropriate for the new generation model with all new features, and adopted it for the 2016 model year.

The tricolor is also recognized as Honda's traditional color in racing⁽⁴⁾. Starting with the road racers in the 1970s, the color has been used for motocross team wear, the World Endurance Championship racers, the WGP racers and Paris-Dakar racers in the 1980s, and the latest racer replica models. Therefore, even customers who are not familiar with the first-generation Africa Twin will be able to feel the appeal of this traditional color scheme for racing.

The tricolor Africa Twin is a symbolic dedication to the



Fig. 6 The XR650, first generation Africa Twin launched in 1988

NXR750 (Fig. 7), which dominated the Paris-Dakar race on the African continent in this color⁽³⁾. It is a motorcycle that could travel through seemingly impossible terrain and it evokes that image of travel in people. Through repeated conversations with customers, such as older users who remember their enthusiasm for the Paris-Dakar race in their youth, it became clear that the Africa Twin in Tricolor is a combination that can evoke even the memories of their motorcycle life. From this, we understood that this color scheme has been chosen because it resonates with the most dedicated Honda fans and Africa Twin fans.

2.3.2. CRF Rally

The momentum of the latest Honda Dakar rally racer was expressed by incorporating the livery of the CRF450 Rally (Fig. 8), the works racer, to show its presence as an adventure model for a new era (Fig. 9).

According to the results of the questionnaire, many customers selected this color based on the image of the



Fig. 7 The NXR750 conquers African continent



Fig. 8 High-performance CRF450 Rally currently used in Dakar Rally

latest Dakar Rally racer as per the color concept, while others selected it based on the powerful and stylish image of the color red itself, and seeing red as a traditional color for Honda's off-road vehicles (Fig. 10).

Since the mid-1970s, Honda's off-road motorcycles and motocross racers have been promoting red as their image color. It was found that the simple elements of such images resonated with the customers, and they chose the products because of the sharp impression and the association with Honda being active in the racing scene.

2.3.3. Monotones

The selection of monotones is composed of stylish tones and colors with a strong, solid impression, as a coloring that is geared towards a wide range of mature lifestyles without being bound by a specific image (Fig. 11).

Monotones are often chosen to avoid the replica colors that tend to stand out, but in the case of the Africa Twin, it seems to have been chosen more proactively. Customers specifically choose this color scheme to match their lifestyles or riding styles, such as: "wanting to ride an adventure model but not off-road," "a businessman who wants a large on/off-road model for a quick ride to work," and "wanting to go on a long-distance touring in comfort wearing matching riding gear with a partner."



Fig. 9 The 2016 Africa Twin coloring design based on the CRF450 Rally



Fig. 10 The Honda CRF series

2.4. Exclusive Tricolor Livery for the New Adventure Sports (AS)

To further enhance the image and feel of the Africa Twin as an adventure sport model, the color selections for the Adventure Sports (AS) trim added to the lineup for the 2018 model year was considered based on the changes of the shipment ratio by color since the 2016 model, as well as feedback from Europe, its main market. In the most recent 2017 model year, Tricolor already accounted for half of the shipments, indicating its popularity (Fig. 12).

We thought that Tricolor would be the most suitable color for the AS, which is equipped with a big tank for more touring fun and reminds us of traveling.

Also, 2018 was a special year because it was exactly 30 years since the birth of the XRV650, the first Africa Twin, in 1988.

For these reasons, we decided to use a color scheme reminiscent of the tricolor of the first generation as the 30th anniversary color, and applied two-tone paint in many areas to create a livery suitable for a special model (Fig. 13).

In addition, the wreath design of the 30th anniversary commemorative mark was expressed in the tire pattern to



Fig. 11 The 2016 Africa Twin in monotone (silver)

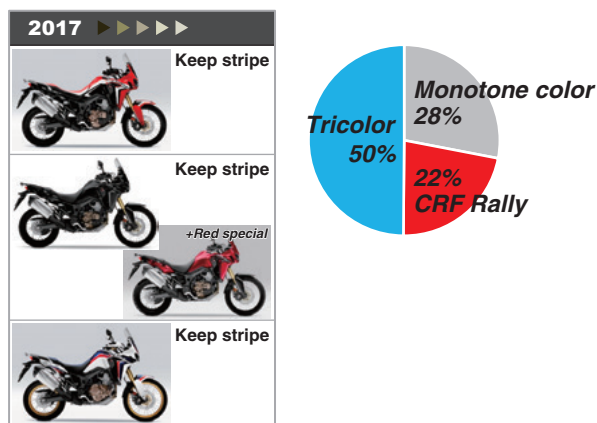


Fig. 12 Shipment volume for 2017 model by color

express our gratitude to the customers who have continued to ride and love the model for the past 30 years (Fig. 14).

