

1952 K-model engine purchase

A K-model engine came up on eBay. Every Sportster lover has to respect K-models.

The whole reason Sportsters have 4 camshafts in a line is because Harley management told the engineering department to slap iron overhead-valve heads on a K-model engine. 1952 is the first year of the K-model. The big deal is that this motor is not hacked up or in a basket. It is most likely a working motor from a bike that was running and in one piece. The seller did not open the engine up. He seemed decent and straightforward. Better yet, he was in Montana, a place with big sky, honest people, and a likelihood there would be a first-year K-model engine laying around.



The eBay listing read:

Stamped: 52K 1194, Complete Motor - carburetor, generator, 6V, etc. Motor Turns Over - NOT Froze Up. I have not had the motor apart and make no representation as to the condition. Please be sure this is the motor you want - no returns or warranty! We will check into various shipping carriers to find the best deal for the Buyer. If you want an approximate shipping quote before bidding, please send us a message. Final shipping quote will be made for the Buyer after purchase when exact details are known such as shipping to business address versus residential address, etc.



The turn-off here is the chromed primary cover. It is a terrible idea to chrome aluminum. It is a soft metal and the chrome is sure to chip and peel when the chrome gets dented. Not to worry, you can get a good plater to strip the chrome or just buy another primary cover. They come up often on eBay. There is also a lot of good news in this picture. The generator and regulator are there. The Linkert carburetor is there, although the air filter is missing. The steel rear motor mount is there, but the battery tray that mounts on the top of it is missing.



The right side of the motor had more chromed aluminum. The sprocket cover

and gearcase cover were chromed. The worry there is whether stripping the chrome off the gearcase will ruin the brass cam bushings. Same deal though, you can buy eBay ones. I am lucky enough to have bought the correct sprocket cover a month ago. This one is actually a Sportster sprocket cover. Other bad news on this side is the missing clutch release worm in the sprocket cover. The kick-starter is missing, a bottom bolt on the sprocket cover and the points cover is missing. The shifter is missing. The breather tube is missing. The good news is that the case does not look damaged, even in the delicate transmission area where the speedometer drive goes. The oil pump and switch are there. This might be a 1952 K-model engine with no zippers, as bikers call the welded-up sections of motors that have been blown up.



There are no visible welds on the back. I live near San Jose, where Kenny and Cary Puccio could fix any case problem, including big holes and missing chunks. The Sportster sprocket cover does not line up with the gearcase. A brake switch is missing that attaches to that boss on the back of the primary cover.



The front view shows the generator to be in good shape. The regulator looks too big for this year, I will have to do some research and see if it is the correct one for a '52. Amazing the oil pressure switch has not been broken off.



The seller is honest enough to show a missing bolt on the front head. I assume it is snapped off.



The rear head has the little bobbins that space off the top motor mount. With all the other chrome, I thought the heads had been chromed too. They are actually polished. The bolts are supposed to be cadmium plated, not chrome. Colony sells cad plated ones.



Even little things like that stud and nut on top of the case primary are a treasure. It is likely the 1952 stud that came with the motor. The holes for the motor mount bolts go into the transmission, so there will be dirt in the tranny. Early K-models don't have a trap-door like Sportsters. You have to split the cases to work on the transmission.



All the important pieces are here. It is an honest and authentic engine from an honest seller. He had 100% feedback on 72 items. I came across the listing late Sunday night, actually at 3 AM Monday. It had just been listed and had 6 days to go. There was a \$2500 buy-it-now price. I figured it was a bit high, but for a first-year oddball motorcycle, you never know who will outbid you. So I just bought it outright for the \$2500. Now the stress starts. Will the seller get it shipped? Is he a crook? Is the thing junk? Will the shipper wreck it? What will I put it in, a Sportster frame? Maybe a 2003 rolling chassis, right before Sportsters went rubber-mount. Stay tuned.

Date	Description	Cost	Shipping	Total
03/21/12	Engine	\$2,500.00	\$464.56	\$2,964.56

I will build a table as I buy parts for this project. Here is the first entry.