



Velocette MAC (1938)

An innovative hand-built reliable bike that was prominent early in Australian scrambles

Model	Years	Engine	Suspension	Power (bhp)	Notable Features
MAC	1933 to 1959	350cc	Webb girder forks (front), rigid (rear)	15–18	The engine was an air-cooled, single-cylinder OHV (overhead valve) design and had a high-camshaft pushrod with short rocker arms.

The first Velocette MAC was launched in 1933 and was developed from the overhead valve Velocette MOV 250cc. The reliable single cylinder motorcycle coped well with the low-grade post-war petrol and was a popular commuter and touring motorcycle.

Velocette motorcycles were made by a small and family-owned firm that sold almost as many hand-built motorcycles during its lifetime as the mass-produced machines of the giant BSA and Norton concerns. Renowned for innovation and the quality of its products, the company was prominent in international motorcycle racing from the mid-1920s until the 1950s.

The company that later became Veloce Limited was founded in 1896 by John Goodman and William Gue, who developed tri-car in 1904 and their first motorcycle, the Veloce, in 1905.

However, the business produced only bicycles until Taylor and his sons produced the first VL motorcycle in 1910.

The 1938 MAC engine featured an air-cooled, single-cylinder OHV (overhead valve) with a high camshaft pushrod engine with short rocker arms, reducing vibration and improving smoothness.

It used a four-speed gearbox, chain final drive, and had a backbone frame with the engine as a stressed member.

Although Veloce Limited started as innovators, they failed to keep pace with developing technology and production ended in 1959.

Racing history

The Velocette MAC was not a world-beater in top-tier road racing, it was a competent and reliable performer at the

club and privateer level, reflecting the brand's engineering strengths and serving as an accessible entry point into racing for many riders.

However, its combination of a strong, race-bred frame, low weight, tractable engine, and adaptable suspension made it a competitive and reliable choice for scrambles (motocross) in its era.

Although never winning an Australian Motocross Championship, some of Australia's top riders raced Velocettes in the 350cc class and were regular podium finishers in the early years – between the very first Championships at Daylesford, near Korweinguboorra in Victoria in 1953 through to Holt Park Queensland in 1957.

In 1956 at Moorebank (NSW), two-time Harley Scramble winner Don Russell riding a 350cc Velocette finished third in both the Australian 350cc and Unlimited championships.

Restoration history

The Velocette on display, which has been restored in road racing trim, was built by Don Chesson for racing with the Historic Competition Motorcycle Club in Western Australia. It is now owned and raced by Robert Dillon.

It features a Don Chesson cast twin leading shoe front brake assembly, Velocette Venom cams and followers and oversized valves.

Here in WA, the Velocette MAC is a popular bike for the Period 2 class competing at both the Wanneroo and Collie road racing circuits.

Photos:[Left] Robert Dillon's Velocette MAC (1938) model restored in road racing trim; [Centre] While not prominent in the World or European Motocross Championships, Velocettes scramblers were popular at the club and privateer level and were regular podium finishers in the early Australian Motocross Championships between 1953 and 1957; and [Right] A Velocette advertisement in the 1950s.

