From: <http://www.moped2.org/whizzer-bike.htm>

**Whizzer Bike**

History of Whizzer - by [Jack Backstreet](mailto:jback@nilenet.com) http://moped2.org/whizzer-bike.htm

Some younger scooter/moped'ers out there might not know anything about the  
history of the Whizzer, the most significant motorized bicycle ever built.  
  
The idea of motorizing a bicycle ain't nothing new. Fact is, nearly every  
motorcycle company prior to 1915 began by either building or modifying a  
bicycle to accept an engine (and one could argue that planes began that way  
too). Larger displacement engines available around WW1 meant motorcycle  
manufacturers could build truly dedicated machines, but some bicycle engine  
applications continued to exist into the early 1920's, namely Smith's  
Moto-Wheel, a bolt on 3rd wheel contraption that's often seen on Indian  
bicycles (anybody have one for sale, call me!).  
  
There's been 2 distinct scooter crazes here in the U.S., the first happened  
around 1915 and died off in the early 20's due to their generally lousy  
construction and being generally marketed toward women. The second and  
greatest boom occurred in 1936 when companies such as Crocker, Powell,  
Salsbury and Cushman made some truly superior machines. It was during this  
second great scooter boom that the idea of motorized bicycles was  
resurrected by companies like Marman, Pow-wow, & Wasp, to compete with the  
somewhat costlier motorscooters.  
  
Whizzer rode in about 3 years into the scooter craze. Breene-Taylor was a  
small company in Los Angeles manufacturing carburetors and aircraft parts  
and launched their bicycle engine in late 1939, the Whizzer Model D.  
  
Model D Late 1939-July 1940 Sales: less than 300 (all kits)  
\* 1-3/8 hp  
\* Roller drive  
  
Kit price: $54.95 (complete)  
Model D suffered from numerous design defects, the most glaring was the use  
of a pot metal crank (continued through to Model F) and a split crankcase  
design. Many were later recalled by the factory and replaced with improved  
models.  
  
Opinion: If you come across an F, chances are it's unridable as they tended  
to self-destruct after a 1,000 miles or so without any help from their  
owners. Novelty items at best and look neat on a prewar bike hung on a  
wall... just don't try to ride it!  
  
Whizzer interest sold to Martin Goldman and Dietrich Kohlsaat during final D  
production.  
  
Model E July 1940-42 Sales: 1,500 (all kits)  
\* Aluminum head substituted  
\* Oil dip Stick  
\* Improved Breene-Taylor carburetor  
\* Hotter camshaft  
\* Improved magneto  
  
Note: The Model E, while certainly an improvement over the D, usually lasted  
just a few miles more before self-destruction. It still had roller drive,  
the split case, and the awful crank. Another novelty item to be seen and not  
heard running.  
  
Model F 1942-43 Sales Approx. 4,000 (all kits)  
\* Horsepower increases to 2-1/2  
\* Larger 1.2 gal gas tank  
\* Switch to belt drive [instead of "the roller drive that Whizzer Motors had used up to that point" –FNC]  
  
   
COMPANY MOVES TO PONTIAC, MICHIGAN  
  
Note: Quick! Name the only vehicle you could buy new during WW2... WHIZZER!  
And then you had to have a qualifying certificate as a defense worker in  
order to buy one. The Model F was no great machine yet, but had the  
significant improvement of being belt driven.  
  
  
Model H Summer 1946- May 1948 Sales: 139,000 (approximate)  
\* One piece crankcase casting w/side cover access  
\* Improved bearings  
\* Improved seals & tappets  
\* Elimination of oil pump (splash/spray lubrication)  
\* Changed exhaust design  
\* Twist off gas cap  
\* Tillotson carb replaces B/T unit  
  
The Model H was the first modern Whizzer. Look at the improvement in the sales! The big news  
was that with WW2 over, an enormous pent up demand existed for ANYTHING that  
moved (new cars were hard to come by and you had to wait for up to 18 months  
to get one)... but the Whizzer finally evolved into a quality machine  
capable of both performance and long life. Most Whizzers encountered are  
Model H's.  
  
The Model H (introduced in the summer of 1946) changed everything. The most  
significant development for the company was that bicycle manufacturers began  
to take notice of these little engines and set out to design bicycles around  
them.  
In late 1947 Cleveland Welding produced a type of Roadmaster specifically  
for the Whizzer engine (maybe 1,000 were produced; note that all sales  
figures mentioned are for kits only, perhaps an additional 5% of the H's and  
later models were installed in preassembled bikes at best).  
  
Schwinn would become involved with Whizzer in late 1947 through a patent  
conflict with Cleveland Welding.  
  
