
1919 Indian 7 HP

Stafford, 17 October

Lot sold	USD 20 496 - 27 329 GBP 15 000 - 20 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1919	Location	
Engine number	87M583	Motorcycle type	Street
		Colour	Other

Description

1919 Indian 7hp Powerplus

Engine no. 87M583

- * Landmark Indian model
- * One of the fastest American motorcycles of its day
- * Superb older restoration

Competition between the major American motorcycle manufacturers was fierce in the 20th Century's opening decades, a factor that greatly accelerated technological development. In Indian's case, the need to stay ahead of rivals Excelsior and Harley-Davidson prompted the introduction of an eight-valve v-twin racer in 1911, and then in 1916 a new 1,000cc 'flat head' (sidevalve) v-twin - the Powerplus - was introduced to replace the production 'F-head' (inlet over exhaust) type.

Development of the Powerplus had been initiated after Harley-Davidson trounced Indian in the 300-mile Venice road race in the spring of 1915, chief designer Charles Gustafson suggesting that a well-designed sidevalve ought to prove good enough to beat the Harleys. The 42-degree v-twin configuration of the existing Oscar Hedstrom-designed F-head engine was retained, but with side valves and increased use of roller bearings. Gustafson's intuition did indeed prove correct, the new 61ci (998cc) twin proving more powerful than its predecessor right from the start, hence the 'Powerplus' name.

As part of the testing programme prior to Powerplus introduction, works rider Erwin 'Cannonball' Baker rode a pre-production model from Vancouver, Canada to Tijuana, Mexico - an event known as

the 'Three Flags' - in August 1915, travelling 1,655 miles in 3 days, 9 hours and 15 minutes, breaking the existing record and emphatically demonstrating the new design's speed and durability. The success of Indian's sidevalve would prove immensely influential, with rivals Harley-Davidson and Excelsior eventually adopting the 'flat head' design.

The Powerplus motor used a Schebler carburettor, replacing the Hedstrom instrument, and from 1918 featured control cables rather than telescoping roads, a change that enabled the handlebars to be made adjustable. One of the fastest American motorcycles of its day, the Powerplus remained a fixture of the Indian range until the end of 1924.

An ideal 'Banbury' machine, this well-restored Powerplus is offered with an Automotoclub Storico Italiano certificate.

Bonhams 1793

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