

FISHTAIL WEST #263



The elected officers of the Velocette Owners' Club of North America and Canada is a registered non profit organization.

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VOCNA 1000 Mile Rally:

13-19th July 2025

Forest Grove, Oregon

VOCNA East Coast Rally:

11-14th September 2025

Catskills, New York

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www.velocette.org

Submissions for the next issue: 8th August 2025

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Cover photography: Blaise Descollonges

Chairman's Chat

by Paul d'Orléans

The good news about the Quail MotoFest getting rained out last year - they pushed the date back one week this year, to May 17. That poached John Ray's usual date for the Spring Opener, but being a flexible sort, John moved the SO forward, and I was able to attend. California was really showing off on May 10, as the hills were still a fuzzy green, the wildflowers were going at it, and it was a warm day with bluebird skies. We had a great 100-mile ride through the wine country, with a few new faces I'm sure you'll see in this issue's photos. Thanks for showing up!

The Quail itself was cool and sunny, and I was happy to see Jesse on his Thruxton for the Quail Ride on Friday, which he'd just finished the day before. That was brave, I thought, but the bike went without a hitch, and looked terrific. If you'd stopped by The Vintagent tent, it was parked outside, along with Kim Young's 1930 KSS, her mount on the Quail Ride. Other rubbish was outside the tent, like Mark Stephenson's lovely Vincent Rapide, and Tim Stafford's impeccably restored Dover White BMW R69S; a proper parking lot. I'd just flown in from Mexico for the Quail, so rode my default '65 Triumph T120, then swapped Laney Thornton for his much-modified 1950 Vincent Rapide, which roared like a lion and held the bumpy ground like one too, after he'd spent 35 years upgrading the suspension, brakes, engine, etc. It looks



2023. Sean Duggan at the MeloVelo.
Photo by Paul d'Orléans



Paul d'Orléans, back in the day.

standard though - that was his goal. I suppose a similarly modified Velocette might be one of Paul Zell's beasts, which might not be as outright fast (though his Big Thruxton might be...), but would surely out-handle the Vinnie with only mild suspension tuning, because Velocette.

Not to belabor what you already know, but an antagonistic commenter on my website once claimed a Vincent would 'run rings around a Velocette.' Well, I responded, don't take my word for it, look at the history books, especially at the Isle of Man TT, and when they were new. The proof is in the pudding:

- Best Vincent Black Shadow 1000cc race average: 1953 Clubman's TT = 81mph.
- Best Velocette KTT 350cc race average: 1951 Junior TT = 86mph.
- Best Velocette Thruxton 500cc race average: 1967 Production TT = 90mph.

Boom, as they say. Oh, and the 24-hour/100mph thing...a Vincent couldn't, and they tried. But, they are fascinating motorcycles: I would not kick a Series A Rapide out of bed.

If you have a moment, send a note or a kind thought towards Sean Duggan, who discovered esophageal cancer a few months ago, and is in the thick of the battle, but winning. I'm thrilled that Sean joined the Velo club, after knowing him for many years, and having ridden the Cannonball together twice. He's been a regular at the Melo Velo Rally, joined us in Idaho last summer, and he's hoping to be kickstart-ready at this summer's Oregon rally as well. We hope so too.

The Prez sez by Carl Greenlund



Carl Greenlund by JP Default

Dear Fun Lovin' Velo Fans

I just got back from the spring opener in beautiful Napa CA, hosted by John and Sue Ray. Thank you both for keeping this going.

What I came away with, was the level of excitement everyone has for the upcoming Rally in July. Members have been working hard to get their bikes ready, Everything from regular maintenance and service, full rebuilds to new projects being completed. Everyone is Jazzed!

I have been working on the final details and it's going to be a lot of Fun: We have great places to stay, fun roads to ride and great scenery to take in. The official Route Sheets are included in this issue for those who want a preview. (see pages 7? Kim's article on the rally) I added up the miles and it comes out to 999.8 I think that's close enough to 1000!

By the time you ride in and out of the parking lot, your speedometer (if you have one!) will hit the mark.
I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in July!!

Your prez

Carl

Oil Leaks and Lost Causes: A Dispatch from the Velocette Front

by Someone who should know better

Let me begin by saying this: trying to keep a Velocette on the road is like trying to date a duchess with a drinking problem. She's temperamental, aristocratic, exquisitely built, and always one cough away from collapse. The machine doesn't run so much as tolerate motion, and me! Starting her is less an act of engineering than a plea to the gods of magneto and Lucas electrics, who, like all vengeful deities, are best approached with ritual, superstition, and a robust supply of expletives.

The Velocette doesn't break down. She withholds. She judges. She shivers her ancient forks with disdain as you flood her Amal carb, and in her silence, you hear every unearned confidence you've ever harbored. The kick starter kicks back. The clutch protests like a French train worker. And just when you've dressed in your finest oily tweeds for the spring opener, she pretends she's French and refuses to leave the garage without a cigarette and an existential reason. As a Frenchman, this rings all too true...

But the club. Ah, the club. A merry band of riders who, when viewed on paper, resemble a functioning community of enthusiasts. But in practice, it's like trying to conduct an orchestra of squirrels on meth. You'd think the hard part would be keeping old British motorcycles from detonating on California's finest back roads. It's not. It's chasing a Thruxton owner for the article they promised three months ago on the glory of VTM custodianship.

And then there's Gordon (let's call him that), who replies to every club email with a different email address and has never once appeared in person, though he swears he's rebuilding a KTT "with modifications." We suspect Gordon may, in fact, be two badgers and a fax machine.

Trying to organize this club is like herding cats. Not house cats, those are manageable with treats. No, these are feral, self-righteous, carburettor-worshipping garage goblins who believe



JP Defaut Vancouver Island 2023

that signing up to rallies early is fascism and deadlines are the stuff of Japanese bikes and broken men. Our newsletter, Fishtail West, goes out quarterly, or whenever I've had two glasses of Burgundy and enough rage to force Google Docs into cooperation. It's a collage of half-finished articles, restoration lamentations, and photos of motorcyclists staring wistfully at bits of aluminium (British spelling) like they're watching their marriages dissolve.

And yet, and here's the infuriating, magical, masochistic part: every ride, every clatter of those indignant tappets, every bumpy back road feels like a bloody pilgrimage. We suffer these bikes because they remind us what it is to feel something mechanical, flawed, human. Something that requires us, entirely.

The Velocette does not care about your convenience. But she will teach you patience, humility, and the quiet joy of tools arranged just so.

