



THE RIVENDELL READER • ISSUE 15 • 1999/SPRING

WHEN “HEARTS OF ROMAINE” MEANT ONE HECK OF A LOT MORE THAN JUST SALAD INGREDIENTS

L.L. Bean now sells distressed versions of its original cash-cow, the Maine Hunting shoe, so now they can “look like an old friend” right out of the box. I wonder what Leon Leonwood would have thought about that. In the new L.L. Bean Early Spring Catalog for Men, you also get advice on how to live (“play every other day” etc), and observations on duct tape (“Your golf swing. One of the very few things duct tape can’t fix.”). I wonder what Leon Leonwood would have thought about that. On another page there’s a big picture of a bunch of guys and two women sitting in a movie theater, wearing cardboard 3-D glasses, eating popcorn, and laughing their heads off. The caption: “3-D glasses, a bag of popcorn, and a fresh perspective.” What would Leon Leonwood have thought about that?

One thing you see a lot these days, including on television commercials for Estee Lauder, is making something seem cool by associating it with fly fishing. I’m not out to get Bean, I still like the catalogue and buy from it, but there on page 89 of the same catalogue is a guy who’s supposed to be casting, but he’s not, and there’s a caption: “Zen and the art of lunchtime fly-casting practice.” It takes one to know one, and he’s a model, not a fly caster, practicing or not. That’s not how you hold a fly rod. I wonder what Leon Leonwood...After the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, everything else tried to hop on to the *Zen and the Art of...* thing. It must drive real Zen folks crazy, if that’s possible. It’s like non-ballet people describing rock climbing or downhill mountain bike racings as “ballet on rock,” or “ballet on knobs”; or a real surgeon reading that a nineteen-year old mountain bike rider “negotiates singletrack with surgical precision.” Do surgeons who also ride mountain bikes ever think

hey, this section reminds me of last Thursday’s bypass or-how do non-surgeons ride these singletracks? Stuff shouldn’t be compared to other stuff by people who don’t do the other stuff. I know the phrase “...surgical precision” isn’t intended to be taken literally, but it’s time to stop, regardless.

I want to talk about catalogues again. Bean isn’t the only oldie gone soft. Eddie Bauer hasn’t been an “expedition outfitter” for decades, but at least it sells cologne. I don’t think either Abercrombie or Fitch would like what’s happening with Abercrombie & Fitch these days. Who bought and wrecked it? Orvis, formerly for fishermen, is mostly about Georgia fatwood, coasters, shotgun shell jewelry, women’s clothing, and lap-o’-luxury dog accessories. The last time I looked, not long ago, neither Bean nor Orvis nor REI sold wool hats. Where’s the sailing gear at Lands End? I looked up Hudson’s Bay on the web, figuring I’d find the blankets and hoping to get a catalogue. (I have a blanket but have never seen a Hudson’s Bay catalogue.) But the hipsters have taken over there, too, and there wasn’t a blanket in sight on site! Lots of accessories, though—nylon packs, travel gear, hats, back-to-school stuff. I emailed, “Where are the blankets?” and got a reply, “Good point—we’ll mention that to our website-folks.” *Good point?* Well, thanks.

Businesses get diluted when they reach out for more business, because a hard-core approach doesn’t attract enough customers to sustain the kinds of growth modern businesses insist on. For 25 years or so, Stephenson’s/Warmlite makes what may be the best in lightweight backpacking and mountaineering tents and sleeping bags. Even if it is all boo-hiss nylon. But the company is owned by a group of nudists in New Hampshire, not

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THE RIVENDELL READER

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IT'S AN INTERVIEW

TIM ISAAC'S MATCH

“MATCH” DOESN'T ROLL OF THE TONGUE LIKE *DE ROSA* OR *COLNAGO*, BUT THERE'S A TON OF SKILL AND EXPERIENCE AND POTENTIAL IN A TIDY LITTLE FRAME SHOP WAY UP THERE IN WOODINVILLE (WASHINGTON).

RR: How old are you and what's your history with bikes?

Tim Isaac: I'm 50. I started building frames half my lifetime ago, 1974. I was a competitive cyclist for several years in Colorado, where I grew up, and there were a few guys putting frames together. They did pretty good work, and I thought I should try it myself.

RR: Did they teach you?

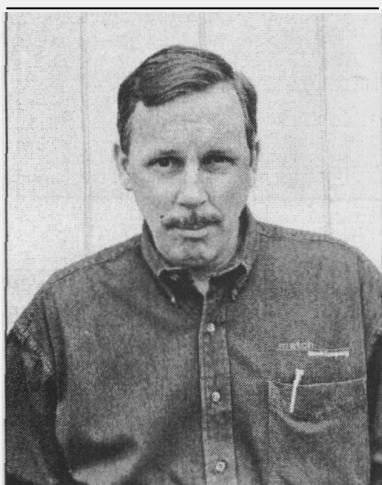
TI: No, I took a job for a guy who imported Italian-style frames from Mexico, and needed someone to do quality control at the factory down there. So, I interviewed for the job, quit my perfectly good engineering job, and headed for Guadalajara. I spent a couple years watching Mexicans build bicycles and trying to find ways to do it better. I made my first frame there—I carved up some lugs to make it look like a De Rosa. At the time, they brazed the Italian way—pinning the lugs to the tubes, and freeform brazing the joints over bricks.

RR: That sounds charming.

TI: Yes, but brazing's better with acetylene. You can select a tip and a gas pressure combination that results in a quiet, but hot-enough flame that wraps itself around the lug and produces a very uniform heat envelope. You get uniform brazing temperatures, and the the flux doesn't get blown off the tubing.

RR: How did you come to build your own frames?

TI: Well, when I decided to start making frames in 1974, the first thing I did was build a fixture, to hold the tubes, and then I drew up the frame on paper. It must have taken a month. I was self-taught, but it was hard. Painful, actually. But after my sixth bike, a guy came in the shop and insisted he needed a custom frame. He was sure he knew what he wanted. He said "I've seen your bicycles everywhere," but there were only six. I attributed that to the decals, which looked really good. I should mention that after two years of solo building, Jock Fisher joined me.



Tim Isaac and his gunslinger stare

RR: Who's Jock Fisher?

TI: He was a good bike rider in Denver. A tourist, a wood craftsman, and he wanted to learn how to build frames, so he joined me in 1976, and we learned a lot from each other. Three years later he died of a heart attack, in a bike race, and I just couldn't go back in the shop and make frames by myself. From working with Jock, I learned that, at least for me, it's better to work with other people, or at least one other person. The interaction between workers, craftsmen, can be quite positive. You learn from each other.

RR: How many frames did you build as a custom builder, and what were they like?

TI: I built about 450 frames. They were traditional frames, built with Reynolds or Columbus tubes. Mostly road racing frames. I always liked the appearance of fastback stays with an integral binder bolt. Very compact and extremely strong. I built all of my frames that way, except for the first five. One of my early customers, Ron Hill, suggested I try to make a frame for him. He showed me a photo of a custom frame with fastback stays. I thought they looked great and have made all my frames that way ever since.

RR: Why did you stop being a custom builder?

TI: I was starving to death. Getting skinnier and skinnier. And it's even harder today. Custom builders today are selling to a smaller market, and in that small market, they're competing with cheaper-to-make TIG welded bicycles with the images created by professional marketing staffs with millions of dollars to spend. And besides that, it's pretty much a mountain bike world out there, and a big company can make or have made a full suspension mountain bike frame in an hour and a half. So the guy with the torch and the file and the traditional methods doesn't really have anywhere to go with it. Nobody's asking.

RR: Yeah yeah yeah. How did you get together with Trek?

TI: I attended a bicycle show in Ohio, one bleak January or February in 1978. I rented a hotel suite to show my frames and try to sell some. About half a dozen of my recent customers in Denver were nice enough to loan me theirs, so I showed up

with what looked like a complete line of frames. I took a bunch of orders at that show and started selling to shops back east. Two fellows from Trek were at that show. I was looking over their bicycles and admiring them. Later, one of the Trek lads came to my booth and complimented me on the lighting and the general impression my frames made. He complained that he couldn't find a single flood light in any of the hardware stores, which didn't surprise me, because I bought them all two days before. I loaned him a few of mine, and within a year we were talking about a position. Dick Burke and Bevil Hogg—the two top men at Trek—were looking for changes, and wanted me there, and the security of a larger company, the chance to control the general direction of design and fabrication were more than I could resist. Plus, it would mean a regular paycheck, and I couldn't say no to that one, either.

