



A great friendship of three air corps buddies, Carlo Guzzi, Giorgio Parodi and Giovanni Ravelli who wanted to start a motorcycle firm after the First World War. However Ravelli was killed in a plane crash which was a shock to Carlo and Giorgio.

They kept going with the motorcycle company and adapted the air corps icon (an eagle symbol) in his honor. Moto Guzzi has been the largest Italian motorcycle builder for most of its history.

In 1920 Carlo designed the first bike called Normale (500cc). It went into production in 1922 and on a wave of racing success. Of course it became a popular model. Moto Guzzi updated the model over the years but didn't integrate highly new race technology, preferring to stay safe on the production bike series. Earning a good reliability name.



Guzzi started producing beautiful bikes like the GT tour (1928), Condor (1938), Dondolino (1940) and the Sport 15 (1931) all delivered in the bright red (landmark) color of Moto Guzzi. With loads of racing victories during these years.

A retro design in 1950 was the Falcone which design was based on the first normale layout. It was built on the previous years Astore tourer and styled a little more sporty. The Falcone was immense popular. The production of the Falcone continued until 1976 with a few updates along the way.

Moto Guzzi got an unusual request from the Italian army for a 3x3 bike. Moto Guzzi used the opportunity to integrate its new V twin engine with a 745 cc capacity. The engine would become a trademark of Guzzi in later years. But was first used for the army. Later the same engine was also used for army bikes. It was only a small transition to integrate it to the civilian models.

In 1967 Moto Guzzi produced the V7 and in 1979 the V7 Special was the follow-up. With 757cc Guzzi was stepping up to the larger capacity bikes. With the army development background a good handling V7 was made. The V7 was also modified to a sports model (V7 Sport).



The 850 Le Mans (844cc) was introduced in 1976. A stunning sportster which would become one of the most desirable sportsters of the 1970s. It featured many innovative aspects for its time (big valves, pistons, tuned engine, excellent brakes and much more).

Moto Guzzi's financial history was rocky and despite owning a huge factory complex and employing over 1500 people Guzzi started to run into financial problems by the end of the 1960s. When the old management left, a misguided venture into moped bikes left Guzzi bankrupt and in 1973 Moto Guzzi was bought by Argentinean Alejandro De Tomaso. Many Guzzi fans had hoped he would spark a new re-investment but that remained a hope.

During the difficult 1970s Moto Guzzi survived with the popular V7 Special which in America was called the California. The engine was updated from 850cc, 950cc and later on to 1100cc. The California remained a popular model especially in the American market.



The successful 850 Le Mans was in desperate need of a follow-up and it took a long time for it to arrive. Sparked by the help of amateur race-enthusiast-Guzzi-engineer John Wittner (who had considerable knowledge of Guzzi powered racebikes) helped develop a new Le Mans model. In 1992 the Daytona 1000 (992cc) was introduced. In 1994 the 1100 Sport followed.

Moto Guzzi was operating on tight budget but still showed there was life in Guzzi race development. Aprilia noticed the potential and took over Moto Guzzi and gave it the financial support it deserved. This has led to a new modern line of motorcycles like the Brevia 750.