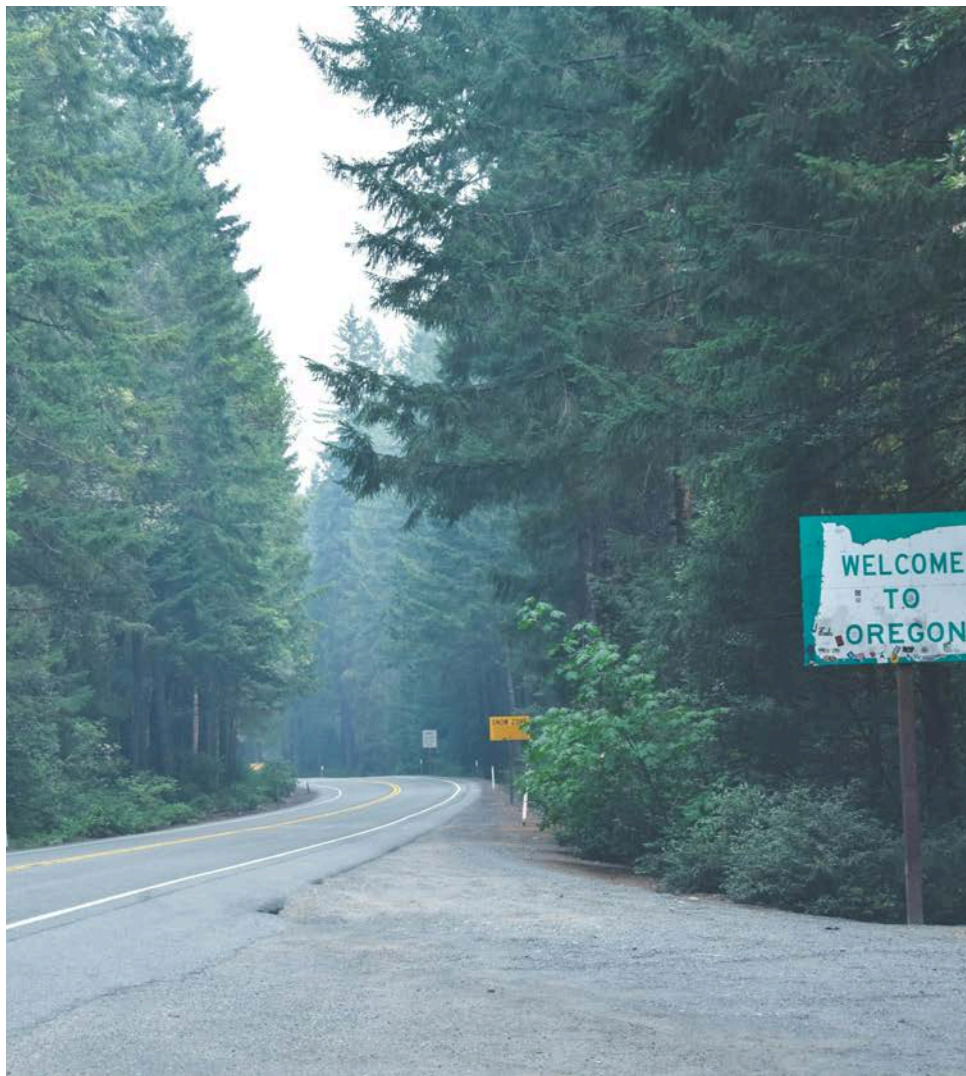
And the club? It's less a well-oiled machine and more a rumbling, contradictory, sputtering contraption of men, women, memories, and an undying, unreasonable love. But then again, so is the bike. See you in Oregon...

THE VOCNA “50W Forever” RALLY 2025

Organiser: Carl Greenlund VOCNA President:

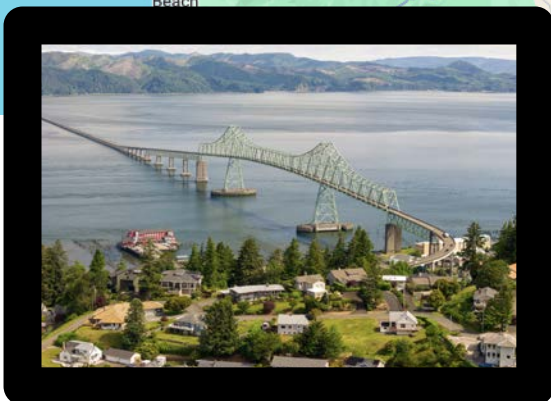
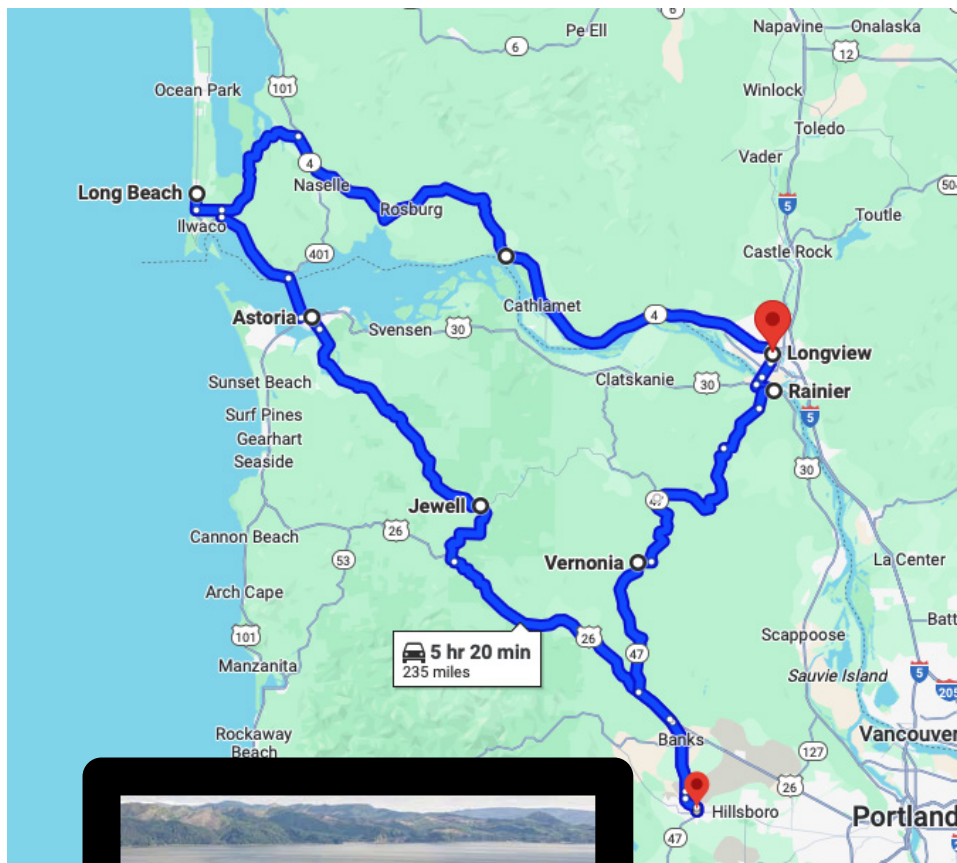
Tel: 503 871-3331 kim@614engineering.com

This year's main event will be based in Forest Grove, Oregon from July 13-19th. We will be doing daily loops and exploring the wonders of Washington County and neighboring regions. Mileage is roughly 1000 miles over 5 days. Carl is a local and knows all the back roads, scenic points and good food stops. There are many great roads, some with twisties for the enthusiasts, and some that simply cut through stunning landscape and epic scenery. Each day will be a separate loop.

