

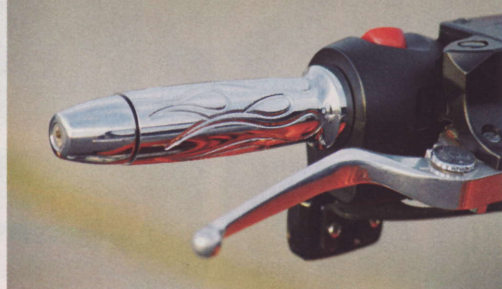
**“ IT’S BIG, BRIGHT,
AND BOLD—THE EXPLOSIVE
ORANGE CONTRASTED WITH
BLACK FLAMES ”**

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Explosive

2012 NESS SIGNATURE



We recently had an opportunity to throw a leg over the newest Arlen Ness Victory Vision. Before even reading anything on the page it was probably clear this bike is bright and bold dressed in a Nuclear Sunset orange hue. Arlen Ness has been painting and building bikes for over 40 years and has amassed worldwide recognition for his forward thinking custom builds and extensive parts line. Many of Arlen's most famous creations have usually stood out from his peers; his unique eye for style has rarely been described as subtle. Adding to the Ness popularity is the fact that Arlen is about as humble a man you'll ever meet—gracious, soft-spoken, and genuine. A testament to his legacy is his family and coworkers Cory and Zach, Arlen's son and grandson respectively. Somehow, whether through nature or nurture or both, the two developed the talent and drive to build motorcycles. Cory and Zach each have a Victory Signature Series model as well. Each of the bikes

NESS

RE VICTORY VISION



“ **VISION OWNERS...
ARE FANATICS ABOUT THE MACHINE,
NOT THE BRAND OR MARKETING,
BUT THE MOTORCYCLE** ”

is a numbered, limited edition, custom Victory model styled by three Ness generations.

Arlen's involvement with the Victory Signature Series dates back to '04 and the Vegas that carried his name. For the '09 model year Arlen got to put his touch on the Vision Street (a since discontinued model; a Vision without the trunk) that debuted the previous year.

The Vision is a big, bold, out-of-the-box bike and we couldn't think of another motorcycle on planet Earth more fitting to carry the Ness moniker. The Vision looks as if Arlen himself helped design it; he actually didn't. The bold, unique, and unusual looking Vision was originally introduced for '08 and stunned and polarized the motorcycle world. People generally have a love it or hate

it opinion of the Vision's looks, but there isn't anyone that doesn't notice it. The Vision was a new motorcycle designed from the ground up, beholden to nobody; the world didn't need another Harley-Davidson look-alike. That decision was brave and risky, and certainly got tons of attention and press. Years later we came to find out that was exactly what Victory wanted. Victory told us they could have released the less extreme Cross series before the Vision.

Imagine how cool it must be when each year you get a new blank slate Vision and given carte blanche to paint and accessorize with your personnel palette. There's a lot of real estate to put your mark on. The past three Arlen Visions were primarily black with progressively more subtle graphics as the time went on.



Without seeing the bike there's a good chance you could imagine if you tried what color Nuclear Sunset may be. It's big, bright, and bold—the explosive orange contrasted with black flames, with subtle highlighted hues of red and orange. The paint is magnificent and changes from dark to light shades of orange and an almost crimson color depending on the strength light and sunshine.

TIP: If you don't like attention DO NOT buy this motorcycle. The 2012 Nuclear Sunset Ness Victory Vision stands out.

After riding the bike and getting some miles under our feet we reached out to the Arlen Ness headquarters, located east of San Francisco, in Dublin, California. There were specific questions we wanted to ask Arlen—

important inquiries involving the Ness relationship with Victory as well as his inspiration; even his favorite nickname.

Baggers: This year's Ness Nuclear Sunset Vision is awesome; it looks like it's in reentry from space. What inspired you?

Arlen: I've always been using a black base and this year I wanted to do something a little more visually exciting and that orange just exploded and flames always look hot.

B: Regarding the evolution of design and styling; is this generally a long, planned out process or do you get hit with a bolt of inspiration?

A: It takes time, but I'm working way ahead of production schedules. The 2013 Ness Victory is already done and I'm working on the 2014 design now. This gives me quite a bit of time and

works out really well.

B: Can you clarify what the Ness relationship with Victory is? Are you designers, consultants?

