

A Short History Of The Motorcycle

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Today's motorcycles are everywhere and there are lots of different classes or kinds of motorcycles as well. But the motorcycle, like the automobile, is a relative newcomer to the world stage.

The first motorcycle ever assembled was built by the German inventors Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach in 1885 in Bad Cannstatt in Germany. They were actually focusing more on the motor that was installed to power the two-wheeled contraption and not so much on creating a new kind of vehicle, but the resulting impact on motorized travel would be tremendous. There were earlier versions of steam powered bicycles, but this was the first petroleum powered motorcycle.

Not long afterward in 1894 the very first production motorcycle went on sale as the Hildebrand & Wolfmüller motorcycle. It wasn't long after that before several of the bicycle companies of that time got into the act and started selling versions of what was essentially motorized bicycles. However, as horsepower increased, the engines started to outgrow the bicycle frames that were used as their carriage.

The most popular motorcycle company before World War 1 was Indian motorcycle. After the war, Harley Davidson took over the number one spot until 1928 when DKW became the leading motorcycle manufacturer in the world. For a few years after World War 2 BSA took over as the largest motorcycle producer until 1955 when NSU Motorworks who had started out as a knitting machine company in 1884 became the dominant manufacturer for the next couple of decades.

Then in the 1970s the Japanese companies Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha, and Suzuki made their entrance into this field, changed the face of the industry, and quickly became the dominant motorcycle suppliers to the world from then on. Since the 70s Honda has held the title of the world's largest motorcycle maker. Today, the big four motorcycle makers have penetrated practically every motorcycle market in the world, and they are highly regarded as makers of high quality motorcycle products.

In recent years some of the older motorcycle brands like the Indian have regained popularity with Harley Davidson being the most successful by far.

Jim Johnson writes on many consumer related topics. You can find out more about Indian motorcycle sale or getting a motorcycle lift table by visiting our motorcycle website.