

Boss Hoss Welcomes Our First California Dealership! Victor & Shelly Vert Spearhead Western Expansion

By: Judy Philipps Otto

Boss Hoss enters a new frontier with the opening of California Boss Hoss Motorcycles at 1730 West Carson Street, in Torrance, California—a “hot spot” location about seven miles south of Los Angeles, and within a mile of the freeway.

Victor & Shelly Vert, owners of the new dealership, love their product, and look forward with great anticipation to introducing the Boss Hoss into a fresh market, where we expect it to be enthusiastically received.

Victor, who also owns a tool and die/metal stamping and metal fabrication

business, has been in the metals industry for 35 years, and has been riding and building motorcycles as a hobby for 40 years. Shelly, a nurse, began riding motorcycles last February.

Until last year, when their neighbor, a fellow Harley enthusiast, mentioned the Boss Hoss, the Verts had never seen one.

“We had never seen a V-8 on two wheels. Larry took Victor to www.bosshoss.com, and that was it – we were in pursuit of seeing this marvelous machine in person. Soon after that, Larry and Donna and Victor and I got on our two bikes and headed over to the American

Heat show in Palm Springs, hearing that Boss Hoss would be there. We weren’t able to locate them, but the next month while attending the Las Vegas SEMA show, we turned a corner and there in front of us were two awesome Boss Hosses and Monte Warne and Rad Hunsley. We were blown away by the power, beauty, and design of the Boss Hoss, and by the ingenuity and down-to-earth niceness of the guys running things,” says Shelly.

The Verts were invited to apply for a dealership, and were not the only aspirants to submit an application.

“I told Rad that I was in the tool and die

metal stamping business and I would love to be considered,” said Victor. “We spent some time with him and Monte, and thank God that they felt that we would be the most capable of representing them in California. That’s how and why I got into the motorcycle business. It’s really a kind of retirement business for me; Shelly and I are looking forward to having a lot of fun with it, which is why we got into the business. It is supposed to be fun! It has been challenging at times, and we are looking forward to being able to have more time to enjoy it, after this initial start-up phase. We are extremely enthusiastic about the product.”

Hunsley, Boss Hoss Chief Operations Officer, speaks for the company in expressing his satisfaction with the new dealership agreement:

“We had a number of individuals inquiring about establishing a Boss Hoss dealership in California over the past two years or so since we gained emissions approval for our bikes in the State of California. When evaluating a potential new dealer we look hard at their financial strength, mechanical and service ability and their plan to market the product in their region.

“We have many individuals and/or groups that are interested in marketing our product and reaping the rewards from their sales efforts, but have no interest in servicing the customer after the sale. That attitude doesn’t suit us. We feel that we have built this company on a foundation of servicing the customer, and all our representatives must be willing and able to do the same.

“The Verts are a family that has been successful in business in Southern California for many years, are motorcycle enthusiasts, and have an understanding of the work and effort that is going to be needed



to get a new dealership off the ground in the State of California. We have found Victor Vert and his team to be a first class act and feel that they will represent Boss Hoss well in the southwestern United States.”

Establishing a Motorcycle Business

Victor notes that this will be a real family business, due to his wife’s special interest in the Boss Hoss.

“Shelly is 5’2” and weighs 125 pounds. Once she saw the Boss Hoss, she decided that she wanted to get a motorcycle license. Prior to that, we had bought a 2003 Harley softtail that was lowered, and, after getting her license she rode that two times on our cul-de-sac, which none of the neighbors could believe. But she will never ride a Harley again—she only rides the Boss Hoss now. We are making a video of her riding the Boss Hoss so when people come in to the shop, they’ll understand that this is a very easy motorcycle to ride. And, not to mention, powerful and exhilarating!”

Not content with becoming a proficient Boss Hoss rider, Shelly is determined to immerse herself completely in the product: “Eventually, when things are in place in the front of the shop, I would love to go to Dyersburg and go through

the training so that I can also work on the bikes in the back. We have already had several Hosses come in for repair and maintenance, and it would be great fun to be able to help out back there.”

