



A motorcycle show is a great place to sit on a few motorcycles, to see how they fit.

Goin' To The Show

There's no better place to connect with the industry than at a motorcycle show.

> By **Alisa Clickenger**

Motorcycle shows are a key place for riders to deeply connect with our sport. Shows are the premier place to find out about new products, to touch and feel products not available at local dealers, and to celebrate motorcycle culture. Shows are also a great place to learn more about our sport and connect with many diverse enthusiasts and entrepreneurs, like ourselves.

There is no shortage of shows for touring, adventure riding, racing, custom bikes and other specific niches. There are also giant industry shows like American International Motorcycle Expo (AIMExpo) and the International Motorcycle Shows (IMS). Having overheard folks complaining about ticket prices, or being negative about the shows in general, it's time to point out the shows' place in our industry.

Supporting smaller, boutique events as well as the large industry shows not only encourages more diversity of events, but reflects the diversity of motorcycling itself. The introduction of new motorcycle models, as well as aftermarket parts,

gear and accessories, is an important part of many shows. Most manufacturers launch new products, display and get feedback on prototype models and attend as a way to connect in a meaningful way with consumers.

However, shows aren't merely about commerce. Innovation, community and connection are also at the core of the experience. Here are seven reasons to attend more motorcycle shows.

COMMUNITY

I ride and travel solo often. In-helmet time is my bliss. However, being a motorcycle journalist, tour guide and author has always been about building community. Sharing the passion for motorcycling binds us together and inspires us to support, teach and uplift one another. The stronger the community, the stronger we are as individuals.

Motorcycle shows help strengthen community bonds. They provide space where riders can meet, network, and develop or maintain relationships. It's no surprise that so many riders choose to travel to shows together, or choose shows as the meeting point or destination of a tour. The atmosphere and

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attractions at shows create ideal circumstances for networking.

CONNECTION

Motorcycle shows provide riders with the rare opportunity to speak directly with manufacturers, gear designers and accessory makers. Ever wanted to share your enthusiasm for BMW's next midsize adventure model? Eager to discuss the future of electric bikes with Harley-Davidson? Attending shows is a premium opportunity to do so.

According to Tracy Harris, SVP of the International Motorcycle Shows, the shows are aimed at connecting riders with their favorite brands on a different level; "Consumers can interact with the industry's leading manufacturers ... to make informed decisions on the newest models the industry has to offer."

MOTORCYCLES

Whether a cruiser fan or a racetrack addict, at many motorcycle shows you can sit on and sometimes test ride many different bikes. You never know what might tickle your fancy. Dirt bike riding will improve riding fundamentals, whereas a café racer might turn out to be fantastic for commuting.

Examine many bikes in one place, without the time and sales pressure involved in visiting multiple dealerships.

"IMS is one of the only opportunities where motorcyclists can throw their leg over hundreds of bikes across multiple brands," Harris said, adding the same goes for the diversity in riding skills and interests. "IMS is broad in its appeal and doesn't exclude or focus on just one segment in the motorcycle industry. Our shows have something for everyone."

FUN

What all motorcycle shows have in common, regardless of theme or scale, is the fun factor. Many shows offer demo rides; custom builder shows and contests; indoor and outdoor demo tracks; rider training; as well as various talks and presentations.

Motorcycle racers, travelers, authors, riding instructors and tour guides are

invited to share their experiences and knowledge. If you've ever wondered what it's like to travel around the world on a motorcycle or win the Dakar, you'll get a chance to hear all about it from the experts at a motorcycle show.

NEW RIDERS

If you've ever wanted to encourage a best friend or family member to ride, taking them to a motorcycle show is a great start. Experiencing the diversity of motorcycling, as well as the camaraderie and the community spirit, can be an ideal starting point for someone who is thinking about getting a bike. In addition to the fun and new friendships, shows can be educational for new riders.

The IMS provides many opportunities for new riders to learn the ropes, via presentations and educational videos at the 'New to 2' area. Riders can also learn about, explore and experience living a life on two wheels in the 'Adventure Out' area. IMS even offers indoor e-bike demos, which break down the barriers to entry and get people on two wheels, in the 'Discover the Ride' program.

"While shows focused on entertainment, custom builders or racing are crucial for the motorcycle community, our shows differ in that they not only support the community of riding but are also built around commerce, education and developing new riders," Harris said.

DISCOUNTS

Motorcycle shows have historically provided a plethora of vendor booths, offering everything from riding gear to motorcycle accessories. If you're looking to discover what's new, try or buy gear and services, or simply do some window shopping, a show's vendor area is the perfect place to do it. It's common to find special deals and discounts for products, as vendors are keen to gain direct exposure to enthusiasts.



The bright colors serve a definite purpose: drawing attention.

SUPPORT THE INDUSTRY

Charging admission allows each show promoter to offer various opportunities for enthusiasts to talk with knowledgeable and professional industry experts.

Tickets pay for securing the physical space, as well as the required organization and promotion to draw enough attendees, vendors and manufacturers. Ticket prices also pay for the experiential attractions and educational opportunities at the show.

A show isn't only about marveling at new motorcycles and shopping for gear. It's also about supporting new riders, new products and the industry, as well as exploring different motorcycling experiences. Shows act as community-building events. They enable riders to communicate with manufacturers and designers, directly influencing the industry with our feedback and choices.

Best of all, shows are a place where we can connect and grow together, as part of a larger and more diverse extended family. **MCN**