

Quasar History

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia and Quasar Yahoo group.



<u>Manufacturer</u>	<u>Malcolm Newell</u> <u>Ken Leaman</u> later, John Malfoy
<u>Parent company</u>	Wilson Brothers of Bristol, later under licence by Romarsh of Calne
<u>Production</u>	1975-1982
<u>Assembly</u>	<u>United Kingdom</u>
<u>Successor</u>	Malcolm Newell's Phasars; Royce Creasey's Voyagers
<u>Class</u>	<u>Motorcycle</u>
<u>Body style(s)</u>	Roofed <u>Feet forward motorcycle</u>
<u>Layout</u>	FF
<u>Engine(s)</u>	<u>Reliant</u> 4 cylinder, water cooled, 850 cc
<u>Transmission(s)</u>	Reliant 4 speed
<u>Wheelbase</u>	77 in (1.95 m)
<u>Length</u>	101 in (2.57 m)
<u>Width</u>	28 in (0.71m)
<u>Curb weight</u>	680 lb (308 kg)

The **Quasar** was a semi-enclosed feet forward motorcycle, created by Malcolm Newell and Ken Leaman, who made a number of similar vehicles. It used an 850cc engine built by Reliant Motors and was capable of cruising at 90–100 mph (145–160 km/h) and exceeding 100 mph in favourable conditions.

Design

In the Quasar, the rider sat feet forward or feet first, changing the usual position of the rider from on top and straddling the vehicle, to inside and sitting down. Unlike most motorcycles, the Quasar was a [cabin motorcycle](#) with a roof which goes over the rider. While normally not a problem, tall riders with larger, more modern helmets could have trouble fitting inside although it was also possible to carry a passenger with an intimate squeeze. In the front of the bike the [laminated glass](#) windscreen had car-style windscreen wipers and a heater. The use of a semi-enclosed 'cockpit' caused [blindspots](#) where the driver had to move his head around to make sure [visibility](#) was not obscured by the screen supports in corners. Integral with the rear bodywork was a 60 litre (2.21 cubic feet) storage space and wrap-around panniers were a factory option. Ingeniously, they were no wider than the narrow mirrors.

History

In 1968, after his previous idea for a [trike](#) named the "Revolution" failed, forcing him to close his motorcycle shop in Devizes called 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang', Malcolm Newell met Ken Leaman while on holiday in Scotland, and the two combined forces to design and build the first Quasar prototype. The first production Quasar was sold in December 1976, having been built by Ken and Malcolm at Wilson Brothers of [Bristol](#), where Ken was employed full time. Wilson kept the rights to the machine, although Ken did all the work on it in his own time.

Though they had launched a publicity campaign to gain interest in the bike, even after they began to receive inquiries Wilson Brothers did not provide enough funds for production to meet demand. Between December 1976 and October 1979, they only produced a total of six vehicles. In 1980, John Malfoy, who had originally designed the Quasar's unique fluorescent rear light, persuaded his employers, Romarsh, of [Calne](#), to manufacture five Quasars under licence from Wilson Brothers. While all five vehicles sold by December, 1981, another batch of ten was prepared starting in August.

When Romarsh collapsed, John Malfoy bought the remaining parts and assembled several more machines and Malcolm Newell independently made at least one more from parts. While only 21 Reliant engined Quasars were produced, Newell went on to build several more with motorcycle engines and Bob Tait-designed [hub centre steering](#) in his own workshop at Field Cottage, in [Heddington](#). These included several with [Suzuki GS](#) engines, both chain and shaft drive, a [Honda VF750](#) powered machine and one with a [Kawasaki Z1300](#) 6-cylinder engine. Malcolm also produced a whole range of Phasar machines powered by engines from the [Honda Goldwing](#) and [VT500](#), [Moto Guzzi](#) V50 and Convert, Z13, and [Yamaha](#) LC250 and 350. He was working on a leaning trike, with two narrow leaning front wheels when he died in 1994, aged just 54.

