

Best of the West Grows Its Show

THIS YEAR'S BEST OF THE WEST -

VegasCon 2017 show was located at the East Side Cannery in Las Vegas on May 7. The show was expanded from its previous location which consisted of 7,500 square feet of convention space to over 12,000 square feet, and IPMS/Las Vegas filled every square inch of it with vendors, displays and models.

The total model count was 631 models on display and in competition, slightly down from 2016, but the attendee and guest count was up. One hundred and sixteen people entered the Best of the West contest, and another 157 people were there as guests and visitors, making this year's show the biggest and best yet.

The new location allowed for larger

model display tables with five-foot aisles between each of the table rows, a large and comfortable seating area centrally located in front of the podium, and vendor tables around the entire convention area. The vendors occupied the same room as the displays tables and reported that sales went very well.

The event had 60 contest categories plus an additional 11 special category awards, including Best in Show. Over 180 wood plaques and multi-tiered trophies were awarded to the winners.

As in the past, the contest continues to use IPMS judging rules except with a greater emphasis on a no-sweep, "spread the wealth" philosophy. This enables more plaques to be given out

to a greater number of people as well as allowing up-and-coming modelers a chance of a win over the vets.

This year the club instituted a new and streamlined model registration and awards totaling system, which resulted in a faster tally and reporting of contest winners, allowing judging to start and end precisely on schedule.

The club also employed a new process of "rolling tables." During the initial set-up of the room, the tables were laid out by category to match the event flyer, which also matched the judging and awards system. Exactly at 12:30 p.m., the contest tables were closed off with yellow tape and immediately the judging process started. During this process, the convention

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hall was left open to allow the vendors a continued selling opportunity. As the judges completed each category section, the yellow tape was removed and the visitor were allowed access to the area. By not closing off the room and quickly allowing access to the judged tables we created a much welcome transparency to the judging process.

A local "Eye on Las Vegas" entertainment film crew was present most of the day and they filmed and interviewed many attendees and guests.

The club has already secured the same location and square footage for

Best of the West 2018 as well as the 2019 Regional.

For 2018 the club is consolidating a few of the less-populated categories, while expanding the sci-fi and figure categories which continue to grow in size and popularity every year. In 2017 there were 58 entries in the Sci-Fi categories, 38 of which consisted of Gundum figures alone.

The club is also exploring the idea of on-site workshops and demos to take place during the judging so as to maintain the interest and excitement levels while the displays tables are closed-off.

The evolution of IPMS/Las Vegas' space at the East Side Cannery for its Best of the West show. Plenty of space meant that the display tables could share space with the vendors without crowding the visitors.

The club is very optimistic about the future success of Best of the West yet to come while at the same time creating a Regional Event in 2019 that will hopefully set the bar for all regionals to come.

— Bob Lomassaro
President,
IPMS Las Vegas Chapter