

850 SS America & Agusta Concessionaires GB

words: Russ Murray

In researching the history of my America I came across an interesting e-mail by Kevin Thompson relating to the 850 SS America and the UK market, in particular Agusta Concessionaires GB (Ltd).

The Bate family were the UK importers to SAAB until SAAB set up it's own import operations in the mid 1970s. When this occurred the Bates made arrangements with MV Agusta to undertake the importing of MVs into the UK and accordingly, Peter Bate, along with others from the car retail operation in Farnham Common, set up Agusta Concessionaires GB in 1976.

Kevin visited the operation only to discover that all those involved were car people with limited motorcycle knowledge and not even a bike licence amongst them. After talks with a Peter Bate, Kevin was offered a job as he had a bike licence, was a bike mechanic and no doubt, showed enthusiasm for the marque. In the first weeks of his employment he drove to the MV Agusta factory in Italy where he received some training on MV Agusta bikes. The factory visits continued every two months and it was during these visits he picked up either bikes or spares for the UK market. It is thought about 99 Americas made the journey back to the UK.

There were the various versions of the America imported by Agusta Concessionaires. The wire wheeled, Scarab brake bikes but with the standard US market exhausts. The more popular America came with the EPM mag wheels and Brembo brakes and finally the 850. The prices of these were 3,187 GBP for the basic America, 3,617GBP for the America with EPM wheels and rear disc and 3,973 GBP for the Boxer. These prices don't include dealer delivery charges which would take the 850 to 4,183 GBP.

There were only two bikes designated as 'Boxer' due to Ferrari having legal claim over the use of 'Boxer' in the badging. These two bikes were in England. All the other 850 MVs were either known as Monza, 850 SS or Super Daytona depending on the country. It should be pointed out that these were names provided by the importer and not the factory. Similarly, any bike badged as a Boxer, Monza, 850 SS or Super Daytona was done by either the importer or the owner.

Many consider the 850 SS as a modified America which is a very apt description. It is widely thought that about 27 bikes left the factory in 850 guise with either 750 S America badging or possibly no badging on the side covers. To add to the confusion many importers modified the standard Americas to similar specs to the factory bikes while individual customers also had upgrades done. In reality, it is easy to identify an original America but quite difficult to verify whether a bike is an original factory 850, dealer modified or customer modified.

The early UK 850s were assembled at the factory using a kit coming from the race shop. There is also evidence that these bikes were assembled by the race mechanics. The kit comprised four single barrels (engine capacity of 837 cc), pistons, EPM magnesium wheels, Brembo triple discs, 27 mm Dell'orto carburetors, exhaust cam timing on inlet cams, dual point Marelli distributor and with chrome pipes as on the 750 S. Machining of the top crankcases was also required to fit the larger cylinder barrels. Later conversions were done locally by Kevin with engineering work completed by a company in Slough. As production at the factory declined (MV Agusta concentrated on the aviation side of the business)

conversion kits were supplied by Magni utilising 2 x twin cylinder barrels painted black, Magni upswept pipes (a common modification by America owners) and larger carburettors.

Magni also supplied the factory with parts for their Americas with Magni EPM wheels and EPM alloy brake brackets for the rear Brembo disc seen on the factory bikes. It should also be noted that there are Monzas with single point ignition, 26 mm Dell'ortos, higher clip-ons, ... all original, all modified Americas.

The Monza test/press bike for Agusta Concessionaires was SRX 833 S. As might be expected, this particular bike was used and abused by all and sundry and, according to Kevin, never broke down although it was returned on numerous occasions with blue clutch plates and bits hanging off. This particular bike was recorded by radar at 144 mph during road tests.

Once the motorcycle side of MV Agusta was wound up Agusta Concessionaires followed suit with all their spares and records being sold to SGT Superbiking, Birmingham, who were previously part of the MV dealer network.

more information about the the MV Agusta America can be found at:

www.thebikemuseum.com <<http://www.thebikemuseum.com>> , a website devoted to classic MVs

MV Agusta fours: performance portfolio 1967-1980, a compilation of magazine reviews of 4 cylinder MV Agusta motorcycles

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Agusta Concessionaires (GB) Ltd.

RETAIL PRICE LIST

750 AMERICA.

Basic:	£2950. 93
V.A.T.	£ 236. 07
	<u>£3187. 00</u>

750 AMERICA. ALLOY WHEELS & REAR DISC.

Basic	£3349. 07
V.A.T.	£ 267. 93
	<u>£3617. 00</u>

PLUS DELIVERY CHARGE.

350 SPORT.

Basic:	£1202. 78
V.A.T.	£ 96. 22
	<u>£1299. 00</u>

BOXER.

Basic:	£3678. 70
V.A.T.	£ 294. 30
	<u>£3973. 00</u>

PLUS DELIVERY CHARGE.

Rosolina Andrea working on a 750 MV



Race director, Arturo Magni, working on an 850 SS

