

BUSINESS

WEEK OF DECEMBER 6-12, 2007

A GUIDE TO THE GREATER FORT MYERS BUSINESS INDUSTRY

GOT TORQUE?

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

ewilliams@florida-weekly.com

BMW Motorcycles in south Fort Myers is where Ed Gallo and family sell those glistening two-wheeled rides, great for traversing Alligator Alley through the middle of the state or traveling cross-country and getting an uncovered look at American countryside.

"Last summer, I took my son to Sturgis, South Dakota for the annual motorcycle rally," he said. "We rode there from here. The worst part of the trip is getting out of Florida — it's long, straight and boring. There are better motorcycle roads up through Georgia, Tennessee and Missouri. You get to see the beautiful country side, a great part of the United States."

Gallo started the business in 2002, and recently celebrated a five-year anniversary with a weekend of food, door prizes, and special prices on parts and motorcycles.

"I had sold my previous company up in Cleveland, [Ohio] and basically retired and moved to Fort Myers and became bored," Gallo said. In that other, northern life, he owned Gallo Displays, Inc., designing custom exhibits for trade shows of any variety.

This new venture sprung from his own motor biking enthusiasm, and a family he could share it with. His son Jeff is the sales manager and his daughter, Jennifer, is the operations manager. Gallo lives in south Fort Myers and vacations in north Georgia, he said, "to get a break from the heat of the summer."

"I've ridden motorcycles since the early 1970s and it was always a passion," he said. "I started off with a Honda, and rode Harley Davidson's in the late 1990s. Then I had the opportunity to ride a [BMW] and discovered what a great motorcycle it is. BMWs are more engineered for performance, safety, durability and rider ergonomics...Harley Davidson's are a little more about style."

Gallo recently added some new bikes to his showroom floor as well.

"Because of market demands, we needed to bring a brand in that built cruisers [primarily for riding 'around town'] and we wanted to bring in a well known name, very high quality and price competitive," he said.

That brand is Triumph, which he has carried since 2005, available in colors like jet black, cardinal red, graphite and scorched yellow. It's done well, but the higher priced BMWs are still the most popular, he said. He also carries "touring" motorcycles, made for long trips; as well as "enduro" motorcycles, which are sportbikes good on and off road. To satisfy that end of the market, Gallo brought in the

Family owned BMW Motorcycles now also sells Ducati, Triumph and MV Augusta

MV Augusta and Ducati lines last year, both old Italian sportbike manufacturers.

"The only segment of the motorcycle industry still growing is the sportbike segment," he said. "The sportbike lines we were looking at had to be high quality and well known...They're design and engineering is more artwork than you'd expect in a motorcycle."

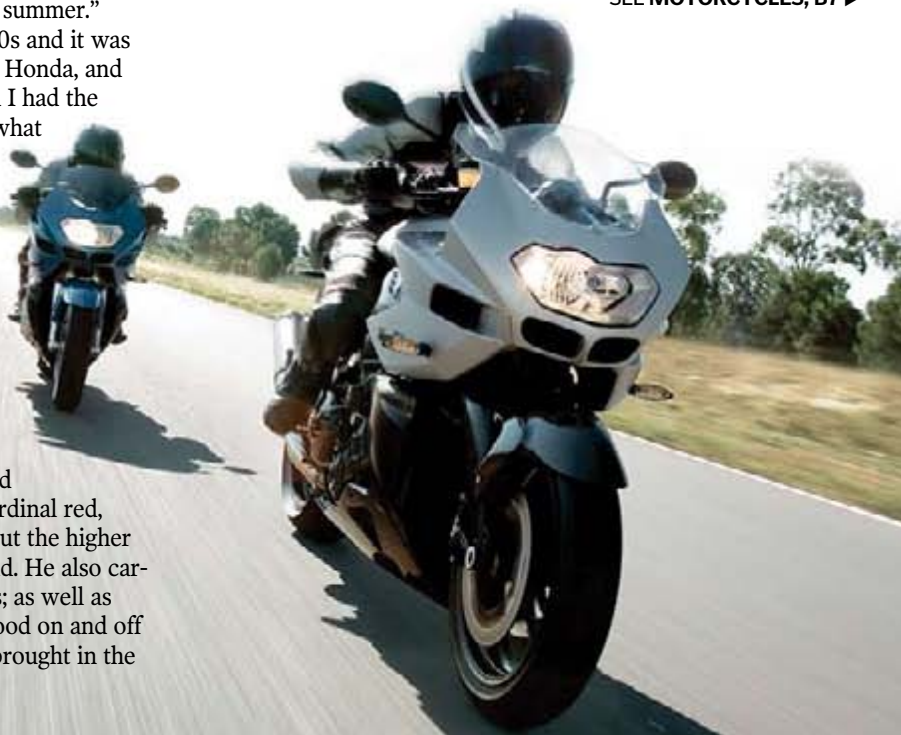
And the business sells all the accoutrements to frame that artwork: boots, gloves, hats, apparel and accessories.

"We service all the motorcycles here also," he said. Technicians are factory trained and certified, of course. Gallo has about 14 employees in all, and is currently looking to hire an experienced motorcycle salesperson, to work in his 14,000 square foot facility, which includes the showroom and service department.



■ Ed and Jeff Gallo

SEE MOTORCYCLES, B7 ►



WEEK at-a-glance



Women Realtors

And other networking social events in Greater Fort Myers. **B10 & 11** ►



Weatherman

On-air meteorologist Dave Roberts also grows and sells palm trees and has a new real estate venture. **B2** ►



Women & Money

Financial advisor, writer, and TV personality Suze Orman on when gifts are expensive mistakes. **B9** ►

Cape Coral promotes business growth with technology

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The City of Cape Coral has redesigned its Economic Development Web site (www.bizcapecoral.com) and launched a powerful new tool to help users find commercial land and buildings and to provide them instantly with business and workforce information, maps and demographics of Cape Coral.

At the heart of CapeCoralProspector is Geographic Information System technology, which allows visitors to rapidly tailor maps and reports to suit their needs and access data that would normally take weeks to collect at a cost of thousands of dollars.

CapeCoralProspector is now avail-



able at no charge at www.bizcapecoralgis.com or on the Economic Development Web site at www.bizcapecoral.com.

Now that the technology has been established, the Economic Development Office needs help from the community to input the data about properties available for sale or lease. Property owners and real estate professionals can include data about their available space for any commercial projects from those in the permitting phase, to those under construction and completed. Owners and real estate professionals can add data on properties for free after registering at www.bizcapecoralgis.com.

"We encourage anyone with a property for sale or lease to enter data on their projects so it's available for users," said Cape Coral Economic Develop-

ment Director Mike Jackson. "The more data added, the more valuable the service. It's a win-win for the buyer and the seller."

Once data on the properties is entered into the system, the power of the software can begin. Users will be able to view available properties, along with site, use, cost, development incentives and contact information. They can also create demographic reports including data on labor force, education levels, consumer spending and age.

Cape Coral is one of only 130 local governments nationwide to use the system.

For more information, call 574-0444 or toll free (866) 573-3089. ■