


CLASSIC DRIVER

1927 Brough

Stafford, 18 October

- Lot sold
USD 145 405 - 193 873
GBP 120 000 - 160 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1927
- **Engine number** KTOR/I 68248
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Motorcycle type** Street
- **Colour** Other
-

Description

1927 Brough Superior 981cc SS100 Alpine Grand Sport Project
Frame no. 922
Engine no. KTOR/I 68248

The most desirable of Vintage-era motorcycles
Current ownership for many years
Offered for restoration

Legendary superbike of motorcycling's between-the-wars 'Golden Age', Brough Superior 'The Rolls-Royce of Motorcycles' - was synonymous with high performance, engineering excellence and quality of finish. That such a formidable reputation was forged by a motorcycle constructed almost entirely from bought-in components says much for the publicity skills of George Brough. But if ever a machine was more than the sum of its parts, it was the Brough Superior.

W E Brough's machines had been innovative and well engineered, and his son's continued the family tradition but with an added ingredient - style. The very first Brough Superior MkI of 1919 featured a saddle tank - an innovation not adopted by the rest of the British industry until 1928 - and the latter's broad-nosed, wedge-profiled outline would be a hallmark of the Nottingham-built machines from then on. Always the perfectionist, Brough bought only the best available components for his bikes, reasoning that if the product was right, a lofty price tag would be no handicap. And in the 'Roaring Twenties' there were sufficient wealthy connoisseurs around to prove him right.

Introduced in 1922, the JAP-powered SS80 achieved instant fame when a racing version ridden by George became the first sidevalve-engined machine to lap Brooklands at over 100mph. With the new SS80's performance threatening to put the overhead-valve MkI in the shade, it was decided to completely redesign the latter. The result was the legendary SS100. First shown to the public in 1924, the SS100 employed an entirely new overhead-valve 980cc JAP v-twin engine. A frame of duplex cradle type was devised for the newcomer, which soon after its launch became available with the distinctive, Harley-Davidson-influenced, Castle front fork patented by George Brough and Harold 'Oily' Karslake. And just in case prospective

customers had any doubts about the SS100's performance, each machine came with a written guarantee that it had been timed at over 100mph for a quarter of a mile - a staggering achievement at a time when very few road vehicles of any sort were capable of reaching three-figure speeds.

With this level of performance available in road trim, it was only to be expected that the SS100 would make an impact on the race track, particularly the ultra-fast Brooklands oval, and the exploits of Brough Superior riders - among them Le Vack, Temple, Baragwanath, Fernihough and Pope - did much to burnish the marque's image. When Brooklands closed forever at the outbreak of WW2, Noel Pope's Brough Superior held both the sidecar and solo lap records, the latter at an average speed of 124.51mph. Brough had entered the 1930s with an entirely JAP-powered range, and then in 1936 the SS100 was redesigned with an engine built by Associated Motor Cycles, in which form it continued until production ceased in 1939.

Its factory record reveals that frame number '992' originally formed part of an Alpine Grand Sport that left the factory on 16th May 1927 attached to a Swallow sidecar. The machine was first registered as 'YH 1622' and was collected from the factory by Reys Ltd. The engine, number 'KTOR/I 68248', originally formed part of another SS100 motorcycle combination, frame number '877A', despatched from the factory on 29th November 1926 and supplied to one G E Tunbridge of Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Gary Ross bought 'YH 1622' from J W Dawson of Sandling, Kent, a consulting engineer and motor claims assessor. The related receipt (for £57) describes the Brough as 'dismantled' and is undated, though it is known that Gary bought the machine in 1970 while he and his wife were in England. The old-style continuation logbook on file, issued 1956, shows that the Brough had already had a change of engine, while there is a period photograph on file, probably taken during the early/mid-1950s, that clearly shows a sidevalve motor installed.

Bonhams 1793

Title Mr

First name Bonhams Collectors' Car department

101 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1SR

United Kingdom

Phone +44-2089632817

Fax +44-2074477401

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/22727/>

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