



## **TRIUMPH'S MODERN ERA**

*The Return of a Storied Marque to Cult Status*

### **THE EARLY DAYS – A SUMMARY**

Triumph Motorcycles was first founded in 1887 in Coventry, England, to manufacture bicycles under the Triumph Cycle Company name. Triumph moved into the production of powered cycles in 1902 and the company later expanded into automobiles. A few years later the motorcycle and bicycle portions of the portfolio were sold to become independent businesses. The motorcycle business was renamed Triumph Engineering Co., and continued to produce one of the world's most popular brand of motorcycles.

Triumph survived World War II much like other motorcycle manufacturers of the day by supplying the military with motorcycles. When civilian production resumed after the War, civilians and former military personnel flocked to motorcycles, including Triumphs. This led to motorcycling's Golden Age, which lasted through the 1960s.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, Triumph's popularity was embraced by a stream of Hollywood and home-grown celebrities who cemented the marque's global cult status. Marlon Brando, James Dean, Buddy Holly and the Crickets, and Steve McQueen all rode Triumph motorcycles.

The storied factory found itself in a series of difficult situations in the early 1970s that led to a government-sponsored merger, and ultimately liquidation in 1983.

### **TRIUMPH'S MODERN ERA**

The intellectual property rights to the Triumph marque were purchased in 1983 by British entrepreneur John Bloor, which paved the way for Triumph's modern era.

Bloor's first order of business was to arrange for a specialty manufacturer to continue building the storied Bonneville in order to maintain production and an ongoing customer base. This provided Bloor with the opportunity to assemble a new team that was tasked with working in secret to relaunch the storied brand with a solid business platform and the goal of recapturing the luster that Triumph enjoyed during motorcycling's Golden Age.

#### **A New Approach**

A new headquarters and factory were established in Hinckley, Leicestershire, England. The move from Triumph's historic locations in Coventry and Meriden prompted the motorcycle community to affectionately refer to the new models as Hinckley Triumphs.

To coincide with the new factory and global headquarters, Bloor's team created an entirely new approach to designing and building Triumph motorcycles. The strategy utilized modular construction, much like automobile manufacturers do, to contain research, development and production costs. This yielded a strong and stable platform for a series of unique models that were built on one assembly line at the same time. Design, research and development began on a new, modern line of Triumph motorcycles in 1984, and the new models were launched at the Cologne show of 1990. While these new motorcycles featured state-of-the-art design and technology, they also stayed true to Triumph's heritage by keeping popular model names such as Trophy and Trident. The iconic Bonneville continued with its renowned styling.

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As the new Triumph motorcycles evolved, the factory retained the parallel twin engines that the company was known for, but also realized that it was time for a new engine that could meet the demands of modern riding. Bloor's team responded by introducing a three-cylinder inline engine instead of the four-cylinder configuration that so many other manufacturers favored. By going in its own direction, Triumph found a new legion of fans. The innovative three-cylinder engine provided a nearly perfect balance of torque and horsepower, revved smoothly and produced a distinctive sound. The engine helped make Triumph's new motorcycles an instant hit.

### **Re-establishing Global Distribution**

As production capacity grew, Triumph re-established its distributor and dealer networks to facilitate motorcycle sales in most of the world's major motorcycle markets. Germany and France were the first countries to again receive distributors, followed by networks in Italy, Scandinavia, Benelux and Japan. Relationships with the United States and Canada were re-established in 1994.

This methodical approach facilitated meteoric production increases, going from 2,200 units in 1991 to more than 24,000 units just ten years later. A second manufacturing facility would soon be built to keep up with production.

In 1995 the company began to develop motorcycles that did not need to rely on the modular concept. These purpose-built machines would give designers nearly unlimited opportunity to explore styles and designs that could be uniquely Triumph.

The first of these motorcycles, the Daytona T595 and the T509 Speed Triple sport bikes, were launched at the 1996 Cologne Motorcycle Show. The Daytona featured full fairings for an aggressive racing look. The Speed Triple, meanwhile, took its styling cues from a burgeoning group of riders that were modifying their sport bikes for more urban riding. The Speed Triple became one of the first production "streetfighter" motorcycles and continues to be one of the most desired motorcycles of its kind.

### **The Great Fire – Rebuilding with Renewed Vigor**

Not long after Triumph hit its stride, a devastating fire engulfed the main factory in March 2002. The chassis assembly line and storage area were destroyed and much of the rest of the site was coated in a layer of soot. What remained of the assembly and storage areas were demolished while a mammoth clean-up operation ensued for the rest of the plant.

There was never any doubt that Triumph would rebuild.

During the rebuilding process, Triumph used the opportunity to reevaluate its approach, its processes and procedures. Every part of its business was evaluated and best practices were implemented in new ways that enabled Triumph to be more efficient and effective at designing, manufacturing and marketing its distinctive motorcycles.

Amazingly, full production resumed just six months later in September 2002.

Triumph's new production facility is equipped with state-of-the-art technology. It is one of, if not the most, modern motorcycle manufacturing plant in the world.

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### **Regaining Cult Status**

North America has always had a special relationship with Triumph because of what the brand represents. Triumph is focused on creating products that provide outstanding experiences and unforgettable rides. Like the motorcycles themselves, people who ride a Triumph tend to be quietly confident and have a distinctive sense of fashion that never goes out of style. Triumph owners aren't afraid to challenge the establishment, but they can do so in a way that's subtle, captivating and inspiring.

The makers of major motion pictures understand this. In the early years, Triumph was prominently featured in blockbuster movies where the leading men encapsulated these same characteristics. When Marlon Brando starred in "The Wild One," James Dean starred in "Rebel Without a Cause" and Steve McQueen starred in "The Great Escape," the motorcycles they rode personified the roles the actors were playing.

Re-injecting Triumph into the American culture was a natural progression as Triumph re-established itself as a global manufacturer of high quality motorcycles. Triumph's iconic machines have since appeared in movies that include "An Officer and a Gentleman," "The English Patient," "Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone," "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days," "Torque," "The Matrix," "Daredevil," "Mission Impossible 2," "Lost Boys 2: The Tribe" and "Terminator 3."

Triumph continues to make great strides in recapturing peoples' hearts and minds as they take to the streets to discover or recapture the thrill and enjoyment that a quality motorcycling experience provides. And people have thanked the company by making Triumph the world's fastest growing motorcycle manufacturer.

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Triumph Motorcycles ([www.TriumphMotorcycles.com](http://www.TriumphMotorcycles.com)) is the British motorcycle marque that produces a wide range of sport, cruiser and touring motorcycles that are all designed to provide outstanding motorcycling experiences. From the storied Bonneville to the class-leading Speed Triple, Triumph offers a blend of design, character and performance that result in truly distinctive motorcycles. First established in 1902 and now located in Hinckley, Leicestershire, England, Triumph has always set the pace for category winning machines. The company is solely owned by Bloor Holdings Ltd. and its North American operations are based in Atlanta.

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