

PENTON WEEKEND

Celebrating the anniversary of the first "American" dirt bike

Early this fall, we made the long journey to Ohio, by automobile, and attended the Penton Anniversary celebration in Amherst, Ohio. I say "by automobile" because it's impractical to think that anybody would want to ride a restored Penton to Amherst, which would have been a cool thing to do, but not over a short weekend.

The Penton Anniversary was a combination of celebrations, specifically the 40th anniversary of the Penton motorcycle, as well as the tenth anniversary of the Penton Owners Group, or POG for short. The event promised to be "a once in the lifetime opportunity" to get together with the Penton family and a group of Penton owners from wherever they wanted to come from. What, no vintage Penton race at Amherst Meadowlarks?

No vintage Penton cross-country event? Nope, there was no competition of any kind, no real riding either. It was like going to a great big birthday party for somebody's 40 year-old baby. Boring? Well, there were over 250 of us who thought it was a great idea!

I knew what I was getting into going out there, and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. You see, I grew into this sport as a Penton owner way back in the '70s, and wound up falling into the motorcycle business in 1979, when I started get-

**Photos by
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Where it all started: That "V001" on the steering head marks the very first production Penton made, sold and raced. Left: Doug Wilford gets ready for the big parade on Sunday. Below: Not the entire Penton clan, but everyone who could make it to the banquet Saturday night. It's a big family!

ting to know everyone in northern Ohio. I lived in Amherst for almost two years, and worked for KTM at that time. That was back in 1985. My wife and I "crashed" in one of the Penton houses for a month or so. Then I rented a house in Vermilion, Ohio, for a little bit, then bought a house in Amherst, right down the street from where KTM is located now. At this house, I grew black raspberries and sold the excess to Bill Penton at the Penton Farm Market. I swiped apples from John Penton's orchard, when he wasn't looking. My daughter was born while we lived in that house.

In the course of all that, I met most of the Penton family (not all—it's a huge family!), and feel a great privilege in calling them my friends. So for me,

