

VICTORY MOTORCYCLES FOR 2006

# Putting on the inches

Bigger motors and a fat Jackpot highlight the lineup



Victory's new Jackpot

by Terry Roorda

WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIF., JUNE 2—Now in their eighth model year and coming off of six months of brisk business that has seen a 50 percent jump in unit sales over the same period in 2004, Victory returned to the Hyatt West Hollywood, the site of last year's Hammer unveiling, to show off their 2006 model lineup. To sum up briefly, Victory's 2006 model year brings back the core of the company's 2005 product line and adds a new model, the Vegas Jackpot. Gone are the special edition Ness Signature treatments of the Vegas and Kingpin, and in their place are two new Signature takes on the Vegas Jackpot—one by Arlen and one by Cory. The most noteworthy and exciting development within the new lineup is the upgrading of the Vegas and Kingpin powertrains from the previous Freedom 92/5 (92-inch/5-speed) to the impressive Freedom 100/6 that was introduced on last year's Hammer. The best-selling and budget-conscious Vegas 8-Ball model gets the 100-inch motor, but retains the 5-speed transmission, and the venerable V92TC will continue to run the 92/5 (while supplies last, presumably).

The introduction of the new Vegas Jackpot (\$17,499 in black, \$17,999 in color), which the company refers to as an "extreme custom cruiser," puts Victory deep into the fat-tire game. They now offer two 250mm-shod models out of a total lineup of six bikes (or four out of eight, if you include the Ness Signature models), and whereas the Hammer (\$16,899) was designed as a "power cruiser" and targeted primarily at the Japanese competition in that class of machines, the Jackpot is intended to do market battle with the likes of Big Dog, American IronHorse, and even, we're told, Harley-Davidson's Screamin' Eagle custom vehicles. Despite its close similarity to the Hammer in the rear rubber and fender strut department, the Jackpot's overall styling is much more indebted to the standard Vegas. It employs the same telescopic front fork and skinny 21-inch tire, and also sports the Vegas' trademark ridge-backed sheet metal. To that foundation, the Jackpot adds paint-matched powder coating on the frame and forward controls, a boldly styled chrome/paint headlamp shell (reminiscent of Honda's Rune) and an attractive new passenger pillion that removes easily for solo profiling.



The Jackpot's distinctive new headlight

The Kingpin returns in both standard and Deluxe touring configurations for 2006 (\$15,999 and \$17,499, respectively), and benefits appreciably from the change to the 100/6 motor and tranny. This unit is significantly more potent than the 92-incher, emits less engine noise, and has a true overdrive sixth gear for long-distance economy and comfort. One additional benefit of the 100/6 is its narrower crankcase, which permits the 2006 Kingpin chassis to be narrower than last year's model, thus enhancing the bike's cornering clearance.

The 2006 Vegas (\$15,799) likewise gets a thinner profile and a quicker throttle with the use of the 100/6. This is the model that really shook Victory out of its market malaise three years ago,

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The Kingpin Deluxe

The Hammer

The Vegas

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and it's holding up well with time and changing fashion trends, mostly because it was so far ahead of its time stylistically when originally introduced. The bike gets some stunning new graphic treatments including a scheme called Nuclear Sunset with Tribal Flames (which is our new favorite name for a paint color and not a bad description of a post-apocalyptic landscape, either). As mentioned earlier, the basic black and bargain-priced Vegas 8-Ball gets pumped up to 100 inches, but doesn't get the overdrive for reasons, we assume, of price consciousness. The MSRP gets a modest bump up to \$13,399 anyway as a result of the larger displacement.

The V92TC Touring Cruiser (\$15,349) returns yet again in all its faded glory and against all odds, and is the sole model in Victory's lineup still running the Freedom 92/5. Victory's ongoing loyalty to this model is almost sentimental, but they insist the model serves the purpose of keeping the company connected to their established customer base. And besides that, the TC offers by far the largest cargo capacity of any bike in the Victory stable, the Kingpin Deluxe included, and thus holds down the long-distance touring end of the model spectrum. Changes for 2006 are skin deep, consisting only of new paint job options.

The Victory collaboration with the family Ness continues in 2006 with a pair of Ness Signature Jackpots (\$21,999) all dolled up with custom paint and Arlen Ness Collection billet and chrome components. The saddles come custom-stitched from Danny Gray, and each of these limited edition bikes carries the signature of Arlen or Cory on the side cover.

Victory Motorcycles continues to grow at a satisfying rate, and is even beginning to thrive. With each passing year they've become more established, more recognized, and more surefooted in their operations. And while revenue generated by the division only accounts for four percent of Polaris Industries' overall bottom line, they're outperforming expectations and being touted as a growth engine of the powersports giant. Much of the credit for Victory's relative success goes to their almost obsessive market research and focus group brainstorming. They use every available tool to scrutinize the market and design motorcycles to stick into the niches, and for now at least, they're seeing the broad appeal of fat-tire customs as unflagging. And with the one-two punch of the Hammer and Jackpot, both priced well below \$20,000, they're looking to take a sizeable bite out of that rich market. ♦

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