

Change is evident in the motorcycle collector market. Only three Harley-Davidson Knuckleheads had ever sold for more than $100,000 before this week. At Mecum's Las Vegas auction, 11 Knuckleheads sold for more than $100,000, moving the Knucklehead into an elite pricing bracket. On the prices evident in Las Vegas, the Harley-Davidson Knucklehead now appears to have surpassed the Vincent Black Shadow, the post-war Vincent Rapide, and the Brough Superior SS80. This is quite remarkable, because unlike those other bikes, which were produced in very limited numbers, there were 41,000 Harley-Davidson Knuckleheads produced.

Mecum

The collectible motorcycle marketplace snapped back into action again this month when Mecum belatedly wrapped up its annual January Las Vegas motorcycle auctions on May 1, 2021

following a four-day-sale that ran from April 28.

Mecum holds the largest single motorcycle auction in the world each year in Las Vegas in January, usually at the same time as a Las Vegas auction held by Bonhams, the world's other major collectible motorcycle auction house. Covid-19 caused considerable difficulties for the London-based Bonhams this year, forcing the company to cancel its Vegas auction. Mecum held its postponed January auctions in April/May without its main rival holding court just down the road.

Although there were just 1300 lots at this auction (half the size of previous years), we gathered enough data to get a picture of what the collector marketplace looked like at this point in time, and it looks remarkably healthy. As we suspected, demand for motorcycles was higher than before the pandemic, and with supply lower, prices went up.

This makes perfect sense, as much of America has spent a lot more time at home over the last year, and 1960s and 1970s nostalgia has risen dramatically in value across most auction genres, from sports cards, to concert posters, musical instruments and even movie memorabilia. On top of that, motorcycles offer an excellent way to social distance, and they fit nicely inside a man cave ...

In 2021, the top seller fetched $297,000 and was an atom-perfect restoration of Harley-Davidson’s first model, known as the “Strap Tank.” This bike has its original 440cc single cylinder four-stroke engine that was built in 1907, and was hence one of the first 150 Harley-Davidsons ever built.

The bike has a long and colorful history and due to having been pieced together with original parts that were from different bikes, it didn’t threaten the model record price of $715,000 set in 2015 at the E.J. Cole Collection auction .

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*__ https://newatlas.com/motorcycles/motorcycle-auction-marketplace/

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