

## Handmade Bicycle Show Highlights the Art of Frame Building

BY JOHN PETERS

HOUSTON, TX—Don Walker was tired of seeing packs at local races comprised mostly of bikes cloned in Taiwan. Filled with a desire to educate cyclists that not all frames are created equal, Walker set out to organize a show last year, but was unable to rally sufficient support. Walker got it done this year.

"This is the first time ever that like-minded builders and aspiring newbies gave up their time to meet as a group, trade stories, offer themselves as resources of information, show off work that is typically seen only on web sites,

and discuss the state of the craft," said Richard Sachs.

Twenty-three exhibitors gathered Jan. 15-16 for the first annual weekend show in Houston. Of them, 17 were builders, the remainder tubing, parts and tooling suppliers. Builders on hand to display their craft included Sachs, Darren Crisp and Don Ferris of Anvil Bikeworks.

Suppliers' reasons for attending varied. Sachs, whose 38-month lead time leaves little need for promotion, was primarily there to support the event, while newcomers like Bill Rider wanted a chance to talk with veterans about how to make frame number six better than his first five.

"I came here to be part of the frame-building community and to pass on information to young developing builders, and the show met those needs. I really can't see any

angle from which someone could say that the show didn't go well," said Brian Baylis.

No one attending the show was disgruntled Interbike; they just felt they could get a little more time in the sun with the smaller format and not be overshadowed by larger companies.

"I can attend this show for \$300 rather than the \$6,000 it cost me to do Interbike and pay much needed visits to my Houston dealers," said Craig Calfee of Calfee Design.

On Friday night after they had set it up, the question on everyone's mind was "Would they come?" The answer was yes.

By Sunday afternoon 700 to 800 budding builders and curious enthusiasts had flowed through the exhibit hall. While most were regional, attendees journeyed from as far as Connecticut and Nevada.

"Everything went off without a hitch and I had a great group of volunteers. The attendees were absolutely phenomenal in their dedication in traveling from different parts of the country, and the locals especially showed up in big numbers," Walker said.

Once in the show, they were greeted

by an impressive array of hand-crafted bikes. Everything from exquisite lugged bikes with paint you could drown in, to laser-like TIG welded titanium bikes and custom carbon-fiber bikes wrapped to rival the best Cuban cigar.

While general admission was free, the show also included a seminar program. For \$55, show goers could attend lectures on lug carving, welding and painting given by practitioners such as Calfee and Baylis.

The show wrapped up with awards in a slew of categories. The winners were: Best Road Frame, Richard Sachs; Best Track Frame, Richard Sachs; Best TIG Welded Frame, Mike Desalvo; Best Paint, Brian Bayliss; Best Lugged Frame, Brian Bayliss; Best Titanium, Darren Crisp; Best Newcomer, Bill Rider; Best Off-Road, Nick Crumpton; Best Carbon, Nick Crumpton; Best Fillet Brazed, Sacha White; Best Tandem, Don Walker; People's Choice, Craig Calfee (bamboo bike); and Best of Show, Sacha White.

With the first show a success, Walker is planning for next year's show. With an eye on keeping it fresh, he hopes to host the 2006 show in Phoenix the first weekend in February. **BRAIN**



Richard Sachs was among the show exhibitors.