
1918 Reading Standard Other

Stafford, 17 October

Lot sold	USD 34 461 - 41 354 GBP 25 000 - 30 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1918	Location	
Engine number	80388	Motorcycle type	Street
		Colour	Other

Description

1918 Reading-Standard 1,150cc 'Big Twin' Motorcycle Combination

Engine no. 80388

- * Pioneering American marque
- * A rare survivor
- * Restored condition

If Reading-Standard's sidevalve engines look just like those of early Indians, it's for a good reason: they were designed by Charles Gustafson Snr who took the idea with him when he moved to Indian to design its Powerplus motor. Gustafson's innovation had arisen from an appraisal of European design trends, and when Reading-Standard introduced its first sidevalve-engined machine in 1906 it was the only American manufacturer offering this type of power unit. Its superiority to other contemporary designs was vividly illustrated in July of that same year when a trio of Reading-Standards climbed to the top of Pike's Peak, a feat that would remain unequalled by any other motorcycle for the next five years. 'No limit but The Law' was adopted as the company's advertising slogan.

The Reading-Standard Company of Reading, Pennsylvania had built its first motorcycle in 1903 using a Thor single-cylinder 'F-head' (inlet over exhaust) engine and continued to offer this type of power unit after the sidevalve's arrival. Indeed, its first v-twin of 1908 was an F-head-powered machine. The company kept pace with technological developments in its early years, introducing a parallelogram front fork, loop frame and mechanical inlet valves (on the F-heads) prior to 1910, and experimented with hub gears before introducing a three-speed countershaft transmission for 1916. Reading-

Standard was acquired by Cleveland in 1923 and production continued for a while before the new owners dropped the R-S models to concentrate on their own 'four'.

The restored Reading-Standard 'Big Twin' offered here is attached to a three-person sidecar. Interestingly, the manufacturer made much of the R-S's abilities in this application: 'Its giant power multiplies the pleasure of sidecar touring. It has the power, the pulling ability to climb hills with ease. Its reserve of speed brings a smile of satisfaction to the rider.' Presented in superb condition, this machine represents an exciting opportunity to acquire a rare example of one of America's pioneer marques.

Bonhams 1793

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