



Terry Vance is a former American professional motorcycle drag racer, racing team owner and manufacturer of high-performance parts for motorcycles

## A 40-YEAR WINNING STREAK

Terry Vance is a legendary pro stock motorcycle racer and owner of the first Phenom 300 in North America. His company, Vance & Hines, became a household name by producing high-quality aftermarket parts for the NHRA motorcycle drag racing scene. During his active racing career, Terry won 14 national championships. He has since been inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame, AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame and the Sturgis Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

*What inspired your passion for motorsports and motivated you to stick with it?*

My father was a hot rod guy and also a motorcycle rider. When I was old enough to ride myself, I would get on one of his old bikes, and we would ride together. Owning and riding taught me a lot; every day, I'd come home from school and ride for hours all over the place. Once I started getting involved in race track activity, I became hooked. From age 17 to 20, I was at the track three days a week, every week without fail.

When I was first married, I didn't even have a car, just a motorcycle. Over time, as I met more enthusiasts on and off the track, I got involved in the motorcycle business and started working in a motorcycle shop. The next thing I knew, I was at the racetrack working for a company that did racing.

*What led to the creation of Vance & Hines and what was the incentive for starting your own racing team?*

I met my partner Byron Hines at the Lions Drag Strip in Los Angeles right after he returned home from Vietnam. We were about the same age, both involved in racing and worked at the same shop. He built engines in the back while I took orders up front, so we developed a good friendship. As time progressed, opportunities arose that our employer wasn't interested in pursuing, so we decided to start our own business, which led to the creation of Vance & Hines in 1979.

We started a team because, as a business, we needed to expose our products to the consumer, and the best way to do that was with racing. When Suzuki began to sponsor our racing efforts, we had an avenue to promote our products through Suzuki and Vance & Hines. That relationship catalyzed our rapid business growth, and we eventually sold the consumer company. However, I still own and run the race

shop in Indianapolis because I'm the most passionate about racing.

*You have managed many teams throughout your career. What makes a successful factory race program?*

Once I retired from racing in 1988, I decided that managing race teams would be the best for the company and exposure. I ran the Yamaha program for about seven or eight years, the Ducati team here in the U.S. for about eight years, and then we signed Harley-Davidson in 1999 and ran their program for 20 years.

Most things have stayed the same since then, and successful race programs are all predicated on winning. Original equipment manufacturers (OEM) want to sell products to the consumer, and in order to promote their products above the other brands, they need to win. So that's why factories must get associated with the right people. It's like



Left: Here on his Top Fuel Bike, Terry Vance was the first person to go over 200 mph in the quarter mile in 1982

Below: Terry Vance doing a burnout on his Top Fuel Bike from the 1981 season when he won the championship



*“When the opportunity came to buy a jet, I realized it would save time, but after I started using it, I couldn’t believe how much better it was for my life.”*



Left: Back in 2010, Terry Vance was one of the first American owners of the Phenom 300, which went on to become the best-selling light jet series for 12 consecutive years

a joining of resources to accomplish the goal. Everybody benefits because manufacturers want to sell products, and the OEMs promote the racers, which provides additional exposure.

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*You were one of the first Phenom 300 customers in North America. How did you learn about the aircraft, and what influenced your desire to own this model?*

In 2010, there was a big push by several manufacturers to get into the private jet market. At the time, most companies started advertising before they had a complete drawing sheet of what the plane would look like. They would basically put out an artist’s rendering and hope for deposits. In contrast, Embraer had complete specs and knew exactly what they would do with the aircraft, flight deck and more.

Even though I already had a Cessna Citation CJ2+ on order, when I saw the advertisements from Embraer for the Phenom 300, I wrote a check, put it in a FedEx envelope, and sent my deposit to Brazil. That’s how convinced I was that they would build an exceptional aircraft. Embraer was just getting into private aviation, but they were already well known for quality engineering. It was a risk for me, but I was willing to take that risk to see how they did.

Fortunately, it worked out very well. I had my Cessna for two and a half years and then sold it as soon as I got my Phenom 300.

I’ve been flying it for 15 years, and it still looks like a brand-new plane. Today, it’s probably worth more than what I paid for it—that’s a pretty good investment! It’s no wonder people are lining up to buy the Phenom 300 series. It really is that good of an aircraft.

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*How has the Phenom 300 benefitted your lifestyle and travel needs?*

Like most teams, my race shop is in Indiana. The town we’re in has several dozen race teams because of its relatively central location. Logistically, it’s nice for the team to be able to get to Ohio, Florida, or even the East Coast easily because they’re already in the middle of the country.

The problem is I don’t want to live in Indianapolis; I want to live in California. However, to communicate with the team and be involved in the processes, I have to be there quite often. That’s where my aircraft comes in handy because I can get to the race shop in three and a half hours from California.

It’s not uncommon for me to have a race on Sunday afternoon in Indianapolis, Ohio, or Wisconsin and be home that evening after the race. It makes a huge difference because you can be up and at work on Monday the next day. When the opportunity came to buy a jet, I realized it would save time, but after I started using it, I couldn’t believe how much better it was for my life.

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*Can you share an exciting or memorable moment you’ve had onboard your Phenom 300?*

I remember the day I went to pick it up in Brazil. Embraer didn’t have a customer service center yet nor a place to put us as they were still getting ready for retail sales. I had my pilot with me, plus another guy for backup, and we were to fly from São Paulo to the top of the continent before heading over to St. Croix in the Caribbean and back to the U.S. Once we left the factory and got it in the air, the feeling sank in that this was my aircraft, and I was taking it home. I’ll never forget it. It felt like a terrific accomplishment, and it made me extremely happy.

Even though that was a special time, it has truly been like that since I’ve owned it. All in all, it’s been a top-notch experience, and I consider myself very fortunate to own it. ◀