

Press Release

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North American Handmade Bicycle Show, Indianapolis, Feb.27 - Mar.1, 2009

Midwest NAHBS "Best Yet" Trends, Innovations, and Comments

*More show stories recently added to the show blog :
<http://nahbshow.blogspot.com/>

INDIANAPOLIS - 115 exhibitors and 6,428 attendees attended a highly successful fifth annual North American Handmade Bicycle Show, at the Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, February 27 - March 1, 2009, and many exhibitors called this the best show to date.

"I am delighted with the way NAHBS went this year. When I first announced Indianapolis as the location, a lot of people were unhappy about it. But I have always been confident there is a good market here in the Midwest for handmade bicycles, it's just under-served. I think 6,428 people proved my hunch was good," said the show's founder and director, **Don Walker**.

Media attendance at the show was approximately 100, the same number as at Portland in 2008, and the overall attendance figure is almost 1,000 less, but still well above the San Jose figure of 4,000 in 2007. The growth trend for NAHBS continues despite the economic woes.

With literally hundreds of customers among the builders of lugged bicycles, **Mark Norstad** of Paragon Machine Works, who supplies a range of hardware accessories to the industry, has a fair overview of industry trends.

"Business for me has been down a little on 2008, but 2008 was a record year. A lot of orders were taken after last year's show. Many people who made those orders may not be willing to jeopardize their deposit even if they're in financial difficulty now. We'll know a lot more a year from now. I'm not seeing any frame builders quitting to get a day job," said **Norstad**.

Another thing **Norstad** said, which was echoed by other voices at the show, is there is an increase in the number of carbon fiber handmade frames being made. One example of this is Independent Fabrication, who won the Best Carbon Fiber Bicycle award for their prototype.

Drew Guldalian, of Engin Cycles, pointed to other standards being taken up in the industry. One of these is the spread of the BB30 bottom bracket - one of the benefits of which is it enables use of the outstanding Zipp Vumaquad crankset. Another product Guldalian mentioned is the new internal head tube from Chris King. Some 15 builders received these before the show.

One of these builders was **Carl Strong**, who incorporated it into his Best TIG Welded award-winning bike of 2009. **Strong** reported that this oversize tube gave a lot more surface area to attach other tubes to, as well as having a lower stack height which, in his view, improved the aesthetic.

Many of the builders ended the show feeling very good about the whole experience. Below is a digest of their remarks (in random order).

Richard Sachs - Richard Sachs Cycles

"I never thought the Midwest had to vindicate itself. There was criticism of the weather and travel concerns, which I thought was misplaced. The weather was good, but it really wasn't a factor, and the number of people who travelled here from afar shows that travel was not an issue. "I would willingly come back here next year.

"There was no downside to any aspect of the show. This was a perfect place. It was better, overwhelmingly better, on every level than anywhere we've been yet. The venue, the city, the hotel was a really great price for what you got, from the moment we got off the Interstate I got a good feeling about this city. It's like a gift.

"The number of people, the quality of the people - they asked good questions, they asked a lot about the history of frame building. And I did better business than ever before at NAHBS."

Doriano DeRosa - DeRosa Cycles

"It was nice to see a lot of young people at the show very interested in bikes. I hope to get a good feedback from the show, and think positive for next year."

Drew Guldalian - Engin Cycles

"I thought it was a phenomenal crowd. They really are great people here. I'd love to come back to Indianapolis, but not next year. In San Jose we learned you can't go to the same place two years running. A lot of people travelled a long way to be here, I just don't see them making the same long trip next year. A few years from now, definitely. But not next year.

"The show was great. Very well organized."

Carl Strong - Strong Frames

"Probably the best NAHBS yet. The people that came are really specifically interested in custom handbuilts. The city itself is very friendly, the layout of the downtown, the hotel the walkway to the convention center, that was very easy. The volunteers at this show were great, it was very well organized, and the decorators were very easy to work with."

Steve Bilenky - Bilenky Cycles

"It was great, great. A very friendly crowd, we had a lot of interest. It's a pleasant town, and a pleasant venue."

Sheila Moon - Sheila Moon Athletic Apparel

"Excellent - as usual! It was very similar to Portland for us, dollar-wise maybe not quite as high as last year. It's cool to be in a new market, there's lots of new exposure. People drove five or six hours to get here, some flew."

Mark Nobilette - Nobilette Cycles

"The best show yet. Best customers."

Nick Crumpton - Crumpton Cycles

"The best NAHBS yet. These customers had some history with handmade bikes."

Carl Schlemowitz - Vicious Cycles

"Busy, very busy. The level of questions was much more sophisticated than last year."

Joe Marchionno - Villin Cycles

"It was really good. I went to the show last year. It was not better or more than other years, just a different crowd."

Eric Noren - Peacock Groove Bicycles

"This show was as good for me as the past two years combined. I saw more flash bulbs go off around my booth than anywhere else! It was great for me. More people liked the paintwork on my bike than were offended by it!"

Rick Hunter - Hunter Cycles

"It went really well. I'm very pleased with the attendance and the venue. Yesterday was the busiest we've seen it at NAHBS. We did well with our soft goods, so it was definitely worthwhile."

Dwan Shepard - Co-Motion Cycles

"A stunningly successful weekend. I had a great time at the show, and I was really impressed at the quantity and quality of show attendees. One of the highlights was the abundance of very helpful and friendly volunteers. "I loved Indianapolis- what a great town. Having NAHBS revisit would be great, but I'd rather see that in a few years rather than next year. I think one of the great strengths of NAHBS is exposing a new audience every year. Whatever you decide, we won't miss it."

Noah Rosen - Velocolour

"Suzanne Carlsen (Headbadges) and I are already talking about next year. The venue was great and the people were friendly. We both have already recieved a ton of e-mails as a result of doing the show which shows the power of community and good organization."

Chuck Schlesinger - Sadilah Cycles

"It was fantastic in every way."

Craig Calfee - Calfee Design

"Nice job with NAHBS this year. I think it's great that the show moves around the country. People read about it and wish they could go - so when it comes to their area, they make sure to go. I think that's why you had such a good turnout in Indy."

About NAHBS

The North American Handmade Bicycle Show moves from city to city each year and is usually scheduled close to the last week of February. The show is dedicated to showcasing the talents of established builders of custom bicycles. It aims to be a meeting point - online and in person - for frame builders and consumers looking for custom-made bikes, for the sharing of ideas, and the promotion of a special industry with a rich history. Since its first year in 2005, NAHBS has grown from a show with 23 exhibitors and 200 attendees to a show with 150 exhibitors and 7,000 attendees. For more information, see <http://www.handmadebicycleshow.com>.

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