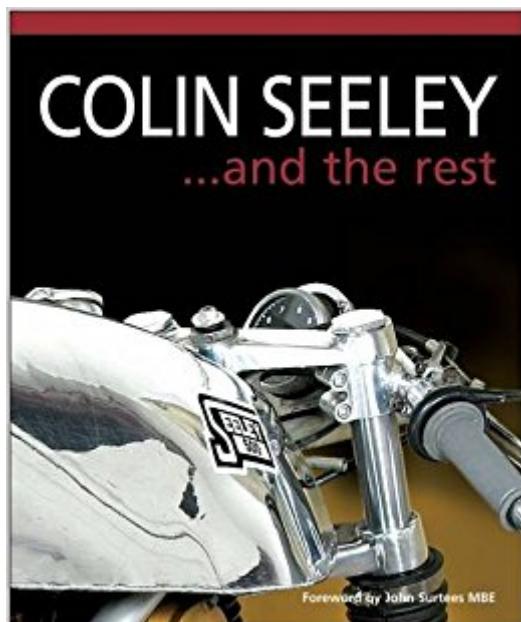


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# Colin Seeley...and The Rest Volume 2



## Synopsis

This volume, the second half of Colin Seeley's autobiography, isn't just the story of one man's life and achievements, although the Seeley marquee is indeed an achievement. Colin Seeley has worked with motorcycles since he was 18 years old. He raced sidecars in the '60s and developed and manufactured the famous Seeley racing motorcycle in 1965, which is still raced today. In the '70s, Colin was joint MD at Brabham Cars with Bernie Ecclestone of F1 fame. In the '80s, he managed the Norton Rotary Race Team. Today, he is still involved in many aspects of the motorcycle world. This book covers the development of the Mk3 and 4 Seeley, his involvement with Bernie Ecclestone, the Seeley Hondas, Seeley TL200 Trails Bike, Seeley Quickfit, his involvement with Brabham Cars and Formula One, and his involvement with The Norton Rotary Team and the demise of Norton.

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## Customer Reviews

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Clearly, Colin Seeley is a man who does things thoroughly, completely and to the best his ability. His

second "Colin Seeley" book shows his complete commitment to any task, but with a flaw. And I do hate to use that term regarding a book I enjoyed so much. It covers virtually every major race his bikes were involved in and every major rider who ever though a leg over a Seeley frame and even riders and races that didn't involve Seeley machines. There is even a short reference to a 50cc star. Many of the ample photos have never been published before and all are great as are the revealing correspondence between Seeley and others in the Motorsports community. His chapters on Bernie Ecclestone are fascinating and possibly even more revealing of old Bernie's character than the book solely about Ecclestone. It's a great book that is in need of a great editor. Actually it could be two good books or, optimally, a very good book on some important aspects of both car and motorcycle racing history if the text were edited back by an appropriate percentage. A good example of "less" that could have resulted in "more." Wade

Colin Seeley was born into the motorcycle world as his father was an enthusiast. He began riding and racing at an early age and opened his first shop at the age of eighteen. Sidecar racing is a major sport in the United Kingdom and Europe and Colin Seeley and became one of the best side car pilots in Europe, coming close to winning the World Championship. Necessity is the mother of invention and so Seeley designed and created his own frame with the most primitive tools because he felt there was a better way to do things. He was one of the first frame builders to understand the importance of using diagonal tubes to connect the steering head to the swing-arm junction and to then to use the engine as a stressed member. Seeley continued production of the legendary Matchless single cylinder engine after AJS/Matchless collapsed, because he felt there was still a demand for them in racing. The Matchless G50, often in one of Seeley's frames, was about the only competition the mighty multi-cylinder MV Augusta bikes had some of the time. The great backdrop to the events in these books is the steady decline and eventual collapse of the once mighty British motorcycle industry and the rise of the Japanese companies. When Seeley's frame and engine business dried up he went to work for Bernie Ecclestone, the biggest small man in motor racing, the racing entrepreneur who then he owned the Brabham formula one team. Then, there is the story of Seeley's involvement with the Norton Rotary racers, one of the last gasps of the old British motorcycle industry. I took a chance on this pair of books because I wanted to deepen my knowledge of motorcycle racing in the 1960s. I was already somewhat familiar with Seeley's career through my youthful involvement with Rickman motorcycles on this side of the pond, as the Rickmans were then Seeley's competitors in the frame building and racing world,. However, once I unwrapped the book, I was pleased by the quality of these volumes and the quantity of information

in them. These are not inexpensive books, but they are a great value, a lot of book for the price of a decent meal. They are beautifully designed, with an exceptional selection of period photographs; the photo editing is nothing short of superb. Old paddock passes, tickets, posters from race meetings, newspaper articles and advertisements have been scanned and then incorporated into the design in order to help tell the story and they are truly a nice touch that adds a textural quality. Its important to state that these books were not conceived of as "coffee table" books which often have capsule accounts of racing bikes and lots of lavish color images of exhaustively restored old racing bikes. No, the intent here is not to present motorcycles as art. Instead, these books a detailed record of Colin Seeley's career - multiple careers actually - as a racer, businessman, frame designer and constructor, engineer, race team manager and racecar engineer. Readers should be warned that when I say "detailed" I mean this is an exhaustive account of motorcycle racing as it was on the Isle of Man, Brands Hatch, Mallory Park, Scarborough, other British circuits and on the continent. Through Seeley's eyes, you can see how difficult the business of racing and catering to racers is. This is not an impressionistic account of the racing scene, but an in depth story of one racer's life and times. The two books are organized chronologically so that we see how motorcycle was in the 1950s when Seeley was a young man and how it changed in the 1960s and 1970s as new players entered the scene and commercial sponsorships began. The first book concludes in 1969. This second volume opens in 1970. The author writes well, with both humility and honesty. This is not an introspective, highly personal book but one that uses an autobiographical account to illuminate an era, a sport and an industry. In an effort to provide a sort of timeline and some context, Seeley writes about the major developments in the motorcycle and racing industry that were occurring at the same time. He shows respect for the innovators of the past and recognizes the contributions of earlier riders and engineers to the development of the motorcycle and motorcycle racing. An example of this is when he notes the passing of George Brough, of Brough Superior fame. Seeley also writes movingly about the brilliance of the great riders of his era, men like Mike "The Bike" Hailwood and Giacomo Agostini. For the serious motorcycle enthusiast, or because of the Grand Prix cars that Seeley was involved with story, I can't recommend a book more highly. If you are not interested in an incredibly through account of how motorcycle road racing was "back in the day," it may be better to choose a book aimed at a more general cycling audience.

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