


CLASSIC DRIVER



1955 NSU SPORTMAX - RS 251

RS 251

Paris, 10 February

Lot sold	USD 32 892 - 65 784 EUR 30 000 - 60 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1955	Location	
Number of seats	1	Motorcycle type	Street
		Colour	Grey

Description

Without title

Competition motorbike

Frame n ° 215545

- Iconic model
- Prestigious provenance
- Superb restoration

Founded in 1873, NSU were initially manufacturing knitting machines! Subsequently, the company moved towards the production of bicycles, and then to the construction of automobiles, from 1905. Forced to separate from the automobile division in 1929, the company refocused on to the construction of motorcycles. Despite the destruction of the WWII, NSU became the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer in the 1950s. The brand then decided to get into motorcycle racing and to setting speed records. Whilst they developed the Rennmax, a pure factory racing motorcycle, they also developed the Sportmax, a single-cylinder racing bike for customers, which was a perfect extrapolation of the Supermax. Featuring a lightweight stamped metal chassis that made the bike very maneuverable, with the tuned engine developing 30bhp, this bike became a very important rival of the Italian factory bikes of the period. Hermann-Paul Müller won the World Championship title in 1955 on a NSU Sportmax. John Surtees, Sammy Miller and Mike Hailwood were also among the riders who ended at the top too. Meanwhile, record holder Wilhem Herz was also the first man (in this category) to exceed 200mph (320 km/h) on a NSU Max Standard.

The NSU Sportmax RS 251 on offer, known for having been previously owned by John Surtees, is a

true Grand Prix customer competition bike of the period. This rare machine is consistent to its origin. Except for its front brake, which is a German 'hand-made' reproduction in very small series (less than 10 pieces), all components are original (the controls, handlebar, conical magnesium rev-counter, its rare GP RM carburetor, even the minimalist levers). The fairing is not original, since it is made from polyester, instead of being in aluminum as it used to be then. The engine was redone a few years ago by an old English enthusiast, in Manchester. He was one of the mechanics in Mike Hailwood's team. The rest was restored by the team of Freddy Brouwers, the founder of Arai Europe and a great enthusiast of historic motorcycles. The previous owner told us: "For the record, I went to Spa a few years ago with this NSU. In the paddock where the bike was on display, Sammy Miller looked at the motorcycle for some ten minutes and finally said 'very nice'." The current owner is none other than the talented fashion photographer Mathieu César, passionate about beautiful machines. He hardly used it, except in one or two motorcycle rallies. The bike also served in a publicity campaign for one of the largest French haute-couture brands.

It is bike that cannot be found easily and is a real sculptural beauty, a bike either to try to tame on the circuits, or to admire in ones living room!

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