



Matchless G12 (1958)

Peter Nicol wins his third Harley Scramble on a Matchless

Model	Years	Engine	Suspension	Power (bhp)	Notable Features
G12	1958–1966	646cc air-cooled parallel twin, OHV	Telescopic forks at the front and twin shocks at the rear	35 bhp @ 6,500 rpm	4-speed, chain final drive transmission, tubular duplex frame (from 1959), drum brakes (front and rear) with a top speed of around 100 mph (160 km/h)

The 650cc Matchless G12, the company's first 650cc twin, was introduced in 1958. Technically 646cc, the parallel twin motorcycle was produced by Associated Motor Cycles (AMC) at the Matchless factory in Plumstead, London.

This model was produced through to 1966 and was designed primarily to meet the demand for larger-capacity motorcycles in the lucrative US market. While not as popular in competition as its rivals, the G12 was appreciated for its torque, reliability, and comfortable ride, especially with the improved suspension and frame introduced in later models. The G12 was also sold as the AJS Model 31, with only minor differences between the brands.

The Matchless 650cc G12 and its variants were used in several branches of motorsport during their production years including: Scrambles (Motocross); Desert racing; and Endurance road racing.

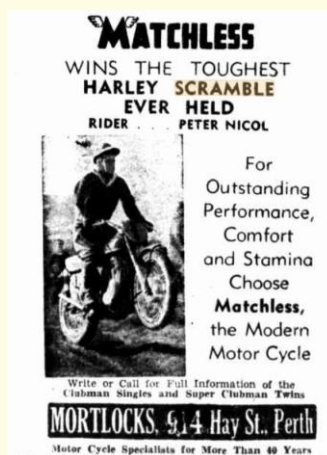
Modifications – including running higher compression, lighter alloy fenders, improved ground clearance, and an upswept exhaust - were made to the G12 CS (Competition Sprung) sports scrambler to make it suitable for off-road racing.

Race history

British scrambles rider Dave Curtis successfully rode Matchless bikes in the 1950s and 1960s, challenging and sometimes beating leading riders of the era such as Arthur Lampkin and World / British Champion Jeff Smith.

In Australia, four riders won Australian Motocross Championships on Matchless bikes in the 500cc and Unlimited classes - Ken Rumble (1954 Daylesford, VIC), George Bailey (1956 Moorebank, NSW), Jim Silvy (1958, Launceston, TAS) and Ray Fisher won three titles at Clarendon (1965, SA), Christmas Hills (1966, VIC) and Collie (WA, 1968).

In Western Australia, five-time Harley Scramble winner Peter Nicol, from the Coastal Motorcycle Club, won his third title on a 500cc Matchless in 1954.



Restoration

The late Peter Nicol purchased this Matchless bike on display from its owner at the time in South America, around 2010.

Peter restored it over several years at his friend Graeme Woolcock's property. On completion, he displayed the bike at the York Motorcycle Festival, where it was awarded the best British bike.

In his early eighties, Peter rode the bike on a few occasions, but would regularly visit Graeme where he would fuss over it, polish it and run the engine.

It was a source of great pleasure for him and took him back to bygone days when he was one of Australia's greatest motocross and road racing champions.

Photo: Peter Nicol celebrates his 1954 Harley Scramble victory on a Matchless bike with fans at the Rope Works circuit at Buckland Hill in Mosman Park, WA; and [Below] a Mortlocks advertisement promoting Nicol's third Harley Scramble win on a Matchless.

