


CLASSIC DRIVER



1910 Pierce Four

Fernandina Beach, 07 March

Lot sold	USD 100 000 - 150 000	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1910	Location	
Engine number	1811	Motorcycle type	Street
		Colour	Other

Description

1910 Pierce Four

Engine no. 1811

- *America's first four-cylinder production motorcycle
- *Part of the Boulton Collection for many years
- *An older restoration
- *Eligible for the Sunbeam Motor Cycle Club's London-to-Brighton Run

THE MOTORCYCLE OFFERED

America's first 4-cylinder motorcycle, the Pierce was manufactured by the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company at its factory in Buffalo, New York. Although inspired by the Belgian FN four, one of which Percy Pierce had brought to the USA in 1908, the Pierce differed in detail design, its engine eschewing the FN's 'atmospheric' inlet valves in favor of more efficient mechanical side valves in 'T-head' configuration, a arrangement FN themselves would later use. According to its makers the Pierce would be, 'Vibrationless, give motor car comfort and travel comfortably from a mere walking pace up to the speed of the motor car.' It was not just its multi-cylinder engine that made the Pierce unusual; the frame too was novel, being constructed from 3½"-diameter steel tubes that housed fuel and oil, and, like the FN, final drive was by shaft. Early models employed direct drive but from 1910 onwards a two-speed gearbox was standardised. Fast and well made, the Pierce soon had a string of

city-to-city endurance race wins to its credit. At the time of its motorcycle's launch in 1909, Pierce-Arrow was embarking on a policy of building luxury cars only, many of which would come to be regarded as among America's finest. This approach was reflected in the quality, and cost, of the Pierce motorcycle and would ultimately lead to its downfall. Priced at \$325 in 1909, it cost \$400 when production ceased in 1913, at which time the basic Ford Model T was priced at \$525.

This motorcycle was beautifully restored for Don Boulton by renowned Oklahoma City collector Ted Davis more than 20 years ago. According to Ted, the Pierce was found in a basement in Hamilton, Ohio.

Although the world's first production 'four' was the Belgian FN, the 4-cylinder motorcycle's natural home was the wide-open spaces of North America where, tun flat-out for hours on end, these smooth and refined machines afforded their intrepid riders a degree of comfort and reliability unmatched by rival singles and twins. Today these advanced and practical multi-cylinder motorcycles are much in demand for prestigious Veteran events such as the Sunbeam Motor Cycle Club's London-to-Brighton Run.

Bonhams 1793



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