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2008 Honda VT750T Shadow Aero Tourer

By **ROB BEINTEMA**
Metroland Media Group

It's getting to be a habit.

Every year I try to beg, borrow or steal a 750 for my first bike of spring. It's the perfect test sled for a new season – big enough to be fun yet small and benign enough to forgive any rusty mistakes after a long winter of only wishful thinking.

This year it was the VT750T, a touring-packaged version of Honda's venerable shaft-driven 750 Shadow Aero. The bike comes in three two-tone choices, in this case wearing a red and cream combo that emphasized its retro look and feel as much as the valanced fenders and classically tuned-exhaust tones of traditional V-Twin rumble.

The big 750s that riders aspired to in yesteryears have somehow been down-slotted into the starter segment for novices these days. Which figures, I guess, considering their easier riding position and less mass maneuverability. (Honda does not list the curb weight yet so take your own guess at how many kilograms have been added over the 250 kg (553 lb) rating of the base Shadow Aero.)

But 750s are still popular model sizes in the lineup, low-saddled, comfortable and confidence-inspiring cruisers with more than enough oomph for lightweight and smaller riders.

So, why not a nice set of bags and a windshield for a little touring convenience?

The VT750T adds the standard windshield and saddlebags along with a passenger backrest for about a \$1400 premium over the base VT750C Shadow Aero price.

This is a nice package bringing added convenience and versatility to a lightweight cruiser with a big bike sound and feel. And a good blend of throwback traditional carb-and-choke cruiser character mixed with economical simplicity and Honda's very modern and technologically savvy dependability.

ture offered a lowered storage tub and a fold-down third row in Honda's Odyssey minivan.

This lockable 240.7-litre trunk holds up to three golf bags or tools, equipment, anything you want safely secured out of sight. It can even be used as a cooler itself, equipped with drain plugs for easy rinsing out.

The Ridgeline, which comes standard with Grade Logic Control transmission, beefy brakes, heavy-duty transmission cooler, limited slip rear differential, heavy-duty power steering cooler, heavy-duty radiator with dual fans and trailer pre-wiring, performed well up to its 5000 lb towing limit in both acceleration and braking tests.

Throw in other dynamic enhancements like the standard Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) system; ABS brakes; brake assist; advanced dual-stage, dual-threshold driver's and front passenger's SRS airbags; front side airbags and two-row side-curtain airbags with rollover sensor, and you have a pretty complete package.

The Ridgeline was also the first-ever 4-door pickup to receive a 5-star safety rating for both frontal and side impacts.

