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Indian Motorcycle(R): America's First Motorcycle Company



Synopsis

Indian Motorcycle(R): America's First Motorcycle Company(tm) tells the complete story of Indian, America's first mass-produced motorcycle maker, from its start as a bicycle manufacturer to the purchase of the brand by Polaris Industries in 2011 and the subsequent new Indian motorcycles. In the early years of the 20th century, Indian dominated the world's racetracks, earning the brand a worldwide reputation for quality, performance, reliability, and technical innovation, but the once-mighty company fell on hard times and in 1953 was forced to file bankruptcy. The Indian brand never quite died, though, thanks in large part to fanatically devoted enthusiasts, who tried to resurrect it for over half a century. Finally Polaris, maker of the highly regarded Victory(R) brand of motorcycles, purchased the brand and released the Chief(R) and Scout(R), models that once again restored Indian to its rightful place in the motorcycle pantheon.

Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: Motorbooks (August 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0760348634

ISBN-13: 978-0760348635

Product Dimensions: 10.2 x 1 x 12.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

The first 65% or so of the book is dedicated to the rise and fall of the original Indian Motorcycle company. From the early years where the founders bowed out fairly quickly, to the nefarious owners inbetween, to duPont Brothers efforts to keep it alive and the poor efforts at the end..Warts and all, good and bad, the effort is outstanding in my mind and just one good read. The remaining 35% of the book is dedicated to the hop-scotching of the name through some others, including not only the Gilroy bikes and the King's Mountain efforts, but also some underhanded efforts that were not sanctioned, or barely were. All of these were in the end, not complete efforts, although the King's

Mountain people seemed to have a good heart for the brand. Finally, you reach the part of the book where Polaris takes over, and yes, it is a testament to their engineering ability to bring the bike up to modern standards. What would an Indian look like, with fairing and hard bags, since the original nameplate that died in 1953 never had these features? What would the electronics look like? How about redesigning the engine so the "flathead" look is maintained, while still keeping it modern and competitive in today's market? You cannot make it look like a HD engine, nor can you make it look like a Victory engine. How to capture that old look? They tell their tale. To me, this is the more important part of the book. Yes, there are purists out there that think the only original Indian is one built 1953 or before. There are people out there that think that no one, absolutely no one, should be able to replicate what the original owners did. Hogwash...

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