



THE SPLENDOR OF THE AMA VINTAGE DAYS

By Moshe K. Levy, RA #43605



It's been about 20 years since I last attended the American Motorcyclist Association's Vintage Days Festival, which was held July 6-8, 2018 at the Mid-Ohio Car Course in Lexington, OH – and now I'm kicking myself for not attending more often. This event is a veritable Mecca for classic and antique motorcycle fans, with three days jam-packed full of attractions, seminars, races, and of course acres of motorcycles from every brand you've ever heard of – and some you've probably never heard of.

The heart of the festival is the Swap Meet, the largest of its type in North America. Over 800 vendors populate row after row teeming with vintage parts and accessories, as well as motorcycles in every configuration from 10-point Concours Class to rusty basket cases. The sheer variety of selection on display will leave any enthusiast in awe! Plan on spending at least 4-6 hours perusing the goods – more if you're on the hunt for something rare and specific.

Across the campus, the Hall of Fame Bike Show featured exceptional restorations in the British, American, European, and Japanese traditions. It was such a joy to see these machines so well preserved and lovingly restored to better than factory new, even after so many decades in service. Better still, most of the machines aren't pampered parade queens – the 2.4-mile road racing circuit at Mid-Ohio was humming nonstop with 39 different classes of motorcycles running flat out in an effort to capture the checkered flag.

It's been many years since I've heard and smelled the urgent howl of a swarm of two-stroke racers on a track – what an experience! Plenty of off-road action was also on hand, including hare scrambles and trials, and an unusual "run what you brung" pitbike race. It was the first (and probably last) time I'd ever see a 1980s Honda Helix scooter being thrashed and jumped in the dirt.

Of particular interest to me was the diversity of seminars, covering a wide variety of topics from GPS 101 (taught by Jack O'Connor of Pine Barrens Adventures) to the complete history of Japanese motorcycles (presented by renowned author Armand Ensanian). The AMA's Government Relations representative Mike Sayre had a fascinating lecture on the future of autonomous vehicles, and where motorcycles fit into this brave new world. With an insight years into the future of impending regulations, he made clear that we riders need to advocate for ourselves, or others may regulate us into marginality.

Overall, the most memorable part of AMA Vintage Days was being surrounded by thousands of like-minded enthusiasts, and their enormous parade of truly unique and creative vintage and classic motorcycles. This included many families riding together, both children and adults on their own individual machines, as proof that our passion is in good hands passing from one generation to the next.



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JULY 6-8, 2018

MID-OHIO CAR COURSE

LEXINGTON, OHIO





**Engine detail of 1959 BMW R50
at the 2018 AMA Vintage Days**

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