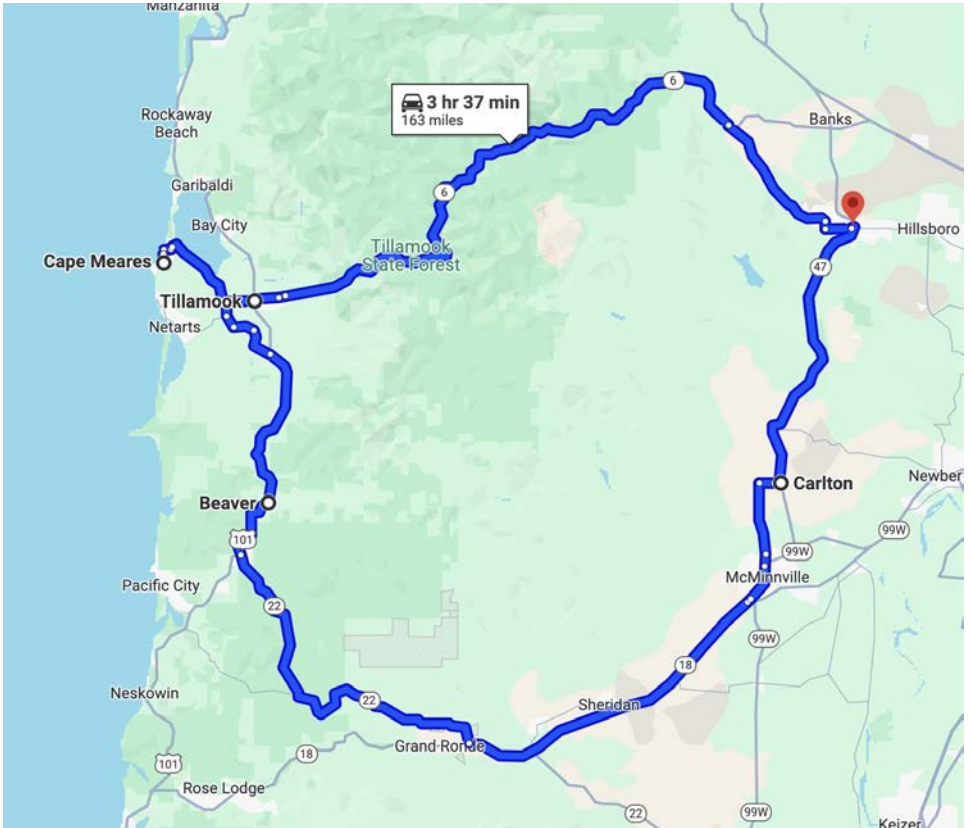


Monday: Route TBC. This will be an easy first day shakedown ride, taking in the local sights

Tuesday: Take the scenic Hwy 202 to visit the oldest place west of the Mississippi. (Astoria or.) Then we cross the bridge to Washington and follow the Great River of the west, The Columbia to Longview, cross the Lewis & Clark bridge to Rainier OR and get on the Apiary rd to Vernonia OR, and back to Forest Grove. It will be a long day!

