

'Pouring a little gas on the fire' heats up Slingshot market

Alamo Cycle Plex seeing no let-up in sales of Polaris product

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Being wrong can lead to all the right things.

Earlier this year, *Powersports Business* caught up with Alamo Cycle Plex of San Antonio, Texas, where dealer principal/general manager Dave Sears gave us the low-down on the predictions for the Slingshot sales for the year. Now, six months later, he is back with an exciting update.

Around March, Sears relayed that he thought the shop would sell 35-40 Slingshots in 2019. So it was surprising to hear from Sears in September that the dealership had already surpassed sales of 65 Slingshots — nearly double his initial prediction.

According to Sears, the dealership's continued success comes from community engagement and hosting events that get people excited about the industry and the future of the Slingshot market.

"The Slingshot community is on fire. Since you last heard from us, we've made a lot of changes to accommodate the growing enthusiasm for the brand," Sears told *Powersports Business*.

A Slingshot parking lot party held in September attracted drivers from throughout the state. The total Slingshot count was over 100.

Though Slingshots are a large focus at Alamo Cycle Plex, Sears says that any powersports enthusiast is encouraged to attend dealership events, no matter their choice of unit.

"When we have an event, we want everyone there whether they're on two, three or four wheels," Sears said. "There's a lot of camaraderie between riders; the three

wheelers love the bikers, the bikers love riding with the Slingshots. It's like this little brother environment. The bikes will ride ahead of the Slingshots and stop traffic ahead at the intersection so the Slingshots can get through with ease, kind of like a parade. They interact well together."

Despite current successes with dealership events, Bike Nights and other social gatherings for the dealership haven't always gone as planned. Sears said that the first bike night the dealership had was underwhelming at best, drawing in just six people. Rather than giving in to discouragement, Sears and his team instead took the initiative to find out what people wanted from dealership events and what would draw them in. They quickly realized that keeping events onsite would have more benefits than moving to a different location.

"The first two bike nights we had were offsite in a bar parking lot. But I thought, 'Why would we send everybody away from the store?' So the next time, we brought everyone to the store and kept the shop open during those hours."

The result? Massive success.

"We had a recent Bike Night where we had sold two units by 6 o'clock, which is when we're supposed to close. When we closed at 10 o'clock, we had sold six more Slingshots, all from Bike Night traffic. All it took was bringing people to our store for a

few extra hours one night."

While Sears reports a 46 percent growth in sales, the dealership's net profit has also increased by over 200 percent.

"Having energy and enthusiasm is essential to running a successful business," Sears said. "I'm onsite every day. I love shaking someone's hand and telling them they can deal directly with the owner. You have to have a new energy to run dealerships successfully nowadays. Running a dealership 40 years ago is not the same as it is today. It's all digital and getting in front of the

right people. Customers love when you walk onto the floor and greet them. We're having a lot of fun doing it our way, and the customers seem to like it as well. We're excited with what we're doing."

While some areas of the market have taken a hit over the last year, Sears remains confident that the growing popularity of Slingshots will continue to rise.

"Slingshots are not dead. All we had to do was pour some gasoline on the fire and get some enthusiasm surrounding the brand, and now we're good to go." **PSB**



Alamo Cycle Plex in San Antonio has exceeded its Slingshot sales goals in major fashion for the first nine months of 2019. Photo courtesy of Polaris

Nash drives AMS Ducati Dallas to Dealer of the Year honors

Dealer conference in Rimini showcases new bikes, top dealers

As Ducati continues to grow in influence and importance within the global motorcycle industry, North America remains an integral market for the Italian brand. This international significance of North America was recently reflected during a private award ceremony at the Ducati Global Dealer Conference, which took place along the shores of the Adriatic Sea in Rimini, Italy.

Accolades were given in areas of Top Sales Volume and Top Growth for various regions, as well as overall Top Sales Volume awards for the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Among the regional and national categories, Ducati also notably honored Jeff Nash, President of Advanced Motorsports (AMS) Ducati Dallas, with a special award for his dealership's dedication and performance as Ducati Dealer of the Year 2019 for North and South America.

Ducati's CEO Claudio Domenicali, who was in attendance alongside Ducati North America CEO Jason Chinnock, presented the award to Nash.



(From left) Ducati Motor Holding CEO Claudio Domenicali, Francesco Milicia (VP Global Sales & After Sales), Jeff Nash (Ducati Dallas president and founder) and Jason Chinnock, Ducati North America CEO. Photos courtesy of Ducati Motor Holding

"We are incredibly honored and excited to receive this award," Nash said. "Since 1995, our team has been a leader in Ducati sales and service in the United States and

we have always strived to provide our customers with the best experience possible when visiting our dealership. From sales to service our team is made up of passion-

ate, knowledgeable Ducatisti and we hope that our customers see and feel this in their experiences with us. We are grateful for our customers and friends who reach out to us both local and abroad as we would not be able to achieve this honor without them."

"Our dealer network is the cornerstone of our success," said Chinnock. "Ducati's reputation for exceptional customer service is something we must value, preserve, and strengthen — and our dealerships do. Everyday. From Mexico City to our new flagship location in Montréal, all the way to our exclusive new showrooms like those in Newport Beach, California and Richmond, British Columbia, we are one team. To have the opportunity to gather everyone together in our home country of Italy and celebrate our achievements is something special. It's what being part of the Ducati family is all about."

The Ducati Global Dealer Conference in Italy was timed to coincide with the Ducati World Premiere program, which took place on Oct. 23 at the Palacongressi di Rimini, and included the premiere of such highly anticipated motorcycles as the Streetfighter V4, the Panigale V2, and the new Panigale V4 superbike.