

Photos by
KACY CRIDER
and
KATIE GORDON
and
MARK PENDERGRASS



KACY CRIDER



MARK PENDERGRASS



MARK PENDERGRASS



KATIE GORDON

Bicycles of all shapes, sizes and eras were on view last month at the Go Away Garage on Commerce Street for an exhibit appropriately titled Art of the Bicycle. Above, collector and custom bike builder Larry Mong tools down Commerce Street.

BUILT FOR STYLE

Custom, restored, or artistically rendered, these bikes were off the rack and in the gallery.

By BARRY OWENS

There is nothing pretentious about a bicycle. Most anyone that has owned one can name the parts, tell the good rides from the bad, delight in the accessories, like a basket and a bell, or marvel at modifications, such as a motor.

So it was last month that the patrons passing through the Go Away Garage were free to drop their gallery scowls (reserved for contemplating abstract works and looking thoughtful while doing so) and just enjoy the Art of the Bicycle.

In short, they were free to be kids again.

"Wow, look at this contraption," one 30-something said, clearly taken with a piece called *88 miles an hour*, by Sean Philip. "That's crazy."

The bicycle was outfitted with fanciful parts, such as an eggbeater, ammunition boxes, a fire extinguisher (as fuel tank), a crutch and other bits of junk, artfully arranged, that made the cycle look motorized, cartoonish, impossible to ride but fun to look at.

There were hundreds of bikes, from old classics lovingly restored, to custom built bikes ("the frame is made entirely of gas pipe," one collector said) to a memorial bicycle dedicated to the late



MARK PENDERGRASS

Photographer and bike collector Erick Riedell.

Michael Jackson. It featured a white, sparkly chain guard, photos of the King of Pop decoupage on the frame, and on the handlebars, a basket held a stuffed monkey named Bubbles.

"It's part art show, part rock concert for bike collectors," said Erick Riedell, a photographer and bicycle enthusiast, who had both bikes and fine art photographs of bikes on exhibit. "We'll get



MARK PENDERGRASS

88 miles an hour, by Sean Philip.

1,500 people plus through here tonight," he said.

Indeed, the floor was so crowded with bicycles and people, it was at times difficult to move through the gallery. Most people seemed happy to linger.

"Hey, I had one like that," a woman in her 50s said, seemingly transported by the sight of an old Schwinn with a spring seat. She admired it for a long time.

The show, an annual exhibit, was hosted by the Coasters Bicycle Club, a casual riding group that tours

Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods every Thursday evening (all are welcome: bring a bike, meet at The Shamrock at 7:30p.m., be prepared to stop for a beer or two along the route).

Among the Coasters with bikes on display was Larry Mong, who lives near Downtown. The former auto body man restores and customizes old bicycles.

"I've got 20 bikes, six of them in here tonight," Mong said. "And I've got one outside."

That would be the one that he rode in on.