

1930s Harley-Davidson bullnose neon dealership sign in original crate could sell for \$200K-\$400K at Sept. 28 auction

Hosted by Milestone in Ohio, the auction features rare neon automotive signs & motorcycles, including a 1947 Harley Knucklehead seen on American Pickers TV show

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Milestone Auctions' gallery will come alive with dazzling neon mega-signs and the bad-boy sounds of coveted vintage motorcycles in a September 28 Auction Spectacular that collectors won't soon forget. The electrifying 643-lot auction, rich with signage rarities and bikes from long-held collections, goes above and beyond any other event the suburban Cleveland company has produced in its colorful 11-year history.



All-original Harley-Davidson double-sided bullnose porcelain neon dealership sign in original, unopened crate as shipped circa early 1930s. Estimate: \$200,000-\$400,000

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The Harley bullnose neon sign was shipped to a newly-authorized dealer in the early 1930s, but it remained in its own virtual time capsule – an unopened original factory crate - for many decades.”

*Miles King - Co-Owner,
Milestone Auctions*

Beaming brightly over the stellar array of neon is a sensational “unicorn” from the Depression Era: a Harley-Davidson bullnose dealership sign that sat crated and “sleeping” for decades in a rural schoolhouse until fate landed it in the hands of its present owner. That gentleman, a fan of both motorcycles and antique advertising, chose to consign it to Milestone’s September 28 sale, where it is expected to attract a hefty six-figure price.

The auction headliner writes its own chapter in Harley-Davidson history through its remarkable story of

ownership. The fabulous double-sided bullnose porcelain neon sign was originally intended for use at a Harley-Davidson dealership but has remained in its own virtual time capsule – an

unopened original factory crate – since it was first shipped in the early 1930s by Everbrite Electric Signs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The sign's original owner, Ellsworth A "Shorty" Schaber (1901-1984) of Ithaca, New York, is believed to have become an authorized Harley-Davidson agent shortly after attending a 1927 Harley dealers' meeting in Milwaukee. The sign he ordered was shipped from Everbrite to his place of business in Ithaca in the early 1930s, with the intention being to move it later on to a new retail location. However, that plan was derailed by the post-Depression economy and, later, Schaber's service in the US Army Motor Corps during World War II.

When the sign initially arrived, Schaber stashed it away under a tarp at a one-room schoolhouse he regularly used as a storage facility. There it remained, untouched in its factory crate, until Schaber's passing on February 21, 1984. Later that year, the unused and still-crated sign appeared in an auction

where it was purchased by a collector who would keep it until 2023, when he sold it privately to the current owner. The sign's original glass neon tubes have been protected by a 90-year layer of dust, and their condition is immaculate. They are easily cleanable and have been tested very briefly to prove that they illuminate like new in a bright-red hue. The transformers and wiring are original. The sign's dimensions are 67¾ inches wide (with bullnose), 30¼ inches high (with bracket), and 13½ inches deep (including neon). Its auction estimate is \$200,000-\$400,000.

A second very rare Harley-Davidson double-sided porcelain neon dealer sign, also from the early 1930s, is described by Milestone's expert catalogers as "the finest, most original example of its type" they've ever seen. Its trademark "bar and shield" are in immaculate condition with perfect colors. One side is virtually flawless, while the other side has only a minor bend to the top left edge of the shield and likely left the factory that way. Its all-original can is in fine, undisturbed condition, and on its side, the sign retains a brass tag for Union Label Sheetmetal Workers Intl Assn Local Union No 24 (Dayton, Ohio). The red neon has been professionally replaced to its original specs, and the power cord has been replaced for safety reasons. Overall, this impressive



Museum-quality 1947 Harley-Davidson Knucklehead motorcycle with sidecar in 100% original condition, including the paint. Featured on American Pickers. Estimate: \$80,000-\$120,000



Rare early-1930s Harley-Davidson double-sided porcelain 'bar and shield' neon dealer sign. Estimate: \$100,000-\$200,000

sign is very clean and has no issues. It has steel hangers at the top, to allow the sign to be hung, and at the bottom, for the attachment of a rider sign. Its dimensions are 64 inches wide by 24 inches tall by 5 inches deep. The sign has resided for many years in a private motorcycle museum and will be offered for public sale for the very first time on September 28. Estimate: \$100,000-\$200,000

No South Boston motorist of the 1950s could have missed the monumental "Lincoln Mercury Safe Buy Used Cars" porcelain neon dealer sign displayed at Fore Rivers Motors in Quincy. The big, bold statement sign with a lighted movement was a landmark at the suburban-Boston dealership until 1997, when the property was sold. The sign is now single-sided, using all of the original porcelain panels and displaying great colors and a wonderful patina. The neon and bulbs have been replaced to factory specs, and both the neon and lighted-arrow movement work perfectly. It retains its original tag for CI Brink Sign Co., a firm well known for producing large-scale custom neon signs throughout the New England area, including the iconic Kenmore Square Citgo sign in Boston. Measuring 14 feet tall by 9½ feet wide, it is estimated at \$80,000-\$120,000.

