

BIKES \ INDIAN CHIEF VINTAGE

# INDIAN RIDES AGAIN!

AMERICAN ICON GETS A PROPER RELAUNCH

**BASE PRICE:** \$20,999

**ON SALE:** Now

**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:** Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail Classic, Victory Cross Roads Classic

**□** AMERICA'S FIRST MAJOR motorcycle manufacturer, Indian, began in Springfield, Mass., in 1901, and for the first half of the 20th century was Harley-Davidson's rival. After smaller-displacement bikes

spurred its demise in the 1950s, the brand had been revived periodically before Polaris Industries acquired it in 2011 (see related story, next page).

For 2014, Indian finally gets properly reborn with a three-bike model range consisting of the \$18,999 base Chief Classic, the \$20,999 leather-clad Chief Vintage and the \$22,999 touring Chieftain. Each shares an all-new 111-cubic-inch air- and oil-cooled V-twin engine and a combination cast-aluminum and steel chassis. Nostalgic design cues include deeply skirted fenders, tank-mounted instrumentation and even the illuminated "war bonnet" on the front fender. A keyless-ignition system, fuel injection, throttle-by-wire, six-speed transmission, cruise control, trip com-

puter and ABS broaden usefulness.

These bikes are heavy, ranging from 812-848 pounds fueled up. Once underway, the steering feels light enough, and handling is linear and confident. A wide handlebar adds steering leverage, which is helpful. Engine performance is strong; there's just enough vibration to be interesting, and ride quality is surprisingly good. The Chieftain's near-570-pound load capacity means you can pack properly for a trip for two.

Wind protection behind the enormous windshield on our Chief Vintage test bike was outstanding, with just our exposed pant legs flapping along at highway speeds. Which is just how you might want life to go, cruising across the prairie from Indian's new home in Spirit Lake, Iowa, heading to who knows where.

—JOHN L. STEIN



**FEATURES:**

The new Indians were designed around the brand's ancestral V-twin engine architecture. A three-camshaft design allows for widely spaced, parallel pushrod tubes; downward-facing exhausts also mimic the original side-valve Indians. Hydraulic lifters help to reduce maintenance.



**IN OUR OPINION:**

Premium cruisers are like the Hummer H1s of the bike world: over the top and gigantic, with a commanding presence to match. The Chief Vintage draws plenty of interest, with folks praising its styling and asking about the ride experience.







## THE POLARIS EFFECT

Two years ago, when Polaris Industries acquired the iconic Indian Motorcycle brand, it became the latest in a long line of owners since the founding entity lost controlling interest in the company in 1945. It's been a long ride, culminating in the move by Polaris, which calls its buy a "labor of love."

The powersports giant has a singular goal (other than profitability, of course): Restore Indian Motorcycle Manufacturing Co. to its pre-World War II glory, when the classic Indian Chief and Indian Scout tra-

versed America's byways alongside Harley-Davidson "Knucklehead" ULS.

Polaris CEO Scott Wine brings to the table experience, technology and solid finances—some, or all, of which previous owners lacked. Polaris VP Steve Menneto told MarketWatch the company wants "to leverage our engineering, manufacturing and operational prowess ... to design and build an exceptional motorcycle that represents the perfect balance of heritage and state-of-the-art engineering."

Medina, Minn.-based Polaris makes snowmobiles, ATVs and (with Global Electric Motorcars) on-road electric/hybrid vehicles, as well as Victory Motorcycles. It typically

builds its brands from scratch, so taking on a revered heritage brand that has seen its share of false starts is bold. Although the road to Indian's revival has had its share of speed bumps, "perhaps our biggest hurdle was balancing Indian's rich history with its bright future," Wine adds. "Some customers wanted us to build a new 1948 bike, and some wanted futuristic bikes. We worked hard to balance the appeal to history with cutting-edge technology, and our team nailed it." As for the other historic brand in Indian's class? Wine isn't shy. "For 60 years, Harley-Davidson had no real competition—a free pass, if you will," he says. "Well, we came to compete." —AARON SIGMOND

## MARKET



### 1980 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW II SHOOTING BRAKE

Bonhams, Beaulieu, England  
Sept. 7, 2013

■ Sable brown with tan leather interior. 6.75-liter V8, automatic transmission. Right-hand drive. Paintwork is in very good condition; some of the brightwork has been gold-plated and shows some pitting. Interior is in excellent condition. Said to have been totally refurbished seven years ago by Coway Coachbuilders in Bolton, England. Until recently, it spent time at an estate in Perthshire, Scotland, where it was "used for grouse shooting," presumably as a way to keep warm and dry as opposed to being integral to the shooting itself. A custom drinks cabinet finished with wood veneer matching the dash and door caps was incorporated into the area behind the rear seat.

### SOLD AT \$69,811

Whose car was this? Well, actually, it was owned by the late John Entwistle, the bass guitarist for The Who. Officially, Rolls-Royce never built station wagons, estate cars or shooting brakes on the Silver Shadow chassis, but that didn't stop a number of specialist coachbuilders from retrofitting them to customer requests.

Although the firm that modified this car is not known, FLM (Panelcraft) Ltd. of South London is perhaps the best known such company. Sadly, many Silver Shadows have been neglected; they have minimal collector value in that state. But this example boasts celebrity ownership, presents nicely and seemed to resonate with the bidders. Selling at \$69,811, it much more than doubled its original high estimate of \$25,722. That must have been music to the ears of the seller—this is one Silver Shadow that didn't go for a song. —DAVE KINNEY