



"THE ACE" 1967 750SS ATLAS CAFE RACER

OWNER BUILDER; BRIAN CAIN

"THE ACE" named after THE ACE CAFE in Stonebridge London UK.

The original Ace Cafe opened in 1938 on North Circular Road in London. Planned as a transport cafe for truck and lorry drivers, it quickly became a place where motorbike riders gathered as it was open 24hrs a day. An icon to English motorcyclists, it also has a significance for bikers elsewhere in the world. In the early fifties the Ace Cafe became the destination for a new breed of bikers. The post-war generation, used to being shot at for the last five years fear had been absent in their lives for some time; left bored by old values and conventions and confronted with social changes, were searching for their identity. There were two significant influences: Rock n' roll and motorbikes. Leather jackets and jeans were worn, creating the black leather rebel cult. They lived on the fringes of society and were generally ostracised by "motorcycle enthusiasts." The young bikers developed their own identity and with it a tremendous group feeling. They met in cafes and rock n' roll clubs, arranging races on London's North Circular Road. They rode the hell out of their bikes as they raced on their unofficial circuit, the north circular road. A general speed limit, when introduced, only added to the challenge. Competitors would put a song on the juke box and have to cover the 3 miles of the north circular road before the song finished, some rock and roll songs of the time lasted less than 3 minutes thus the term Cafe Racer was born. Shunned by bourgeois middle-class society, the Ton-up boys attracted a lot of young people to their ranks and had a significant influence on the youth culture. Rock n' roll was their music, their uniform was black leather, their lives were wild and full of danger. The driving beat of the music was the rhythm, the drug was high speed on modified motorcycles. Though most of the original influences were adopted from America, they were integrated and developed into a unique British phenomena. The bikes at that time, some of the best and the fastest, were English, and British musicians were as much admired as their American counterparts. By then the Ace Cafe had become the launch pad for many famous racers such as Dave Degans and rock n' roll bands like Johnny Kidd and The Pirates. The riders who met at the Ace had their own sets of rules and codes, neither understood nor recognized by outsiders. Their wild and martial appearance didn't fit within conventional norms. Their racing, their music and the very distinctive way of expressing themselves frightened polite society and sensational press articles fanned the hysteria for all they could. Government officials often discussed counter-measures to be taken against these youths now known as Rockers. Equipping police with equal or superior pursuit machinery was one ploy adopted by the powers to be, one being the Norton 750SS Atlas. The Norton Atlas 750SS was the super bike of the 60s, the last hurrah of falling icon under attack from overseas manufacturers on dominance of the last 40 years of the motorcycle industry. It is ironic that "The Ace" has a /P after its engine number, this is unusual. Norton stopped using letters to depict the year of manufacture in the late 50s. This machine was shipped to American Norton agent Berliner in New York in November 1967 and the /P after the engine number depicts it was in all probability a Police pursuit bike.. It has now been lovingly transformed into an immaculate and authentic example of a pure Norton cafe racer of the 60s. Raw steel and the sound of thunder. Ageing is inevitable, growing up is optional.

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