RR: Why you? They could have hired another custom builder.

TI: Well, they'd seen the bikes I made for the Olympic team, so I had a good reputation.

RR: When did you start at Trek, and what did you do, exactly?

TI: In 1979. At that time, the frame factory was like a high volume custom shop, with a high volume of custom shop problems. My plan was to design fixtures that guaranteed consistency from one frame to the next. It required new machining operations, semi-automated brazing, and electrostatic painting. Our assembly area was also in need of a new layout.

RR: But how did your experience as a custom builder in a two-guy shop help you there? It seems like it wouldn't help at all. It seems like it might even hurt.

TI: Well, I had an engineering background, also, so that helped. And I traveled to bike factories around the world, studied them, and I brought back the best ideas. It was a lucky break, though.

RR: What was your most challenging design at Trek?

TI: It must have been the road frame from Reynolds 753. The challenge was to engineer a frame that could be built with a minimal amount of heat, so the metal wouldn't suffer, and could be built efficiently. So I designed special investment castings that made that possible. The seat tube was captured by a nifty little shelf, so instead of sticking the seat tube all the way through the lug, we could just cut it off straight and butt it up against this shelf near the top of the lug. That's the way all



Judy Isaac

seat lugs are made these days—it's just a better way. Then there were sockets to hold the seat stays, and the sockets were designed with similar shelves, which eliminated mitering the seat stays, too. The seat post binder boss was also built in, so we didn't have to braze that on either. By eliminating caps and binder barrels and a seat tube that normally would pass through the seat lug, the brazing time was reduced by 60 percent, and the metal suffered less. I learned a lot from that project, and later I designed other castings based on the same idea, for other parts of the bike—dropouts with built-in cable guides and chain hangers, and so on.

RR: They sound like clever short-cuts.

TI: They were clever, and the only thing they short cutted were things that were problematic in the build, or harder to control. Smart castings often allow you to build a better bicycle. Using castings in this way makes the outcome more precise and consistent and predictable. Don't call it a short-cut.

RR: Rivendells are notorious as being really labor-intensive. Waterford thought so, Joe says the same, and that seems to go against your engineering values.

TI: They're a lot of work now, but I think any good bicycle evolves. You believe in the design, but "design" to you means something different than it does to me. For you it means how the customer sits on it, and how parts fit on it—tire clearance and chainring clearance, and all those details we've been working out on your All-Rounders, and how it behaves when you ride it. For me, it means *how is it built?* We have to be sensitive to your definition, but for our definition, that's where I look at them evolving. We'll be able to evolve the design so it's easier for us to build it, and the the frame will be improved. There are things right now that are difficult, but it'll be easier later on.

RR: What changes would you make?

TI: Um...well, the way the All-Rounder is currently configured, there's more labor than there needs to be. Assembling chainstays and working out seat lug shapes. You know, we're carving up Road seat lugs to shape them like All-Rounder lugs. The seat stay plug has a radius on it that creates a gap between the tube and shoulder—it's an excellent plug with some unique design features that I really like, but I'd change that one detail on it. And fitting up the rear dropouts to the chainstays could be easier. Functionally there's no problem, but from a builder's point of view, it could be improved...and all those things are in our plans for revision. And when that's complete, they'll be as strong and straight and pretty, but easier to make.

RR: Since Joe's been building our frames for a year and a half now, and you're just coming on board, do you see him as competition, and how does it feel to chronologically follow a guy who you hired for his first brazing job?

TI: I am not just coming on board with Rivendell. Rivendell is coming on board with Match! I've been at this a long time, and Match may be new, but inexperienced we are NOT. We've got one of Joe's frames here, and it's a really fine frame. Good details, lots of care in it, and there's nothing to take away from it, at all. But we build bikes as good, and as pretty, as anybody's. We have the skills and we care as much, so it's just a matter of putting the time into it.

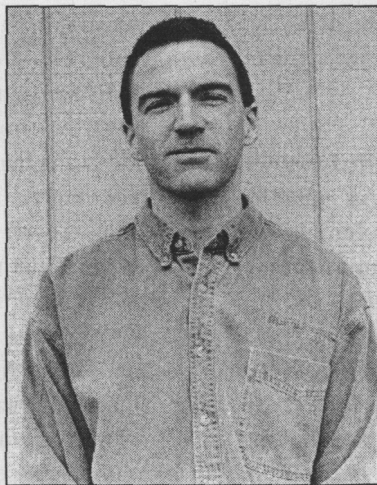
RR: Well, what I meant was, he has a history with us and you're just starting to. Anyway, why did you leave Trek, and where did you go next?

TI: Trek became a very stressful company, a huge company. There were so many changes, so fast. I was ready for a change, and for warmer winters.

RR: And then where to? You're building Schwinn Paramounts these days—how did that happen?

TI: It's a long story. In 1988 I started working for Diamond Back, trying to help them get their Chinese bike production under control, and I spent so much time traveling to China, that I finally ended up living there. It was a tough environment to work in. Every thing I communicated required translation. Diamond Back was buying bikes from China Bicycle Company (CBC). CBC at the time lacked the technological advancement of the Taiwanese, but with a relatively new factory, I had the kind of influence I was looking for. They wanted more export business, and I wanted them to be more reliable before I'd approve bicycles from them for Diamond Back.

After a few QC trips to CBC, they offered me a permanent job as VP of Engineering — another once in a lifetime opportunity. They planned to build the world's biggest bicycle factory, and I couldn't resist. My wife, Judy, and our children—we moved to Hong Kong. I commuted across the border to the factory, and our children went to British schools. That this had all stemmed from making custom frames in Denver, still amazes me. But I wanted to be making fine bicycles again, and we wanted our children to go to English schools and have normal American upbringings, so I gave it up and came home. Judy and I decided we'd start a small company to make really fine lugged frames.



Martin Tweedy

RR: What was the first step? And don't forget to talk about the Paramounts.

TI: Well, I went to Taiwan to investigate the cost of specific machines I'd already used and had lots of experience with—machines that are indestructible and operated with high precision and eliminate the time-consuming steps that machines simply do faster and more accurately than people can. I wanted to eliminate the tedious work, and the things that present so many opportunities for human error, so I could concentrate on brazing and finishing. I knew of two places making these machines and went to visit both of them.

I stayed at a hotel not far from the machine factory and was waiting for an elevator, and when the door opened, there was Skip Hess. {Skip Hess's dad started Mongoose, and Skip Hess Jr. recently quit as Schwinn's Sr. VP.—ed}. We were both surprised, and we chatted a bit, then went our own ways.

The factory visit went well, and I went back home to Hong Kong that same evening. The next day I set off walking to the American Consulate's office in Hong Kong to get a fresh new

thin passport to start this next phase of my life with, and saw an American coming down the hill, and it was Skip again. This second encounter was too coincidental—remember, I'd seen him in another country just the day before—and we talked about what caused us to find each other in different countries two days in a row on the far side of the planet. We had dinner that evening and I told him my plans to leave CBC and to start Match Bicycle Company in the states. Schwinn was then buying more than 150,000 bicycles from CBC, so we had that in common already. Skip divulged the plan to revive the Paramount, and my next challenge was right in front of me again. My first custom frame had been a Paramount. It was built as the result of a visit to the Schwinn factory. Frank

Brilando showed the factory to me. I was 16 years old visiting Chicago for the chance to compete in the Nationals at Northbrook. I'd won the state championship in Colorado and was off the races. Now, half way around the world, I sat with a friend discussing the future of that same bicycle. Within a year I'd set up Match, and we got the Schwinn Paramount contract.

RR: Would you have started Match without the Schwinn contract? And how many Paramounts did you build?

TI: Well, sure I would have. I just told you I was over there this time on Match business, getting the machinery lined up. But the Paramount deal was a great way to get started, that's for sure.

RR: Skip Hess recently quit Schwinn and joined Giant. Does that jeopardize your Paramount deal?