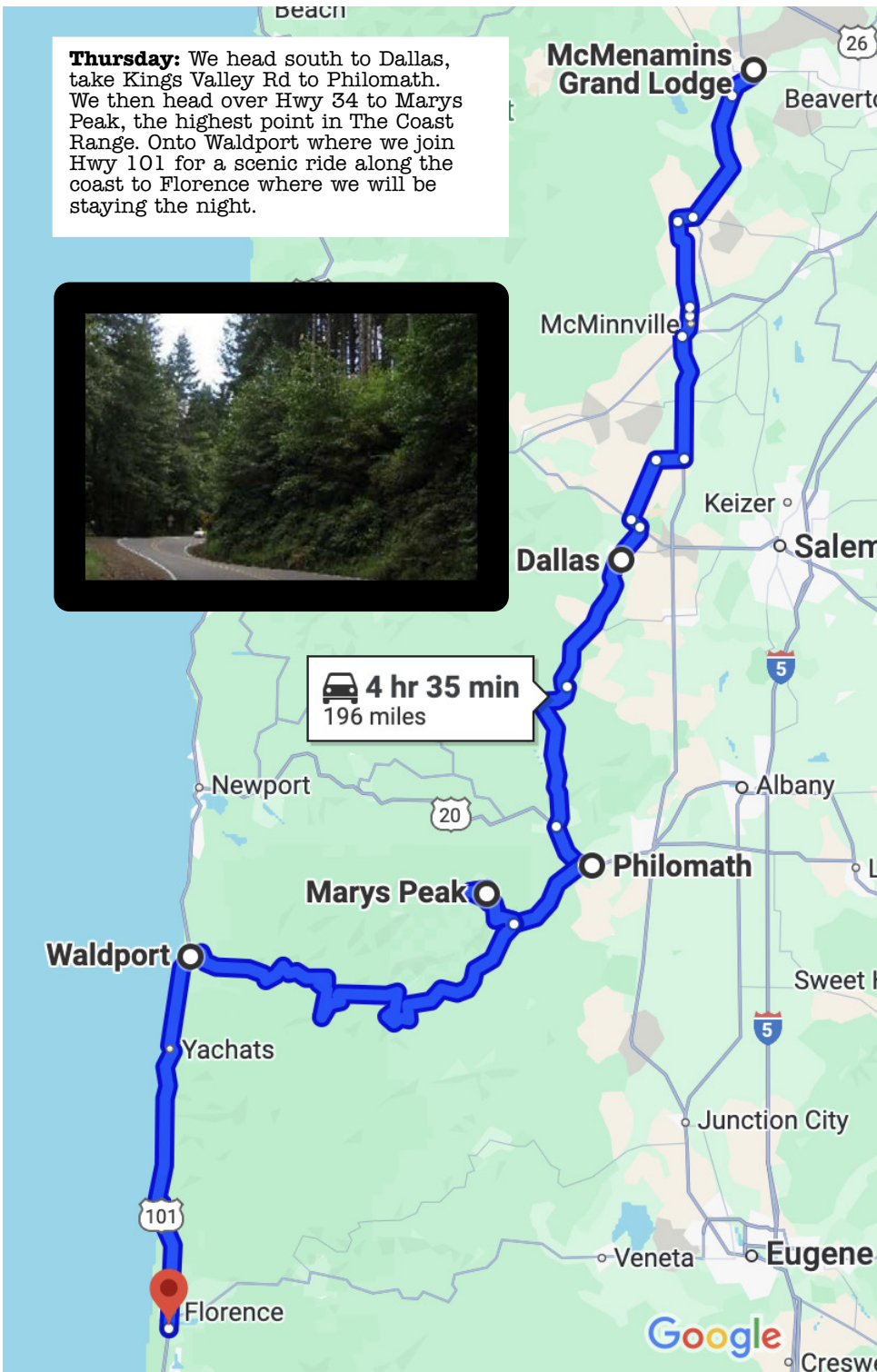


Wednesday: Head over Hwy 6 to Tillamook; then on to Cape Meares, down the coast to Cape City. We then go to Beaver, and up The Nestucca River over the hill to Carlton, and back to Forest Grove.



"There are many great roads, some with twisties for the enthusiasts, and some that simply cut through stunning landscape and epic scenery." - Carl Greenlund

Thursday: We head south to Dallas, take Kings Valley Rd to Philomath. We then head over Hwy 34 to Marys Peak, the highest point in The Coast Range. Onto Waldport where we join Hwy 101 for a scenic ride along the coast to Florence where we will be staying the night.



Friday: We go South on 101 to Reedsport, turn up Smith River Rd and go to Veneta. We then ride North. Although we will be based in Forest Grove, we are riding to Florence, staying there Thursday night and riding back on Friday. Hotel reservations should be made by phone, please mention The Velocette Club for the discounted rate.





Sunday 13th through Saturday 19th July 2025

Hotel: McMenamins Grand Lodge
3505 Pacific Ave, Forest Grove, OR
97116 T: 503-992-9533

Please make reservations by phone and reference The Velocette Owners Club code 2607THEVELO. For room rates, please check:
www.mcmenamins.com/grand-lodge

Thursday 17th July 2025 (1 night only) Pier Point Inn – Best Western

T: 541-997-7191
85625 Highway 101, Florence,
Oregon 97439

Call the Pier Point Inn directly (number above) and use group ID 6Q1MK2I3 for the discounted rate. Also, they will add an extra roll-away bed for ~ \$12 to any room.
www.bestwestern.com – search for Pier Point Inn Florence, OR

Now might be a good time to start getting your bike ready....



Cory's rant, or Cory's ride?



It is with great disappointment that Vivian and I will not be attending the Velo rally this year. We were really looking forward to seeing some old faces as well as meeting new ones since we could not attend last year's rally. The reason for not attending is the unfortunate current political climate has made it difficult for Canadians to travel into the US. This has nothing to do with Americans, it's just that the current US administration that has altered the relationship between our countries. Crossing the border has become very problematic for many. Phone searches have become the new norm. Crossing with a couple of old bikes in tow and a bunch of gear can lead to more problems than it is worth. These are strange times we are living in. On that thought, I put out an email to see if a few fellow Canadian Veloers that would not be attending could have a get together and send down our hellos with a photo. The response has been rather staggering with over 17 people showing interest in attending. This is almost as many people as those that attended the very first riding rally in 1983.

Our ride is set for the same weekend as the start of the main VOCNA Rally, July 12th and 13th. Our intention is to have a meet and greet on Saturday, with a BBQ dinner. On Sunday the plan is to have a modest ride of approximately 200 kms in the surrounding area. Currently I am working on having a T-Shirt made for the event.

Best wishes to all the Oregon Rally attendees. May you complete the rally with no bike related issues. Hopefully this world will get back to some normality soon.

Cheers,
Cory

NB: Cory's ride is an alternative for those in Canada unable to attend this year's rally in Oregon. If successful, which it will be, there are talks for the possibility of an official VOCNA Rally in Canada set for August 2026. If it happens, you can attend them both!

Meanwhile, back in Napa...

by JP Defaut



Spring opener, Napa 2025
by Blaise Descolonges

Once more, with the sort of effortless generosity that can only be extended by those entirely at ease in their own legend, we found ourselves beckoned back to Rancho Veloce: that gently mad Eden tucked into the Napa hills, where the wine breathes oak and the motorcycles seem to hum themselves into being. The gathering point: John Ray's red moto barn: a cathedral of combustion, chrome and oil which sits proudly somewhere between a restoration workshop and a reliquary. If barns had rankings, and let's agree, they absolutely should, this would be somewhere near the upper sanctum: not cluttered, not chaotic, but curated. The kind of place where every tool has a tale, every washer a pedigree.

But be warned: despite its temptingly dusty patina, this is no sanctuary for forgotten relics or mythical barn finds. No serendipitous Velocette tucked under a tarp. Everything here is spoken for, cleaned, coddled, and likely carbureted within an inch of its life. If you came sniffing for a rusted Velocette to rescue, you're in the wrong parish. These aren't finds — these are kept things.

After the requisite preamble and route briefing, a gentle herding of iron thoroughbreds and their equally

eccentric jockeys, the machines were kicked, coaxed, and thumped into life. A chorus of gruff cylinders and cantankerous carburetors, clearing their throats like old men waking up in draughty manor houses.

For my part, I'd brought along JR's old racing KSS, a moody, magnificent little beast I'd acquired from him some time ago. It had done splendidly on the Melo Velo ride last October, like a jazz musician that finally remembered its solo halfway through the gig. It seemed only polite to let it stretch its legs again, to let the old valves sing. And sing they did, as well as smokers' cough towards the end of the afternoon. That said, it was observed that she's developed a smoking habit, so I'll be calling upon my local Velocette mentoring support network and see what is possible

The ride, a measured loop around Lake Berryessa. The roads are far from perfect. They ripple and roll like ribbons hurriedly tossed onto earth by the gods of joy and never quite reconsidered. But somehow, they're just right. Perfect in their imperfection. The kind of roads motorcycles dream of when left too long in the shed.



Top Left: Our dedicated President Carl

Top Middle: Our host John Ray addressing the congregation

Top Right: Howard Johnston on his Norton by JP Default

Left: Mike and Kim Young after the spring rolls

Below: JP's Bob Strobe KSS Special , built for John Ray when he was racing .





