

Yamaha Motor Monthly Newsletter

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The 1st floor display space of the Plaza opened after renovations in July 2015. With a more open view from the entrance, the scope of exhibits has been expanded beyond products to include technology, design and lifestyles

The Core of Yamaha Motor

Communication Plaza

A Facility for Exchange and Communication that
Gathers the “Unique Style of Yamaha” to Pass on

In 2015, Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. celebrates its 60th anniversary. The Communication Plaza at Yamaha headquarters in Iwata is where you will find on public display a full collection of definitive models from the company’s earliest years to the present day, the latest offerings from our various business lines and the generations of racing machines that form a vital part of our Spirit of Challenge.

The Plaza opens its doors not only to those who work in the global Yamaha Motor group and our business partners but also to the local community and the general public. Visitors can see the company’s history, get a picture of the global spread of our products and services and discover things about Yamaha they never knew before.

In this issue, we introduce this facility that seeks to be such a venue for exchange and communication.

A Corporate Museum Actively Collecting and Reaching Out with Our Corporate Heritage

The Communication Plaza (hereafter, "the Plaza") was completed and opened in 1998 at Yamaha headquarters in Iwata in Shizuoka Prefecture. The facility was the result of a project to celebrate Yamaha Motor's 40th anniversary. The three-story building has a unique geometrical design with a modern atmosphere built around a spacious central atrium. Today, about 200 models old and new from our various product lines are on display, primarily motorcycles but also snowmobiles, recreational vehicles, electrically power-assisted bicycles, outboard motors and more. In addition to these displays, there are others presenting our corporate culture and history, displays related to Yamaha *Monozukuri*, areas that allow visitors to actually get on a number of different motorcycles or try operating a variety of products, and a hands-on learning corner for holding educational events for children. The Plaza also has a library with a wealth of books and other materials, event/lecture halls and presentation rooms, and a number of large and small meeting rooms.

When it first opened, the mission of the Communication Plaza was to gather and preserve historical assets from our various businesses, and to serve as a place where Yamaha employees could gather to talk about the past, present and future of the company. However, as time passed, the scope of the Plaza's "communication" gradually shifted toward the people of the local communities, customers and the general public. A large number of special exhibitions on themes like "Challenge," "Racing" and "History" that Yamaha fans were interested in, and ones that explored Yamaha technology from a child's perspective were held, along with family-oriented experiential events where children and their parents could have fun learning how an engine or boat runs. As a result, one million people visited the Plaza in its first ten years. Every year, people from Yamaha distributors and dealerships, members of the media and the general public from around the world visit the Communication Plaza in increasing numbers.



What's more, recent years have also seen efforts to strengthen the Plaza's roles both as a corporate museum collecting, preserving and making use of the company's historical assets and as a facility for communication. Examples of this are the complete renewal of the Plaza website and the increase in special exhibitions for Yamaha products other than motorcycles. When Yamaha Motor celebrated its 60th anniversary in July 2015, renovations were made to the 1st-floor display space and the Plaza Café on the 3rd floor to make them more welcoming and give them fresh appeal to entice not only repeat visitors but also people to visit the Plaza for the first time. Thanks to efforts like these, the cumulative visitor count is expected to reach two million by the spring of 2016.

Restoring Models from Throughout Yamaha's History to Their Original Condition

About half of the products currently displayed in the Communication Plaza today are historic models from the company's earliest years, like the YA-1 and YD-1 motorcycles and the P-7 outboard motor. Each of these models have stories to tell about the history of Yamaha Motor and most of them are kept in running condition; if you simply add gasoline and oil, they will run as they originally did. The restoration work undertaken at the Plaza is done in order to show visitors each model as it looked and worked at the time of its initial release. For example, in the case of motorcycles, one of the things the Plaza staff does is search throughout Japan for motorcycle enthusiasts or dealerships in possession of models that haven't been used or have been in storage for a long time,

transfer ownership of the bike and then painstakingly restore them in every detail back to their original condition.

According to one of the restoration specialists, "It's our mission to not only restore a model's exterior appearance in terms of its shape, color and the look and feel of the original materials, but also the model's functions and performance, even the exhaust note. These historic models use parts that can't even be found in the company's stock, but we never ignore even a single bolt. We either make completely new parts or perhaps salvage them from extra models of the same type and restore the parts so they're like new. Then, whenever a model is restored in this way, a number of staff members are gathered to give it a final check in every detail and make sure it's truly in running condition."

Models restored in this way are displayed in the Plaza's historic model display space and in special exhibitions, while restored production models and racing machines are sent to circuit events, classic model events, motor shows and the like at venues around Japan and overseas where they can be enjoyed by a wide range of fans. The Plaza also holds demonstration runs that are open to the public, both as a means to make sure older models are still in running condition and for fan enjoyment. The biggest of these runs is the "Historic Model Demo Ride and Observation Tour." Scheduled to be held next on November 14, 2015, this event will celebrate Yamaha Motor's 60th anniversary and feature demonstrations of some 60 motorcycles and automobiles spanning the company's history.



