

Propel Your Passion: The Magic of Going to a Motorcycle Show

Written by Elisa Southard



What do an industry leader, a second-grade teacher, a biologist, and a coach entrepreneur have in common? Come with me to a motorcycle show to find out. The answer lies in the cavernous halls of California's San Mateo County Expo Center, hosting the Cycle World International Motorcycle Show.

This fall, I spent opening night on Friday and all day Sunday there.

In our time together in this article, we will navigate the show, check out an education session, and along the way meet mentors conversant in how to get the most out of one of the coolest ways to spend a weekend.

For a new rider, going to a moto show feels like going to the Emerald City... You can throw your leg over bikes of all types (see sidebar) — cruisers, sport, sport-touring, enduros, dual purpose — all with gleaming gauges, solid feels, yet minus the sales pitches.

Not sure where to ride? You will find maps, with routes test-ridden, ranked, too.

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Curious about long-distance? The Women's Center oozes information. Check out one of Sunday's seminars: "First Time Tourers: Best Bang for Your Space."

In a corner of the Exhibition Hall, subscribe to magazines. In the MarketPlace, check out new Bluetooths, or get a better grip with new gloves.

Wait up! Before surrendering to a spending spree, realize you can walk into a motorcycle show a newbie, and exit an educated rider, an informed buyer, an inspired woman. "When I decided to ride," says Sarah Schilke, the first woman on the Board of Directors of the Motorcycle Industry Council, "I didn't know there were different styles of riding." A personal friend got her rolling on a Honda Rebel; her personality led her to a Ducati Super Sport.

Sarah, who runs the Women's Center for the season's Cycle World shows, urges participation.

"A show is great for new riders. You find out about Motorcycle Safety Foundation classes, organizations, gear, and..." You will find her final purpose most compelling: "...It gives you the space to talk to mentors." Riders often need to build support for new endeavors; mentors offer answers along with insights that build confidence.

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[Read Elisa's bio on HH's Contact \[ElisaSouthard@gmail.com\]\(mailto:ElisaSouthard@gmail.com\)](mailto:ElisaSouthard@gmail.com)