Above: Treasurer Blaise Descolanges inauguration ride of his Thurston Thruxton by JP Default



Top: John Sims with Pete Young's MSS by JP Default



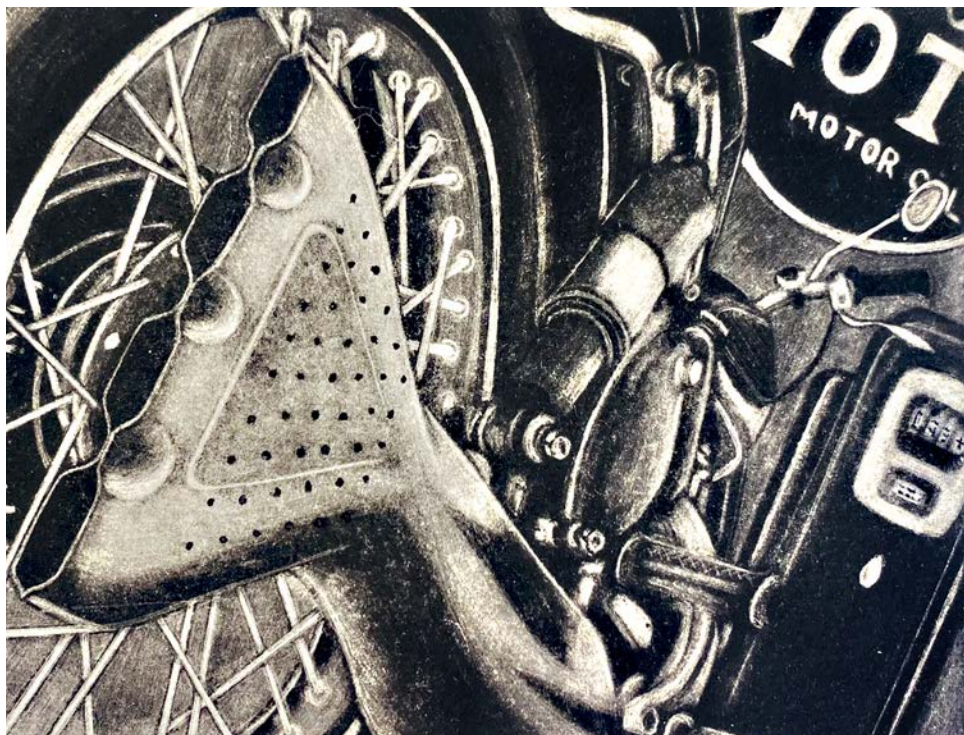
Above: Melissa Guerrero and her Velo slaves



Pete and Atticus Young in a roadside Velo class

Symphonie Mécanique: A Velocette's second coming

by JP Defaut



Limited edition etching of his Velocette by artist Thierry Bianco, France

There are moments in life when destiny arrives disguised as mechanical failure, and artist Thierry Bianco's came wearing oil-stained leathers in the winter of 1969, or was it '70? His memory is like a badly tuned carburettor, and tends to splutter when you need it most.

Two stranded Englishmen had washed up in Lezignan, Thierry's home village, like storm debris, their Velocette having committed the ultimate act of British engineering: a spectacular, inconvenient breakdown at the most inopportune moment. They'd taken refuge at the "Hotel de France", that wonderfully shabby establishment where dreams go to die and motorcycles go to be disemboweled on the pavement. There, spread across the sidewalk like the entrails of some magnificent mechanical beast, lay their 350cc engine and gearbox, shrouded each night in a tarp, like a corpse awaiting burial. Thierry would cruise by daily on his pristine CZ 175cc; that eager, reliable Czech mistress watching these two knights of the road perform their daily ritual of automotive resurrection. For seven days they laboured; these disciples of Lucas electrics and British optimism, their tools clattering against ancient metal, their curses floating on the winter air like incense. On the eighth day, defeated by the very machine that had once carried them across continents, they made Thierry an offer that would haunt him for decades: their wounded Velocette for the unblemished CZ. The pragmatist recoiled. He was sixteen, mechanically illiterate, and dependent on the Czech for that most precious teenage currency: *mobility*. So he declined,

watching them disappear into the grey distance, their Velocette's fate as mysterious as smoke.

Forty years is a long time to carry regret. Long enough for hair to thin, for joints to stiffen, for the heart to grow both wiser and more foolish. In 2010, just fifteen kilometres from where that original drama unfolded, he encountered an elderly gentleman nursing a 1954 350 MAC Velocette back to health. Fate, it seemed, had decided to offer Thierry a second act. But, his initial overture was rebuffed. The old boy wasn't ready to part with his restoration project. Nothing if not persistent, and several years later Thierry returned like a patient suitor to find the old boy finally willing to negotiate. The transaction completed, Thierry found himself the owner of a machine that purred with renewed life. Now, as he rides this mechanical time capsule through the same countryside where he once rode the CZ, he's haunted by a delicious impossibility: Could this be the very same Velocette that sparked his obsession all those years ago? The same machine that taught him sometimes the most beautiful things are the ones that break your heart?

Logic says no. Romance insists maybe. And really, isn't that the most perfectly British ending of all? Thierry Bianco is one of those wonderfully contradictory souls who spent his working life convincing light to dance through coloured glass in the service of the Almighty, only to discover in retirement that his true calling lay in the altogether more earthly pursuit of immortalising motorcycle engines in copper and ink. He inhabits that slice of southern France where the Corbières stretch lazily across the Aude, a landscape so relentlessly picturesque it makes you slightly suspicious, all sun-drunk vineyards and that particular brand of rural French perfection that seems almost too good to be true. It's the sort of place where men of a certain age go to tinker with beautiful machines and contemplate the aesthetic superiority of things that were built when craftsmanship still mattered.

For decades, Bianco's workshop hummed with the ancient alchemy of stained glass restoration, breathing life back into medieval windows that had spent centuries filtering divine light for



Thierry's studio in Corbières, France

the faithful. But there's something deliciously heretical about his artistic evolution: from creating portals to heaven to etching love letters to British motorcycles. It's as if he'd grown weary of saints and angels and decided that a 1960s Triumph Bonneville was, in its own way, just as worthy of veneration.

His chosen medium is mezzotint, that most unforgiving of printmaking techniques, where copper plates are tortured into submission with rockers and burnishers until they yield images of smoky, velvety darkness. It's a process that demands the same patience once required to piece together fragments of thirteenth-century glass, but now serves to capture the chrome and shadow of garage culture rather than the golden halos of martyrs. The subjects of his devotion read like a love letter to mid-century mechanical romanticism: Velocettes and Rickman frames, MV Agustas and Guzzi V-twins, all rendered with the reverence once reserved for biblical scenes. His garage has become a secular cathedral, populated by BMW /5 series boxers and the ghosts of Sammy Miller's trials bikes.



