



The 25th Annual Toronto International Bicycle Show

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Once again, I made my way to the Toronto Bicycle Show, courtesy of free tickets from Maureen. This year marked a quarter century of the show, which has given them plenty of experience to get it right.

For me, this event is much more than good deals on bike swag. It is the light at the end of the tunnel which is the Canadian winter. It really serves to get me psychologically ready for the upcoming riding season. As I entered the 200,000 square foot "Better Living Centre" at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds, my senses were assaulted with the aroma of dirt. They say that smell is the most powerful sense that stimulates memory, and I agree. There is nothing like the smell of soil to remind me of the many pleasurable mountain bike rides I have experienced over the years. I was happy, because last year the organizers elected not to truck in the dirt for the indoor mountain bike competition. It was the only year I can remember that they didn't, and I was disappointed.

The show ran March 4-6, and as always, it kicked off at noon on Friday. I try to get there as close to opening as possible because this is when selection and "show stopper" deals are at their best. I am most excited about perusing the Marketplace area for bargains. There were over thirty booths from local bicycle shops and other cycling related vendors. And yes, I did pick up some sweet deals on stuff I wanted but did not necessarily need. My wife can't believe that I could possibly need any more "bike crap," as she puts it. One reminder of how many purses and pairs of shoes she has happily puts an abrupt end to the discussion.

In addition to the Marketplace, bicycle manufacturers and component and cycling related dealers display their latest lines. Sales are not allowed in this area, but you can see the latest in technology and sample the newest energy drinks and bars. This gives you a well needed boost to get through the rest of the show. Represented in this area were familiar names like Shimano, Trek, Thule, Bianchi and Power Bar. Also included were some Canadian offerings such as Argon 18 who make awesome road and triathlon bikes (I own one) and Wike bicycle trailers.

After taking in the latest and greatest, you can visit displays by cycling-related tourism and interest groups. Local mountain bike areas, tour groups, trail networks, racing series and magazines compete for your attention. Some of the more interesting booths reside in this area. A Bamboo bicycle manufacturer and probably the coolest booth of the show, "The Recycler," who makes furniture out of old bicycle parts, caught my eye. You'll notice me lounging in one of the chairs at this booth. Check out www.therecycler.ca for some unique gift ideas for you or the cycling nut in your life. And yes, they are Canadian too, eh!

My time was limited this year, but I managed to take in some of the trick riding at the BMX jam area. These guys and gals are truly nuts. Maybe too many crashes have dulled their sense of fear. I also got to smell the dirt up close and take in some practice sessions at the Pro Mountain Bike Competition area.

One last note: another item I pick up each year is an addition or two to my "Spinervals" video collection. These are a series of workout videos designed for riding your trainer or stationary bike. I have a dozen of them and they sure break up the monotony of riding indoors during the long Canadian winters. They range from aero base workouts to killer hill climbing and sprinting sessions. There is even a three disc, 5.5 hour workout designed to allow you to ride an indoor century (now, that is really crazy).



If you live in the northern states, want a break from the summer heat in southern states, or just want an efficient and productive way to train, these videos are for you. There are also other series for running, swimming, fitness, strengthening and flexibility. If you can't find them at your local bike shop, you can order them at www.spinervals.com. And no, Spinervals doesn't pay me a commission!

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