Model H kit price: $97.55  
  
Even with the preassembled bikes (discussed later), the most commonly  
encountered Whizzers are of the kit variety. Most will be found on various  
26" men's (there are no girl's Whizzers) bikes such as Cleveland Welding, JC  
Higgins, Shelby, BF Goodrich (a Schwinn licensee) and Schwinn itself.

THERE IS [now (circa 1998?) –FNC] NO TYPICAL WHIZZER. What you see when encountering a kit bike is some kid's idea of what a motorized bicycle should be 50 years ago... if it's  
'restored' you get the restorer's idea of nostalgia.  
  
Sidebar:  
Ideally, a kit bike should include a front expander brake. Most often  
however, this is not the case. When encountering an authentic 'barn bike'  
with the front expander brake, it'll be a small miracle if it's complete. The  
internal mechanisms were often ditched due to their cost at the first sign  
of wear or trouble back in the old days... THEY ARE VERY EXPENSIVE AND HARD  
TO COME BY TODAY! You can expect to pay over $300 for a working NOS unit in  
1998.  
  
  
Model J May 1948- Sept. 1949 Sales (Unknown, but a lot!)  
\* Throttle controls replace thumb unit  
\* Most have Carter carbs  
\* Some have 'tall' oil stack towers (a rarity)  
  
With the model J, Whizzer began producing, in addition to the kits, their  
own line of proprietary bikes: the PACEMAKER (24") [later produced as a 300  
series] 1948-51 (about $200.00), the SPORTSMAN (a bit later, as a 300S)--- a  
20" (!) miniature motorcycle (no pedals to crank!) with a kick starter and a  
2 speed automatic transmission, the bimatic. 1950-52 ($239.50), and the  
SPECIAL (Schwinn DX frame by Whizzer, built until about 1963).  
  
   
Schwinn would produce the WZ series and the Ambassador (their most deluxe  
model) until about 1952 and sold through their extensive dealership network.  
  
European affiliates are established and begin selling preassembled bikes  
utilizing frames quite different than anything seen in the U.S.  
  
Alpha-numeric sequences (which skipped several letters in the alphabet) are  
ditched.  
  
300 Series Sales 15,600  
  
Sales begin to fall off dramatically in late 1952.  
\* Bimatic transmission proves a costly failure and is discontinued.  
\* Kick starter introduced  
\* 3 hp  
  
Company begins production of aluminum windows and kitchen utensils.  
  
500 Series Sales 2,300  
  
600 Series Sales 1,500  
  
700 Series Sales 5,300  
\*Kick starter deleted  
  
All figures are for kits. 700 sales figures are deceptive due to the length  
of production. Whizzer would continue building preassembled SPECIALS in  
limited quantities until company closes using virtually any available NOS  
parts from across series which blurrs model lines.  
  
Factory closes in 1964.  
Remaining inventory sold to late Leonard Davis in 1970 for a rumored $5,000  
(he buys approx 175 kits, some completed bikes and bins of misc. parts worth  
an estimated $1,000,000 today).  
(Sorry folks! He's taking a dirt nap, having sold off the stuff at Hershey  
back in the early 70's).  
  
  
Various prototypes and one-off models are extant in many series.  
  
  
\*\*\*\*  
  
Estimated values:  
  
  
A decent COMPLETE kit barn bike (not running) on a non-expander brake frame  
brings $1,100-1,400 in today's market.  
  
Good operating original Whizzer kit bikes can be had for about $2,000-2,500  
  
'RESTORED' kit bikes (usually H/J series) are found for $2,400-3,500  
Anybody who pays more than $3,500 for a Whizzer kit bike has more money than  
brain cells.  
  
Whizzer rebuilds aren't cheap (is anything?): expect to pay $650.00 for a  
complete rebuild.  
  
PREASSEMBLED UNITS  
  
This gets squirrely...  
  
BF Goodrich made a rebadged Schwinn model in 1948 (relatively rare, yet  
eyeballs as a Schwinn), The Schwinn WZ, the Columbia, all are desirable and  
could bring $4,500 restored in todays's market, 50-70% of that in decent  
shape and $1,500-2,000 as a barner.  
  
The Ambassador is the deluxe model and restored goes for $4,500-5,500  
Maybe $2,800-3,000 in running order and $2,000 next to a tractor.  
  
Pacemaker: $5,000-$5,500 restored, $2,800-3,200 running and maybe $1,800-2,000  
The Pacemaker is a neat machine! A 24" with dual springs mounted on an  
entirely new telescopic fork. Ensure all the parts are intact! The  
gernerator is spendy and should have the headlamp and a complete drum brake.  
The absolute best bet for both rideability and appreciation!  
  
Sportsmans are the cream of the crop, but not from a rideability standpoint  
due to their (often installed) troublesome bimatic transmissions. They just  
look so cool you can't believe what you're looking at... $6,000 restored,  
$3,500-4,000 running and $2,500 in the shed.  
  
