

500 WEST FLORIDA STREET  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53204

THEIRONHORSEHOTEL.COM  
1.888.543.IRON (4766)



THE IRON HORSE  
HOTEL™

MEDIA CONTACT  
BRIGETTE BREITENBACH

BRIGETTE@COMPANYBONLINE.COM  
1.414.750.7298

Buell kicked to the curb... see page 26

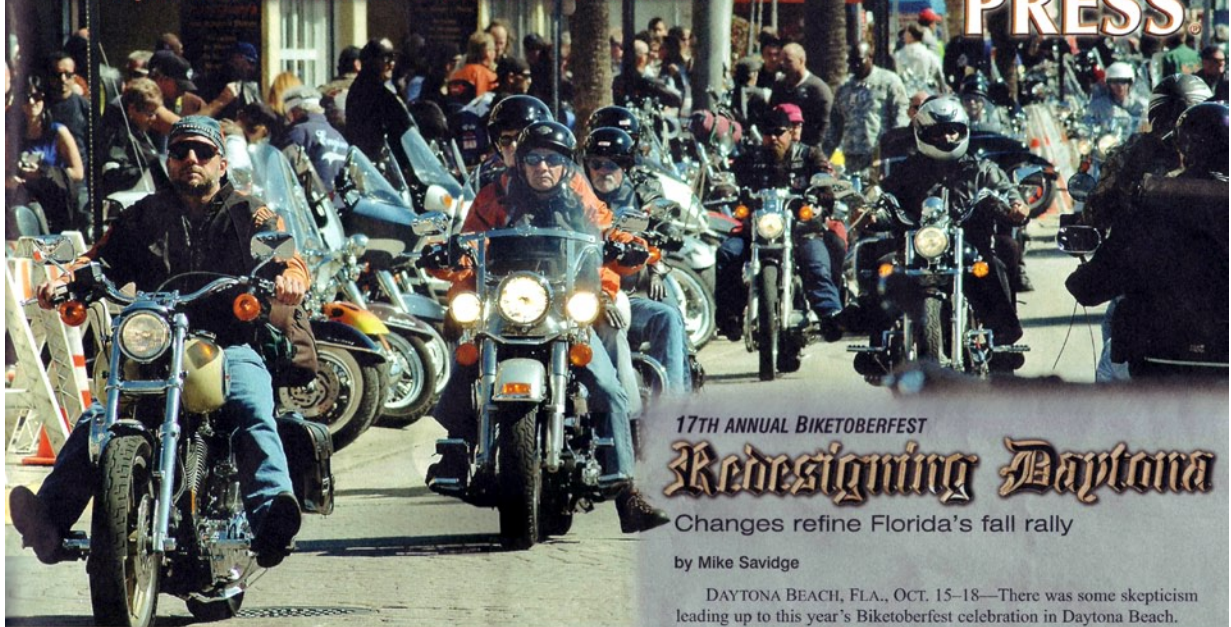
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Harley-Davidson and American Motorcycle News

PRESS



17TH ANNUAL BIKETOBERFEST

## Redesigning Daytona

Changes refine Florida's fall rally

by Mike Savidge

DAYTONA BEACH, FLA., OCT. 15-18—There was some skepticism leading up to this year's Biketoberfest celebration in Daytona Beach. With the weak state of the economy, especially within the state of Florida where a majority of the fall rally riders come from, would the party still be able to draw the usual large crowd? Also, given the state of the motorcycle industry, would the builders and vendors be willing to haul their wares to town and set up shop for four days? Thankfully, most of us in

See "Biketoberfest," page 14, column 1

BROOKLYN INVITATIONAL CUSTOM MOTORCYCLE SHOW

## A museum kind of feeling

First-time event showcases tri-state talents

by Brooklyn

BROOKLYN, N.Y., SEPT. 19—This is how it always begins, or should begin: One man has an idea to put on a bike show. He knows a few people and the perfect place to park the bikes for a day. It's out of the way, down a dusty little alley in the backwaters of Greenpoint, but he knows the people will come—those who hear of it, anyway. No need to advertise too extensively, no need to bring in the big guns. This isn't about glossy super-



