

# HARLEY-DAVIDSON MUSEUM

## ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

Harley-Davidson has been dreaming about building a museum for a long time. The Motor Company has an amazing history, and it is no surprise that we have gone to great lengths to preserve that history and heritage.

### GETTING IT STARTED

Since the early 1900s, Harley-Davidson leaders have been saving and collecting Harley-Davidson motorcycles and memorabilia.

- Important internal documents, marketing materials, and photographs were retained from the earliest days of the Motor Company.
- In 1915 leaders began saving at least one motorcycle per year from the assembly line.
- They later went into the field to repurchase sold vehicles from dealers to fill in bikes missing from the 12-year span between 1903 and 1915.
- The Company Archives became a formal department in 1993.

### VEHICLE COLLECTION

One thing that makes the Harley-Davidson Archives vehicle collection so extraordinary is that most of our bikes are in original condition.

- The bulk of the Archives motorcycle collection was pulled right off the factory floor through the years, and has been preserved in original condition.
- Several motorcycles were generously donated by private collectors.
- The Company occasionally purchases rare and unique Harley-Davidson motorcycles from private collectors and enthusiasts.

### VEHICLE CONSERVATION

Motorcycle conservation can be quite a process; in fact, it's a 90 eight-hour day process. We have two full-time restorers dedicated to the job. For the average bike we:

- Disassemble the entire bike
- Meticulously remove decades of grime
- All the greatest care is taken to preserve the original plating and finishes
- Occasionally, we replace a few parts that are beyond saving

Visitors to the Museum will be able to stop by the Archives and see the conservation work areas, get a peek into some visible storage areas and watch Archives staff as they work.

### ARCHIVES TODAY

The Harley-Davidson Archives is a part of the Museum. It serves as the conservation facility, research center and repository for the collection of motorcycles, documents, photography and memorabilia from which the Harley-Davidson Museum draws in developing exhibits and programs.

The Harley-Davidson Archives supports the entire Motor Company with its collection - from product development to marketing to customer relations. The resources and staff in the Archives support a wide and expanding variety of company activities.



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