

# CLASSIC BIKE RAMBLINGS

## Variety.....Baseball Cards.....And The Holy Grail !

Most people who collect motorcycles tend to stay with one or two types or nationalities, they are a bit cliquish, they stay in a brand or a style or maybe two but you rarely see a Brit fan with a Jap bike or a vintage Harley collector with a Euro bike. But I met an old collector early on in my sickness who owned ten bikes at the time and I asked him "how many bikes do you really need"? to which he replied "as many as you want, but no more than you can ride" I then wanted to know what type of bikes should I collect and he looked at me point blank and said "just like the bike" and that has been my directive, ride all my bikes at least twice a month and collect the ones I like. I collect to ride them I know that some out there collect as an investment, but if you buy a motorcycle purely for the investment, you are playing a dangerous game. If you are just going to sit on it and look at it, your money is better off elsewhere. Remember this, if you buy a motorcycle only to be sold at some future auction and don't ride it, well my friend you are not getting any dividends on it, and really you didn't buy it because you liked it you bought it because you think someone else will like it in the future and you could be wrong bubba. Don't buy junk and ask yourself, "do I really like this motorcycle"? I have done this 17 times and that's my main question, before I write the check, before I wire the money, before I trade my baseball cards, its question numero uno. It's so very strange how many motorcycles everyone thinks will become collectable and never do..... Just like the bike and don't buy junk

Collecting bikes is a lot like collecting baseball cards when we were kids, but now we can afford bigger cards. Its an affordable second childhood, especially if you have a vision and are handy with a wrench. I also know of collectors who have so many bikes they have lost count and then there are some who collect so others like me can't have them, and that's just plain mean, really! lol. A variety of vintage bikes lets you experience different periods of time, history and technology and while 2 or 3 are not running and you are waiting on a part being located on foot at a flea market in Italy, you have another bike to ride! I may break even on some or maybe not, maybe one of my bikes is my 401K but that's not the point of collecting. You see for many of us its the thrill of the hunt for the Holy Grail to pull in on a original paint bike that you bought for a decent price that none of your buddies knew about and they still think its cool that you got it..... the Holy Grail of collecting.....a barn fresh/hidden find. Its a friendly sort of competition, we keep our cards close and when a card doesn't fit our hand, we deal it to a friend.

We spend hours and hours on Craig's list, ebay, walnecks, chasing down leads from neighbors and classifieds. Spending more hours driving only to find a storage unit full of junk, but enjoying the road trip and the motorcycle enthusiasts we meet. Its the thrill of the chase, of finding lost history, buried treasure, the thrill of showing up at bike night to, "where did you get that"? Its the stuff collecting legends are made of. My collecting is a bit more broad then most, I have enduros, sport tourers, sidecars, 1,2,3, cylinders, air cooled, water cooled, kickstart, electric start, 106cc to 1000cc, they just have to be old, unique or special and most of all I don't want to bump into another one very often. I like rarity and I like original.

I enjoy my times on all my bikes for different reasons and connections, I remember the find, the repair, the first ride of them all. They all have stories and they tell them to me as I ride or as I sit on a picnic table eating lunch with my obedient steed sitting near. Oh, the stories it could tell, I think all bikes tell stories, its just the vintage bikes have more chapters and we all are writing an endless book making new stories and friends along the way. Every ride adds a little soul, a little more personality to a metal and oil machine.

The true test of a bike I find is when I look down at it and say out loud "Wow this is a great bike"! or on a rainy day, I go to the garage and have a cup of coffee just to look, to observe and I am

genuinely proud to own and ride this machine.

Yes, I may have too many bikes but the need to rescue them to resurrect them from their doom in that abandoned garage and to let them make new stories, well that overpowers being sane and sensible and vintage and antique bikes are not for the sane and sensible. Some ask me what its like to own some of these bikes, but I don't really think of it as owning them it is more like being a caretaker or curator of them till their next chapter in history.

Many of the bikes I have now were posters on my bedroom wall. I desperately wanted my 1976 BMW R100 sport but I was 15, so it was a 1973 Honda CB450 for me. People in their 30's, 40's, 50's can go back in time, pretty cool huh?

These are time machines my friends and come with the inherent problems of time and travel, these bikes still have their quirks, their problems and issues. If you are in a hurry, if you need perfect, if you are anal about details and rattles well than you need to know the past was very imperfect, and you my friends need new bikes, but I am ok living in the past.

I may have a garage full of worthless bikes or it may be a treasure trove, it really doesn't matter either way, because I like them all.

Cycle collecting doesn't require the cash of the Classic car market and it attracts a different crowd most members of the vintage bike gang are not in it for the money, but because they like their bikes..

Do not get a vintage bike and try to fix or update its stock personalities and quirks, its technology is 30,40, 50 years ago. The transmissions are not as sharp, the suspension is not as stiff, and they don't start as easy and leak oil, the electrics give you fits and they run hot and don't stop as well, and this is when they drove off the showroom floor! If you have to change history or improve upon it get a new retro bike, its cool, they are great. But leave the old bikes original, scars, leaks and stories intact, there are too many of us out there looking for the Holy Grail and I'm a bit big for baseball cards....

## Super Bike Update

A record number of entries in world superbike competition show that 32 riders from 10 countries are entered with 7 manufacturers as follows, Honda (8-CBR 1000RR), Ducati (7-1098R), Kawasaki (6-ZX10R), Suzuki (4 GSX-R1000K9), Yamaha (3-YZF-R1), Aprilia (2-RSV4) and BMW (2-S1000R). This will be an un-precedented level of factory participation in a world championship.....

## Mr. 300 All Classic Team

This one's special, its bikeweek! Gotta go big! And its Fran Haasch. What can I say, she gives away bikes, promotes bike shows and makes it to the events, even if its raining or she is sick. And the All Classic Team could use some "beautification" Heres to you Fran for being the 3rd. member of Mr 300's All Classic Team. (and the hottest !)

