



RThe motorcycle is a descendant of the “safety” bicycle, which is a descendant of the high-wheel bicycle, which is a descendant of the pedal-less “push-bike.” Circa 1800, the push-bike was called the “bone-crusher” for its nasty tendency to toss riders. In 1885, Gottlieb Daimler put together the first motorcycle, constructed mainly of wood, characterized by a “bone-crusher” chassis, and powered by a “single-cylinder Otto-cycle engine.” Back then, *Let it ride!* was more of a wish and a prayer than a call to fly on the wings of the wind down an open road.

IThe first American motorcycle—if steam propulsion counts—appeared in 1869, the ingenuity and handiwork of one Sylvester Howard Roper of Roxbury, Massachusetts. Oh, we forgot to mention that these early bikes had 3 or 4 wheels—like training wheels—to keep them from tipping over. By 1894, Hildebrand & Wolfmueller produced and patented the first two-wheeler in Munich. **1895** is a pivotal year in motorcycle lore. A French firm unveiled the mother lode of all motorcycle engines: the DeDion-Buton, making possible “mass production and common use of motorcycles.”

DWhy reinvent the wheel? The DeDion-Buton was such a powerful machine that everybody copied it, including Indian and Harley-Davidson. The first US production motorcycle was the Orient-Aster (Metz Company, Waltham, MA, 1898), which beat out the Indian (1901) and Harley Davidson (1902). Indian and Harley-Davidson were the sole survivors of the Great Depression. During WW2, Harley got the better military contracts, and Indian, nearly broke by 1945, drew its final breath in the late 1960s. Coming from a shareholder, this sounds prejudicial, though it happens to be true: Harley rules! (See “The First Motorcycle,” by Dave Tharp, Virtual Museum Curator at www.motorcycle.com/mo/memuseum/firstbike.html)

EWho wants to ride on a bike that sputters, whines, and stalls? Nobody. Anyone serious about living to ride wants dependability and inimitable style! The H-D marquee has become a world-class symbol. You trust it with your life when you get on and ride. It’s become so much a part of you that you feel one with it.

IThink of it. Life is a road—sometimes a straight smooth shot right into the horizon, and other times a steep, bumpy careen into pitch dark. For the ride of your lifetime, you need more than horsepower and more than a machine: You need a name you can trust. Guess who that might be? Hint: No one plays fast and loose with him.

TBelieve it or not, Jesus understands that we want to be free. Isn’t that what motorcycles are really all about? (As someone put it, defying gravity *and* society!) But are we really free? Sin is a road that comes to a dead-end, and we’re all on it. When it comes to sin, we’re all riding for a fall. No problemo! There is hope for the road, hope for easy, tough, jaded, aging hippie, seniors, or even Yuppie riders. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He said that you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. You can ride on that forever!

VAROOOM!