

Across the Pond: The Long Beach International Motorcycle Show

John Miller *special to Road Rider*
Pix provided by ML1 Media / Frank Matuszek

Bikers and bike makers come to the Long Beach international Motorcycle show for the same reasons: Opportunity. Manufacturers and distributors know the California market is the best place to pick up on trends in the market and identify areas to boost sales. And they really want to meet with bikers.

Bikers come...because they can. It was a balmy 25° when the show opened on Friday, and cool weather and rain on Saturday did nothing to reduce crowds and enthusiasm. Plus, manufacturers weren't shy about letting licensed/geared up riders take a variety of new motorbikes out test rides --rain or shine!

The show didn't offer too many surprises, but it's still a great chance to see all the new bikes in one place at one time. Plus, there were plenty of custom jobs, a great selection of apparel and accessories on display and ready to try, and no shortage of fabulous southern Cal biker babes.

In alpha order then:

BMW brought four of their five new models to show (the SS1000 R naked sport bike was AWOL). The 2014 R nine T, R1200 RT, K1600 GTL 'Exclusive' and the R1200 GS Adventure were all knockouts waiting to be ridden the SoCal twisties.

CanAm rolled out a new version of it's familiar 3-wheeled Spyder, the new



Inline Triple-powered 2014 Spyder RT. They also had a bodywork-off version on display for the curious and Danica

Patrick was on hand giving interviews as part of her new partnership with the brand. (YAWN!)

Ducati could display their new (2014) 1199 Superleggera and the disappointment of show-goers was apparent. Not that you couldn't be content with the rest of the Duc lineup, including the awesome 2014 Monster 1200 S.



Harley-Davidson's big unveil this year is Project Rushmore equipped bikes and the first liquid-cooled V-Twin offerings, the 2014 Ultra Limited and 2014 CVO Limited.

Honda debuted the 2014 Valkyrie and futuristic CTX1300. An unexpected surprise was a custom CBR1000RR set up like the Honda GP bikes of the 1960's.

Husqvarna (part of KTM since being recently acquired from BMW), showed the first of the KTM-powered Huskies. The classic white/blue/yellow paintjob is smashing.

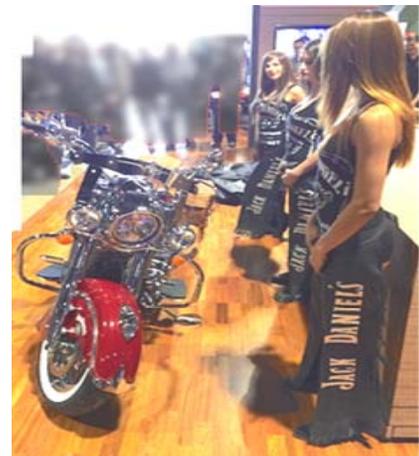


Hyosung is worth watching. They brought the fierce looking all-new 2014 EXIV 250. With a list price below

\$4000 (US), and a powerband to match larger bikes, Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki have reason to worry.



Indian (now part Polaris Industries) brought out a 2014 Chief Vintage tourer that will be sold at a charity auction, with the proceeds going to charity. Jack Daniel's (whiskey), helped the cause with a couple of FINE chaps-clad babes presenting the bike.



Kawasaki brought two updated liter bikes get —the Z1000 and Ninja 1000. Both get significant performance updates and new paint schemes.

KTM debuted two 2014 models—the 1290 R Super Duke (naked) bike and the 1190 Adventure R. KTM also displayed the spectacular (and highly coveted) 350 XCF-W dirt bike.

Royal Enfield keeps the old school look alive with modern tech. The Enfields get

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electronic fuel Injection, disc brakes, and piggyback shocks while staying with their trademark retro character.

Yamaha and the Yamaha offshoot, Star combined displays, with emphasis being placed on the Star Bolt customs rides.

Suzuki showed off the 2014 V-Strom 1000 Adventure.

Triumph displayed its updated 2014 Thunderbird LT.

Victory did not have any new models for next year, but brought some customized versions of their big tourer to generate excitement.

