

# TAIPEI CYCLE SHOW



A fully booked venue augurs well for the Taipei Cycle Show.

# Advantage Asia

## RECORD OVERSEAS VISITORS DESPITE JAPANESE CATASTROPHE

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**Led by China, rising Asian curiosity about high-end premium bicycle products took the 24th Taipei Cycle Show (TCS) on March 16-19 at Taiwan's Nangang Exhibition Center to record highs.**

According to TCS organizer Taitra, the number of overseas visitors increased by 9.2%, to a total of 5,637. The number of Chinese visitors alone skyrocketed by 36.7%, and for the first time this meant that Chinese visitors outnumbered those from Japan, the longtime leading visitor group.

The number of exhibitors in the fully booked Taipei Cycle Show increased by 6% percent, to a total of 948 exhibitors out of 36 countries. The 24th edition of this valuable bicycle show was overshadowed by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, approximately 2,260 kilometres northeast of Taipei. At the time of the show, the nuclear cloud was about to hit Tokyo. That made not only the Japanese, but also another visitor country group extremely nervous — especially the Germans.

### German Fears

Why the Germans? While it is difficult to say for sure, many may have had the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in mind. As such, some German exhibitors and visitors didn't show up, or turned around while

on the way to Taipei or left the show on the second or third day.

The team from SKS-Germany was already in Hong Kong when the news first came out of Japan. Within seconds, they decided to go back home. The SKS booth was handled by export manager Stefano Zugno from Italy and the Taiwanese company representative Oscar Yang.

The German Thun team abandoned their booth on the second day of the show. When asked why they left that quickly, show vice-president Alexander Thun answered, "This decision came out of our headquarters and from our company founder and president Alfred Thun. He made the decision after recalling an undesired two-week delay at an airport a couple of months ago due to the volcanic ash cloud out of Iceland. We wanted to have our people back in time."

The nuclear catastrophe led to approximately a 25% drop in visitors from Germany and Japan. Nevertheless, the Japanese still ranked as the second-largest number of visitors, behind China. Of the top-five visitor groups, the U.S., Korea and Germany followed.

## **Increasing Numbers of Asian Visitors**

The number of visitor groups out of Asian-Pacific countries was obviously greater. And they weren't, as one Western exhibitor told *Bike Trade Canada*, "just staring and taking photos to copycat, but showing real interest in exclusive distributorships of high-end premium bicycle brands." The times, they are a-changin'.

## **TCS Leads the Way**

The increase in Chinese visitors to the TCS is a statement that can't be ignored. At the present time, the China Cycle Show in Shanghai can't compete with the high-end premium brands that are produced as a result of Taiwan's bicycle know-how and are showcased at TCS. Consequently the fair in China is now more representative of a strong national bicycle show with modest international acceptance, which explains the surge in Chinese presence at the Taipei Show.

## **More than "Meet and Greet"**

The image of TCS has changed slowly. Due to much-earlier product cycles, it has become less of a spec-and-order show. This role has been slowly taken over by a competitor, the Taichung Bike Week (TBW for short), first held in December and, in 2012, at the end of November. According to many industry participants, this is the right timing for specs. Nevertheless the Taipei Show has much more to offer than a "meet and greet" agenda. At TCS, exhibitors meet with their importers and talk in detail about future strategies and new products, before the finished products are on stage at the large fall industry shows, Eurobike in Europe and Interbike in U.S.

"For us, this is the right place to see all our customers," states Lois Mabon, Global Product Manager for Gore Ride-On Cable Systems. Gore Ride-On Cable Systems debuted as an exhibitor at TCS on the sixth floor of Nangang Exhibition Center. "We don't care if there are fewer walk-in customers on the



**There's still no better place than the Taipei Show to meet and talk.**

sixth floor. We see our booth more as a meeting spot. We spread the message out that we are here and set up appointments with our customers. It's perfect." Others also note that they don't meet just their Asian-Pacific customers, but those from all over the world. Often overheard was "There is no better place to meet and talk than the Taipei Cycle Show."

## **Fewer Consumers**

Some exhibitors complained about less-crowded show floors. In truth, there were fewer consumers, and not only on the last day — which is officially open to consumers — but also during the first three show days. Unlike last year, which saw these first three days at times packed with consumers. However, many exhibitors are happy that the show is concentrating again on the industry rather than on consumers. Not only has the Taiwanese bike boom peaked, but show organizer Taitra may not have pushed the event to consumers, as in the previous year. While last year there was some speculation that the TCS might move into the direction of a consumer show, it clearly has not, and it now seems that Taitra is again concentrating on the show's strength.