TI: It's hard to say. The bike is good enough that it should be able to stand on its own merits. Schwinn's own testing has proven it to be the toughest frame they have, and there's no reason why they shouldn't sell a lot of them. But we'll see. How well a frame sells depends so much on how much support it gets. How it's promoted, and other things.

RR: It's pretty amazing to me that you'd start a frame shop and specialize in lugged frames. But why now? Don't you wish Match could have begun at a time when people aspired to own a handmade, lugged bike, rather than saw it as a "retro" statement, good for a chuckle and a warm thought?

TI: Why now? The answer seems so obvious when you are dedicated to a good idea. I like lugs. I believe in them. I've spent untold hours working out designs for lugs, and of all the frames I've had a hand in, and there have been millions, I'm most proud of the lugged ones.

RR: You've had a hand in millions of TIG-welded frames by now, so you must believe they're strong and reliable, and it's pretty clear that people aren't aching for lugged frames these days, so why did you decide to build them? And, is there a Match brand frame in the future?

TI: Well, sure I know TIG-welded frames are reliable, but I still think brazing with lugs is the best way to build frames. It's just more difficult. Well-designed and brazed lugged joints are much stronger, and it's fairly easy to understand why that is. The lower temperature of brazing preserves much of the tubing's original mechanical properties, and the lug itself is an external butt right where the stress is greatest. So, with reasonable tubing and good brazing, a lugged frame can easily last a lifetime. But lugged frames are just more expensive to build. You can get entire frames made in Taiwan or mainland China for less than the cost of a good set of lugs.

As far as a Match-brand frame goes, I don't see it happening. I don't want to sell bikes, I just want to build them. Certainly, we'd like the Paramount orders to keep coming in, and we're glad to be making Rivendells, but we'd like to get a few more frames coming our way, too. But, as I said, it's hard to compete in price with TIG-welded frames. They're much less expensive to build and far more profitable to sell, since they cost almost



Curt Goodrich

as much and sometimes even more than a nice lugged frame.

RR: You don't see a lot of cracked TIG-welded frames though. It happens, but it's not an epidemic, and with oversized CrMo tubes and the city-use most people subject their bikes to, durability isn't likely to be a problem. And the low cost of TIG-welding, especially in Taiwan or China—well, the natural conclusion is that those bikes are just great values.

TI: Well, Grant, they are great values! What the factories have accomplished, in building those bikes, is minimizing the effort and expense to construct the frame, with as little human physical skill as possible. In some cases they've eliminated it entirely, with robotics. So where does that take it? They're using the same material as we... so the distinction comes from using lugs and the labor, and you either like it or you don't. It's a wonderful way to build a frame, and it's extremely strong. It comes down to what the rider wants—craftsmanship or pure engineering. They both get you the same thing, functionally, but one has more "people" in it. Whether one is a better value than the other depends on what you value. You know, it seems like we're always defending lugged frames. Over and over we're explaining and defending them, and that can't sit well with everyone, especially those people who think a tig-welded frame is great. It's a distasteful part of the business, and an uncomfortable part of this interview, to me. I don't like to defend lugs, you know. I just like to make lugged frames. But it seems like we're fighting for our lives with things that matter only to us and a few others, and I don't want to convey that idea, that negativity. I don't want to resort to selling lugged frames by trodding on TIG-welded frames. I

don't like TIG welded frames, but I've had a lot of great rides on them. I like the rides, but not the frames. That doesn't mean they aren't good, or great values. I'm talking for me, personally. Anyway, to always put TIG frame against lugged frames... is not what we're about. The success of TIG-welded frames is the result of millions of marketing dollars, and the frames are successful. The manufacturers are survivors. We're never going to be able to compete with Chinese labor, but that's not what I even want to do. And, I'm not the kind who says "Buy American," out of hat, either. I know what I like, and I liked lugged frames, and I do like American lugged frames, and I think their survival is important, but not from a



Kirk Pacenti

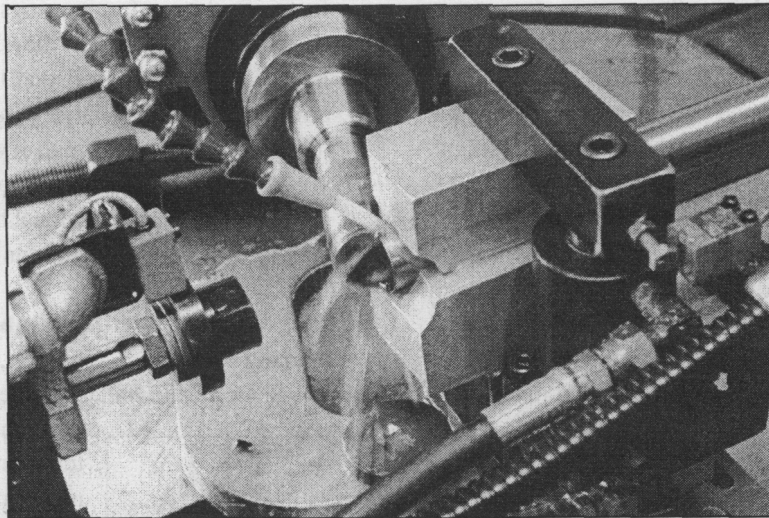
functional-value perspective where it comes down to “performance per dollar.” Does a \$1,500 lugged Rivendell-designed, Match-built or Joe-Starck built bicycle frame have to compete with an engineered frame made either by robots or Chinese labor? I hope it doesn’t. I hope there are still people who want certain refinements and styling and the type of craftsmanship that you can get only in a lugged frame. Those are the people we’re serving. But it’s even more than that. I started off building lugged frames, and it’s still what I like to do, and that’s why I started Match—so I could do that.

RR: Okay, no more TIG-talk. I would like to add, though, that I’m not anti-TIG. That’s a pretty dumb thing to be anti—. I bring up TIG-welded frames because they’re the standard these days, and lugged frames are the odd ones, and to appreciate a good lugged frame, it helps to compare it, in as many ways as possible, with the standard frame of today, that’s all. So, let’s forget about TIG and talk about lugs for a while. TIG-welded frames are fine. No need to rustle any feathers.

TI: That sounds good to me.

RR: How do you distinguish a good lug design from a bad one?

TI: Well, a lug needs to meet a lot of different requirements. One, the design must be brazable. Two, it should be something that is reasonably economical to make. And three, it should be beautiful, elegant, and look purposeful at the same time. The lug gives the frame a character, or personality. Lugs are a big part of what distinguish one frame from another, even among lugged frames. The curves of a lug set a mood for putting a frame together. It



Hand mitering is slow and not as accurate or consistent as machine mitering. Here you see the machine at work. Kirk sets it up and gets out of the way ...

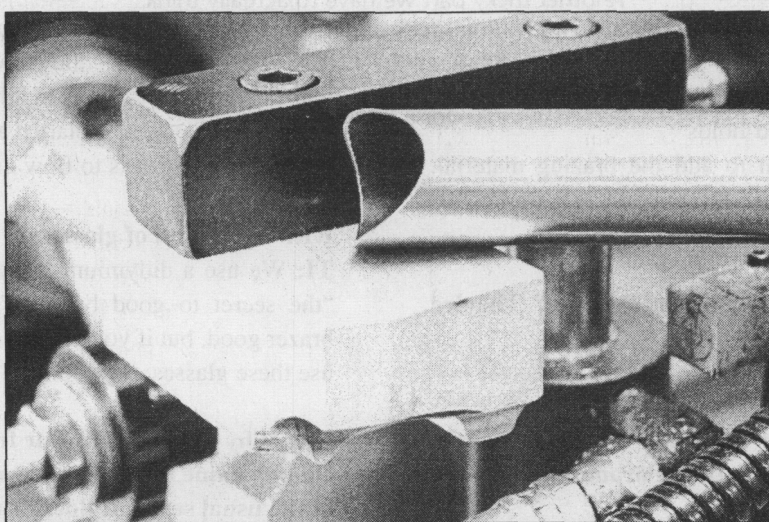
starts when a frame is tacked—that’s where the frame’s geometry is set and where the tubes fit together, never to come apart again. If the lug fits poorly, the tacking operation can start a sequence of events that leads to a misaligned frame. A proper lug reduces the amount of heat required during tacking, reduces the amount of filler metal to hold the frame in proper alignment.