Thierry Bianco with his '54 MAC, possibly the same one that he encountered all those years ago...

But perhaps most charmingly, this French artisan has fallen completely under the spell of American culture, specifically that golden age of West Coast cool that stretched from Sunset Boulevard to the Monterey Jazz Festival. He's the sort of Frenchman who can appreciate both a 1947 Bogart film and a 1967 Ducati with equal passion, who understands that there's a direct line connecting bebop to rock and roll to the rumble of a well-tuned parallel twin.

In an age of digital everything, Bianco remains gloriously analogue—a man who still believes that the best things in life require oil under the fingernails and ink on paper. His prints emerge from his press like small miracles, each one a testament to the enduring power of human hands to create beauty from metal and imagination.

If you're interested in one of his etchings, drop me a line:
info@velocette.org



Thierry's tools of the trade

Foraging through the fossil record of youth by Cory Padula



Iron Mike resting after a demanding day at the first VOCNA rally.

As the Sisyphean struggle to keep this publication from becoming just another liner for the cat litter tray rolls on, the powers that preside, cloaked in tweed and nostalgia, have had a meandering swerve into sentimentality. They've decided to ask our members, those mothballed raconteurs of the golden years, to rummage through their dusty boxes and offer up tales, snapshots, and sepia-toned memories from the glory days of VOCNA rallies. That means you!

First to rise from the archival ashes is Cory Padula. Yes, that Cory Padul; a stalwart of the scene, whose oil-streaked fingerprints are still on the club's carburetor. He was there at the inaugural rally in 1983, before Wi-Fi, before gluten intolerance, before common sense, and before political correctness. What follows is his recollection, unverified, unfiltered, and unfettered by editorial interference. The club denies all liability, of course, but we believe him. Mostly. - JP Default

In this installment of Characters, I want to show you what type of people made up the club in 1982. These people and events inspired me to come up with the Rockies Run Rally of 1983. As was published previously, that rally became a very wet and rocky ride and was renamed as the Great Submarine Rally. Prior to 1983, most of the members rode their bikes to the VOCNA rallies. The ride to the rally and back was the adventure portion of the rally. Once at the rally, we became very quiet and respectful participants. In fact, if they are still looking for someone to replace the Pope, some of the rally participants of that day could very well qualify.

Packed and ready for the ride to Bend, Oregon, I say a prayer, not to make it to the rally and back, but to survive the rally itself.

One member in particular, Iron Mike McNeil, after riding all the way from Iowa to Bend, Oregon is shown busy reflecting on his journey. I believe he was having a brief conversation with

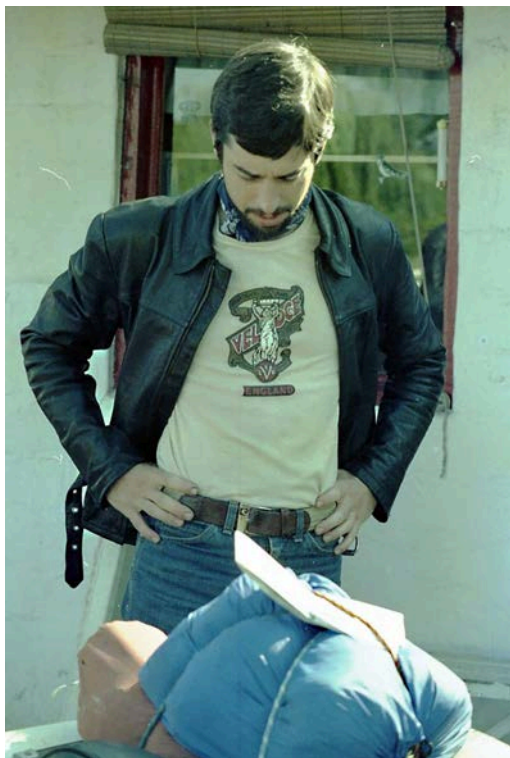
God. We gave him the moniker Iron Mike because he would ride almost non-stop the whole way from Iowa to the early rallies that were held in Eugene, Oregon. On this particular ride, as he was going through a small town car pulled out of a gas station in front of him forcing Mike to lay down his bike to avoid hitting the car head on. The driver then proceeded to get out of the car and tell Mike to watch where he was going. Mike, an ex-army sergeant in the Vietnam war, dusting himself off, walked over and had a very brief discussion on fiscal responsibility with the car driver. When Mike returned to his bike the driver appeared to be sprawled out, motionless over the front hood of his car. Mike eventually ended up later that day in Bend where he had a relaxing sip with the boys. The photo shows him having a nap on the lawn after his eventful day. Rumour has it that the rest of the gang who were still having a sip may have enhanced the area where Mike was having a good snore, but it is just a rumour.



Ian Marshall



Ron Marks



Cory Padula



Tim Thielmann

After our meal of dangling dogs we finally began to pull our weight:

Left to right: Derek Belvoir, Sam Jowett, Cory, Ian Marshall and Tim Thielmann



After all that Hard work, Carey McSquid proceeded to teach us how to use two hands to pull, the clutch lever in. An amazing feat. And before you know it, the rally was over and we all packed our tents and headed back home. Great time. Great friends. So much so that we are still doing it today.

From paper route to the editor's chair

by Debbie Macdonald



Debbie on her Buell M2 Cyclone

I had a paper route. Wasn't that what you did as a kid with a bicycle? Well, for me, I was in my 30s, and it was a Harley-Davidson motorcycle publication for enthusiasts that a friend started. I delivered throughout the Bay Area until it became a national paper with 3 monthly regional editions that we boxed and shipped out via UPS to all the Harley dealers in the US.

By the end of my 20-year tenure, I had worked my way up to being the office and production manager, as well as being the only woman in the office who rode a motorcycle. I wrote travel articles and product reviews. Erik Buell had already been building his brand-name motorcycle since 1983. Then, in '93, since he had been an engineer for HD and contributed to the design of the FXR frame (I still own my '87 FXR), a collaboration was born. As a publishing company, it was decided to start a magazine specifically about Buell motorcycles. Battle2win was born. We put on events to increase interest and for the fun of it. When I met Erik, I ended up with a Buell M2 Cyclone serial #1, right off the demo truck. I have ridden with Erik and the Buell

team a few times in my area and on a ride in the hill country of Texas. By now, you are probably wondering what this has to do with Velocette. Well... when Niel and I joined the club in 1987, we owned a '51 Mac and a Harley. Unfortunately, it took us (and the whole club) forever to get it together! So until 4 years ago, we rode our modern bikes. I started out riding on the back of our Harley, till I got my own, and then on any number of different Buells I was loaned through the magazine. Now that my MAC is on the road, the Buell is the backup we bring to the rallies. Last year we purchased another '51 MAC, which Niel has been rebuilding with the help of club members, and we hope to have it ready for next year's rally. Throughout that time, I've kept in touch with Erik and found out that one of his first bikes was in fact a Velocette Thruxton, hence the connection. He would love to find his old bike, so occasionally, I put a call out to club members to see if it's surfaced somewhere. No luck so far. On the next page you will discover his love of the Thruxton, why we have tried to find it for years, convince him to just buy another one, and join us on a Velocette rally. Things have certainly changed for Erik since the demise of Buell Motorcycles; he started an electric bike company called Fuell and is now on the road to becoming a rock and roll star! He has been making music which you can find on YouTube or follow him on Facebook. Feel free to poke at him to get another Velo and ride with us. Tell him Debbie sent you...!



