

West Coast Aikido Festival 2010 - the beginning of something great?

The West Coast Aikido Festival was held on the weekend of January 22-24 januar 2010, this time hosted by Stavanger JūShinKan.

We note with pleasure the festival has developed into a yearly event and cooperation between the three West Coast clubs Haugesund Aikidoklubb, Stavanger JūShinKan & Bergen Aikidoklubb.



It all started in Haugesund in October 2008 when Kim A. Tinderholt and his newborn aikido club contacted the other two clubs on the Wst Coast and aired the idea of doing something together. The result, as Kim proposed, became the West Coast Aikido Festival and the intention was to promote good relations and ties between the clubs.



A month later, a solid standard was set, and when Kim looked for a successor, Stavanger JūShinKan gladly took the challenge. The seminar was planned and announced three quarters of a year ahead of time, and resulted in so many registrations that a bigger venue was called for.

A very early morning, three quarters of a year later, a bunch of cocky, but eager aikidoka left Bergen to attend this festival. So cocky in fact that neither map nor schedule was checked beforehand. After a quick flight and some meandering in Stavanger's charming net of streets, we found an even more charming café where we spent almost a whole working day of good company, good coffee and cards games.



Many hours later, the group had doubled in size and restlessness started to dominate. Both locals and a GPS or two guided a long walk that brought us to large premises, only a stone's throw away from the quai.

Just like last year, the sessions were of 1,5 hours each with short breaks in between, and were held by the instructors from all three club: Bob Johnson, Kristian Haugland, Kristofer Seierstad, Kim



A. Tinderholt, Torstein Jacobsen, Per Ivan Odland and Andrea Raviglione.



We attended the first session with Bob Johnson quite anxious, somewhat worn out and quite tired from an early flight and a long day. We weren't disappointed and the fatigue was transformed into enthusiasm, zeal and the well-known energy and glow that only a good aikido practice can bring about.

Bob Johnson set a standard and provided a good starting point for the rest of the seminar with his clear and steady aikido and with his warm personality. This was quite the inspiring start and it was obvious that people were hungry for more. The following instructors lived up to the expectation and each distinct approach contributed to a great and abundant festival that had something for everyone.

All in all, there were 7 sessions, each with its own focus, but without losing the red thread throughout the weekend. A grading was arranged for the members of all the 3 clubs which resulted in four new 6th kyu and four new 5th kyu, and was followed by a party which had all the right ingredients: music, dance, tea (with a capital T), and of course fantastic food!

As if it weren't enough, a group of us who had been lucky enough to get private accomodation was in for an extra treat. Something that could have been a problem turned out to be quite a fun experience. The town decided to close the only bridge to the island where we were to stay, so the only way to get there was by boat!



You could taste the mood when 9 somewhat anxious aikidoka wrapped themselves in safety vests and climbed aboard a sailboat that looked like it was built before the war... but not only did the ship do what it was supposed to, it did it with a well-know put-put-put steered by a very pleasant skipper.

The festival grew so big that plans had to be changed and a new venue found, but It looked like Stavanger JūShinKan was used to navigate storms and solved all challenges with a professional matter of course that left us with a big grin and an appetite for more!

Next year's festival will take place in the cradle between the seven mountains, namely Bergen! And the date? 21-23 January 2011!

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[Pictures from the 2010-festival](#)

[Pictures from the 2008-festival](#)