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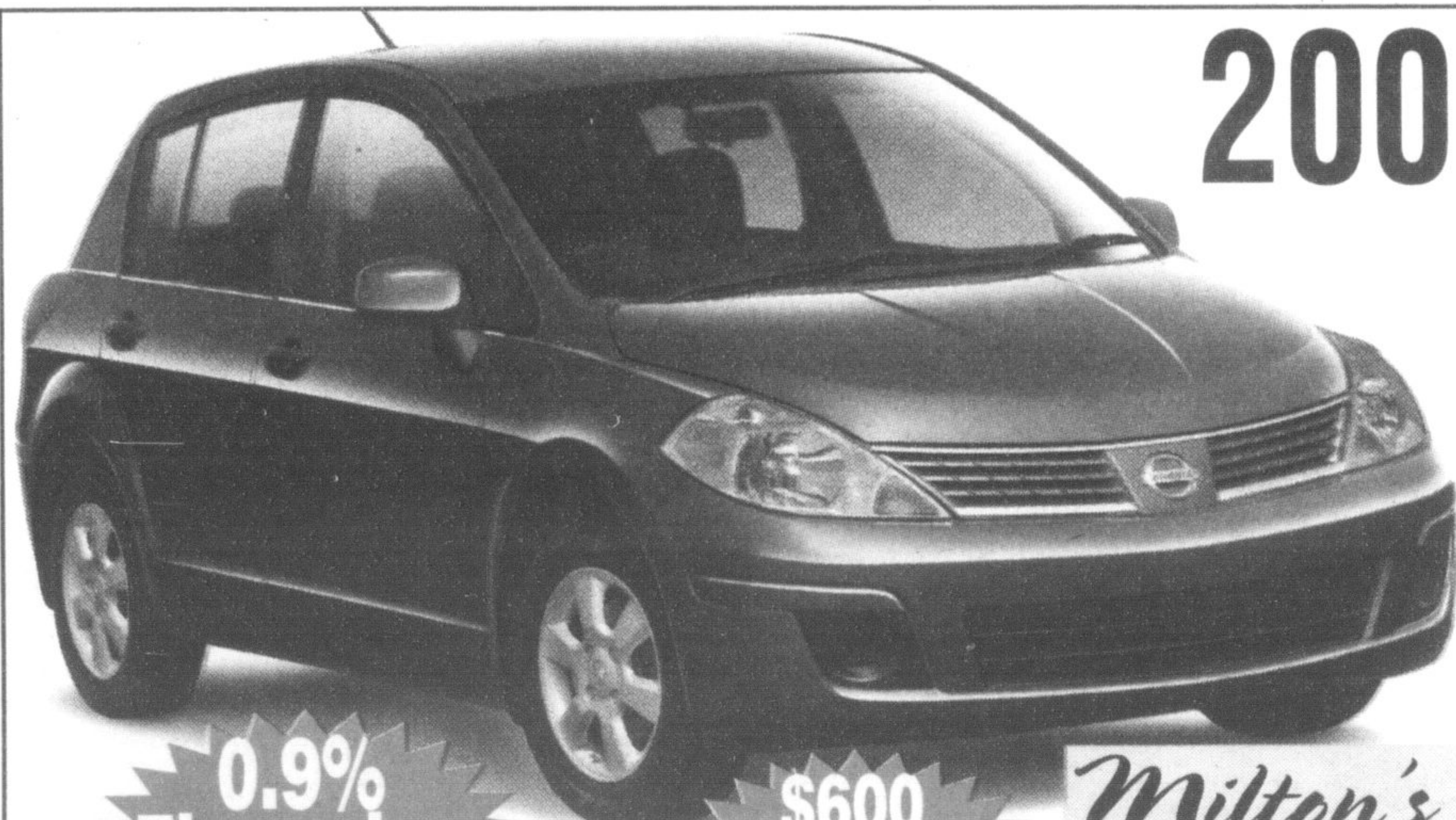
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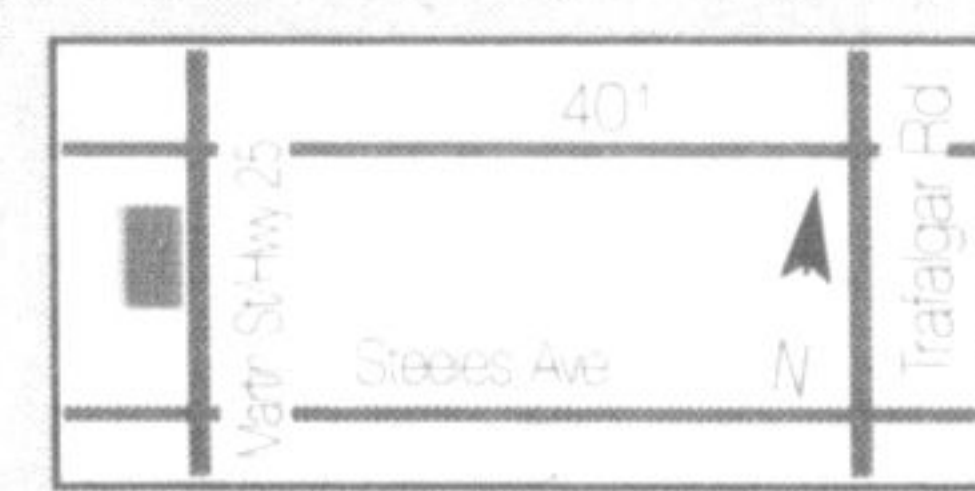
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