



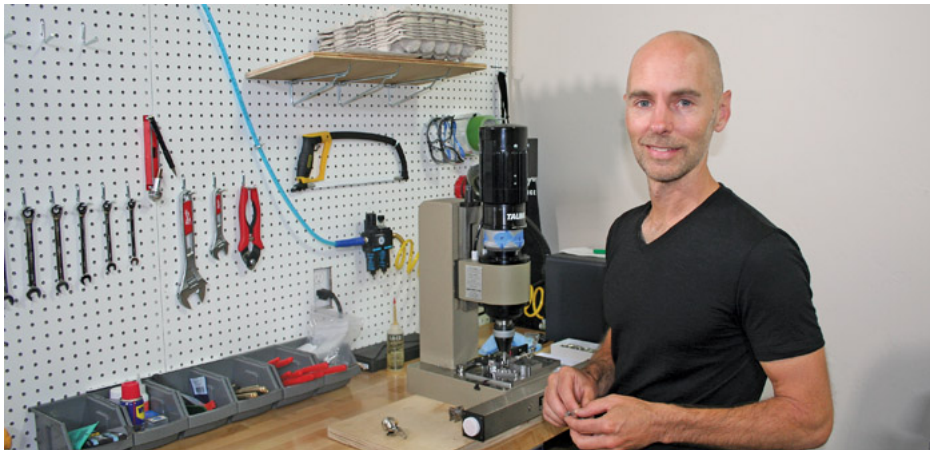
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Spurcycle Bell Manufacturer Lands in Bend

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BY SAM EDELEN FOR CBN ON AUGUST 29, 2019

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY, E-HEADLINES

(Nick Slone / Photo by Sam Edelen)

The maker of the Spurcycle Bell and a handful of other bicycle-related accessories has relocated to Bend. Spurcycle, founded by brothers Nick and Clint Slone, moved its offices and product assembly in early May to a facility on SE Bridgeford Blvd.

The Massachusetts natives, who grew up around their family's retail bike store on Martha's Vineyard, started Spurcycle in 2012 in San Francisco by designing and selling bicycle grips. A year-and-a-half later the duo executed a successful Kickstarter campaign to crowdfund a newly designed bicycle bell — the Spurcycle Bell — through advanced purchases.

The inspiration for the bell, which is known for the amount of sound it generates for its size, was the brothers' often harrowing trips across the Golden Gate Bridge on their bicycles.

"We sent a bunch of the designs and hard drawings out for a quote, and they came back a lot higher than we could have necessarily anticipated or maybe hoped," Nick said. "At that point, we thought 'we still believe in the design' so maybe we can put it on Kickstarter, see what the response was like and take it from there."

That online campaign was slated to raise \$50,000 for the bell's first purchase order, but much to their surprise it generated \$100,000 in the first week and topped out at roughly \$330,000 with the sale of 8,000 bells. Nick and Clint were off to the races.

Their first production run of 10,000 bells came in August 2014, and a staff of six assembled and delivered the first 8,000 directly to customers from office space in Sausalito, California, just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. Most of the remaining inventory was sold through wholesale channels to individual bike stores, including several in Bend.

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Early on the bell's retail price of \$49 had some bike shop owners questioning its ability to sell, Nick said, as the product was still unproven. But with customers regularly spending thousands of dollars on bicycles alone, it turned out that purchasing a matching quality bicycle bell made sense.

Following the Kickstarter campaign, Spurcycle focused on direct-to-consumer sales through its website, which initially accounted for some 60 percent of its revenue. As time went on and Nick and Clint learned more about the costs and manpower associated with e-commerce and shipping, particularly overseas, the business migrated toward a wholesale model that now accounts for 80 percent of its sales.

"Over the course of time we've continued to build up the number of wholesale accounts we're working with," said Nick. "We have maybe around 1,100 wholesale accounts now that we ship to, and most of those are independent bicycle dealers around the country."

Included among those accounts are international customers in Germany, Great Britain, Australia and Japan, among other countries, which account for nearly one-third of the company's sales.

Since the launch of the Spurcycle Bell, which is manufactured using only U.S. parts and vendors, the company's added several "Made in USA" products to its line, including a titanium key clip, titanium tool set, saddle bag and multi pouch.

MOVE TO BEND

Fast-forward to September 2018, when Nick hit the road in search of a change of scenery and a new location for the business. He headed north to Vancouver, B.C., and then east to Boise and Sun Valley, Idaho. Eventually he ended up in Bend, a spot he'd visited several times over the years and always found appealing, he said.

So, in March the company signed a lease and set up shop here and moved its operations up from California. For the time being, Nick's brother, Clint, continues to work on company research and development from the Bay Area.

"I'm sort of like a country guy who wants it all. There's a desire to have access to the outdoors but also a desire to have this critical mass that's important for good food, good entertainment and just good interactions amongst the community," Nick said.

"Since moving the business here, I feel I've recognized what a better fit it is than it was in the Bay. The business resources here are at our level and speak the same language to some extent."

Alongside Nick, two employees began operations in May and are now running five days a week. At the current staffing level that means an annual output of 30,000-40,000 bells, and there are several other products in the works and possibly more staff to go along with them. Time will tell.

"I think for us the reason we've seen success without seeing just a huge growth in sales has been simply by means of focus," said Nick. "We stay very diligent with our costs and how efficient we are with our operations. We've been able to step our way comfortably to a position of profitability."

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