



ANTIQUE MOTORCYCLES - ACCESSORIES AND RELATED ITEMS

**MINERVA 1908 3½HP 432CC 1 CYL SV**



**SOLD**





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### PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

#### **Minerva 1908 3 ½ HP 433 cc side valve single frame # 21489 engine # 12878**

Mr Sylvain de Jong, born in Amsterdam on 5 January 1868, moved at the age of 13 with his parents and two brothers to Brussels.

After working for some years as a journalist, he went to the U.K. to study the safety bicycle production. In 1895, S. de Jong, his brothers and other investors started a factory in Antwerp, to produce and repair bicycles.

For these bicycles, they selected the name "Mercury".

Only two years later, after a dispute with the other investors, S. de Jong created on 15 October 1897; "S. de Jong & Cie".

This time he selected the name "Minerva" for the new plant in Antwerp.

Minerva the Roman goddess, daughter of Jupiter, sprang from the head of her father, fully grown and in full armour.

She was the patron of warriors, goddess of knowledge and wisdom and goddess of artisans and industry. Sylvain de Jong anticipated on a slackening bicycle market and announced in February 1899, the production of light cars (voiturettes) and motorcycles.

In 1900, S. de Jong & Co. bought an engine from the Neuchâtel - Swiss based Zürcher & Lüthi. Zürcher & Lüthi did not only build the engines, they also patented the bicycle set-up.

The engines were "clamped to the framing" (clip-on). S. de Jong & Co. bought the licence and started the production of all parts needed to turn a Minerva bicyclette into a Minerva motocyclette.

Due to the reliability of the clip-on engine, success was immediate.

In 1905 Minerva introduced a V-twin for sale to the public. The clip-on had been deleted from the production program.

For the 1908 model year Minerva abandoned the square shaped petrol reservoirs for the cylindrical (torpedo ended) tanks.

The English catalogue for 1908 showed four models, two singles of 345 cc and 433 cc and two V-twins of 577 cc and 855 cc.

Since 1904 the production of cars had taken more and more of the factory potential.

Therefore, during the years 1904 till 1907, the production of motorcycles decreased to a mere 1500 per year and in 1908 (1909 ?) the production of motorcycles was stopped. A total of about 35,000 Minerva motorcycles left the factory.

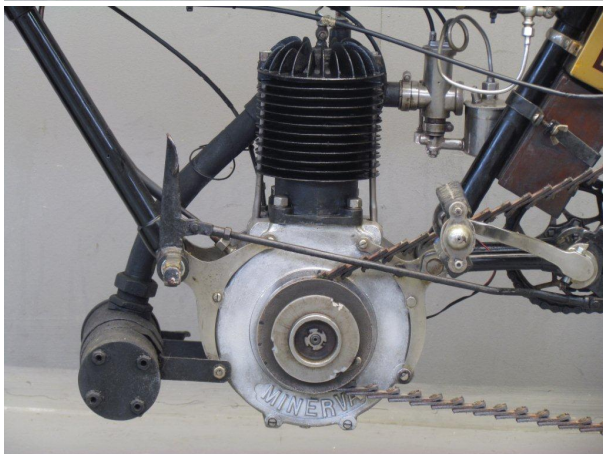
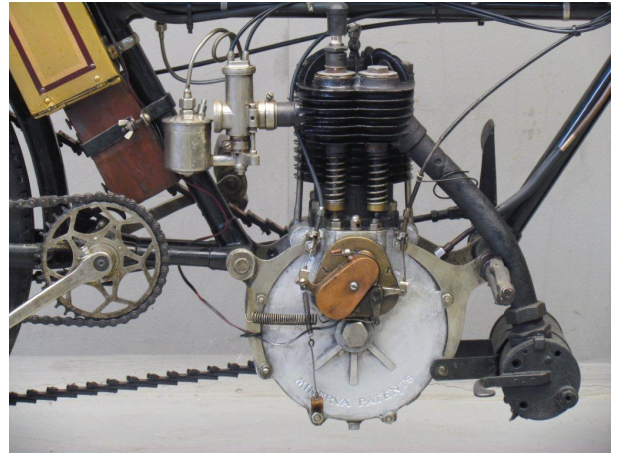
Ads indicate that at least till 1910 Minerva motorcycles were available. ( source:

[www.minerva-motocyclettes.com](http://www.minerva-motocyclettes.com))

This rare 1908 survivor with " Simplex" leaf sprung fork has been restored some time ago and is in good condition.



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