

BY MATT BENSON

AMA VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE DAYS

MV & Hodaka

TWO MARQUES, TWO ATTITUDES



PHOTO BY MATT BENSON

One is serious as a heart attack, the other is all about playful fun: The two motorcycle brands being singled out at this year's AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days—MV Agusta and Hodaka—could hardly be more different.

When it comes to competing at American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association events, MVs are exceedingly rare. Most racers are genuine works machines from the era when MV was king and are now in the hands of well-heeled private collectors and museums. Occasionally they are brought out to display in the paddock or for a few exhibition laps. Break a part or—heaven forbid—crash one of these ultra-exotics, and replacement pieces have to be fabricated from scratch at no small expense.

The few that are raced are likely to be former street bikes converted to GP lookalikes. John Lawless of Fallowfield, Pennsylvania, competes in the 350 Grand Prix class at selected AHRMA events on a beautifully done 350cc MV Agusta. The machine started life as a 1971 350B Electronica. The two-cylinder four-stroke was transformed from road bike to racer by Chris Marshall and made its debut at AHRMA's 2003 Daytona races. Both Marshall and Lawless have raced it. An end-over-end crash in 2004 necessitated a full restoration—nice enough to win the prestigious 2005 Radnor Concours and to be featured on this year's poster for the event.

On the track the MV makes about 40 horsepower and has a comparable top speed to the Ducatis that are the benchmark in his class, but the MV takes longer to reach that speed. For that reason, the little MVs were seldom raced in their day.



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