As a result, the total number of both STD and AS in Tricolor in the 2018 model reached nearly 60% of the total (Fig. 15).



Fig. 13 The 2018 CRF1000L Africa Twin AS



Fig. 14 30th anniversary mark

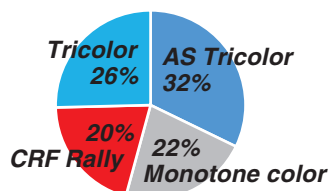


Fig. 15 Shipment volume of 2018 model by color and type

2.5. Africa Twin Color Variation Features and Brand Revival

We have taken the approach mentioned above towards the coloring design for the Africa Twin since 2016 as a way to strongly solidify the brand that was first established with the original model. The image that customers seek for the Africa Twin changes depending on the historical background of their exposure to motorcycles and the feelings that are fostered by the wide range of uses for on- and off-road vehicles. The iconic Tricolor, CRF Rally, and monotones fulfilled these individual wishes of the customers, and this combination of color schemes became the distinctive features of the Africa Twin. With sales exceeding 100,000 units in the five years since its launch, and the well-balanced acceptance of each color with Tricolor at its core, we believe that we have achieved the revival of the brand.

3. 2020 Model Livery Concept and Methodology

In considering the color schemes for the 2020 Africa Twin, we kept in mind that this is a rare model where the colors are given the role giving different identities to their respective Africa Twin.

The main feature of the 2020 model is that it has been differentiated into two distinctive types, Standard or STD (Fig. 3) for more enjoyable off-road riding and Adventure Sports or AS (Fig. 4) for more comfortable touring, with enhanced functions⁽²⁾ for each type. This is linked to the above “the colors are given the role giving different identities to their respective Africa Twin,” which means that each model concept can be accurately expressed in the coloring. Figure 16 shows a concept board showing the color scheme of each model.

The STD is interpreted as a new Africa Twin, an on/off-road model with a large but tight body that demands off-road mobility. The conventional CRF Rally color is used as the image color; a black monotone model with an urban extreme sports image was also made available.

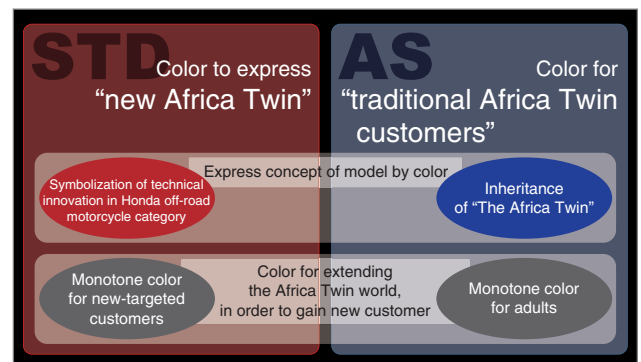


Fig. 16 Coloring concept of 2020 model

The AS is a tourer that inherits the impression of the Paris-Dakar model of the Africa Twin, which used to race through the African desert, and the traditional Tricolor was chosen as its image color. In addition, a monotone model has been created to take advantage of the characteristics of the AS, creating the image of a mature tourer that can handle a wide range of activities from urban use to touring.

The following is a description of the specific techniques used for each type and coloring.

3.1. The 2020 Africa Twin AS in Tricolor

The Africa Twin AS, which has evolved to enhance comfort in touring, is centered on the traditional tricolors, reminiscent of the first-generation Africa Twin that has traveled around the world with customers.

The livery concept was set as “New Interpretation of Heritage” and the tricolor arrangement was reworked to express a modern interpretation of the model’s heritage (Fig. 17).

The tricolor scheme of the AS type released in 2018 was expressed in graphics that flowed horizontally (Fig. 19), paying homage to the original Africa Twin (Fig. 18), as

mentioned earlier.

For the 2020 model, a geometric expression was adopted to make a modern update. Geometric graphics were arranged to accentuate the vehicle body’s front-to-back flow line to tighten the appearance of the AS type, which comes with a large gasoline tank (Fig. 20).