Naturally, setting up a dealership isn’t something that happens overnight—especially in California.

“We started the process in January 2004,” Victor explains. “California is very unusual. In order to sell a motorcycle in California, you have to have an auto retail license. So we had to become an automotive dealer. We have the top of the line license, which we had to get in order to be a retail motorcycle dealer. Right now we’re exclusively a Boss

Hoss dealership, although it is very difficult to survive as a stand-alone retail store.

“The biggest problem in California, and what took us so long, was finding a location; auto dealer zoning is limited to auto corridors in our area, and smaller properties of that type are extremely difficult to come by. Luckily for us, we came upon a piece of property that could be grandfathered in to the desired zoning, simply because there had been a motorcycle dealership for 30 years in that location. With that zoning approval in hand, we were able to make an appointment to apply for our dealership license. That was a six-month period for us.

“We got our license at the beginning of June, finally allowing us to establish ourselves in a dealership environment. There were many difficulties, and quite frankly, had we not been able to get into our current location, we would probably not have been able to open in California. It was that serious.”

Victor estimates that they considered in the neighborhood of 100 possible locations before finding the ideal combination of advantages in Torrance.

“At one point I told Rad that I was afraid that it was just not going to work. It seemed that the only way it was going





toward the development of the facility. “He said he’d come out and help us, and he really meant it! Don rides his Hosses every day it’s not raining, oftentimes with a group of riders who insist he organize their expeditions. He has thousands of miles on his bikes, and he has probably been our best advertiser, having passed out thousands of

flyers and sharing the merits of the Boss Hoss everywhere he goes. We consider ourselves blessed whenever he goes anywhere with us!”

The contributions of Jim Stoddard, who

to work was to purchase a multi-million-dollar property in one of the auto corridors, which is where the cities want you—they do not want you to stand alone, even though you’re going to sell motorcycles. They don’t care. California is extremely difficult.”

Victor explained that their original business plan was to use buildings that he already owns in Gardena, 15 minutes from the current Torrance location. The Gardena location was situated on a busy boulevard, and could easily have been converted to a showroom. The existing business was already staffed with trained office personnel, managers, and mechanics who could have been specifically trained to service the Boss Hoss, as well. Changing the plan to acquiring a different location was like starting fresh, from the ground up, said Victor, and has been very difficult and very expensive.

“What made it work for us in the very beginning was having Bob Becker on board. He has been a close friend for many years, and with his eagerness and help and ideas, we were able to get through the ups and downs of that initial phase.”

The Verts have had the good fortune to have two other individuals who have been instrumental in developing California Boss Hoss into an authentic and recognized dealership.

Don Johnston, a loyal friend and owner of two Boss Hosses named Pearl and Hottie, has been unyielding in his efforts

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has many years of experience in the automotive and RV industries, have been invaluable to the Verts. Jim has maintained an involvement with motorcycles since the age of 13, and considers the Boss Hoss to be the ultimate motorcycle.

“Both of these guys have given inestimable time and experience to our dealership, and their passion for the Boss Hoss is at the core of it,” Victor says. Positioned For Success

California Boss Hoss Motorcycles has 4,000 feet of full service dealership, including a modern service bay with two of the same state-of-the-art lifts that the factory uses. It’s in a prime location on a very busy street—Victor estimates that 100,000 cars pass the spot each day. “We have a very upscale shopping center across the

street from us, and although this is an industrial area, there are a lot of retail businesses here.

“We’re still putting the finishing touches on the dealership,” said Victor in a mid-August interview. “We just put a new phone system in this morning. Our air lines were hooked up two weeks ago and we’re servicing our first bikes now—both racks have bikes on them and another one coming in this afternoon—Boss Hosses, of course.”

The state is already populated with a few immigrant Boss Hoss bikes from other states, and Victor points out that their sales in California will be limited to the new California Boss Hoss model, which differs from the regular Hosses in two basic ways: It is fuel-injected, and it has a special California exhaust system with a catalytic converter that complies with the California emissions standards and is certified by the state to meet those standards.

