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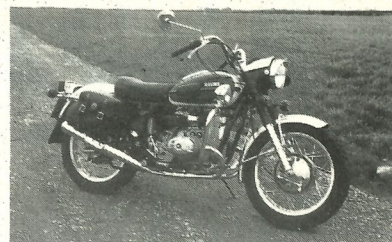
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INDIAN VELOCETTE SINGLE



MULTINATIONAL HYBRID

The Indian Velocette was conceived in America, built in Italy and had a British engine /John Pearson

FLOYD CLYMER had a dream. In the late sixties, like many others before and since, the American entrepreneur wanted to revive the Indian marque.

It never happened. The former west coast Indian distributor and publishing magnate died in 1970 without fulfilling his ambition of resuming full-scale manufacture of the famous V-twins.

Clymer did, however, manage to get some Indian-badged machines into the showrooms. After obtaining the rights to use the Indian name, he experimented unsuccessfully with a couple of prototypes — a 750cc (45cu in) Scout built in association with the German Münch organisation, and an Indian-Horex. There were also a number of European-engined Indian minibikes. However, the only real motorcycle to be produced for sale was an Anglo-Italian hybrid — the Indian Velo.

We said in February's feature on Robin Markey's 1957 Indian Apache that the Indian name survived after the Springfield, ►



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MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN

*Motorcycle Journeys in
South India*

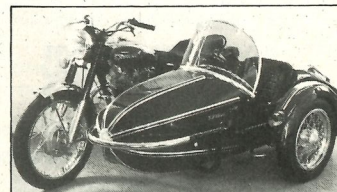
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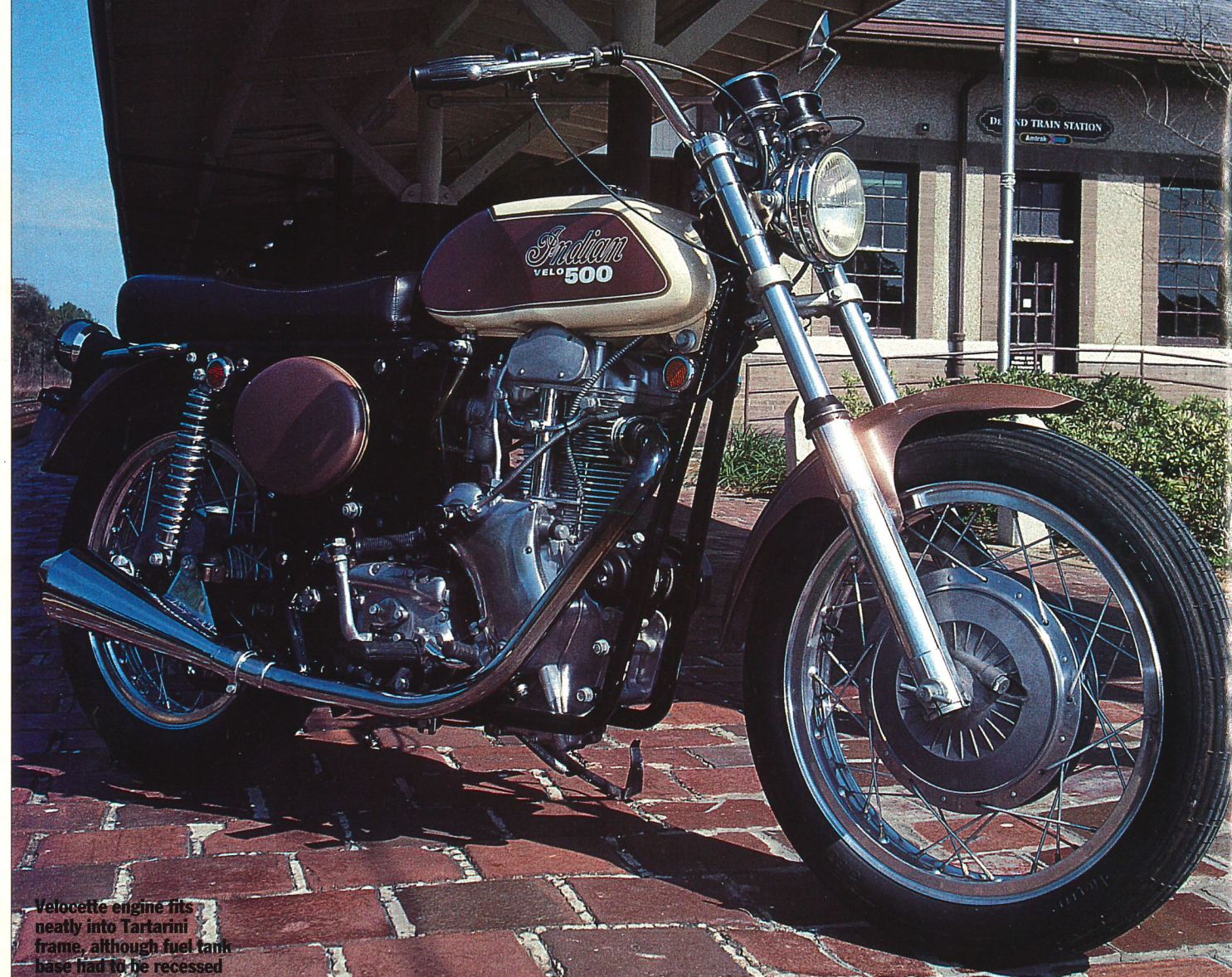
MULTINATIONAL
HYBRID