In the 2018 model, the blue paint was applied all the way down to the front edge of the middle cowling to create an imposing front-view impression in the horizontal direction. In the 2020 model, the front edge of the middle cowling was painted white to give a vertical impression in the same view (Fig. 21). This gives a slimmer look to the overall volume of the fairing (Fig. 22), which has increased with the installation of the cornering lights⁽⁵⁾. In contrast to the 2018 model, which has a more imposing impression, we tried to create a design that communicates ease of handling in touring.

Using these techniques, we further evolved the



Fig. 17 The 2020 Africa Twin AS in Tricolor



Fig. 18 The 2018 CRF1000L Africa Twin AS with the XR650, first-generation Africa Twin



Fig. 19 Graphics accentuating lateral flow



Fig. 20 Geometric graphics accentuating longitudinal flow

traditional tricolor scheme by expressing the fusion of tradition and modernity as well as the ease of handling coming from the lighter body.

3.2. The 2020 Africa Twin STD in CRF Rally

The Africa Twin STD is slimmer and lighter for more enjoyable off-road riding. To show its link to the latest rally racers with high off-road performance, the CRF Rally color scheme was selected to be the main focus.

The livery of the latest CRF450 Rally has a greater proportion of red to give a stronger impression. Therefore, the livery concept was changed to “VIVID RED HONDA” to enhance the image of the powerful and light racer.

The areas of red, a color that symbolizes Honda’s motocross racers, has been increased to increase the image of aggressive strength, sportiness, lightness, and agility (Fig. 23).

In contrast to the previous CRF Rally color scheme, which were graphics of red and white placed adjacent to each other, black was inserted in between to give sharp

contrasts in brightness between the adjacent colors, resulting in a tighter color expression (Fig. 24).

By doing so, we were able to make the red stand out and make CRF Rally a more powerful color.

Utilizing these techniques allowed for the creation of graphics that look sporty, nimble, and agile, while at the same time giving a vivid impression of each color and expressing a more aggressive strength, deepening the impression of sharpness and the worldview of Honda as a racing company.

3.3. The 2020 Africa Twin AS and STD in Monotone

3.3.1. The AS in Monotone (black)

In creating the first monotone color scheme for the AS, we kept in mind the need to appeal to a wide range of adult



Fig. 21 Difference in impression in front view by their coloring design



Fig. 22 The 2020 Africa Twin AS equipped with cornering lights



Fig. 23 The 2020 Africa Twin STD in CRF Rally color scheme



Fig. 24 Differences in details of painted parts between 2016 and 2020 models

customers of today with diverse values.

The livery concept was set forth as “Adventure Elite,” and we were conscious of using dark colors to show a high level of quality as gear that would look good not only in chic touring attire, but also in daily use in the city, and that would give a sense of ownership status.

The contrast in textures created by the combination of the main color of gloss black and aluminum parts evokes the feeling of a sophisticated belonging of an adult, making this a distinguished adventure model with a cool impression (Fig. 25).

3.3.2. The STD in Monotone (black)

The monotone added to the color lineup for the STD type makes effective use of the red aluminum subframe also used in the CRF Rally color scheme, and the graphics are designed to convey a sense of crisp mobility.

The livery concept is “MODERN EXTREME SPORTS,” with linear graphics that express the speed of extreme sports for young-minded users.

To express urban sophistication, matte black, which has a high affinity with the aggressive image of extreme sports, was selected as the main color to achieve both a trendy look and a strong presence (Fig. 26).

These two black monotone color schemes are designed to appeal to a wide range of customers by presenting the world of Africa Twin differently from the Tricolor and CRF Rally colors. By using these techniques, the adventure model, which has a strong off-road image, has been given a high-tech, modern, and urban sophistication to match new lifestyle and riding styles.

As a result, the colors for all 2020 Africa Twin AS and STD models have been decided. Figure 27 shows the color variations corresponding to the concept board shown at the beginning of this section.



Fig. 25 The 2020 Africa Twin AS in monotone (black)



Fig. 26 The 2020 Africa Twin STD in monotone (black)



Fig. 27 Coloring variations of the 2020 Africa Twin STD and AS

4. Designing of Logotypes and Texture

As with the coloring described above, the logotype design and the texture design also play an important role in conveying the concept of the product. The following are the details that were worked on in order to further enhance the attractiveness of the Africa Twin.