  
And yes you can always find stuff cheaper (the "I found one for $50 in a  
farmer's field," like, duh, story). Problem is, people now know what this  
stuff is worth. The good news is that even with today's outrageous parts  
prices ($80 for a rear pulley!!!!!?) you can still 'restore' one, ride it  
and enjoy it, and still turn more than a buck on it when selling. You just  
may never want to!  
  
  
\*\*\*\*\*\*  
  
MODERN WHIZZER.  
A repro Whizzer was manufactured by Nostalgia Cycles from 1993-97 and sold  
for about $1,900 in kit form. These are easily identified by a whacky  
cyclinder/head unit and Mikuni carb. From a distance (like, a mile) they  
look very similar. These should be avoided like the plague.  
  
A MORE MODERN WHIZZER???  
  
Rumor has it that the licensee is negotiating with a better company... we'll  
all have to wait n' see!  
  
  
Thoughts, gripes, comments? email me!  
  
P.S. I was in error in PART ONE regarding one point: CUSHMAN also received  
a manufacturing waiver during WWII for civilian sales under the same defense  
clause. It's kind of interesting to think that the only motorized thing  
Americans could buy new after around the Spring of 1942 was a handful of  
motorscooters!  
  
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From: <http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html> on 2018/02/18

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| **1939** | | |
| **August** | Breene-Taylor Engineering, a Los Angeles-based manufacturer of airplane parts, announced the availability of the Whizzer Model "D" Bicycle Motor. This kit sold for $54.95 and included an air-cooled, four-cycle engine that was capable of producing 1.375 horsepower as well as a 2/3 gallon fuel tank. Approximately 1000 Model "D" motors were made and sold. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1940** | | |
| **July** | Breene-Taylor released the new Model "E" Bicycle Motor, which was essentially the same as the Model "D" with several key improvements and additions. Most notably, the cylinder head was changed to aluminum for better cooling, the camshaft was redesigned to provide better performance, and an oil dipstick was added to check the oil level. Approximately 1500 Model "E" Motors were made and sold. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1942** | | |
|  | The Whizzer Motors had not been a great success, resulting in sales of only about 2500 units. As such, Breene-Taylor decided to divest itself of this unit and focus on more profitable ventures. So, Dietrich Kohlsatt, who supplied the capital, and Martin Goldman, an attorney for Breene-Taylor, bought the Whizzer Motor operation from them. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1943** | | |
|  | With World War II in full swing, Whizzer had to lobby the United States government for the right to continue production of their motorbike engines. Martin Goldman visited Washington and convinced the government that the Whizzer was a great way for defense workers to travel to and from work. |  |
|  | http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/Graphics/RedLine.gif |  |
|  | Whizzer released the "New Model" engine for "defense workers only." This redesigned engine was more reliable than previous models because it used a belt drive instead of the roller drive that Whizzer Motors had used up to that point. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1945** | | |
|  | With the War ending, Whizzer was able to bring its production of engines back up and make them available to the general public. The Model "F" released in 1945 was the same as the "New Model" that had been released during WWII, with the same belt drive and large 5-quart gas tank. Approximately 4200 Model "F" engines were sold for $125 each. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1946** | | |
|  | Whizzer moved its main production facilities from southern California to Pontiac, Michigan. This enabled them to use the nearby auto-production facilities to outsource the manufacture of most of the Whizzer components. |  |
|  | http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/Graphics/RedLine.gif |  |
|  | Henry Schuricht, a former Breene-Taylor engineer who had moved to Whizzer when it changed ownership in 1941, finished redesigning the Whizzer motor. |  |
|  | http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/Graphics/RedLine.gif |  |
| **March** | Whizzer announced the availability of the new Model "H." This new engine featured a one-piece crankcase that replaced the old two-piece case, a crankshaft that used roller bearings at one end and a ball bearing at the other, more reliable seals, and a Tillotson carburetor. The Model "H" was more reliable and popular than any other Whizzer model, with sales of approximately 139,000 at prices ranging from $89.50 to $97.50. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1948** | | |
| **May** | Dietrich Kohlsaat announced that they had sold 150,000 Whizzer engines. The company had over 12 dozen warehouses nationwide that supplied 3500 dealers. |  |
|  | http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/Graphics/RedLine.gif |  |
|  | Whizzer announced the Model "J" engine, which had a chrome-plated exhaust pipe and fittings, a new, more-reliable Carter carburetor, and motorcycle-type twist-grip controls. Whizzer sold about 51,000 Model "J" motors at a cost of $97.55. |  |
|  | http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/Graphics/RedLine.gif |  |
| **June** | Whizzer introduced the "Pacemaker," which the company referred to as the "only complete motorbike." The bike came with the Model "J" engine already attached to the frame and ready to run. The "Pacemaker" retailed for $199.50 | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1949** | | |
