

CLASSIC DRIVER

Harley Davidson Other

Stafford, 17 October

- Lot sold
USD 22 739 - 30 318
GBP 18 000 - 24 000 (listed)
Engine number 20T18951
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Motorcycle type** Street
- **Colour** Other
-

Description

c.1920 Harley-Davidson 'Board Track' Racing Motorcycle
Engine no. 20T18951

- * Keystone type racing frame
- * Single-gear transmission
- * An older restoration

1909 marked the appearance of Harley-Davidson's first v-twin, though it was not until the adoption of mechanically operated inlet valves in 1911 (replacing the 'atmospheric' type inherited from the single) that production really took off. Known by the sobriquet 'pocket valve', this 'F-head' (inlet-over-exhaust) engine - built in 61ci and 74ci capacities (1,000cc and 1,200cc respectively) - would remain in production for the next 20 years. The Harley single's transmission arrangements - direct drive by means of a leather belt - were continued at first on the twin, but the need to make better use of the engine's power characteristics, particularly for sidecar pulling, prompted the introduction of a two-speed rear hub for 1914, by which time chain drive and a proper clutch had been adopted. Later that same year a conventional, three-speed, sliding-gear transmission with 'step starter' was introduced on the top-of-the-range version of the twin which, with full electrical equipment, was listed from now on as the Model J.

An older restoration, the machine we offer has been restored in the style of a board track racer. Board track racing became popular in the USA in the early 20th Century, when purpose-built tracks sprang up catering for both cars and motorcycles. The racing was spectacular and often dangerous there were numerous fatal accidents but what eventually led to its decline was the expense of maintenance and relocation, and the motorcycle sporting scene shifted to dirt ovals constructed for horse racing.

Harley-Davidson remained aloof from motorcycle sport in its formative years, preferring to concentrate on developing its road models and the establishment of a national dealer network. The first serious factory

racing effort was launched in 1914 and soon bore fruit, one of its more spectacular early achievements being victory in the Dodge City 300 in 1915 when six of the first seven machines home were Harley-Davidsons.

This fascinating motorcycle features a frame of the kind first adopted by Harley-Davidson for its works racers in 1916. Known as the 'keystone' type, this chassis used a pair of plates instead of a conventional lower loop, thus enabling the engine to function as a stressed member. These rigid frames had the engine slightly offset to the left to assist cornering on the bankings and were in common use from 1916 to 1925. Other noteworthy features of include single-gear transmission, un-sprung front fork, dropped handlebars and short straight-through exhaust pipes. There are no documents with this Lot.

Bonhams 1793

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