4.1. Logotype Design

In the 2016 model, both the STD and AS types adopted the common Africa Twin logotype design (Fig. 28), and in the 2020 model year, the common Africa Twin logotype that was redesigned with a modern edge (Fig. 29) was used to create logotype mark exclusive to the AS with an iconic element representing the form of the African continent added to it (Fig. 30).

This design is intended to give the audience a sense of the Africa Twin's journey through the vast land of dreams,

just as the Paris-Dakar Rally once did. The design of the logotype symbolizes the comfort of long-distance travel and the spirit of adventure, which have been enhanced in the 2020 AS model.

4.2. Textured Pattern Design

Texture designing plays an important role in both functionality and feel of quality: its functional role is in adjusting the slipperiness of the material according to the degree of friction required, and in reducing the appearance of scratches, and its role in the feel of quality is to have a high-quality look from its appearance.

For this iteration of texture designing, we collaborated with an external design studio to pursue a new expression.

Figure 31 shows the three proposals that were narrowed down based on the theme of “a pattern that gives a sense of dynamism” to stimulate the owner’s senses and satisfy the desire to own the vehicle, as well as having the necessary functionality for full-scale off-road performance. In addition, we discussed how the pattern would look when applied to actual parts, and decided on a fine-tuned pattern based on Proposal B.



Fig. 28 Logotype of the 2016 Africa Twin



Fig. 29 Logotype of the 2020 Africa Twin



Fig. 30 Logotype mark of the 2020 Africa Twin AS

Figure 32 shows the textured pattern with an application example.

Proposal B was derived from Africa Twin’s basic concept of “Go anywhere,” taking the image of a vast and complicated course in a rally competition and processing it as a geometric pattern.

This pattern, named “Random Road,” was applied to the top cover of the tank and the covers around the speedometer, where it is most likely to be seen by the user, with the aim to stir excitement when riding the vehicle.

Because of the Africa Twin’s use in various scenes, it must be able to withstand the various conditions of nature, such as rain, wind, and sand. Therefore the ease of cleaning was also examined when adopting the new textured pattern.

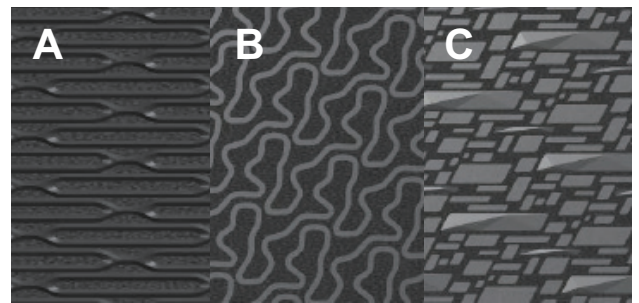


Fig. 31 Candidates for textured pattern

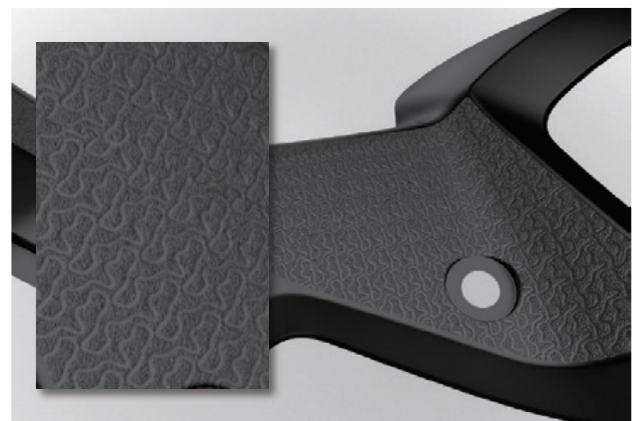


Fig. 32 Textured pattern and applied part

5. Summary

Since the 2016 model, the color variations of Africa Twin have been distinctive, with each livery having a different image and feel as felt by the customers.

This sense of each color becoming a brand on its own was the result of our effort in maintaining a consistent approach to the color schemes.

We aimed to enhance and further solidify the Africa Twin brand for the 2020 model by linking the characteristics of each livery with the STD and AS model concepts.

It is our hope that the Africa Twin will continue to “go everywhere” with its customers and remain a reliable lifelong companion.

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