

Maintaining Momentum: Jones Bicycles Celebrates 100 Years



Owners Lisa and John Genshock (front row) with employees Donna Williamson and Shawn Charlton, are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Jones Bicycles. Jones Bicycles is located at 5332 E. 2nd St. in Belmont Shore. For more information, call 562/434-0343 or visit www.jonesbicycles.com. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

By **ASHLEIGH OLDLAND**
Staff Writer

Jones Bicycles has kept wheels turning for Long Beach cycling enthusiasts since 1910.

Owners Lisa and John Genshock keep the store stocked with brightly decorated velocipedes for all ages, shapes and sizes. No longer just a one-stop shop for bicycles, the fixture in Belmont Shore features skateboards, red wagons, tricycles, unicycles and more.

"This is a beach community, and people at the beach love riding bikes," says John Genshock. "I just had an older gentleman come in, and he was the third generation of his family to buy a bicycle here."

It's hard not to notice the 2nd Street store filled with neon green lights and four levels of bicycles stacked from floor to ceiling. The business, which the Genshocks have owned since 1994, houses

more than 600 bikes and one of the best selections of skateboards in the Southland.

The atmosphere and decor at Jones Bicycles is also part of the allure, John Genshock says. Certainly, white space is difficult to find – no part of the walls is left unadorned. Visitors are greeted by a collection of works by local artists, "Star Wars" memorabilia, a model airplane collection, antique coin-operated arcade games from The Pike and a restored drone missile complete with a sultry "Mrs. Jones" painted on its shell.

"The thing people like is that whenever they come in, there's tons of stuff everywhere," Lisa Genshock says. She adds that her husband has incorporated a lot of his own personal style into the decorating.

It's as easy to marvel at the wall-to-wall curiosities in Jones Bicycles as it is to admire the newfangled bicycles, which look a lot different than the high-wheeled mech-

anisms the store sold a century ago.

The modern bike is made from aluminum or carbon fiber and painted in every color imaginable. Bikes today have hydraulic shocks and brakes and can be accessorized with bells, colored seats, baskets and more. But John Genshock says that bikes in the early 1900s were simply constructed, single-speed, high-wheeler versions made from steel. Solid rubber tires were glued to the wheel rims.

The front window of Jones Bicycles displays one of the high-wheeler bikes that would have been sold in 1910. John Genshock still rides the antique on the streets of Belmont Shore to attract inquisitive customers.

In 1910, the first Jones Bicycles was established at 10th Street and American Avenue (now Long Beach Boulevard). Owner Frank Samuel sold bicycles and wheeled toys through the Great Depression, the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and two

World Wars. The businessman was known for selling bikes to the boys and girls who delivered the local newspaper during the Depression – he worked out a payment plan so that the kids could buy a bike for 50 cents down and 25 cents every payday.

But a few cents don't go as far as they used to – bike prices at Jones Bicycles range from \$150 to \$6,000. Skateboard prices range from \$50 to \$350.

Still, the owners remind travelers that purchasing a bike is a great investment because, after the initial equipment cost, riding a bike is free. Biking can save money on gasoline and car maintenance, but it also mitigates the need for a gym membership, which is why John Genshock says cycling and skateboarding have become more and more popular in recent years.

"Belmont Shore has grown in the last few years as a serious bicycle community," John Genshock says. "We have a lot of people who come in here for recreation or commuting. We have a lot of people now who are becoming more conscious of their health. And they are wanting to save on gas."

Though not necessarily used for serious exercise or commuting, beach cruisers are a best-selling item because the style is so easily customizable. Cruisers may not be the most practical for getting a workout, John Genshock says, but they reflect the distinctive persona of the rider.



Jones Bicycles' Brady Martinson works in the shop's skateboard department. The owners say that the store boasts one of the best collections of skateboards in Southern California. Jones Bicycles is located at 5332 E. 2nd St. in Belmont Shore. For more information, call 562/434-0343 or visit www.jonesbicycles.com. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

"Cruisers are very fashionable bikes," Lisa Genshock agrees. "There are classical ones, ones with flowers, themed ones; they really have a personality to them. And we have baskets and liners that match the bikes and baskets for dogs and bells. . . . A person's bike is unique to them."

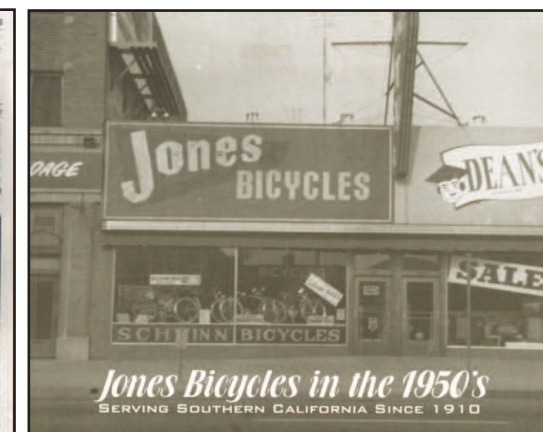
This year, customers can purchase a 100th Anniversary Jones Bicycles Commemorative Bike, designed by Nirve. Additionally, the shop plans to have a variety

of spring and summer promotions to celebrate the milestone. For more information about Jones Bicycles, call 562/434-0343 or visit www.jonesbicycles.com. ■

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The photograph at left shows the first Jones Bicycles, which opened in 1910. Established by Frank Samuel, the shop sold bicycles and wheeled toys from its location on 10th Street and American Avenue (now Long Beach Boulevard). By the time the center photograph was taken in the 1950s, Jones Bicycles had been through the Great Depression, the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and two World Wars. Right, after the 1933 earthquake, which destroyed the facade of Jones Bicycles, Samuel rebuilt the store. Above, the shop sign is an example of what an early high-wheeler bicycle looked like. John Genshock, current owner with his wife Lisa, still rides the antique high-wheeler on the streets of Belmont Shore and has one on display in the shop's window.

