

# HOMEGROWN

## AS IT SHOULD BE

### Cyclops Fest returns bigger and more homespun

BY RUSTY PATE

**By the time** September rolls around, festival fatigue starts to set in. After a long summer of every city, village and township celebrating something or other, the scenes start to melt into each other. Before long, it becomes hard to remember where that terrible cover band butchered Van Halen. One can only walk by so many trailers selling funnel cakes before winter doesn't sound so bad after all.

The Cyclops Fest is different.



The festival returns to Yellow Springs on Sept. 15 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the John Bryan Center, 100 Dayton Street. This marks the second year for the celebration of handmade goods and the DIY aesthetic. Going into the inaugural offering last year, not everyone was sure it would all come together.

DJ Galvin co-owns Urban Handmade. Along with fellow Yellow Springer Brian Johnson, and a host of other folks passionate about handmade wares, they brought their vision of what a festival should be to life in 2011.

"Going into it last year, we had about three months to plan it total," Johnson said. "We kind of went into it with hopes, but not really knowing exactly where it would go. Our sponsors came in behind us and helped to make it a huge event."

"It really surpassed everything we thought it would be," Galvin said.

That worry, followed by joyous enthusiasm, even spilled over into at least one vendor.

"I had my doubts, to be honest," said Tracey Hanlin Rohr of Reinvented Vinyl, winner of last year's Best in Show award. "I was a little bit worried."

Rohr brought her fairly new venture of repurposing vinyl music albums into purses to Cyclops last year. A self-described "show veteran," Rohr knew the challenges for a first-year festival.

"Typically, a first-year show doesn't draw that many people," Rohr said. "It totally blew me away; DJ (Galvin) did such a great job. People did show up. They showed up from very far away and they bought."

Rohr's win last year included a free booth spot at this year's event. She will join more than 80 other vendors, musical acts and all other ilk of like-minded creative folk.

"It's been a lot of fun to be part of it," Rohr said. "People really appreciate the uniqueness of handmade and repurposed. Even people that don't feel like they have a creative streak at all do appreciate what we do."

The festival highlights a movement that has always been around, even if it has been

simmering under the surface of mainstream sensibilities.

"In the last five years, there's been a huge resurgence in recycled, reinvented and restored," Rohr said. "Everything old is new again."

The concept becomes less of a linchpin that loosely holds together a festival and more a way of life.

"It's kind of approaching the festival on a cultural deal," Galvin said. "The feedback we heard over and over again was it was so nice to be at a festival where you see really interesting things and has a really laid back vibe. You can really enjoy yourself. There's something for everybody."

Last year's event drew an estimated crowd of more than 5,000 people.

"It was inspiring," Johnson said. "We kind of went into it not exactly sure what it was going to be and the response we got, the community outreach, people just kind of swarmed in behind it and made it a really great festival."

While the connecting thread of DIY and handmade runs throughout the festival, an eclectic mix of artists provide plenty of diversity – especially on the music side. WYSO's Nicky Illiopolis has long been known as a lover of funk. Grey Market/Dysfunktional Family, Turntable Philanthropy and Skcratchmatic Turntable Crew all offer different takes on hip hop. Tin Armor and The Motel Beds represent the rock side of things.

Returning headliner Ruckus Robotikus has a style that might be tough to pin down to a genre. Ruckus mastermind Dan Haug prefers to call it audio collages.

"I'm a DJ at heart and I collect records," Haug said. "I kind of build songs from a bunch of little snippets of existing songs and try to build them into something new or different. That ends up being a little bit of hip-hop, because of the beats and sampling, but I love funk. So, it comes out kind of funky and danceable."

Haug said his debut album was based heavily on children's music. How many DJs can say that?

His distinctive sound recently earned his track "Take Me to a Disco" a spot the MTV-U show "The Freshmen," which features up-and-coming artists. He also opened up for legendary funk pioneer Bootsy Collins at a June show in Columbus.

"For me, it was definitely the biggest venue and biggest audience I've had," Haug said. "It was a really amazing experience."

Haug will play a two-hour set at this year's Cyclops, with one hour devoted to his original songs and the other hour featuring him spinning some of his favorite records. He said Yellow Springs is the perfect venue for such a diverse collection of performers.

"They are open to a lot of different genres and as long as it has soul and is good, they'll appreciate it," Haug said. "The festival reflects that diversity."

Haug was also impressed with the scope and breadth of all the festival offerings.

"There's quite an impressive group of vendors who make some really interesting and very cool goods," Haug said. "To me, that's just as impressive as the music."

Also on hand, will be demos by skateboarders and BMX riders.

"That's something new we're trying out this year," Johnson said. "It's the same kind of thing. These skaters and BMXers are out there every day working on their art, by themselves – busting it out. It's all about the culture – the progressive local culture."

While on the surface, it seems like a hodgepodge of different elements, Johnson said the underlying DIY current allows



A. Live graffiti art demo at Cyclops Fest 2011 by Etch B. Handmade vinyl record bowls by Dayton local Lissa Lush C. DJ Nicky Illiopolis – also from WYSO, a premier sponsor of Cyclops Fest