

TEXT/撰文 MARK ANDREWS

Road rebels 鐵騎士

Harley-Davidson
has a strong
presence on
China's roads
Harley-Davidson
很受中國鐵騎士歡迎

Despite restrictions, China has taken a shine to luxury motorbikes

儘管中國對電單車有諸多規管，奢華電單車在內地的銷情仍然理想

While car sales in China have been grabbing the headlines, it's easy to forget that the mainland is the biggest producer of – and market for – motorbikes. However, whereas car sales rose by 4.3 percent in 2012, those of motorbikes fell by more than 12 percent to the lowest level in five years.

“The market is suffering as consumers choose to either move upmarket and purchase cars, or purchase scooters, which can offer most of the functionality at a lower price,” says Benjamin Cavender, an analyst at China Market Research.

Realising this, Lifan, one of China's largest motorcycle manufacturers, moved to emulate Honda by starting to produce cars in 2006.

Nevertheless, the market for large, imported luxury bikes rose by 43 percent last year. “Since 2005, we've seen a steadily growing popularity of heavyweight and leisure motorcycles,” says Sean Jiang, Managing Director of Harley-Davidson's China operations – which

holds a 65 percent share of the market.

Cavender says interest comes from those with generational wealth, celebrities and business owners, all of whom are seeking something a little different and turning to niche products and hobbies. “Most consumers purchasing luxury motorbikes right now get involved in group riding events and enjoy the opportunity to socialise with others sharing their interests,” he says.

But it's often a bumpy road they travel. Kin One, a division director of BMW Motorrad Importer, lays some of the blame for the overall decline in sales on the cities that prohibit or restrict motorbike usage. Harley-Davidson has been lobbying for changes in regulations that Kin also says have seriously hindered the development of the leisure-motorcycle market, while Jiang feels there is “a socio-cultural misunderstanding and bias against motorcycles in general”.

中國的汽車銷情廣受媒體報導，卻讓人忽略了內地同時也是全球最大的電單車生產國和市場。在2012年，內地汽車銷量上升4.3%，同期的電單車銷量卻下跌了超過12%，創五年新低。

市場研究公司China Market Research的分析師Benjamin Cavender表示：「消費者為了追求優質生活轉而購買汽車，或寧願以價錢較便宜卻具備實用功能的小型電單車代步，這些都是電單車銷情受挫的原因。」

有見及此，中國大型電單車廠力帆於2006年與本田車廠看齊，除了生產電單車外，亦開始生產汽車。

雖然電單車的整體銷量下跌，大型豪華進口電單車的銷量去年卻大幅上升43%。Harley Davidson現時

擁有65%的市場佔有率，該品牌的中國總裁江錫祥說：「自2005起，重型和休閒電單車的受歡迎程度持續上升。」

Cavender指出，富裕一代、名人、企業家和生意人都喜歡與別不同的玩意，追求小眾的產品和嗜好。他說：「大部分購買豪華電單車的消費者，都會參加車主會舉辦的駕駛活動，一方面與其他車手分享交流，也可藉機會交朋結友。」

然而，電單車銷售經常面對重重障礙。BMW Motorrad Importer項目總監秦煥指出，部分城市禁止或限制電單車在市內行走，是電單車整體銷量下降的原因之一。Harley Davidson正游說政府，修改這些秦煥認為嚴重阻礙休閒電單車市場發展的條例；江錫祥則指出：「社會普遍對電單車存有誤解及偏見」。

BMW's Motorrad
scooter concept
寶馬的Motorrad
小型電單車概念車