My Thruxton by Erik Buell



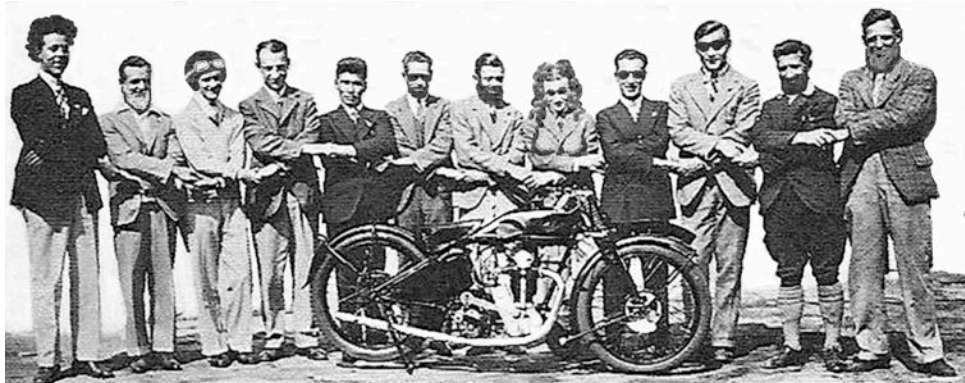
Erik Buell on his beloved Thruxton. Yes that is snow...!

For some reason, I lusted for a Velocette Thruxton even before I had my driver's license, likely starting with articles in Cycle magazine. My first real motorcycle ride was a Harley chopper that I had reassembled, but although it had an image, it sucked on the back roads of western Pennsylvania. So I found a Thruxton for sale when I was 17, and with some inheritance money from my grandmother, money from work and money from selling the Harley, I bought mine (VMT340 or 346...my mind almost pictures the case numbers) out of New England. It had the full Avon fairing and both fishtail and open megaphone exhausts. I was told it had been owned by Gordon Jennings, but who knows.

It was my main ride for a while, in all kinds of weather, and oh man did it handle well. One of the few motorcycle that totally becomes one with you. But I bought a Kawasaki A7 for a daily driver, followed by other Kawasakis on rotation. The Velo needed a lot of attention to keep going, and I could not afford to have it just for the fun. I sold

it a few times over the next 7-8 years, but kept getting it back cheap when the new owners couldn't keep it going. Then "somewhere near Salinas, I let it slip away". I'm guessing the last time I owned it was in 1975? Got caught up in racing and my engineering career.





2025 Velocette Owners Club Catskills Rally

September 12-14, Hunter Mountain Resort

Back by popular demand, The VOCNA East Coast Rally will be held in The Catskills, NY 12464. As recommended by several of our 'right coast' members, we will explore The Catskills and The Hudson Valley Region in upstate New York.

Legendary for its exceptional scenery and world-class roads. Our rally hub is the Catskill Mountain Club on Hunter Mountain, a winter ski resort and summer mountain bike mecca, with enough rooms to accommodate a rally of any size, and as it's in the mountains, enough canyon and river roads to satisfy curve-hungry riders. Our planned route over 3 days includes a day in the Hudson Valley, with a visit to painter Frederick Church's remarkable estate/museum Olana, and lunch in the super charming nearby town of Hudson. A second day's ride includes a run through the beautiful Beaverkill Valley, through beautiful covered bridges and historic sites. Another day winds all around the Catskill mountains per se.

If you know the area well and would like maps of our planned routes (I'm open to feedback: Ultan Guilfoyle has been very helpful so far), send me a note directly: chairman@velocette.org

There's a group discount for rooms at the Catskill Mountain Club. I recommend you make your reservation sooner rather than later, as it's rumored a music event may coincide with one of our dates. Please call the resort directly: 855.947.0443 Use the group name (Velocette Owners Club) or group code SHUVEL25. Make sure to reserve rooms for Sept 11-14, as we ride on Friday 12, Saturday 13, and Sunday 14 - a shorter ride so locals can get home Sunday evening.

Please submit your rally entry at www.velocette.org by September 1st 2025



The East Coast crew 2024 by Mark Lapriore

Move over, darling...

by JP Default

I may have inadvertently sidestepped what was once The Quail, an elegant whisper of petrol and pedigree, now unceremoniously rebranded as Motofest. Motofest? Really? Gordon, darling, a quiet word behind the paddock tents, if I may. Branding is not a game of darts thrown at a plate of baked beans.

But I digress. The gig remains in my sights, like a Brough in a rear-view mirror: impossibly desirable and always just out of reach.

Fortunately, my crack team of petrol-scented aesthetes were there in my stead, trigger fingers itchy and lenses poised, capturing every mechanical ingénue on show. And among the chrome and carburetors emerged her—a 1929 KSS, no less, in the possession of a woman so achingly

stylish she makes Marianne Faithfull look like a work instructions chairwoman and Jane Birkin seem like the school librarian.

She was snapped like Anita Ekberg in a fountain of flashbulbs, golden mane tousled just so, wrapped in denim, stitched into leather, wearing trousers so tight they might be molecularly bonded. All glistening with just enough oil to suggest she'd actually ridden the thing, (which we all know she does). So not just posed on it for Instagram validation. A muse with an exhaust pipe and a pulse.

So, do send me your Velo sightings from the next two-wheeled bacchanal, motofest or otherwise. You never know, amidst the petrol fumes and longing looks, you might just fall in love.



The Velocette Girl and her 1929 KSS

Postcards from the Quail

Photos by Corey Levenson and Jim Palm



If you haven't been, then you must!