## **New Products for 2012**

First off, there were no obviously big innovations, but that was not really expected at this TCS. But there are some hot trends to watch. One is the increasing number of complete-system e-bike suppliers. Many companies are jumping into this currently booming market. Not all will survive, but for now, but there are more choices than ever before.

Carbon is still big and rolls in with more reasonable price points — an interesting fact, as raw materials are getting more expensive. As well, steel is making a comeback. Backed by the single-speed scene and retro-look trend, steel is experiencing a revival. This also led to the resurgence of several traditional Japanese steel-frame builders, for example, Toyo. Toyo has set up a factory in Taiwan.

According to Toyo, the "Taiwanese are good at TIG-welding, but do not have much experience with filet brazing and lugged frames. That's what we teach them." This means that some products, at a more attractive price point, will soon use steel instead of aluminum-alloy frames. That, however, doesn't mean that aluminum alloy is a thing of the past. Several Taiwanese specialists such as Kinesis are still working on tube innovations. Aluminum-alloy frame building is one of the largest strengths of the Taiwanese bicycle industry.

Generally speaking, the product innovations for 2012 are more in the details and often not immediately evident to the naked eye. In particular, parts and component manufacturers displayed some great products and will surely benefit from the current trend for customized high-end premium bicycle parts. More and more, premium customers are seeking out unique and innovative bicycle products — not only in the West, but also in Asia-Pacific and the rest of the world.

## **Trade Show Quartet 2012**

On the last day of TCS, organizer Taitra not only announced earlier dates for 2012 (March 7-10), but that it will also hold all four trade shows at the same time. In addition to TCS will again be the Taipei International Sporting Goods Show (Taispo for short) at the old fairgrounds, along with two new trade shows — the Taiwan Diving and Water Sports Show and the Taiwan International Sporting Wear and Accessories Show.

According to a Taitra spokesperson, "The four shows will showcase the complete supply chains and high-value products from Taiwan bicycle and sporting goods industries, which will also meet visitors' need for one-stop shopping."

Some industry participants' wonder why Taitra is giving the Taipei Cycle Show-Taispo combination another try since several previous attempts have never worked. Perhaps the other two new shows can generate more buzz.

However, both new shows rely on segments that are currently also under pressure. One of the best possible options, the outdoor segment, has already moved to China. Asia Outdoor in Nanjing is the brainchild of German show organizer Messe Friedrichshafen and its OutDoor show (sister show of Eurobike). OutDoor is also attempting to attract some bicycle companies to its Asian show.



## Asia Bike Launched with Asia Outdoor

(Friedrichshafen, Germany) – European OutDoor and Eurobike show organizer Messe Friedrichshafen is adding the inaugural Asia Bike to its sixth annual Asia Outdoor Show, which it co-produces with the Nanjing Nantex International Exhibition Centre. Held in Nanjing on July 27-30, the new Asia Bike will cover the entire bicycle sector. Both shows will be coordinated and marketed by Knut Jäger. The stakeholders are Messe Friedrichshafen/Germany, Asia Outdoor Marketing/Hongkong and Beijing Alpinist Outdoor Media, and, according to Jäger, the goal is to use the synergies between the outdoor sector and sports bikes (especially mountain bikes). While Asia Outdoor 2011 will cover approximately 38,000 square metres, the Asia Bike debut is slated to occupy approximately 12,000 square metres of space.

## Bike Brno 2011 Moves Dates Again

(Brno, Czech Republic) – In 2010, Bike Brno, the largest Eastern European bicycle show based in the Czech Republic, moved its dates from November to October. Show organizer BVV intended to move the show to earlier dates in 2011, but after this year's event, it brainstormed that idea and has now moved the show back to November. "A majority of our exhibitors polled want the show back in November. In the future, Bike Brno will be held in the second half of October and the first half of November," said BVV marketing manager Jan Smid. In 2011, it will be held from Nov. 10-13 and, as in the past, will be held with Sport Life, Boat Brno and Caravaning Brno.

