

MOTORCYCLEPEDIA MUSEUM

NEWBURGH, NEW YORK

Find the stuff motorcyclist dreams are made of.

by Moshe Levy

NESTLED NEAR THE heart of upstate New York's most alluring riding routes, the Motorcyclepedia Museum in Newburgh boasts a mammoth 85,000 square feet of open space over two floors, jam-packed with some of the most interesting two-wheeled treasures ever assembled. More than 500 motorcycles, from a running 1897 De Dion Bouton trike (the oldest running motorcycle in America!) to modern marvels are categorized into various subgenres, including choppers, military veterans, police motors, and even minicycles.

Arguably the most impressive draw is the Indian display, which features more than 100 of the storied original marque's machines (including the one pictured above), covering every single year of production from 1901 to 1953. Some are in original condition, while others have been meticulously restored to absolute perfection by the museum's staff, allowing viewers to feel what it was like to walk onto an Indian showroom floor over a century ago.

Not to be ignored by a long shot, there is also an enormous collection of eclectic Harley-Davidsons, notably military models, and even one that was in John F. Kennedy's motorcade on the day he was assassinated. Long-defunct brands, such as Thor, York, Pope, Flying Merkel, Pierce, Pennington, Copeland, Thomas, Excelsior-Henderson, and many others are also presented in various stages of immaculate restoration. The ambiance is enhanced by period-appropriate signs, posters, advertisements, and other memorabilia related to the respective displays. Beyond standard production motorcycles, many specials are also exhibited, including drag racers, board trackers, trials bikes, and land speed record holders.

Three motordromes, aka "Walls of Death," are on site, as well. These are enormous, silo-shaped wooden cylinders measuring 20 to 36 feet in diameter, used primarily as carnival sideshows wherein stunt pilots would ride on the vertical walls of the chambers in a circular pattern, held in place by centrifugal force, while the audience watches from above. The comprehensive coverage of chopper Americana's heyday in the Indian Larry and Chopper City exhibits also deserves mention. A diverse selection of wildly raked, tie-died creations from the 1960s



and 1970s, built by the masters—Arlen Ness, Ron Finch, Ed Roth, and others—can be seen against a backdrop of cheesy "bad-ass biker" movie posters so prevalent during that time period. With all of these attractions under one roof, the Motorcyclepedia Museum is often the gathering place for special events, antique motorcycle and car shows, gearhead festivals, and other noteworthy occasions.

More detail-oriented motorcyclists should plan to spend an entire day on site. Luckily, once the gawking is finished, you will find yourself in New York's prime riding country: the world-famous Hawk's Nest on Route 97; fabulous routes 28N, 28A, 30, and 73; the Catskill Mountains; Harriman State Park; and Adirondack State Park (the largest state park in the entire country) are all within easy reach. The winding tarmac is endless, and having a serendipitous pit stop at the Motorcyclepedia Museum is the icing on the true enthusiast's cake, so make a long weekend of it! 🍓

VISIT

Motorcyclepedia Museum
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Newburgh, NY 12550

CONTACT

845-569-9065
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motorcyclepediamuseum.org

HOURS:

Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

ADMISSION:

Adults: \$11
Ages 3-12: \$5
Under 3: Free



PHOTOS COURTESY MOTORCYCLEPEDIA