See "Brooklyn,"  
page 38, column 1

ON THE ROAD WITH THE 2010 CVO CONVERTIBLE

## Two-faced beauty



See page 76

# INDUSTRIAL CHIC

## HIP HOSTELRY CATERS TO BIKERS AND BUSINESS TRAVELERS

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By Shadow

December 9th, 2009

Milwaukee—The summer of 2008 featured a couple of big, highly-publicized events in Milwaukee for Harley-Davidson enthusiasts. First was the opening of the Harley-Davidson Museum in July, and then the MoCo's 105th anniversary bash in August. A third event took place during that time, as well—the opening of the Iron Horse Hotel, a luxury boutique hotel located in Milwaukee's up-and-coming Walker's Point neighborhood.

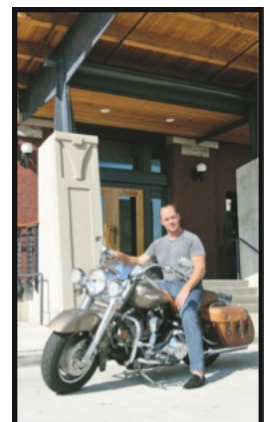
The Iron Horse Hotel When I turned off West Florida Street onto the circular drive in front of the hotel last August, I'd already been on the road for a few weeks. I was pretty road-weary and quite hungry. I pulled up to the front door and prepared to dismount when a friendly young man walked to my bike and greeted me with, "Are you registering as a guest here?" I responded in the affirmative and he asked for my name so that the front desk could have my registration ready by the time I got inside. He then directed me to leave my bike underneath a covered area across the drive, only about 20 feet away from the front door. A doorman wheeled a luggage cart over to my bike, offering to unhook all the bungee cords so he could get my gear inside. This covered, secure (there is always at least one hotel staffer standing outside) parking area is a free perk for motorcycle riders visiting or staying at the Iron Horse. There's also a self-service bike-washing station in front, and for those who are traveling too far to ride there, the hotel arranges bike shipping as well as bike storage in the lower level of the hotel.



Dave Cook's award-winning custom bike on display in the lobby always draws a crowd. The 100-room hotel is close to the Midwest Airlines Convention Center and at the foot of the Sixth Street Viaduct; less than half a mile from the new Harley-Davidson Museum. The building itself is representative of the industrial structures in that area such as the headquarters of Rockwell Automation and its Allen-Bradley Clock Tower, the world's largest four-faced clock and an icon of the neighborhood. The architecture of the lobby—in fact, the entire hotel—is "industrial chic," as owner Tim Dixon calls it. The building is just over 100 years old, and was originally used as a furniture factory and then as a cold storage warehouse.

The restoration kept key elements of its industrial heritage, and the two-story lobby features exposed ductwork, wooden rafters and beams and brick walls combined with lots of solid leather furniture, brass decorative pieces and other period ornamentation. On one side of the lobby is the motorcycle that won one of the top awards at the S&S 50th Anniversary celebration in 2008, built by Milwaukee motorcyclists' hometown hero Dave Cook of Cook's Customs. On the opposite wall is a massive American flag made of blue jeans, and throughout the hotel are sculptures and paintings created by local artists such as Charles Dwyer, Amber Van Galder and Cindy Lesky.

The Iron Horse Hotel After a warm welcome and a quick check-in at the front desk, I took the elevator up to my room. The standard, loft-style rooms are about 450 square feet, and carry out the industrial chic theme. The tiled entranceway contains a solid wooden bench and a row of heavy-duty clothing hooks so you don't have to worry about ruining the floor or furnishings. My room had a king-sized bed made up with luxurious linens, a desk with a leather executive chair,



and another comfy side chair. The 42-inch flat screen television, high-speed wireless Internet connection, iPod docking station, coffeemaker and fully stocked high-end mini-bar added to the room's appeal. The roomy bathroom was quite spectacular, with large vanity sink, tiled walk-in shower and luxury bath products.

