

Matchless Motorcycle Models

The Collier family at Plumbstead, London in 1899, founded Matchless. The two brothers Charlie & Harry were racers & made a name for their company by winning in the first ever Isle of Man TT in 1907. They remained a company always at the top of racing & in 1931 having taken over AJS they moved to the midlands. Having won many more notable victories & being taken over by AMC they ceased production in 1966. Colin Seeley built his own frame & fitted a G50 racing engine, & in the late 1980's the marque was revived with a Rotax engine.

G2 1958-66, 248cc ohv single, 330lb, 66mpg, 70mph

At a time when most other manufacturers were going to unit-construction, AJS produced this single, which retained a separate gearbox. Employing butterfly valve springs & an oil tank in the engine case casting it was a brave attempt, which never succeeded. Heavy for a lightweight the handling improved with the AMC front forks on later models. The 14CSR was the sports model with improved styling & suspension.

G3 1945-66, 348cc ohv single, 400lb, 80mpg, 75mph

A good British single, which was not particularly spectacular for it's time. The rigid versions had bad handling characteristics.

G5 1960-62 348cc ohv single, 350lb, 70mpg, 80mph

This is the bigger version of the Model 14 & G2, which has increased performance.

G9 1948-61 498cc ohv twin, 410lb, 60mpg, 90mph

These were introduced when twins were vogue. Late ones have alternator electrics & better frames. The early have odd handling characteristics & very poor brakes.

G11 1956-58 593cc ohv twin, 410lb, 60mpg, 90mph

This 600cc twin is difficult to come by & is slightly better than the 500cc. There is also a sports CS version.

G12 1959-66 646cc ohv twin, 430lb, 55mpg, 100mph

This had the enlarged 600cc engine which improved in build after 1960 with new cylinder head & lubrication system. They acquired Norton forks & wheels in 1963 along with 12v electrics. The sports CS & CSR versions are more sought after but this also has a more fragile engine.

G15/45 1963 749cc ohv twin, 430lb, 50mpg, 105mph

Us-only development with a enlarged 650 engine. You may find some in the UK. It had the engine reliability problems similar to the G12.

G15 1964-69 749cc ohv twin, 420lb, 45mpg, 110mph

AMC put the Norton Atlas engine into the Matchless cycle parts. It was very powerful, but they did vibrate a lot & the engine is fragile.

G50 1962 Prototype 500cc ohv single, export

Responding to American pressure AMC popped a G50 road-racing engine into a CSR competition frame to produce this successful model that sold particularly well in California.

G80 1945-66 498cc ohv single, 400lb, 55mpg, 80mph

This was the 500cc version of the models 16 & G3. It had slightly better handling & was more pleasant to ride.

G80 1987-90 499cc ohc single, 390lb, 55mpg, 95mph

Early starting problems have been overcome on the later bikes & the G80 makes a pleasant practical classic bike for everyday use. It handles well in the seventies style & is cheap to run. The better models have electric start & twin front discs. They later sold it with Rotax's mild single which makes a nice alternative.