A: At this point we are more consultants, but in the early years of Victory Motorcycles we had some design input. Currently, our main involvement is with each of the Arlen, Cory, and Zach Ness Signature Series motorcycles.

B: The Vision looks like your design but in reality you had nothing to do with that?

A: That's correct. We saw the first drawings and it really looked space aged and then we watched how it evolved. The Vision is an absolutely wonderful bike, with amazing handling, great power and yeah, it looks like a Ness.

B: How has the bagger craze changed your business?



A: We have always been in the bagger business. We were the first with the deep drop saddlebags, but in the last several years it just went crazy and it's the focus of the Ness product line. We spend a ton of time on product research for baggers.

B: We're seeing the 23 and 26-inch front wheels becoming the new 21? How do you look at some of the newer bagger trends? Are we going to see 30-inch wheels, raked triple trees, and slammed suspension for example, become the norm; the must have parts?

A: It's true that builders are pushing the envelope and giving people what they want. But all of that can work really well—you just have to be really careful as a builder. Everything has to be done





right—no compromises. The proper triple trees, rake, and trail need to be calculated and tested; otherwise it could be dangerous.

B: Will this trend to outdo the next guy kill baggers similar to the chopper industry a few years ago? Ultimately making the bikes unridable for the sake of looks?

A: Some of the builds out there are going in that direction, they are bigger and heavier, and generally harder to ride than a chopper. Plus some builders don't understand weight distribution and that saddlebags can actually make your bike wobble. There's just so much to it. Our wheels are sent to a lab for testing, and the raked necks and triple trees are checked for strength and function. Everything we build is tested, tested, and retested then used in the real world before it hits the street. We've learned a lot working with Victory. They are very particular when it comes to safety. It's great for everybody.

B: It seems like the Victory relationship works well for both parties.

A: Very well! Many of their designers are all really young and creative, they're not afraid to think out of the box, and Victory supports that.

B: We're thrilled that Indian is now part of the Polaris family.

A: You know if Polaris is behind the wheel it will be a great bike. It's going to be exciting.

B: Perhaps we will see a Ness Signature Indian?

A: You just never know, but I'd like to do that.

B: We're going to wrap it up

Arlen, but before we go there is just one more question. What's your favorite or preferred nickname? We often hear you described as the Godfather of Choppers or the King of Choppers?

A: Well, actually my friends just shorten it to The King.

B: Thanks Arlen for your time and to Kevin King, General Manager of Arlen Ness Enterprises for assistance.

Victory Refines its Pedigree

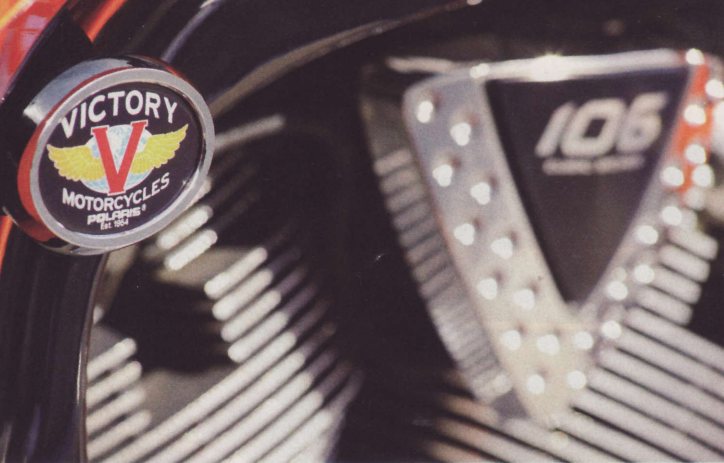
Since its debut, the 2008 model year Vision has proven to be a world-class touring motorcycle. Subtle changes have come to the Vision, but most of those were also true of much of the Victory lineup. The Freedom motor was increased from 100 cubic inches to 106 and last year the Six-speed true overdrive transmission and cases were treated to a revamp that decreased gear whine and overall noise as well as a cool inertia-based Neutral assist. Many of the changes to the Vision have been small. Vision owners are usually the best people to talk to about these bikes: they are fanatics about the machine; not the brand or marketing, but the motorcycle.

Since the introduction of the two, more traditionally styled Victory Cross models, the Vision comes in basically two flavors: the Vision Tour and the Ness version seen here that is a factory customized Vision Tour. Gone is the Vision Street (no trunk) and the stripped-down, blacked-out, budget-conscious, hot rod 8-Ball Vision. That probably makes lots of sense, as the Vision is best



suited for the open road where the extra carrying capacity is welcomed, as well as the speakers in the trunk.