Grand Opening

As of this writing, California Boss Hoss Motorcycles had not yet celebrated an official grand opening, although a January celebration is being considered. Shelly, who determines the schedule for their shows and rallies, has a pretty full calendar of public appearances planned to introduce the new dealership—and the Boss Hoss!—to its new market.

“There are a few more things that we are working on that need to be in place, including competitive financing, our website, and clothing items. Like so many things, doing it well takes time, and we are pretty meticulous about just about everything!”

Both Verts are busy with plans to attend events, and to proceed with advertising and promotion opportunities, including sending flyers to all of the other motorcycle dealers in their area.

Will this news be well-received by competitors? Victor thinks so, and believes they’ll be welcomed.

“Since the Boss Hoss is in a class by itself, I don’t think that anybody is going to consider us competition. Certainly I think that I’m the typical Boss Hoss owner: I’m older than 45, I can afford the bike, and I’m a

Harley rider of many, many years, and I have two Harley-Davidsons. I think the people that buy Boss Hosses have owned Harleys and/or still own a Harley—and they are over 45 and can afford the Boss Hoss. Little do they know that they’re not going to go back to their Harleys,” he laughs. “I’ve got two new Harleys sitting here with dead batteries.”

The Boss Hoss spoils riders for other makes, he believes. “Pound for pound, the Boss Hoss is the finest stopping machine I have ever driven or ridden. Period. I don’t care where it is. The Brembo racing brakes on this motorcycle are absolutely phenomenal.”

Currently the new showroom has ten Boss Hosses on the floor: six 2004 models and two 2005’s, along with two trikes.

“We’ve had an overwhelming amount of response just from local advertising, and from exhibiting in six major motorcycle events since May, 2004. Since the beginning we have had our doors open, but nonetheless, there are still potential customers in our area who do not know we are here. We have been heading toward our grand opening all along, and when it happens, we will be ready for it! We got into the building pretty quick and got the sign up, but still had to get the big lifts in that can handle the bikes before we could offer real service, and that meant we had to run all new air-lines and electrical first. It’s been a ground-up labor of love, and there have been many, many 24-hour days put in

here,” Victor explains.

What’s on the immediate horizon? “We will continue to attend all the shows,” says Victor. “This year we were at the Long Beach Calendar Show, Las Vegas Bikefest, American Heat in Palm Springs, the Las Vegas SEMA show, and last

weekend we were at the world’s largest one day motorcycle event in the world—the Love Ride, which begins at Glendale Harley Davidson, and ends at Castaic Lake. We were also represented at Reno Street Vibrations, and we will do all of these shows again next year. Coming up in early December, we will be in Long Beach again, at the International Show. Of course, we will be advertising for these shows.

“We also have a gorgeous custom-painted American flag bike that is going to Bank of America for six weeks. They’ll display it in the center of their bank, which is going to be just beautiful. We’re really excited about that.”

As far as anticipated sales and growth projections, Victor is casual and cautious. “We’re just going to take it nice and easy.



We’re introducing California to Boss Hoss. A lot of people have heard of it, but they’ve never seen it. We have had a steady stream of people in here since opening, and as the word continues to get out, we know the response will be even greater. Rad promises that as California gears up, the factory production will, too.

“We really believe that between California, Arizona, and Nevada, there is an incredible market out here. With proper marketing and exposure, Boss Hoss will become discovered and established. There are 30 million people out here. If we just sell one motorcycle to one in every 500,000...!”

The prospects of this new, wide-open frontier are indeed awesome. It’s a culture of adventure-seekers and trend-setters in love with the outdoors—always ready to embrace something new and worthy. A perfect new proving ground for the Boss Hoss.

“People think the Boss Hoss is a novelty, and it’s not,” Victor suggests, “This is a legitimate, well-balanced, high performance motorcycle that is one of the most manageable machines I’ve ever driven. To look at it, of course, it’s intimidating. Just the thought of it is psychologically debilitating! But once you get past that, you’re going to have the experience of a lifetime.”

Amen.

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