RR: How would you describe or explain brazing to someone who doesn’t

know exactly what it is, and how it works?

TI: The molten brazing material—brass or silver—gets drawn into the gap between the lug and the tube, by capillary action, and it goes to where the heat is. So, that being the case, I’d say brazing is observing and understanding heat flow. You have to be aware of what’s hot and what isn’t hot, so you know where the brass or silver is going to go. That’s the essence of brazing. When you’re starting out, you’re seeing colors and watching the heat flow, but you don’t know how to respond to it, so you try things, and some don’t work. When you start making the right decisions, when you can read the heat flow and know when to add the filler metal, how much to put in, how long to maintain the heat, knowing whether you should allow it to cool, or to heat it more... that’s brazing. What the brazer tries to do is not only braze the joint thoroughly, but to use the minimal

amount of brazing material to do that, so that when he’s done working, there’s almost no need to filing, sandblast, or rebrazing, to make the edge clean and sharp. Reheating isn’t good for the joint or the metal, and having to go back like that won’t be necessary if you’ve done a good job the first time. From a production point of view, it’s just so inefficient, so expensive to have to go back and fix up your problems. We can’t have that at Match.



... and the final cut is crisp, clean perfect, and consistent.

RR: And what makes a good brazer?

TI: I think one of the things that makes a good brazer is knowing how to approach each lug. Each style lug is different, and you need to practice on them in order to work out the sequence, and the path you take, before you do it on a frame. So “a good brazer” is creative and experienced. If one guy has brazed a thousand frames, all with the same type of lug, and is then given a completely different set of lugs, he’ll have a good idea of the best way to braze it. But if you have another guy with equal aptitude and less overall brazing experience, but with more experience on a particular lug, he’ll probably do a better job on that lug, because he knows how it responds to heat.

RR: When you get a new set of lugs, what do you do?

TI: Do you mean, for instance, *what will we do when we get your new lugs?*

RR: Okay. I mean, we are getting new lugs, and that remark about how you have to “learn” lugs makes me wonder how long it’s going to take, and does that mean the first few frames will be crummier than the ones that follow.

TI: No, no, no! We’ll figure them out before building with them. First we’ll braze some with surplus tubing—“stumps,” which are just cut-off ends. Curt may start off, and he’ll give his feedback to Martin and Kirk, and then they’ll try some. Since they’ll be brazing with Curt’s feedback, they’ll be farther along with the lugs than they would if they started from scratch. Each brazer will share his observations, and in a short time, we’ll all know how the lug heats up and holds the heat, and where and when to add the brazing material. We’ll work it out before we use the lugs on real frames, so don’t worry.

RR: Are the new lugs going to be challenging? They’re fancy...

TI: All lugs are challenging!

RR: But these are fancier than most, *so* what I mean is, are they going to be harder to braze than Paramount **lugs**, for example?

TI: They’re fancier than the Paramount lugs, but they’re about the same in that way as the current Rivendell lugs. One nice

feature is the reinforcing rings at the edges. They’ll take a little longer to heat up, but they’ll heat up more evenly, and will hold the heat well, and that’ll help the brazing. One of the advantages of doing large numbers of bicycles with the same lugs, is the extremely high level of skill you acquire because you’re so familiar with that particular lug. Repetition builds skill in a way that occasional building, or building with a wide variety of lugs or methods can’t.

RR: What do you think about “pinning” frames before brazing them?

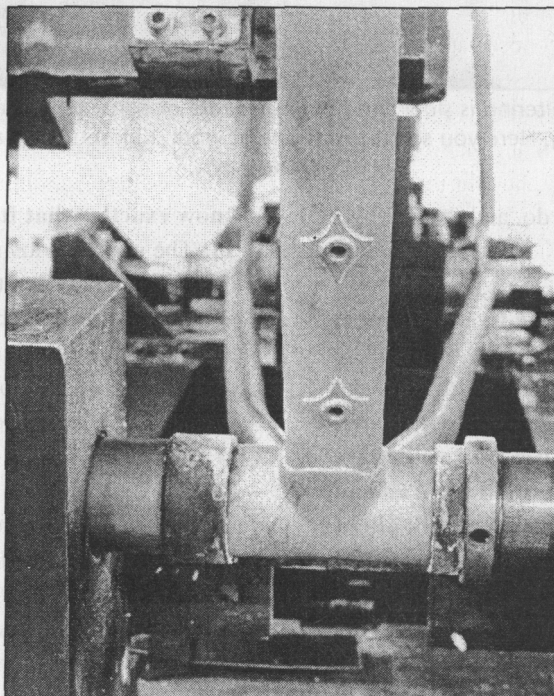
TI: Some of the Italian builders do that—they put steel nails through the lugs and tubes to hold the tubes and lugs together before and during brazing. They say it reduces the number of times the joint has to be heated. It’s impressive, to see those nails sticking in the lugs, but personally, I don’t like drilling holes in perfectly good tubing or lugs. If you ever have to replace a tube in a pinned frame, the filed-off nail could rip the lug when you pull out the tube. You have to find the nail and drill it out before pulling the tube. It’s not a quality difference, as much as a matter of style, though. I prefer to tack the tubes and lugs together using the same filler metal used in brazing, usually bronze. Then braze it carefully, so the tacked portion holds everything together while you work on another part of the lug. It takes concentration, timing and a good memory for what you’ve already done. The glasses we wear are a help, too. They enhance the glow of the metal and actually show us in advance where the brazing is best started and completed. They let you see when the brass starts to flow under the lug.

RR: What kind of glasses do that?

TI: We use a didymium lens with a 3.0 flip-up. They aren’t “the secret to good brazing,” and they won’t make a bad brazer good, but if you already have the skills and learn how to use these glasses, they do help you see beneath the lug.

RR: Why *did* you call your frame shop “Match”? That’s a choppy name for a bicycle company. It’s not a pretty name in the usual sense. **It doesn’t roll off** the tongue.

TI: But I like it! “Match” came from a famous magazine, Paris Match. My old friend Ron Hill subscribed to it and I thought it



Another tricky part we have to actually think about: The All-Rounder’s under-the-downtube bottle braze-ons are off-center to improve chain clearance at the water bottle, and allow room for a fender.

was a great name for a bicycle. When the time came to start my company, the name Match was still with me. So “match” it is, with a lower case “m.”

RR: O-kay. How did you get your match builders?

TI: They found me. Word got out that I was starting up, and a lot of builders applied for work. There were plenty of applicants, and I’ve turned away some people I didn’t want to turn away, but there’s only so much work here. It was interesting, though, seeing the reactions to the shop. It’s a close community here, and I’m not a native, so when the builders came by, they thought “Where did YOU come from?” If they have experience, they’re immediately impacted by the set-up, the dedicated stations and machinery that lets a builder concentrate on building, rather than being distracted by readjusting fixtures, or moving things out of the way, or having to walk over there find something he needs. They were surprised that suddenly, in the midst of their tight community where they thought they knew everybody who had anything to do with making bikes, here’s a “clean, well-lighted and professionally equipped place” ready to take on serious framebuilding.

RR: Is it bigger than it needs to be?

TI: I don’t think so. I don’t want to outgrow it and have to move. And understand, I’ve known shops where, for two things to happen at the same time, one guy has to move. It’s not uncommon. Sometimes it’s a matter of necessity, the builder can’t afford more space, but for good production, it helps to have room and organization. If you set up the shop right, good production is easier. If the flow isn’t in one direction, a certain inefficiency is created. But if you have enough space, it can notch up the quality, because there are fewer opportunities for mistakes. I had the whole shop laid out on paper before I owned a single tool or machine.