continued



MULTINATIONAL HYBRID

continued



Velocette engine fits neatly into Tartarini frame, although fuel tank base had to be recessed to clear rocker box

Authentic and original

Arvid Myhre's Indian Velo has travelled just 2000 miles in 23 years. The Frenchtown, New Jersey, building construction company owner added the Anglo-Italian hybrid to his 50-machine collection about five years ago, but only recently put it on the road.

'I bought it from the original owner, who used it occasionally for two or three years and then parked it,' he said. 'When I got the bike it was just as it is now, except it was kinda dusty and scruffy.'

All it needed was a thorough clean and

polish, a carburettor strip and some fresh oil.

The front tyre was in poor condition, but Arvid obtained a new-old-stock Pirelli Super Sport — the original fitment.

He planned to ride the Indian in Daytona's 'Pace Ride', the parade of machines that traditionally kicks off AHRMA's race day at the annual Florida festival. Unfortunately, when Arvid tried to start the bike the nipple broke off the carburettor end of the choke cable, dropping down inside the air cleaner along with some choke components. There was no time to strip the air cleaner, and he couldn't risk starting the engine without removing the

offending items, so he missed his ride around the historic banked circuit.

The story doesn't end there, because in his disappointment Arvid forgot to switch off the ignition. So when *Classic Bike* turned up to ride the Indian not only did the cable nipple and choke components have to be retrieved, but the battery needed a fast charge before the bike would start. Our thanks go to the extremely helpful Stuart Rogers. The Daytona-winning Norton ace from Wisbech, Cambs, is a friend of Arvid's, and he took on the fiddly task of removing and refitting the air cleaner.

Massachusetts, factory ceased production, albeit as a badge-engineering exercise on a variety of British machines.

Clymer also went shopping in Britain for his engine — at Velocette's Hall Green, Birmingham, factory. The 500cc ohv Venom motor was bolted into a lightweight Italian frame at Leopoldo Tartarini's Italjet factory in Bologna.

Tartarini was involved in various projects with British links in the 1960s. Italjet made a 160cc Ariel prototype as a potential BSA Bantam replacement, and the Grifon, a handsome but little-known Italjet model, built around Triumph's 650cc Bonneville unit.

Italjet slotted the Velocette engine and gearbox into a full duplex frame very similar to the Grifon's.

The package of Italian proprietary components included Marzocchi telescopic front forks, 18in Borrani wheel rims and full-width Grimeca brakes: a twin-leading-shoe drum at the front with a single leading shoe at the rear.

Around 100 Indian Velos were built, half of which reached the United States. Following Clymer's death, the remaining 50 were sold in Britain through Geoff Dodkin's South London Velocette dealership.

According to Rod Burriss' book *Velocette*, 51 Indian Velo machines had the rorty 41bhp Venom Thruxton motor. This engine's go-faster package included a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in-bore Amal GP carburettor, a modified cylinder head with massive 2in inlet valve and a 9:1 compression piston.

Arvid Myhre's machine featured here is one of the remainder, featuring the more tractable and user-friendly standard Venom motor. It has a 30mm Amal Concentric carburettor, which Velocette fitted to some models after its introduction in 1967. Compression ratio is 8.3:1 and maximum power output 34bhp.

All Indian Velos had Lucas coil ignition, which Velocette used from 1969 until their own demise in February 1971. Lighting equipment and switches were all sourced in Italy from CEV, while the speedo and tacho are both British Smiths.