My stomach signaled me to head downstairs to lunch at Smyth, the upscale restaurant off the hotel lobby. Smyth was named after the blacksmiths whose services were being rendered obsolete by the onset of the industrial revolution. Service was quite fast and my meal, featuring local specialties such as Wisconsin beer cheese soup and a DLT sandwich made with duck confit, was excellent. So good, in fact, that I dined at the Iron Horse for every meal during my stay.

Each guest room has a tiled entranceway, heavy-duty wall hooks and a wooden bench to store your wet and muddy riding gear without ruining rugs, walls or furniture. That afternoon, I was introduced to Iron Horse Hotel owner Tim Dixon, an avid rider who owns a customized 2004 Road King. Dixon is a carpenter by trade, and has been roofing since he was a kid. He opened a restaurant in 1983, and sold it in a few years when he realized that he's not the world's best manager. Dixon started working for a guy who renovated buildings, and eventually started buying and renovating buildings himself. He considers himself really good at two things: urban development, and throwing parties, which he believes is a great mix for a successful hotel. Because of his earlier failures in trying to manage businesses, he partnered with Desires Hotels to manage the Iron Horse.

Tim tells me that his goal was to create "a little bit of an urban resort—a business leisure hotel" where business travelers walking through the lobby are just as comfortable as bikers. He and his staff researched motorcyclists and found that they're the exact same demographic as business travelers—40ish, married, college-educated and affluent. "We hit both sides of the market with one guest," Tim says, "business travelers during the week, and riders on the weekends." Although riders represent only about 10 percent of the hotel's visitors, they represent 90 percent of the hotel's atmosphere. "When riders walk into the hotel, people tend to gravitate toward them; ask where they're from, what they ride. There's a camaraderie here—an opportunity to interact." To encourage socializing, the furniture in the lobby is arranged in conversation "pods."

The latest addition to the hotel is Branded, the brand-new lobby bar. It was designed as a Milwaukee bar, meaning that it has a beer-drinking, stand-up-next-to-the-bar vibe, although it has a quite sophisticated feel to it, as well. According to Tim, it's the hottest bar in Milwaukee, both by numbers and visual count (weekends are standing room only). And The Yard, the hotel's outside patio bar, often has several hundred people enjoying cocktails and conversation on warm evenings.

Communal breakfasts are served in the Library, a wonderful "reading room" with industrial tables, antique chairs, and lamps and other décor accents that reflect the industrial feel of the early 20th century. Free Wi-Fi is available, and people can order drinks or snacks there while they relax or conduct business. The hotel also has a luxury spa, 24-hour fitness center and even late-night room service.



The Yard patio bar Tim is a self-described people-pleaser. "I'm all about people feeling good. I want to deliver an experience." Bike nights already take place on Thursday evenings, but Tim's got a lot more plans for the hotel, which already has the highest occupancy rate in Milwaukee. There'll be live music on Tuesday nights, and the hotel will host a Sunday brunch and blues in The Yard next season. A 50-person high-tech board room will occupy the top (sixth) floor in 2010, and the former boiler room will be converted into a European hot tub that'll be the largest in Milwaukee, with a chilling pool in the summer and an outside deck. It'll be called, of course, the Boiler Room.

Everything about the hotel exudes a wonderful combination of comfort and luxury. Instead of a concierge, a "director of desires" anticipates guests' wants and needs (check out the Your Desires program on the hotel's website, and also check for seasonal specials on room rates).

Services offered especially for riders include printed ride routes, listings of biker-friendly hot spots and even packed saddlebag lunches! It's no wonder that the Iron Horse Hotel was named to Conde Nast Traveler's 2009 Hot List. Next time I'm in Milwaukee, I'll be very disappointed if I can't pay them another visit. ([www.theironhorsehotel.com](http://www.theironhorsehotel.com), 500 West Florida Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204, 888.543.IRON)