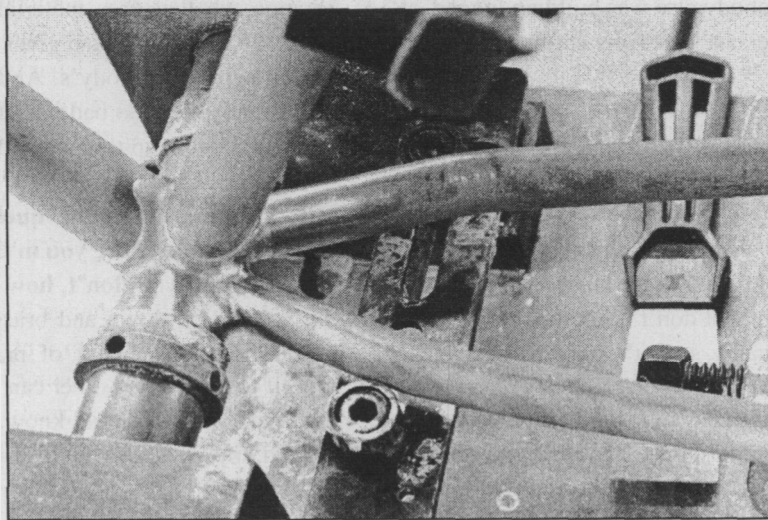
RR: How did you evaluate the builders, during the interview?

TI: It’s not easy work. You detect in some people that they’ll be great, that they’re committed and will make it work. And, there’s a way that builders can talk to other builders. I’m not saying I didn’t watch them braze,

because I did, but if you’ve done a lot of brazing, and you’re good, and you’re competent, then certain things come out in a conversation. I talk to you about brazing one way, like we might do here, and I talk to them another way. It’s like, when I’m showing you a fixture we have, you can look at it through your eyes, and maybe it means something if you’ve seen other fixtures, but it means more if you’ve used other fixtures, or tried to build a certain joint, a fork or a bridge or whatever, without a fixture. An experienced builder can appreciate those things more. When I was showing Curt around, for example, I could I read a lot into his answers and responses. I’d show him our fixture for mitering seat stays, and he’d say “whoa,” and I knew exactly why, I knew what he was thinking about it.

RR: Is there a “match” way to braze frames, or do you hire experienced builders and let them do it the way they’ve always done it?

TI: We share our skills and learn from each other, as I alluded to earlier, and what evolves from that is a consistent way to braze. I think any good frame shop would do the same, so I’m not going to say there’s a “match method,” or anything like that. We’re after the best joints humanly possible, and we’re after consistency, from frame to frame. Good brazing is gentle. We’re not in a hurry. Good brazing has a natural speed to it, that results in a clean joint that needs very little clean up. If you go too slow, you bake off the flux, and if you go too fast, you make mistakes, you force things and cause more rework. We use dedicated machines to cut the tubes consistently and accurately, and non-adjustable fixtures—as opposed to adjustable ones—that always put the bridges in the right spot. Those machines make the bikes more accurate and consistent, and they also free up time for humans to do their best brazing.



The trickiest part of any Rivendell frame is simultaneously getting enough clearance for a fat knobby inside the chainstays, and making room for a low-Q crank and tucked-in chainrings outside the chainstays. Match figured it out quickly, and designed a go/no-go gauge to verify. Every frame gets checked on this gauge.

RR: What’s the easiest frame joint to braze?

TI: It depends on the lug shape. On the All-Rounder? It’s got to be the seat lug. It takes about five minutes with the torch. But there’s more to brazing than just the “torch time.” There’s the set up, tacking, fluxing, brazing, cleaning up the flux.

RR: That’s enough about brazing. You’re married

and have three children at home still. What does your wife think about starting up a frame shop and specializing in the least popular style of frame today?

TI: Judy's faith in this project and her support have given me the energy and enthusiasm to make it work. Moving around was hard. I was away for a year at a time, twice, and our family lived in China for a few years, too. It wasn't easy. But Judy knew the plan all along was to get the experience that would prepare us to open the shop and build lugged frames. And, she has lots of bicycle experience herself. I met her at Trek, and she worked there for six years, buying all the parts for the complete bikes and frame production—wheels, rims, tubes, lugs, seat stays. Buying those parts is a huge responsibility, making sure the hundreds of parts from dozens of vendors show up on time, so you can get the bikes out. Then she did the same thing another four years at Diamondback. She's supportive, but not just supportive. She knows the business, and she knows the pressures, and she's committed to Match, too.

RR: But it seems like really crummy timing. I sometimes think the big share of the new bike market is half young kids who grew up on BMX or mountain bikes and lack any warm-fuzzy feelings for lugs, and half midlife crisis guys who don't have a history with lugged bikes, and just want something really "high tech." I think Rivendell can squeak by, but our volume requirements have to be smaller than yours.

TI: We want more work, that's for sure. As far as the timing goes—it's taken this long to learn what I have to know, to do it right! So the time is right. There are still cyclists who respect craftsmanship and the best materials. I know I'm not following the market trends, but even if nobody else was building lugged frames, even if match was the last place on earth building them, this is what I'd do.

RR: But don't you wish you could turn back the clock to the mid '70s, when everybody wanted frame was lugged, or at least steel?

TI: Well, if you're asking: Do I wish that the cycling populace was aching for fine, lugged steel bikes?—the answer has to be yes, but it's not going to happen. But don't think the mid '70s were the golden age in terms of quality, so that's to our advantage.

RR: There were many of nice bikes back then. If you take any mid-to-upper end road frame from 20 years ago and compare it to what you get today for an equivalent dollar...

TI: ...what you get is a certain look, and a certain value system that contributed to that look, and looking back, we call that whole thing "classic." But there are a lot of misconceptions

about the "hallowed frames" of the '70s. You've got to understand that the European frames were new to Americans, who were comparing them to ballooners and other bikes that cost a lot less and weren't so fancy. The brands were exotic, and our eyes were glazed over. Some of the frames were very good, even by today's standards, but if you stripped them of paint and decals and rated them objectively, by looking at the miters and brazing quality and finish work, most of the "best brands" were nothing special, and in some cases were pretty shabby by any standards. In those days, a prestigious name that rolled off the tongue was a smokescreen. When the Americans started building frames, a lot of this became evident. Eisentrauts and Ritcheys and a dozen others—including my own—were at least as good, and usually better than the even the best European frames. I still stop in my tracks when I see a 1972 Colnago, but I look at it as a symbol of a time when cycling was simpler, and cyclists had a passion and a reverence that's just different from what it's like today. It reminds me of good times, for sure, but I don't worship it as a work of art. It's not like a Rembrandt, it's just a Colnago. I don't mean that in a disrespectful way, but objectively, it's not the epitome of the art.