One thing that continues to impress about Victory Motorcycles is they do their homework and market research, make a decision, and they stick with it. The Victory team—from the engineers, to the designers, to the highest-ranking employees in the motorcycle division are the most accessible of any manufacturer. There is a passion within the company that starts with the no-nonsense approach to dealing with the press. There is an honesty that is refreshing and has endeared Victory to many moto-journalists. The now infamous, yearly press launch isn't a long-winded presentation and a chaperoned ride. Victory gives a brief overview of what's new for the year, then they throw journalists the keys to a brand new machine. The general goal the past few years is riding to Sturgis for the Black Hills Rally in August. But, Victory just wants, actually begs, us to ride their bikes—and hard. Or not, if you want to meander and stop a lot. They want the limits pushed, the performance felt, and if there are any, find the weaknesses as well. It's up to each journo if they ride with a group of Victory folks, together, or head off to South America



for a month. It's refreshing and it evokes all of the senses, passion, and feeling of what motorcycling is all about: Freedom. If you've been to Sturgis the past few years then you know how many of your favorite magazine and web editors were on Victory Motorcycles.

In 2011 approximately 40 percent of the drivetrain was new, and with the Six-speed transmission receiving so many improvements it's virtually a brand-new transmission. The goal was improved ridability and a more pleasant-sounding transmission, and it's been achieved through improved manufacturing efficiency and quality assurance; the larger shaft bearings don't hurt, either. In Fourth and Sixth gears in particular, gear whine has been reduced substantially and driveline lash has been reduced by 66 percent. Basically that means smoother power delivery for a better ride and less jerkiness. And then there was that "neutral assist" feature to make it easier for the rider to shift into neutral when stopped.

Victory has highlighted five areas (summarized below) they believe give their motorcycles an advantage over the competition.

The Victory Edge

Performance: To outperform every other bike on the road with the 106-cubic-inch, overhead cam, Freedom V-twin engine that is found in the entire lineup.

Comfort: Victory strives to make sure that every detail put

into the bikes revolves around making the rider comfortable and confident.

Storage: To take a rider wherever the road takes them they equip the Touring line with ample storage and the ease of mind that you'll always have what you need.

Reliability: Victory engineers built-to-last bikes with worry-free scheduled maintenance.

Styling: All Victory Motorcycles are designed with a modern edge and smooth, flowing lines, illustrating they don't rely on the past for design.

While researching this article and perusing the Victory website looking for available options for the Ness Vision it became apparent that there are very few. The Ness Vision comes with cruise control, electrically height-adjustable windscreen, and an impressive audio system.

2012 Ness Victory Vision Features:

1. Nuclear Sunset paint and custom Ness flamed graphics.
2. Ness Hot-Rod billet high performance wheels front and rear.
3. Nestled between the diamond-cut cylinders sits the crown jewel of Arlen's Custom Vision Tour, fully flamed-out engine covers that direct the eye toward the heart of the machine and set the theme for the rest of the bike.
4. Ness flamed chrome billet grips and chrome grip ends.
5. Diamond cut cylinders.
6. Ness chrome flamed billet shifter, brake pegs, and hand levers.
7. Acoustically precise,

“ IF YOU DON'T LIKE ATTENTION DO NOT BUY THIS MOTORCYCLE ”

premium Kicker premium audio speakers reproduce your favorite music to be heard clearly on the road. **8.** Ness custom windshield graphic provides a wind-breaking as well as groundbreaking extension of the bike's singular look. **9.** Leather stitched seat with comfort to make the long haul. **10.** The front and rear linked Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) monitors what the wheel is doing and gives you consistent, smooth braking from the handlebar lever down to the rubber on the road. **11.** After making every other aspect of going the distance as effortless as possible, automotive-style cruise control is standard. **12.** The 106ci Freedom V-twin engine is balanced for perfectly controlled explosions, and delivers 97hp to along with 109 lb-ft torque. **13.** Victory's Six-speed overdrive tranny takes the Freedom's power and converts the bike into rolling art. Neutral Selection Assist and helical-cut gears ensure smooth shifting. **14.** Chrome, flame-etched rider and passenger floorboards. **15.** The matching and spacious, locking trunk provides ample room for two riders' gear. Passengers can lean back and see the world in easy-chair comfort while enjoying the added audio speakers, relaxing even more knowing their personals are dry and safe. **16.** Ness oil line cover for added style. **17.** Each of Arlen's Custom Vision Tour motorcycles bears a numbered plate on top of the right engine case with an etched facsimile of Arlen's signature. **18.** Ness radio display adds a custom touch to the audio system. **19.** A Ness graphic on the ignition key.