Zero, the all electric cycle brand is making strong moves for 2014. The entire model line has seen updates to one degree or another. The SR is Zero's highest performance electric bike with a (finally) usable range of 270+ KM with an accessory battery pack and under 'ordinary' city use. The emphasis is on CITY use, as highway range drops to only 88KM. The new FX model gains full size tires and improved suspension bits.

With California being the biggest US market for motorbikes and a big market for electric cars, bikers and manufacturers are keeping a close watch on Zero motorcycles. After a short (5KM) test ride on one, I must say, at first, it's a slightly creepy experience---there's no engine sound, just the air rushing past --and people staring. A Zero spokesman had already warned me: "You get all the excitement that you get riding, without the noise, no vibration, no heat, no fumes..." Once I got past the lack of noise, I truly enjoyed the ride---immediate torque, excellent handling for a relatively heavy bike, and superb braking. For now, range is still a killer---especially in southern Cal, where every trip can be 150KM. Still, Zero gets closer to the mark every year.

Bikers---riders and makers, should take note.

By the Numbers:

Long Beach International Motorcycle Show

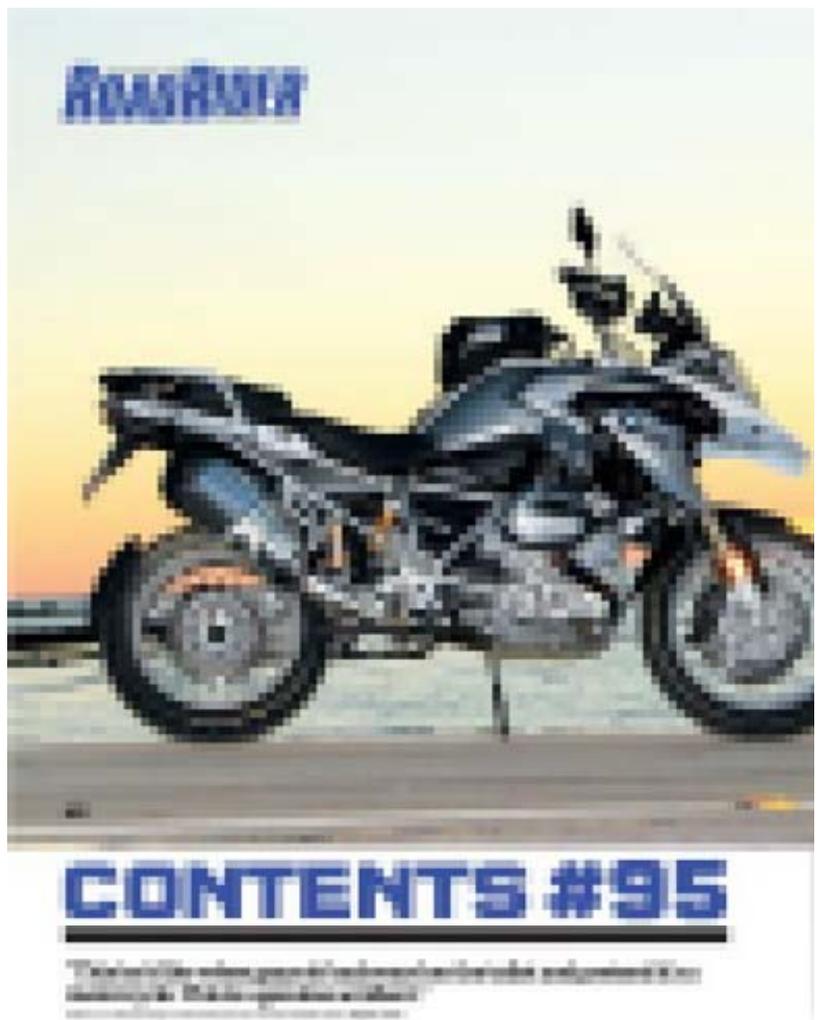
Where: Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, California

When: December 6 – 8, 2013

Who: Everyone. All the big motorbike players, a few bikies, and a few wacko's, estimated at 54,000 this year.

For more information on the Long Beach (Progressive) International Motorcycle Show, visit:

www.motorcycleshows.com/long-beach



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