RR: Materials have gotten better—

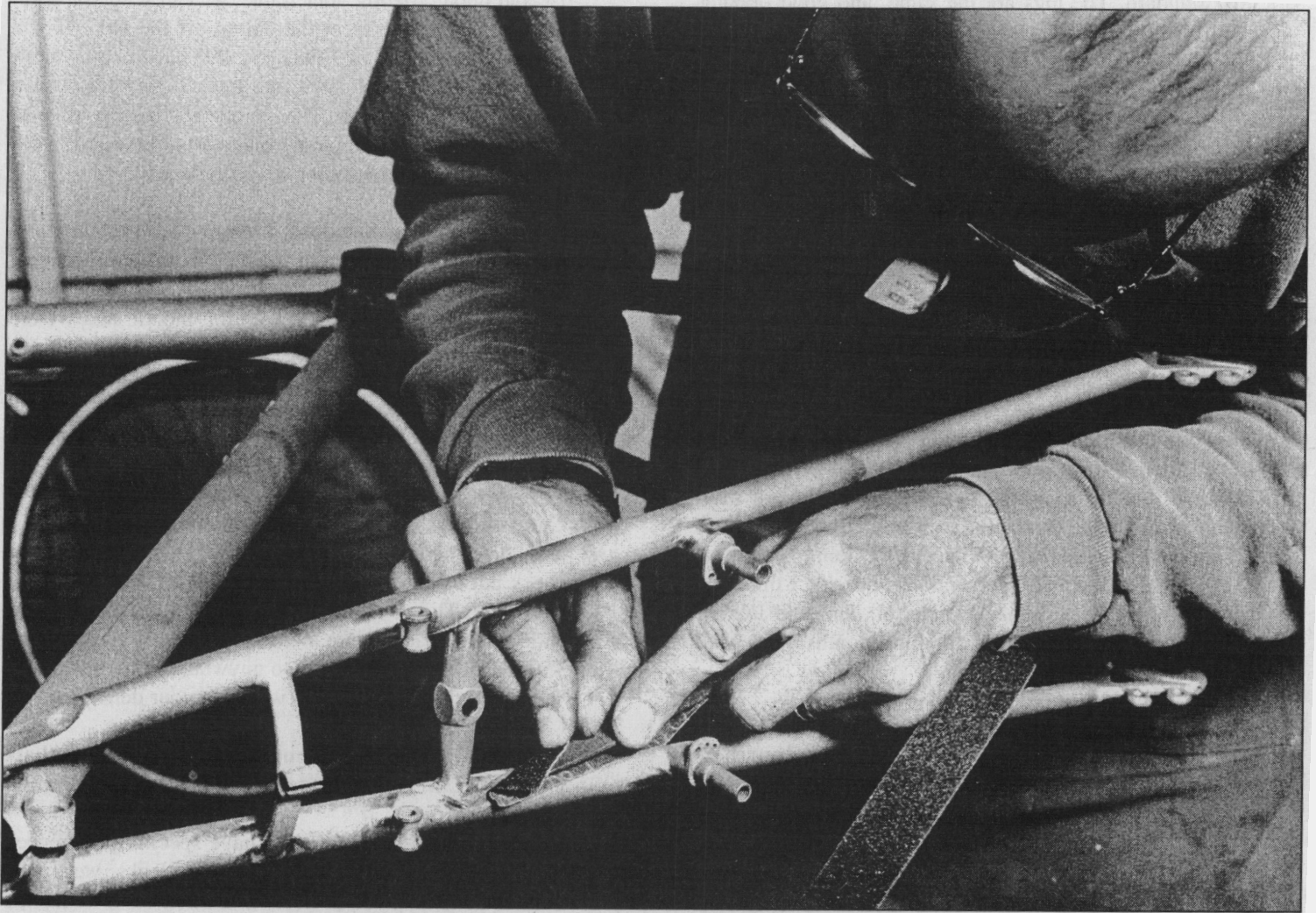
TI: A lot better. Precision castings, stronger steel alloys, and better paint. It's still possible to take good materials and braze or weld them into garbage, but when you do a good job, a great job, then you have something special. Our brazers are as good as anybody. They've had intense training, lots of experience in a relatively short time, and each has an aptitude for it to begin with. The match method of brazing is, well, I've already said it's probably not unique, but I can say it's a refined, systematic approach that uses material and flame economically, and treats the metal well, and gives a clean, beautiful result that I'd put up against anybody's. And we do it over and over again, consistently. It's too bad we have to paint the frames, because the paint covers up things we'd like to show off.

RR: One more brazing question, even though I said no more: How active are you in the brazing? Do you still braze at all? And if you don't, how do you spend your days?

TI: I could sit down and braze all day, but I'm not the best brazer because I'm out of practice. I'm rusty, so I restrict myself to jobs where other can make me look good. I get to do that. And, as you should know, I've put in a lot of time doing the cad drawings for your new lug designs, because the casters don't work off sketches, you know. I still find great satisfaction designing things and setting up a frame shop that's both small and personal, and efficient—not in terms of speed, but accuracy and precision that are consistent, which means we don't have to undo our mistakes. We don't cover up brazing by excess

filing or clean-up. We don't spend undo time aligning frames, because they come out so straight the first time. Our fixtures are dedicated to each frame, so there's no chance of us building a Paramount with a Rivendell dimension, or vice versa. Mostly, I have a great crew. They solve problems and create

solutions. They figure things out, and they care about what they're doing. They know match is important to me, but I know it's important to them, too. It's a good arrangement. I wish we had more business, and maybe that'll happen, but in the meantime, I'm happy.



Curt filing a seat stay. They aren't necessary, but they look good.

QUESTIONS WE'RE OFTEN ASKED

Q: What are the differences between a Joe-built Rivendell and a Match-built one?

A: They're both made by people (as opposed to machines, not that machines are bad), and built one at a time (as opposed to large production runs, not that they're heinous), and there are minor cosmetic differences that reflect the way each builder treats the metal. We aren't talking about a quality difference, just a subtle stylistic one. The filing and thinning and smoothing out of forging flashing on the spine of the dropouts and stuff like that—all the same high standard. The lugs are the same, and good brazing skills result in similar, clean joints.

Q: Who will paint the frames match builds for you?

A: How come nobody ever asks Urago or Univega that? Most of the frames will go to Joe Bell & Crew. We're looking into other painters, too, because JB has a limited capacity. We have a standard, and it will be met!

Q: What's the lead time?

A: Right now, three months for an All-Rounder, and five months for a Road or LongLow. We've started delivering Match-built All-Rounders already. We're still waiting for new Road/L/L lugs. They should be here in a 2 months.

Q: New lugs? Whaaaat?! Whatever happened to the old ones? Them's the ones I want!

A: Eventually we'll have both in stock again, but we were running low on the original seat lugs, and lugs are fun to design, and it's been a while, so we're doing some new ones. You don't actually get a choice, but don't think the new ones will be less than wonderful. Tim and I/Grant worked on them, after hours, for four months. And what do you think we have—bad *taste*?

Q: What if I need a custom frame?

A: We can do it, with a few qualifications. "Custom" here means you still gotta let me/Grant design the frame, as opposed to using Rivendell and our lugs to indulge your own dream geometry and fantasy braze-ons. We don't use fastback seat stays, internal cables, brazed on front derailleurs, straight fork blades, oval tubes, or "suspension-ready" anything. If all that's o-kay by you, and you truly need a custom frame, we'll do it. On the other hand, if your idea of the perfect frame is one you design yourself, and you're ~~firm~~ in your desires for a particular way of doing this or that, or if you just want a bike that is so unique that nobody'll ever want to steal it, then an honest-to-goodness custom builder is a better way to go.

Q: I've got a local builder who will build me a custom bike, but I want your lugs ...

A: We get lots of requests, but we don't sell them. They can make their own, or buy from the catalogues. There are lots of nice lugs out there.

Q: What are the paint options?

A: Seven colors PLUS a wild card (formerly called Painter's Choice, but now "wild card," since we want in on the picking, too). The colors will be on our website by April 15, and upon ordering your frame, we can send you paint samples if you can't get the colors off the web. If you ordered your frame in 1998, you still have access to all those (9) colors. For 1999, we have three blues, three greens, and an orange. The colors are on the website (www.rivendellbicycles.com), and starting in April, we'll send out color samples after we get a deposit.

Q: If I want a frame but don't know which model, can I put down a deposit to get a place in line, and decide later? How much later?

A: Yes, sure. Just try to decide within a month, and we are happy to talk it over with you.

Q: What if I don't know the size?

A: Let us pick that. The frame order form asks everything we need to know to put you on the right frame.

Q: Can you guys build up a complete bike?

A: Yes. Peter here does it, charges \$125 (so you make the check out to him), and you cannot get a better-built-bike anywhere. The complete bike is minimally disassembled and lovingly packed into a custom bike box, and you pay \$50 for UPS ground freight to anywhere in the lower 48. Typically, this adds just two weeks to your delivery.

Q: Can you-all help me pick out the parts? How does that-all work? Can you build it up even if I don't buy all the parts from you?

A: Yes; it's easy; and yes. If you have specific preferences we'll include them. If you're drawing blanks, we'll talk with you and help you decide. We do that a lot, we like it, and we're good at it. One thing to think about: If you have 3 road bikes, they can each have a different personality. Mix it up, variety is good. Many of our customers are concerned with building up the Rivendell in "Rivendell style." Don't worry about that. Put your own favorite parts on your Rivendell, because you'll ride it the most.

Q: How much does a built-up bike cost?

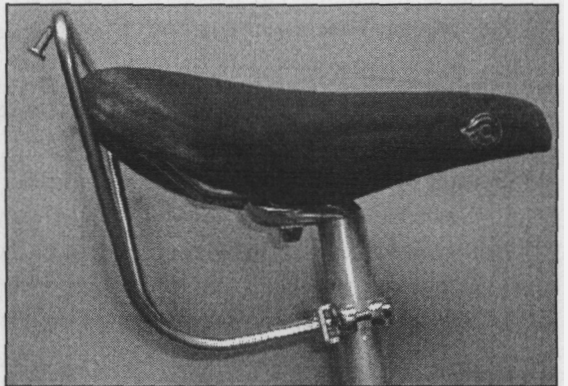
A: Usually between \$2700 and \$3000.