"Preserving the products our company built in the past is a very meaningful part of building and preserving our corporate culture. When I see developers of the newest Yamaha models gathering around historic models we have restored and discussing them, I feel anew the importance of the work we do."

The Route to Feel the "Unique Style of Yamaha"

There are some 200 models on display at the Plaza, so getting a good look at them all will take more time than you would imagine. If you have the opportunity to visit the Plaza, it may be helpful to check the official website ahead of time, where the Collection page shows and explains the models currently on display, and the Facility Guide page describes the floor layout.

The first floor features a concentration of exhibits introducing the Yamaha Motor of today. First of all, on the center platform is the first Yamaha motorcycle, the YA-1, surrounded by pairs of models—the first and the latest—from different product lines, beginning with motorcycles and commuter models and going on to electrically power-assisted bicycles, outboard motors, snowmobiles and automobiles. This symbolic arrangement provides a picture of the evolution from the company's early years to the present, and the breadth of expansion of our product lines and fields of business to bring more fulfilling lives to people around the world.

Beyond the circular Symbol Zone is where we display the latest models of our various business lines worldwide, arranged by product category and with some displayed in ways that give a look into the lifestyles they can be part of. Against the wall at the far side of the 1st floor, there are display zones for introducing the technologies and design work that support Yamaha's *Monozukuri*. Considering all this variety, you might find it interesting to choose a theme to focus on



[The official website](#) has the latest information about when the facility is open, directions, events being held, etc. You will also find explanations of the roughly 260 historic Yamaha products in the Plaza collection, and you can view past issues of Yamaha Motor publications.

when touring the displays, such as seeking out products that you usually won't see every day, such as our industrial-use unmanned helicopters, snowmobiles or industrial robots, models not marketed where you live, or the different variations of products intended for different regions. This type of tour is more likely to lead to new discoveries and scenes that other people won't see.

On the 2nd floor, you will find displays telling the history of Yamaha Motor. These displays begin with explanations about the company's Spirit of Challenge inherited from our founder, Genichi Kawakami, the origins of the Tuning Fork Mark and more. Next are displays of the historic motorcycle production models and race machines mentioned earlier, as well as early examples of our boats, recreational vehicles and more. Regarding production motorcycles in particular, there are always more than 50 epoch-making models that followed the YA-1 displayed here in chronological order. Looking over these models one by one with an eye out for the unique ideas, technologies and designs they embodied can provide a rare opportunity to see with your own eyes the "Unique Style of Yamaha" that has been passed down and evolved through the changing eras.

Communicating and Fostering the Fascination of *Monozukuri*

As its name implies, the Communication Plaza is a place for communication that helps connect Yamaha Motor and the society at large. People who have never even used a Yamaha product before or people who don't know much about Yamaha Motor to begin with, are among the many we want to invite to the Plaza in the hopes that a visit here will become an experience that makes them feel more familiar with the company and the Yamaha brand. Toward this aim, we organize more than 50 diverse events each year around the *Kando**-creating themes of music and *Monozukuri*. These events include ones for children to experience the fun and fascination of creating products and mini-concerts for families.

A good example of these hands-on activities is our engine dismantle/assembly workshop. In this very Yamaha-like educational program, children take apart and reassemble an actual 2-stroke engine with their own hands. One of the specialized instructors for this program explains: "This is a first-time experience for all of the children and they all work hard through trial and error to learn what tools to use. When they discover the tricks of using them, they all beam with pride for what they learned. Seeing the intense looks of concentration as they work is a very rewarding and encouraging sight for us. When I was young, I loved building models and creating things, and whenever I looked at machine, I was always so curious to find out what it looked like on the inside. I hope that in 10 or 15 years from now, some of these children will become engineers that build vehicles like us."



In the engine dismantle/assembly workshop, children are provided with a selection of about 20 tools, ranging from screwdrivers and spanners to offset wrenches. They then have to figure out for themselves what tools to use and in what order things should be taken apart in order to disassemble and reassemble an engine.

Another Communication Plaza program is the boatbuilding workshop. Children think about what makes a boat float before they build a model boat to see what hull shape is the best. There is also a design class where the participants imagine a vehicle they would like to build and then use clay to give shape to the design they envision. As one of the program instructors says, "The important thing is to create more opportunities for young people to experience the fascination of creating things and take an interest in the process." In these ways, the Communication Plaza is a place that expands communication two-fold through its interactive activities and various model displays.

**Kando* is a Japanese word for the simultaneous feelings of deep satisfaction and intense excitement that we experience when we encounter something of exceptional value.

Message from the Editor



Some things I often see when I go to the Communication Plaza is elderly visitors looking intently at an old model with admiration, as if they are meeting an old friend again, or riders finding the race machine they had dreamed of seeing up close and then eagerly taking pictures of it, and children squealing with glee as they sit on the motorcycle simulator.

The Plaza is a kind of magical place that gives even people who know little about Yamaha products beforehand an experience that turns them into fans by the time they leave. I hope everyone will find the opportunity to visit the Communication Plaza and experience its magic.

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