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GRAND OPENING

Bikes and tattoos

Posted By MARYANNE FIRTH, TRIBUNE STAFF

Posted 3 months ago

The sound of rumbling of engines was met with the roar of the crowd as motorcycle enthusiasts gathered this weekend for the fifth annual Canadian Biker Build Off.

Event founder/promoter Vern Savage said Saturday's rain didn't deter people from making their way down to Niagara Regional Exhibition grounds.

"Spirits were high, people had a great time," she said, estimating nearly 2,000 people walked through the gates on Saturday alone.

Savage said a highlight of this year's event was the Friday night IlluminAqua rock concert which featured performances by Street Pharmacy, Sukka Punch and The Joys.

She's received a lot of positive feedback from people attending both the concert at the Merritt Park Amphitheatre and the events at the fairgrounds.

This year, visitors got to experience two events in one when they walked through the gates, as the biker build off was held in conjunction with the first annual Canadian Tattoo Expo.

Savage said the combination was such a success that there are plans to further expand the tattoo portion, including more artists next year.

Jodee Fine, tattoo expo event co-ordinator, said the weekend was steady with visitors passing through to view the work of the 12 visiting artists.

Fine said a few of the artists were up until the wee hours of the morning completing tattoos for patrons who came in Saturday night.

"Everyone's extremely happy. We're going to be expanding next year," Fine said, adding she "couldn't be happier" with the way the weekend turned out.

She was unsure of how the public would respond to a tattoo expo in the area, but she was pleasantly surprised at the crowds that came through.



Frédéric Vaillancourt, of St-Côme, Quebec's The Rat Shop Custom Bikes, shows off his custom three-wheel bike, which won this year's Canadian Biker Build Off.

MARYANNE FIRTH Staff Photo

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RICCI, REMEMBRANCE, AND
Nino Ricci, a winner of multiple awards for Canadian fiction writing, will return to the Centennial Branch of the Fort Erie Public Library on Tuesday afternoon, November 10, beginning at 2 p.m. for a reading, question session, and book signing. Nino Ricci's newest novel, "The Origin of Species" is

DEVOTED TO DOGS and other programs at FEPL

November is usually a dull month, marked by rainy weather and no Canadian holidays. The Fort Erie Public Library is a busy, bustling place, with programs for all ages and interests to beat the boredom all month long. Working dogs, playing dogs, healthy dogs, and happy dogs: dogs are featured

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"Every year the event will grow and grow," she said, adding she's scouting more international artists to join the participants from this year's show for the second annual event.

This year's artists came from across Ontario and even as far as Switzerland.

Lynrd Skynart Tattoos, from Thorold, was the only Niagara shop to participate.

"We want the world to see what Niagara has to offer in this industry," she said, adding the "tattoo industry is alive and well in Niagara."

Dana Drapper, of Dog House Ink -- a tattoo shop out of Pembroke, Ont. -- said their crew would definitely be returning for next year's festivities. "It was a great weekend with a friendly atmosphere and a lot of camaraderie between artists," she said.

Drapper said it was a nice venue for various shops to get their names out there, and give visitors an option to be tattooed by someone they may not otherwise have access to.

Overall, Savage said she's pleased with the way the weekend festivities turned out this year and looks forward to expanding in the future.

"We appreciate the builders, sponsors, vendors and fans, because this show would be nothing without them," Savage said.

"It's a great event for the motorcycle community, and the community-at-large," she said, adding the event drew people from as far as Calgary.

Organizer Randy Doan said although there were plenty of new faces at the weekend-long bike showcase, many of those who attend are repeat visitors.

This year's main event, was, of course, the biker build off, which pitted six builders against each other to show off their custom bikes.

Doan said some builders work on their bikes for years before showcasing them at a show of this caliber.

"This is a show for the small guy in his garage," he said, adding participants don't need to come from a big-name builder to enter a bike.

The biker build off is meant to make stars of great Canadian builders, show off their talent and give them the credit they deserve, he said.

This year's Canadian Biker Build Off Champion is Frédéric Vaillancourt, of St- Côme, Quebec's The Rat Shop Custom Bikes.

Jeffrey Starke, president and founder of International Master Bike Builders Association, was on site over the weekend to judge the various shows. The judges from the association are all certified and travel the world judging bikes at various shows, he said.

All bikes are judged based on a number of criteria, and when the results are tallied, builders are able to find out where they gained or lost points.

"They're building pieces of art," Starke said, adding as builders learn where they need to improve, their bikes get closer to perfection.

Results from this year's Canadian Biker Build Off are:

First place: Frédéric Vaillancourt, of The Rat Shop Custom Bikes in St- Côme, Quebec.

Second place: Alain Panneton, of Air Design Inc. in Montreal. Third place: Ponch Brunet, of Niagara Choppers in Welland. Fourth place: Stephen Lebreton, of Speed Trix in St. Andrews East, Quebec. Fifth place: Alain Tourigny, of Touring Creation in St-Louis-de-Blandford, Quebec.

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and gold Then it's Halloween! Nancy Byrd Turner It's the evening of October 31st., and the little ghosts and goblins are hop, skip and jumping around the neighborhood having a wonderfu

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Photoshop, the digital photography editing, hosting and sharing resource, has been updated and upgraded. The Photoshop workshop presented by Fort Erie Public Library's favourite digital photography coach, Peter Ferguson, has also been revamped. Digital photographers of all levels of experience are

Stamford Kiwanis

The Stamford Kiwanis Club meets each Monday at 6:30 p.m. at the Best Western Cairn Croft on Lundy's Lane.

Job Gym is helping the Welland community!

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Calendar

- Today**
- "1st Annual Big Little Holiday Party"
 - "DROP IN WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP" in St. Catharines
 - "How to hear God" class
 - "Kundalini Yoga" Classes
 - "Kundalini Yoga" classes
 - "Pet First Aid Course" November 29th from 9 - 4pm
 - "TAOIST TAI CHI SOCIETY - New Classes Start Nov 9&10, 2009 in Niagara Falls & St

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