A superlative double-sided [GM General Motors Parts](#) porcelain neon sign, all

original with colors and gloss as fresh as the day of its shipment from the factory, shows extremely clean porcelain fields on both sides with only two small exceptions. It has a 1-inch chip to the top edge and a dime-size chip to the edge of the letter "M" on the other side, only noticeable upon close inspection. Both sides are stamped Walker & Co Detroit. The vibrant yellow and green neon is in perfect working order, making this prized auction entry as close to



Massive Lincoln Mercury Safe Buy Used Cars porcelain neon dealer sign with lighted movement. Ordered in early 1950s by Fore Rivers Motors of Quincy, Mass. Estimate: \$80,000-\$120,000



Rare Ferrari 180 Testa Rossa children's car, all-steel with electric drive. Period-built by Modena Ferrarina under authority of Ferrari. One of 5 known. Estimate: \$80,000-\$120,000

new/old stock as a neon sign can be. It measures 46 inches high by 38 inches wide by 12 inches deep. Estimate: \$25,000-\$35,000

Fans of the American Pickers TV show would surely remember the time host Mike Wolfe went for a wild ride in the sidecar of a fantastic 1947 Harley-Davidson Knucklehead. The episode is memorable for the bike's pristine appearance and, equally so, for its eccentric owner's wardrobe choice. He liked to wear Speedos and did so during the show's filming. Everyone had a good laugh, Mike survived the ride, and afterward, he did his level best to buy the rare bike. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be had at any price, but Mike was eventually able to acquire it when it became available a few years after its owner's passing. It is, in every way, a museum-quality motorcycle in 100% original condition, including the paint. It has the correct VIN number, matching belly numbers, and TV provenance that will live on forever. No finer or more original Knucklehead exists, especially with the factory sidecar. In running order, it comes to auction with an \$80,000-\$120,000 estimate.

An original [Indian Papoose motorcycle](#) is one of only a small number originally manufactured for WWII paratroopers to drop as they landed behind enemy lines. Compact, durable and specifically designed to fold down, it's powered by a 98cc two-stroke engine with a single-speed transmission. It would be very difficult to locate a better example than this one, which is all original and complete. From a longtime collection, its estimate is \$6,000-\$8,000.

Around 1958, some lucky boy or girl landed behind the wheel of a sporty Ferrari 180 Testa Rossa children's car. Of all-steel construction with an electric drive, it was period-built by Modena Ferrarina under the authority of Ferrari and distributed by Luigi Chinette Motors, the sole importers for Ferrari. Called the "180" because its electric motor generates 180 watts, it is a faithful representation of the iconic Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa that won the 1958 24 Hours of Le Mans. It is believed that only 25 were built, with only 5 remaining. The auction example was very nicely restored around 20 years ago and shows beautifully. Estimate: \$80,000-\$120,000

From the early era of pedal cars comes a 1920s Gendron Willys "Knight" in excellent, all-original condition with original paint. This nicely appointed, full-fendered car has headlights, an attractive dash, and its original windshield and hood ornament. It is 4 feet long and ready for an imaginary road trip. Estimate: \$3,000-\$5,000

An early and extremely unusual [mechanical store display](#) was made by Cook Company, 546 Dupont St., Roxborough, Philadelphia, Pa. This great-looking advertising piece has an illuminating upper portion that boasts shipping to "All Parts Of The World. It is illustrated by images of a train, steamship and "Air Mail" airplane with a moving propeller. The lower portion includes three mechanical figures: a lady on a porch swing, a second lady standing by her house, and a postman delivering a parcel. It advertises Fruits, Meats, Vegetables and Candies, with the company name Harry Heppe & Sons, Gloucester City, NJ. It is of all-wood construction, electric-powered and driven by chain and belts. In working order when tested, this unique 48-inch by 36-inch sign is estimated at \$2,000-\$4,000.

The Sunday, September 28, 2025 Auction Spectacular featuring antique and vintage advertising signs, early motorcycles and pop culture collectibles will be held at Milestone's gallery located at 38198 Willoughby Pkwy., Willoughby, OH 44094. Start time: 10am ET. Ample free parking. In addition to live bidding at the gallery, Milestone welcomes all other forms of remote bidding: absentee, phone or live online through Milestone Live, LiveAuctioneers, Invaluable and AuctionZip. Worldwide shipping available. For additional information about any toy in the auction, to reserve a phone line for bidding, or to discuss consigning to a future Milestone auction, call Miles King at 440-527-8060 or email info@milestoneauctions.com. Online: www.milestoneauctions.com

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