

CLASSIC DRIVER

Long-lost family: Harley-Davidson Aermacchi RR350

Lead

Harley-Davidson is synonymous with heavyweight V-twins and burly Hells Angels, while few are aware of the successful road-racing outfit the company ran in the Seventies. This 1974 RR350 is a stunning example from the lesser-known back-catalogue of the legendary American firm...

Around 25 RR350s were built over a three-year period (1974, '5 and '6) at the firm's Varese factory in Italy, acquired following the full takeover of Aermacchi, the ailing Italian aircraft/motorcycle manufacturer. They were built for one thing and one thing only: road racing, incorporating what were then high-tech features, such as double-disc front brakes and a six-speed transmission.

On top of the world



In this case, the old adage of 'if it looks quick, it probably is' couldn't have been truer – the RR350 won Harley-Davidson the 1976 350cc Grand Prix World Championship. Walter Villa, the unassuming yet ruthless Italian, won four races that season to seal the title, while also contesting (and winning) the 250cc formula series aboard a similar, if less powerful, Harley. Despite this particular bike's lack of precise competition history, it's in fantastic condition, having benefitted from a restoration some years back.

These stunning photos were captured by US-based photographer Nick Keating, whose father incidentally owned and sold the RR350 pictured, among several other classics sold through his business, the [Keating Wheel Company](#). The next time you see a lumbering Harley-Davidson, spare a thought for the dainty Italian thoroughbreds that once ruled the world.

Photos: [Nick Keating](#)

Gallery

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