Sales Of Motorcycles And Scooters Ridin' High

Contributed by Mintel
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While abandoned by many with the onset of responsibility and maturity, it seems the market for motorcycles and scooters is set for something of a revival - as consumer nostalgia drives demand.

The motorcycle and scooter market is ridin' high as new research from Mintel predicts that sales of new machines will rise strongly over the next five years.

With the market benefiting from an increasing number of older returner bikers seeking to rediscover their youth, plus a significant number of younger people looking to own a motorcycle or scooter for the first time, the value of the new motorcycle market is forecast to grow by a hell raisin' 60% in the next five years alone.

Following the 21% collapse in new bike sales in 2009, sales of new machines are predicted to reach a breath-taking Â£895 million by 2014. Meanwhile, volume sales will increase by an impressive 41% with bike units set to rise to 157,300 in 2014 - up from 111,500 in 2009.

Although there are only 1.16 million motorcycles and scooters in use compared with 30.3 million cars, the popularity of motorcycles and scooters is underlined by the fact that the number of motorcycles in use has grown at a faster rate than the number of cars.

Between 1998 and 2008, the number of cars in use increased by 24%, meanwhile, the number of motorcycles and scooters in use increased by a staggering 71%.

Robert McNab, Senior Automotive Analyst at Mintel said:
"This upsurge in demand for motorcycles suggests that some people are escaping the ravages of the UK recession on two wheels, inspired by the prospect of the kind of adventure that has been shown in recent television documentaries. The mainstay of the market over at least the last decade has been lapsed or former motorcycle owners returning to the market. Principally aged over 35 and owning a car as well, lapsed owners have returned to the market purchasing generally either a new or used supersports bike for leisure weekend riding rather than as daily personal transport."

The research also highlights a core number of aspirational riders. While only 6% of all adults currently own a motorcycle or scooter, almost a fifth (18%) of adults are lapsed owners. Furthermore, 12% of adults who previously owned a motorcycle or scooter would like to own one again.

"The advent of returner bikers, many of whom remember fondly the British, European or Japanese bikes they owned when they were younger, has meant that nostalgia is an important determinant of demand in the motorcycle market. This could particularly benefit sales of two British motorcycle brands - Triumph and the recently relaunched Norton brand with its new Commando model." Robert adds.

But it is not just returner bikers who present an opportunity to expand the market. As many as 13% of adults who have never owned a motorcycle or scooter before like the idea of owning one.

Those who have never owned but like the idea of owning a motorcycle or scooter are generally aged under 35 but with a high proportion of 16-24 year olds.

"Leaving college with debts averaging around Â£6,500 will limit young riders' ability to finance a new machine, especially a large capacity motorcycle once they've passed their test. In the short term the solution is likely to be a second-hand scooter or small capacity motorcycle." Robert concludes.

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