END

OTHER PROJECTS IN THE WORKS; & NEWS IN GENERAL

1. A Nitto front rack, high-rider style, to fit any bike. It may mount on cantilever bosses (this is the traditional way, it works great, it's not weird), Nitto already makes racks like this, but they don't fit on all that many frames, so we're after one that does.
2. Nitto has discontinued the Mod. 175 bar. It was our deepdrop bar. We have a few left.
3. The Goatskin gloves are now officially all Cow. Goat is NLA.
4. Carradice is working, though slowly, on a trunk-style bag for the mini-rear rack/saddlebag support. We got word today that a sample is ready and will ship to us next week. Jeannie B., if you read this, you can try it out.
5. Y'all are asking, in regards to the lugged stem, "Can you paint it to match my (Rivendell) frame?" Yipes! Let's wait until we have them first. The answer will be *probably*, but the nickel-plating will go with any bike, and will definitely cost less. The "stem futures" offer from the last flyer still holds: Pay for one now and it's \$100—about \$50 less than the "now we got 'em" price. If we can't deliver, you get \$110 in Rivendell credit; and you gotta be patient.

Nitto's Version One answer to our request for a seat-post mounted, uplift-style rack for would-be Carradice-carriers who so far have been out of the loop either because their saddle is too close to the tire, or they refuse to give up their loopless saddle (or both). It mounts onto the seat post. It swoops up. It has a horizontal bar that carries the saddlebag a little higher than the saddle. It requires a longer lower strap (use a toe strap). The one shown here works with most combinations, but we're trying to eke out a little more versatility, so it'll work with all but the wackiest seat/seat post combos. Available May 10? We're taking backorders now. Order it as the Nitto Uplift. \$30.

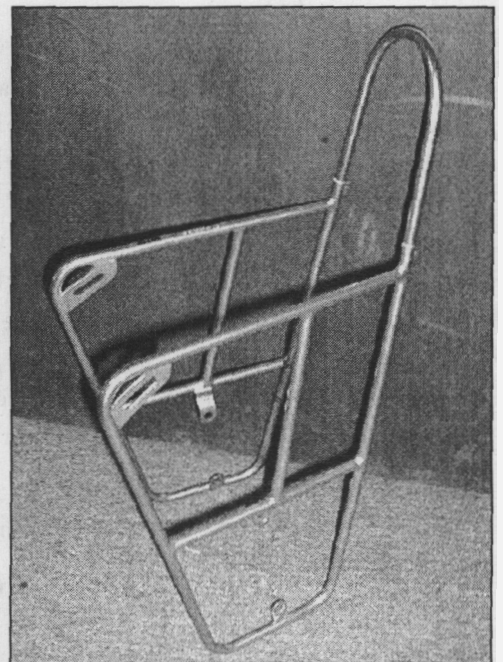


Lugged Stem Test Results

It was a fatigue test. A fake bar was clamped and loaded up and down with a force of 200 pounds. According to the independent tester, this test is roughly equal to (or slightly more severe) than the ISO fatigue test for stems. Our stem lasted 310,000 cycles, which, for this type of stem (quill stem, as opposed to Aheadset types) is the most this tester can remember any stem lasting. It finally broke at a lug point on the underside of the bar clamp bolt lug. We'll round off the point. This was just the first test. We'll test at least a dozen, for fatigue and overload (ultimate strength), at various test facilities. But so far, so good.



Version 4 Prototype of a Nitto-Rivendell Low-Rider. It has a removable hoop, which allows you to pack the rack flat for travel or storage. The hard part is making this rack compatible with every bike that comes down the pike, and the current version won't do it. No ETA—we have to work out the bugs first.



RIVENDELL FRAME ORDER FORM

Date submitted: ___/___/99

Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Day Phone () _____ Fax () _____ email _____
 Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____ Pubic BONE height (PBH) in bare feet _____ In cycling shoes _____

PBH measuring tips: Get a pal, a thin book, and a metal tape. Hook the end of the tape over the edge of the book, and pull it up until it weaves through your tissue and strikes BONE. Have pal take the reading on the floor.

Saddle height on current bike, from center of bottom bracket to top of saddle: _____ cm (inches x 2.54).

Saddle height measuring tips: Make sure the bike is vertical. Have Pal place the end of the tapelyardstick on the center of the crank (center of the dustcap, or if the dustcap is missing, on the center of the crank bolt). Measure to the top of the saddle, and have your eye level with the saddle when you read the measurement.

Years riding as an adult _____ Current favorite bike (model, size, comments) _____

Type of riding you will do on this bike: _____ Approx. yearly miles: _____

Typical tire: _____ Largest tire: _____ Percent time riding on that thar largest tire: _____

What style handlebars will you ride? Drops _____ Moustache _____ Both? _____ Other? _____

WHY DO YOU WANT A RIVENDELL?

Model(circle) Road Std LongLow All-Rounder Size (c-t): Rivendell's choice _____ No. Please build a

COLORS

3 metallic blues: Light, medium, dark. **3 greens:** Grey-green; Coleman Stove; Dark Green (metallic). **Orange:** Burnt.

____ Surprise me (on or off our palette), but stay away from (list your fears): _____

When we get a deposit, we'll send out photos or color chips with your first receipt; then you have a month to decide. **Or** you can see them on our website: Rivendellbicycles.com. **If you pick without us sending chips (in other words, if you do it now), we'll take \$20 off the price of your frame.** If you later change, we'll silently add that \$20 back.

DELIVERY

With good luck, 2 to 3 months. With medium luck, 5 months. It shouldn't be longer than that, and in the time you order we'll give you our best estimate, which isn't a guarantee. Call anytime for updates. A Rivendell will probably last you the rest of your life, but if you need a bike fast, for a special ride or a high school reunion, this isn't the one.

PRICE AND PAYMENT

(note: Price includes prepping, anti-rusting inside the tubes, two water bottles, water bottle bolts, seat binder, and a cap.)

	one color	fancy"	
Road	\$1375	\$1475	* "fancy" just means the head tube panel is painted cream, which sets off nicely the main frame color; and the lug and fork crown windows are painted cream, to match. It is a tedious process that requires a steady hand and a good eye, and it looks nice.
LongLow	\$1400	\$1500	
All-Rounder	\$1425	\$1525	

Other: Bottom bracket: Phil Wood (to fit your cranks): \$135 installed. Want it? _____ (other bbs available; ask)
 Headset: Tange Rollerball (we love it): \$50 installed. Want it? _____

Deposit: \$300. Check or credit card. Balance before shipping. If you cancel after 60 days, we refund as Rivendell credit.

Layaway Plan: \$100 deposit locks the price, and you can then chip away at the balance month by month, or as you come up with the money. Refunds as credit. If you want to lay-away a frame, check here _____ and send us \$100.

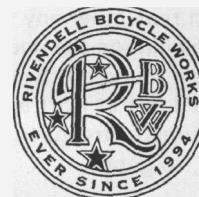
Freight: UPS Ground is \$35 per frame, \$50 per complete bike. International, \$200. For faster methods, call.

Payment Enclosed: Visa or MasterCard: _____ expires / /

Your Signature: _____

Other comments?
 Photocopy this and write
 on the back, or submit a
 separate page.

Rivendell Bicycle Works / Frame Dept.
1561-B Third Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
ph (925) 933-7304 or fax (925) 933-7305



PROTECT THAT TOP TUBE FROM DENTS. IT'S EASY.



The most common bike frame injury is a dent on the top tube. Usually it happens in a crash, when the handlebar swings around and smacks the top tube in its thin, unbutted belly. It can also happen when your bike falls against a metal pole or a piece

of furniture. To help prevent dents on our frames, we tend to spec heavier top tube bellies than most, but that's not a clear-winner of an idea. The weight penalty is minimal, but so is the gain, and maybe it'll prevent a dent, maybe it won't. Just so you know, many modern steel top tubes are 0.4mm thick. They make them that thin so they'll compete in weight with aluminum and titanium. Then, to not lose ground on steel, some of the aluminum and titanium top tubes go even thinner than they were before. It's like playing chicken with top tubes!