Kim's 1929 KSS caught at magic hour by Corey Levenson



Start 'em young! Max Hazan's custom Vincent by Corey Levenson



Paul d'Orleans finally found a bike to match his jacket by Jim Palm

Nice little custom BSA spotted by Corey Levenson



His Lordship's ramble

by John Sims



John Sims deciding which hot rod would look best in his garage

What a fabulous mid-week ride with cool green hills and wild flowers at the side of the roads. Last year we experienced severe rain and cold, but this year the roads were clear and dry. We met at Starbucks in Crossroads Shopping Mall in Carmel, and headed down Carmel Valley Road to King City. In King City, we ate at one of the finest Mexican restaurants, we devoured shrimp tacos, burritos, rice and beans. The Nacimiento Fergusson road from Fort Hunter Liggett had recently reopened, and we headed to the military reserve and the Ocean. I always enjoy riding through the military reserve due to it being completely open. No houses or habitation, just trees, grass and open country. It must have been like this when the settlers first came to California.

Highway #1 has been closed at Big Sur for over a year, but the road from Kirk Creek Bridge to Morro Bay was completely open. There were very few cars or tourists, and it was like a race track. I just love those fast long sweeping curves and open roads. We arrived in Morro Bay in late afternoon, and after checking in, headed down to Dornes for the best food in Morro Bay.

On the Wednesday morning, Steve, Jeff and Terry joined us and we went off in the direction of Hwy #229. Some people refer to it as "Mario Andretti's" private race track, made up of beautifully paved twisties. Of the 9 people on the ride, only 5 made it back to the starting point. Steve brought his

9-gallon tank BMW and at one of the stops, Ray Pallett said to him, you won't run out of gas with that big tank. Needless to say, a few miles down the road, Steve ran out of gas. The food was so good at Dornes the previous night, we went there again on the second night. It was perfect.

Picture of Steve and his bike. On Thursday Morning Jeff brought over his road going Vincent Black shadow. A beautiful bike that started first time. I think the electric start may have had something to do with it. Picture of Jeff's bike

We headed off to the Parkfield Café and enjoyed of the local hot-rodders. Picture of Cars

Heading back to the Bay Area, Indian Creek Road was rougher than old horses, but the scenery was spectacular. Green hills and more wild flowers by the sides of the road. Got home in the early evening and promptly fell asleep In front of the TV. A nice mid-week ride. Doing another one in June out of Oroville dam and Quincy. See events on the website for more details.



Guess who ran out of fuel with an 8 gallon tank...?!

Classifieds



VOCNA Veteran Gil Loe is sadly letting go of his pride and joy. A well loved and well known Velo. This '63 Clubman originates from Lou Branch and has more provenance than a Savile Row tailor's cutting shears. Located in Los Angeles. When you pick it up, if you ask nicely, he'll take you for a pint at the Rock Store. info@velocette.org



One of New Jersey's finer offerings, a **1967 Velocette Thruxton** for sale. Clean NJ title and a runner. Snap it up for the East Coast rally, unless Erik Buell gets there first...! info@velocette.org

Book Review: Always in the Picture

by R.W. Burgess and Jeff Clew

An Ode to the Unsung Aristocrats of British Motorcycling by JP Defaut

Always in the Picture, delivers more than just a historical account of one of Britain's most enigmatic motorcycle marques: The Velocette. Burgess and Clew craft a rich, nostalgic tribute to a company that, despite its size, left a thunderous echo in the years of two-wheeled innovation.

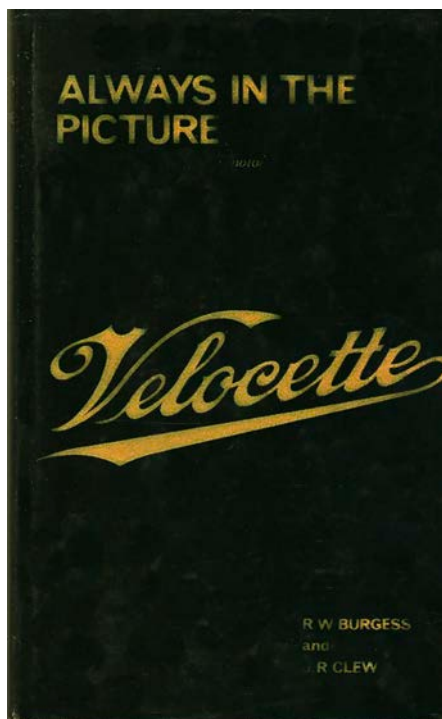
Velocette was never the largest, loudest, or most financially dominant motorcycle manufacturer. But it was, without question, one of the most refined. This book captures that spirit in loving detail. Burgess and Clew, both seasoned chroniclers of British motorcycling, bring their formidable knowledge and passion to the task, creating a narrative that is equal parts technical chronicle and human story.

The title itself, Always in the Picture is both a rallying cry and a lament. Velocette may not have taken center stage in the global motorcycle arena, but it was always present, always relevant, and often ahead of its time. The book traces this trajectory with exquisite care, starting from the company's roots in the early 20th century as Veloce Ltd., through its pioneering of innovations like the positive-stop foot gear change and swing-arm rear suspension, to its eventual demise in 1971. The authors strike a delicate balance between engineering detail and broader cultural context. Readers are treated to clear, affectionate explanations of the K-series overhead camshaft engines, the elegant simplicity of the MAC, and the race-bred venom of the Thruxton. But they're also immersed in the world of club racing, TT glory, and the peculiar culture of post-war Britain, where Velocette riders were often seen as gentlemen rebels—stylish, understated, and fiercely loyal.

Photographs, both archival and atmospheric, enrich the book with a tactile sense of time and place. You can almost hear the clatter of tappets and feel the oily warmth of a garage heater

on a winter's evening. The images of meticulously restored models and grainy race-day snapshots remind us that Velocette's story is not just one of machines, but of people: riders, tinkerers, and dreamers.

Much like this club, it's fair to say that custodianship of a Velo requires a particular mindset, and it's not everyone's *cup of tea*. After all, Velocette was not just a company; it was a character in the golden age of British motorcycling. A fastidiously dressed underdog that fought with brilliance, not brute force. This book is a love letter to craftsmanship, individuality, and the enduring charm of a motorcycle that was never mass-produced, but always meticulously made, and always, somehow, in the picture.



The Last Word

by JP Default

No, it's not a new petrol tank for that custom café racer you've been lovingly ignoring on the bench for the last four years, gathering dust, delusions, and the occasional passive-aggressive glance from your partner.

What it is, however, is a new brew from Marble Brewery in Manchester. Yes, that damp, defiant cradle of proper pints and poor decisions. We've no tasting notes yet, no florid reviews from men with beards and barrel-aged opinions, but I'll be in London post-rally, and intend to sniff it out with all the devotion of a truffle pig in a leather jacket.

This is not a sponsored message. And for the record, VOCNA does not condone drinking and riding. Though, if you must do both, at least have the decency to do them separately and with style.





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www.velocette.org