Strangely a security system is not available from the factory for any model. A pet peeve of ours is the insistence on using metal grips again on this bike. While stylish and blingtastic they are uncomfortable especially on a touring machine. Aside from the general hardness against the hands, they transmit more vibration and in our experience caused palm bruises after a multi-day ride even with gloves on. They are slippery when dry and when it rains

become worse. Some riders may find the windshield height too low as well, but that's an easy remedy and nothing to negate the windscreens.

The Vision probably provides the best weather protection of any motorcycle. Oftentimes our feet won't even get wet while riding in a downpour and rain pants can even be optional. The downside to the protection is extra heat trapped by the engine and can be reduced with the help of the adjustable wind deflectors on the fixed fairing.

Over a few weeks we travelled a couple thousand miles from the warm Pacific Ocean to the cool San Bernardino mountains and Big Bear on this Ness Victory Vision. The Vision is probably our first choice for transcontinental trips; the Vision eats up miles and has helped many achieve Iron Butt status of riding 1,000 miles in a 24-hour period. Smaller riders may find it harder to transfer weight to the front wheel for optimal cornering, but that is subjective. The brakes work well and the ABS is not too sensitive. Power delivery is a bit different from the other American motorcycle company, with power starting a little higher in the rpm band. The chassis is probably the most stable of any large motorcycle on the planet and can be ridden hard and fast over the worst terrain. We actually had the opportunity to ride a 35-mile stretch of dirt road in the Rocky Mountains last summer on a variety of Victory touring bikes. Some guys, coined the Dirt Baggers, were ripping through the rough sections and the bikes just wanted more.

Arlen steps up the game exponentially with the accessories and paint and this Vision is exhilarating. This 2012 number 005 Ness Vision is aerodynamically faultless and visually stunning. Its no wonder the 2012 Ness Vision is too hot to handle with unprecedented presales before they even hit the showroom floor.

To find a dealer near you, or more information and photos log onto victorymotorcycles.com. ●

SPEC SHEET

GENERAL

2012 NESS SIGNATURE VICTORY VISION

ENGINE

ENGINE TYPE	4-stroke 50-degree V-twin
COOLING SYSTEM	Air/oil
DISPLACEMENT	106ci/1731cc
BORE X STROKE	101 x 108 mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.4:1
VALVETRAIN	Single overhead camshafts, 4 valves per cylinder, self-adjusting cam chains, hydraulic lifters
FUEL SYSTEM	Electronic Fuel Injection with dual 45mm throttle body
FUEL CAPACITY	6.0 gallons
EXHAUST	Split dual exhaust with crossover
OIL CAPACITY	5 quarts
CHARGING SYSTEM	48 amps max output
PRIMARY DRIVE	Gear drive with torque compensator
CLUTCH	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	6-speed overdrive, constant mesh
FINAL DRIVE	Carbon fiber reinforced belt

CHASSIS

SEAT HEIGHT	24.5 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	4.8 inches
RAKE/TRAIL	29.0 degrees/5.4 inches
DRY WEIGHT	869 pounds

SUSPENSION

FRONT SUSPENSION	Conventional telescopic fork, 46 mm, 5.1 inches of travel
REAR SUSPENSION	Single, mono-tube shock, air adjustable, 3.65 inches of travel
SWINGARM	Cast aluminum with constant rate linkage

BRAKES

BRAKE SYSTEM TYPE	Linked (ABS)
FRONT BRAKES	Dual 300mm floating rotors with 4-piston calipers
REAR BRAKES	300mm floating rotor with 2-piston caliper

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEEL/TIRE FRONT	18 x 3.5 inches/130/70R18 Dunlop Elite 3
WHEEL/TIRE REAR	16 x 5.0 inches/180/60R16 Dunlop Elite 3
COLOR	Nuclear Sunset with Arlen Ness Graphics
MSRP	\$25,799 (49-State)
WARRANTY	One-Year Unlimited Mileage