My thoughts about the Indian Velo's looks are mixed. Initially I thought it looked pretty, in a lean and rakish sort of way. But after a longer study, I became aware that the machine represented a clash of design cultures.

I mean, there's the typically seventies styling and a sort of candy-apple metallic bronze and white paint scheme. But then

there's the high-camshaft single cylinder Velocette motor. This is probably one of the most aesthetically appealing of all time, but there's an indisputable pre-war stamp on it. To me, this looks uncomfortable amidst the seventies' brashness. However, our design editor Peter Allen likes it, so what do I know?

Starting the Indian Velo proved straightforward if a precise procedure was adhered to. Flood the carburettor, pull on the handlebar valve-lifter and ease the piston past compression, then swing on the short kick-start lever. It always thumped readily into life, hot or cold, emitting a raucous note through the reverse-cone megga-style exhaust silencer.

The Indian weighs 40lbs less than a typical Velocette single, a fact that is apparent

This is lean, light and very taut motorcycle

just taking it off the stand. On the move, while there is the Venom's delightful flexibility allied with strong, effortless power, you know you are definitely not riding a Velocette.

This is a lean, light and very taut motorcycle. Forget the Venom's relative comfort and long-legged ability, the Indian is a street racer with firm suspension and uncomfortable seat.

But it is a fine handling machine: quick steering, stable and manoeuvrable. It inspires confidence to pitch hard into turns, using all the available ground clearance. Eventually, cornering excesses are restricted by the side stand on left-handers and the exhaust to the right.

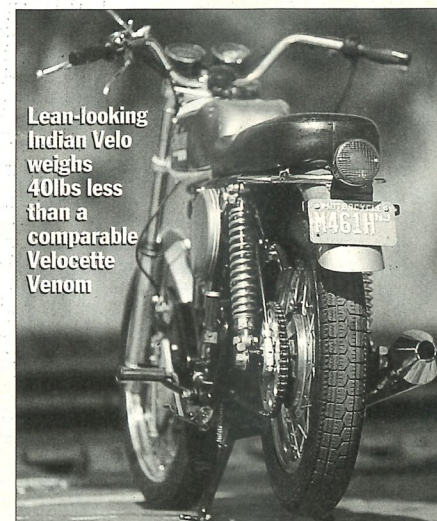
Braking is commendable, too. The twin-leading-shoe Grimeca proved reassuringly powerful. It was rather lacking in feel, however, and maybe this was a symptom of the machine's lengthy hibernation, which will improve when Arvid Myhre has clocked up a few more miles.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to understand why the Indian Velo was not a great success. It was hampered by a \$1400 (£939 at current exchange rates) price tag in the US — another \$95 would have bought a 750cc Honda Four.

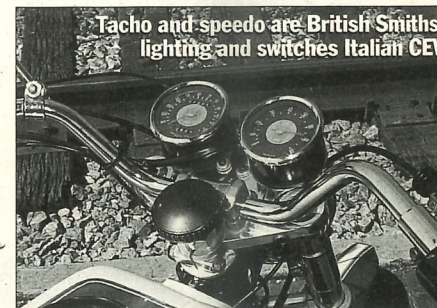
And in Britain, Geoff Dodkin sold the Venom-engined models for £525, with the Thruxton version costing a mere £25 more. That's comparable to what you would have paid for a 750cc Norton Commando or 650cc Triumph Bonneville.

Specifications 1970 Indian Velocette

ENGINE	
Type	single cyl, 4-stroke, overhead-valve
Bore x stroke	86 x 86mm
Capacity	499cc
Compression ratio	8.3:1
Carburation	30mm Amal Concentric
Output	34bhp @ 6200rpm
Electrical	Lucas dynamo, 6v battery, coil ignition
TRANSMISSION	
Clutch	multi-plate, wet
Gearbox	4-speed
Primary drive	chain
CYCLE PARTS	
Frame	tubular duplex
Suspension	(front): telescopic fork (rear): swinging arm
Tyres	(front): 3.25 x 18in (rear): 4.00 x 18in
Brakes	(front): t/s drum (rear): s/s drum
Wheelbase	56in (1422mm)
Seat height	32in (812mm)
Ground clearance	7in (177mm)
Kerb weight	360lb (163kg)
Fuel capacity	3gal (13.7 litres)
Oil capacity	0.5gal (2.3 litres)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	95mph (est)
Fuel consumption	43mpg (est)



Lean-looking Indian Velo weighs 40lbs less than a comparable Velocette Venom



Tacho and speedo are British Smiths, lighting and switches Italian CEV