| **September** | In order to keep pace with its new competition, Whizzer released the Model "300" Motor. This new engine had 7/8 in. valves, a more efficient combustion chamber, better cooling, and a higher compression ratio. These changes resulted in a 3 hp engine that could reach speeds of 40 mph. Whizzer sold about 15,000 Model "300" motors at $109.97 each. |  |
|  | http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/Graphics/RedLine.gif |  |
|  | Whizzer released the "Sportsman" motorbike, which was much more like a real motorcycle. The "Sportsman" abandoned pedals altogther and used a kickstarter to get the bike going. The "Sportsman" cost $224.50 for the Standard edition, which had a clutch transmission, and $239.50 for the Deluxe edition, which sported the Bi-Matic automatic transmission. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1951** | | |
|  | Whizzer released the "Ambassador," a motorbike similar to the "Sportsman" but with a full-size frame, larger tires, and greater overall length. The "Ambassador" was the top-of-the-line, with a gloss black finish, ivory trim, and chrome-plating. The Ambassador sold for $249.50, making it Whizzer's most expensive product. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1952** | | |
|  | In 1952, the company introduced its last major motorbike engine, the "700." This motor was in many respects similar to the "300," but it included a new carburetor, a sealed-beam headlight, and a taillight. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1955** | | |
|  | Whizzer Motorbike Company changed names to become Whizzer Industries, Inc. and began to expand into other areas of production. Whizzer Industries produced childrens' toys and wagons as well as windows and sliding doors. The company continued to sell parts for Whizzer engines and bikes until 1965, but times had changed and the Whizzer was no longer king. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1997** | | |
|  | What do you get when you combine an intelligent investor with a seasoned motorcycle marketing professional?  The idea of bringing the Whizzer back!  The new Whizzer bought the trademark and embarked on creating a new bike to match those of yesteryear. They found a manufacturer, perfected designs to allow the new bike to meet DOT standards, created all new tooling and began re-manufacturing the legendary Whizzer. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1998** | | |
| **December** | The Whizzer has returned and **Motorbike fun is back again!** The Classic model, a black 26" bike, was introduced and received rave reviews.  They immediately became the new "in" thing to own for motorcycle and nostalgia enthusiasts alike. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **1999** | | |
|  | The Classic sold throughout the year with great success. | [Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) |
| **2000** | | |
|  | Whizzer introduced the Blue Sportsman, a 24" limited edition motorbike. It came  stock with additional accessories not on the original Classic. The Black Knight was also created as a modification to the Classic with 24" chrome wheels and specialty decals. |  |
| **2001**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
|  | Whizzer came out with the Pacemaker II with the centrifugal clutch and later in the year also offered them in a slip clutch version.  It was available in a 24" or 26" vintage maroon bike. The Pacemaker II was loaded with numerous chrome accessories not stock on previous models. |  |
| **2002**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
|  | Whizzer continued to produce the maroon Pacemaker II slip clutch and introduced the Pacemaker II in midnight blue or candy apple red slip clutch bikes, 24" or 26". |  |
| **2003**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
|  | Whizzer came out with the Panther, a black, sleek  24" motorbike. |  |
| **2004**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
| **October** | Whizzer introduced their new NE5 model in a pearlized sapphire blue or ruby red 26 inch bike.  Significant modifications and enhancements have been made to this model. This is the first major change Whizzer has undergone since the new bike came out in 1998. |  |
| **2005**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
| **January** | Whizzer came out with the 24 inch version of the NE5 model in red or blue. |  |
| **February** | Whizzer introduced the 24 inch version of the NE5 model in pearlized ultra black at the Dealer Expo in Indianapolis. |  |
| **November** | The NE5 became available with a brand new automatic centrifugal clutch. |  |
| **2006**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
| **March** | The 26" Black was back by popular demand!! |  |
| **September** | Whizzer introduced three exciting new colors: Forest Green, Vibrant Yellow and Original Vintage Maroon. |  |
| **2007**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
| **January** | Whizzer continued the production of the NE5 model in five different colors. |  |
| **2008**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
| **March** | Whizzer introduced the Ambassador, a new age classic. Designed with an electric start and retro chopper styling-once again the top of the line Whizzer bike. |  |
| **July** | The new automatic CVT drive on the Ambassador is a big hit! |  |
| **December** | Whizzer introduced the Whizzer NE-R in black, a motorbike with the same styling as the NE5 classic with many upgrades such as wider wheels, disc brakes, automatic CVT drive and standard accessories like turn signals, speedometer/tachometer, dual mirrors, deluxe grips and chrome electrical cover. |  |
| **2009**[Back to the Time Line](http://www.whizzermotorbike.com/History.html#top) | | |
| **January** | Whizzer celebrates its 70th Anniversary. |  |
| **February** | The Whizzer NE-R was available in two new exciting colors...red and blue. |  |