## Specialized-Europe Manager Joins Bike Action

(Rodgau, Germany) – Former longtime Specialized-Europe manager Stefan Götz has taken a position as sales manager with German bike importer Bike Action. After a short stint as a business development manager with Rotwild bikes, manufactured by ADP Engineering, Götz was hired by Bike Action following Eurobike 2010. The industry veteran is now responsible for sales and distribution of all Bike Action imported brands, which include Rocky Mountain, Syncros, Race Face, Evoc, Genuine Innovations and Marushin.

## New Czech Bicycle Association CBI

(Brno, Czech Republic) – At Bike Brno 2010, a new Czech bicycle industry association is introducing itself. The Czech Bicycle Industry (CBI) plans on becoming the umbrella organization for all Czech bicycle associations. CBI's inaugural president Radim Broz, general manager of Czech bicycle manufacturer 4ever, commented, "Most important for us is to have a Czech voice with Coliped, (Organization of European Two-Wheeler Parts and Accessories Associations) and Colibi (Organization of European Bicycle Manufacturer Associations)." CBI's role is to promote the interests of the Czech bicycle industry at home and on the European stage.

## Cube Bikes Celebrates New Logistics Centre

(Waldershof, Germany) – The close of 2010 saw German bicycle producer Cube Bikes open its new logistics centre. At 100 metres long and 80 metres wide, with a capacity of 40,000 bin locations, it was built over a seven-month period. According to Cube founder and senior general manager Siegfried Pürner, the building of its new logistics centre was critical given the company's growth: in 2003, Cube had an output of 36,000 bicycles; in 2009, it was 186,000 units of which 80% percent was mountain bikes. Today, the company offers 150 different models and employs 120 people. Cube is one of the main employers in Waldershof, a town 50 kilometres east of Bayreuth.

## VeloBerlin Consumer Show Debuts in March 2011

(Berlin, Germany) – VeloBerlin, the new cycling exhibition for the general public, took place from March 26-27 at the Messe Berlin exhibition grounds, premiering as the new hub for everything to do with bicycles and urban mobility. VeloBerlin is a co-production involving the two market leaders of top-class events in the bicycle industry: Eurobike, today's leading international bicycle trade show in Friedrichshafen, and Velokonzept, Berlin's cycling centre of excellence. "VeloBerlin is set to become the cycling industry's main public exhibition, generating consumer interest in bikes and cycling at the start of each new season, with an emphasis on urban mobility," says Klaus Wellmann, CEO of Eurobike show organizer Messe Friedrichshafen. For further information, see [www.veloberlin.com](http://www.veloberlin.com).

## Scott Opens High-End Plant in China

(Givisiez, Switzerland) – Swiss multi-sports and bicycle supplier Scott Sports SA proudly announced that all of its carbon frames and forks will be exclusively manufactured in a brand-new high-end production plant located in Southeast China. The new 6,000-square-metre facility is "currently transforming from a four-month testing phase into its production phase." The new plant is equipped with the latest state-of-the-art machinery, including automatic and computer-aided molding, new CNC trimming equipment, electronic visual sensors, computer-aided structure analysis system and a fully automatic vacuum-system painting facility. According to Scott Sports' vice-president Pascal Ducrot, the plant was built with the company's longtime Asian manufacturing partner: "[It is] a calculated decision to open our new plant in Asia, and it is because we can count on the production experience and our long-term partner . . . The environment in Asia allows us to benefit from new developments not limited to bike production, for example, the aerospace business."

## Bosch Electrifies Singapore

(Stuttgart, Germany) – After introducing its first e-bike kit to the global bicycle market, German automotive giant Robert Bosch GmbH has successfully bid for a pioneering e-mobility pilot project in Singapore. This project includes a software-based service platform for e-mobility, as well as the necessary charging and communication infrastructure. The Internet-based "eMobility Solution" not only helps drivers find available charge spots, but also enables them to reserve spots in advance. That is particularly significant in megacities, where parking space and thus space for charge site is limited. The "eMobility Solution" is designed to be open and flexible so that additional business models and value-added services can be integrated, such as the option for drivers to reserve power from renewable sources at the corresponding "eco-rates" or plan routes including alternative forms of transportation. "The many possibilities this integrated service platform offers are becoming especially apparent in megacities. The Singapore government has recognized this opportunity and is now working with Bosch to make this pioneering technology a reality," said Franz Fehrenbach, chairman of the Bosch board of management.