

# The Crossbow Incident

Two wheels good and three wheels bad? Not so says trike expert Uwe Wachtendorf.

Joining Victory at the Texas launch is Canadian manufacturer Lehman Trikes, self-described as leaders of the three world. They are here to showcase two Victory-based trikes: the Crossbow and the PitBoss. A glance at their catalog shows nine models based on various Harley-Davidson, Honda, Suzuki, and Victory motorcycles. Not included in the list is the Tri-Glide (CC, Sept/Oct 2009) that Lehman builds under license for Harley-Davidson. Originally located in Westlock, Alberta, the company has since moved its production facility to Spearfish, South Dakota.

The Crossbow faithfully follows the Vision's design with free-flowing rear fenders that mimic the stylized lines of the Vision's fairing. The end product is striking, made even more dramatic with the absence of a top case. From the rider's seat forward everything remains the same as on the two-wheeler, but looking back reveals a handbrake and two trunks in place of side-loading panniers.

The Crossbow feels more compact than Harley's Tri-Glide yet is 18 mm wider at the rear wheels. The Crossbow is fitted with Victory's optional reverse gear, which uses the engine's starter motor to back the 538-kilogram rig up. I've timed my switch from two to three wheels poorly. The road suddenly begins a steep upward ascent and tightly weaves its way around the wall of a canyon. Keeping up with a group of briskly ridden two-wheelers requires concentration and an interaction with the trike that is surprisingly satisfying. The Crossbow remains very stable in turns and much tauter than the Tri-Glide, in



part because of Lehman's "no lean" suspension that uses a rigid swingarm and straight axle differential. Ride quality, especially over offset impacts, is good for a trike.

Late in the day I try the PitBoss, but Lehman president and CEO Ken Hines is reluctant to hand me the keys.

"It's a pre-production model and still needs a little tweaking," he warns as we admire the relatively diminutive trike built on the Victory Kingpin platform. The last thing I hear him say before I fire up the engine is that I might experience a bit of headshake. I laugh off the caution. Not long into the ride I realize I shouldn't have. My recent trike experience has made me complacent, as I consider myself a veteran of buckhorn handlebars and wide ass ends, and I'm not prepared for what the PitBoss can dish out. Powering the PitBoss hard through turns is like holding onto the horns of a steer.

In fairness to Lehman I should not pass judgment on a prototype, but had it not been so terrifying to ride it probably wouldn't have been so much fun. As it stands the PitBoss is the sportbike of trikes and demands to be ridden hard.

My fascination with trikes continues to grow, to the annoyance of the boss back home. My interest in them does not imply waning interest in conventional motorcycles; it is just another vein for an enthusiast to mine, and criticizing three-wheelers is like a beer drinker scorning those who prefer wine.

Canadian prices have yet to be announced, but the PitBoss starts at \$27,195 U.S. while the \$33,995 U.S. Crossbow is still in the process of being approved for Canada.

