

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [This Ducati shares its race-winning technology with the Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR](#)

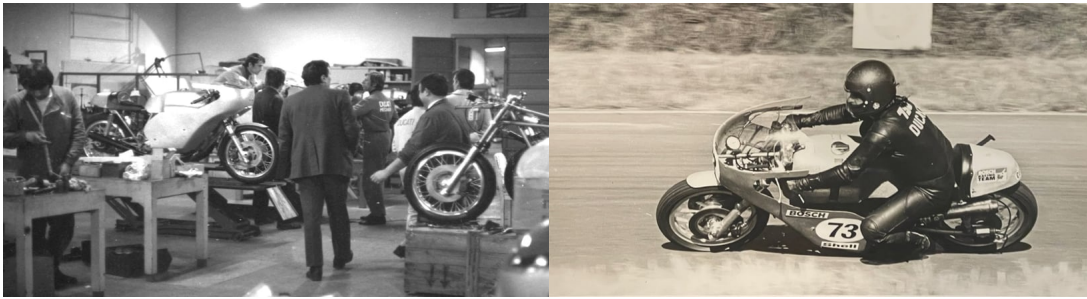
**Lead**  
Motorcycle racing in the 1970s was a brutal discipline to remain competitive in, mainly due to the Italian dominance of some truly incredible bikes. For Ducati, their desire to beat their rivals became an obsession, and from it the mighty 750 was born. Now it heads to Gooding & Co's upcoming sale.



If motorcycles are your passion, it is almost a rite of passage that one should own a Ducati at some point along the way. Much like car owners simply must experience the trials and tribulations of an Alfa Romeo, the two-wheeled brand is one filled with momentous racing glory and some truly incredible machines that came with them, the 750 being arguably the brand's most significant.

It's difficult to comprehend just how innovative this motorcycle was, and would lead Ducati on a path to be recognised as Italy's greatest bike-maker, leaving its rivals firmly in the dust. The year was 1972, and Ducati had been quietly working on eight 750 cc masterpieces to be unveiled and raced at that year's Imola 200, a race regarded as the pinnacle of European motorcycle racing. As the race weekend neared, and 70,000 spectators piled into the surrounding grandstands and grass verges, Ducati were ready to show their rivals and the world what they'd been up to, arriving with seven of the racers in a specially designed glass-sided transporter, naturally causing widespread excitement among the crowd, competing teams, and the motorcycle world at large. Thankfully for Ducati, the boasting paid off, and riders Paul Smart and Bruno Spaggiari claimed 1st and 2nd on the new bikes, a victory that would mark the beginnings of a new era for Ducati, setting it on course for decades of international success.





Even in 2024, the Ducati 750 is a true product of ingenuity and craftsmanship. Groundbreaking technical innovations aplenty, the 750 has bevel gear-driven camshafts and desmodromic valve actuation, which allowed extreme high rpm performance, the very same technology previously used on the Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR, no less. In fact, the desmodromic valve actuation was so good, it is still used by Ducati in its highest performance models today. No component was overlooked, and was designed with extremely strong sandcast engine cases, lightweight billet connecting rods and cranks, and were not fitted with either a flywheel or alternator for reduced rotational mass. For extreme durability and performance, the bikes were also fitted with two sets of coils and two spark plugs per cylinder for better combustion at high rpm. All of these innovations combined led to a racing motorcycle the world had never seen before, leaving rivals utterly dumb-founded and severely out of their depth out on the racetrack.



Of the eight racers, this example spent much of its life being used and enjoyed out on its happy place, competing in multiple events in South Africa, California, and New Zealand, where it has been meticulously maintained and comes complete with a plethora of original and spare parts for the next owner. As pieces of Italian motorsport history go, it's easy to jump straight to four-wheeled examples donning a prancing horse, but this Ducati is a true feat of engineering, and a showcase of just how passionate the brand was for complete dominance. It will go under the hammer at Gooding & Company's upcoming 'Geared' online sale, which takes place on May 17th with plenty of motorcycles and memorabilia to bid on.

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