Also, the larger diameter the tube, the thicker the wall should be, so as not to behave, in the dent department, like a soda can. Usually tube designer-makers

ignore dent resistance and look only at stiffness:weight ratios, and that's when you end up with soda pop can tubes. When you were a kid, did you ever stand on an empty soda can, then squat down and poke the sides with your fingers, and pull your fingers away fast, so they didn't get squashed with the can?

Frame tubes work the same way. What's sufficiently thick for stiffness and torsion may be nowhere near sufficient for dent-resistance.

Top tube material and dimensions aside, it's far better to protect the tube with five wraps of cloth bar tape, or some other substitute (hemp twine comes to mind). You used to see this a lot on track bikes, but it was less common on road bikes. My first fancy road bike, a lugged Ritchey, got dented in a race crash, and I was sick about it for years. You'd have thought I'd learn from that time, but over the years I've dented three more top tubes. Enough is enough! From now on, if you see a guy wobbling down the road on a nice bike and the top tube isn't wrapped, it's not me. — *Grant*

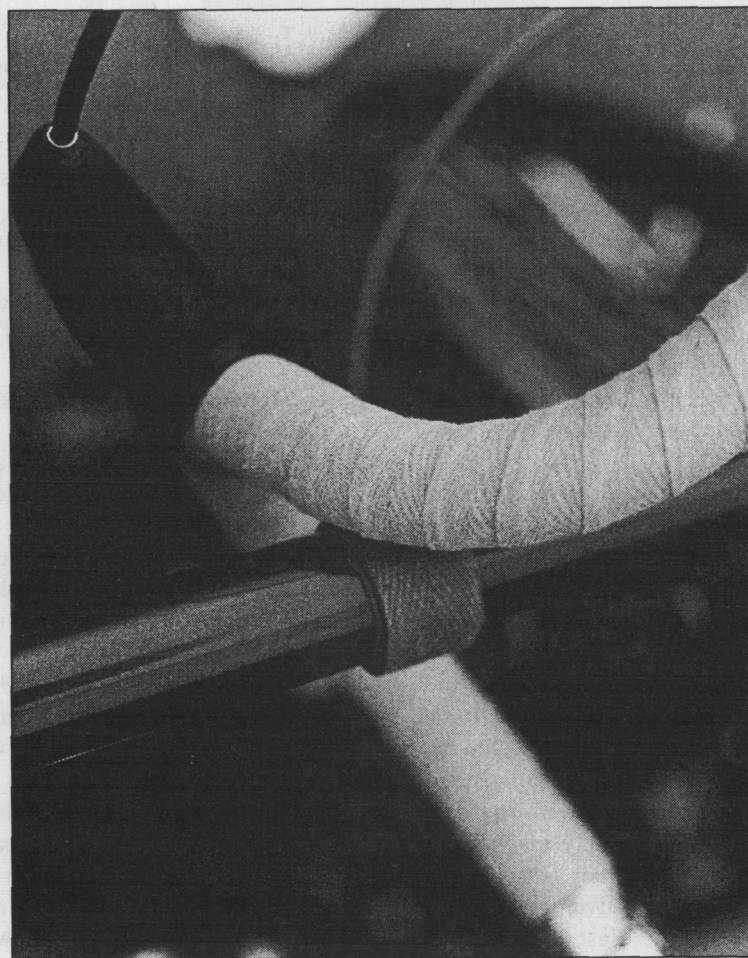


Figure out where the handlebars are going to smack into the top tube (in a crash), and wrap the tape there.

BY JANE AND MICHAEL STERN

SCULPTURES IN LEATHER

LEATHER CARVERS IN SHERIDAN, WYOMING, CLAIM TO BE CRAFTSMEN, BUT THE CUSTOMERS WHO WAIT YEARS FOR THEIR SADDLES KNOW THAT THEY ARE ARTISTS

The saddlemakers of Sheridan, Wyoming, carve leather with finesse on the order of skills like gunmetal engraving and scrimshaw. The saddles they produce are majestic creations - fantastic to see, wondrous to touch, and delicious to smell. One could ride in them all day, rope big steers off them, winter with them in Montana's Judith Basin, and they would stay strong for years. But they are more than durable; they are bas-reliefs in leather, flaunting fields of flowers, curling vines, and leaves that run deep into the surface of the honey-colored hide. As Frank Lloyd Wright might have said, the carved bower is not on the saddle, it is of it. The surfaces of the saddles are stitched and layered with a surgical precision that makes the different components - horn, pommel, seat, skirt, fender, stirrups - appear to be organic parts of a single whole. Whether viewed from the ground or from horseback, these saddles look like flows of sculpted leather made to hug an equine back and be hugged by a rider's thighs. Silver-dollar-size conchas or corner plates may adorn the leather skirts of the saddles. They, too, are embellished with detail, wrought in gold: bucking cayuses, hearts, and flowers.

A working cowboy's livelihood - and his very life - depends on a saddle that is comfortable, strong, and functional. The old folk song "Chisholm Trail" tells of a cowboy with a "ten-dollar horse and a forty-dollar saddle"; it is still true that horses come and go but a really good saddle will last a man a lifetime.

About a hundred years ago saddles were elevated from cowhands' working tools to dream objects that signified the frontier. Thanks to the romantic image of the West created by mythmakers as varied as Teddy Roosevelt, Buffalo Bill Cody, and the railroad magnate Fred Harvey, and also to a spate of pop-culture frontier heroes in books and weekly magazines, cowpunchers began to see themselves - and their gear - as the embodiment of freedom, independence, and adventure. Saddle shops, which had grown up throughout the West wherever the cattle business went, issued catalogues showing saddles far more handsome than any working ranch hand needed. The catalogues came to be known in the cowboy fraternity as bunkhouse bibles, and were studied and memorized by men for whom their contents were fantasies.

Long waits have always been part of the experience of acquiring

ing a deluxe custom saddle. Most of today's top saddlemakers are at least a year or two behind in filling orders; one esteemed craftsman in northern New Mexico, a veteran carver well into his seventies, tells his new customers that the wait is ten years. The Montana cattle rancher Jim Hamilton wrote a poem called "The Rancher's New Saddle," in which he wryly described a harrowing two years of watching calf prices go down after he ordered an expensive saddle from Sheridan's legendary Don Butler. The poem ends with the rancher in his banker's office, getting a loan to pay for his prize.

A WORKING
COWBOY'S
LIVELIHOOD - AND
HIS VERY LIFE -
DEPENDS ON A
SADDLE THAT IS
COMFORTABLE,
STRONG, AND
FUNCTIONAL.

The banker says, "What! Don Butler made it?"

Then he leans back in his chair with a smile.

"It still ain't real funny, but we'll loan you the money. You may go broke, but at least you got style!"

The frustration is often compounded by the quirky nature of saddlemakers, who tend to be better artists than businessmen. Legend has it that one Sheridan saddlemaker used to take an order patiently, writing down everything a customer wanted - stirrup size, cantle angle, horn shape, and the like. Two years later he would deliver a saddle that he had made just the way he wanted. The punch line is that no one ever refused a saddle he delivered - it was too beautiful.

There was certainly nothing pretty about the earliest western stock saddles, which were scarcely more than wooden frames covered with leather ponchos. Cowboys who made the historic cattle drives north from Texas into Kansas and then up to the high plains were known for riding saddles that were big, tough, and plain. By the late 1870s cattlemen were pushing north of Cheyenne and grazing beef in the Big Horn basin, where the town of Sheridan soon became the main stop on the rail line. Though it was a dirt-street cow town, with its share of rough-around-the-edges frontier life, Sheridan was different from most range settlements. Many of the big cattle ranches in the area were owned by English aristocrats who had migrated to America to be closer to their holdings; what would become one of America's oldest polo fields was built near Sheridan in 1898. Local horse farms began to breed thoroughbreds for sport as well as quarter horses for cowpunching. Eatons'

Ranch, along Wolf Creek eighteen miles from town, opened in 1904. One of the first dude ranches in the country, it quickly became the largest. Well-heeled Americans seeking a taste of cowboy life headed to Eatons' or other local guest ranches, such as Spear-O-Wigwam, Bones Brothers, and Horton's H F Bar.

The popularity of the West was largely owing to the salesmanship of Buffalo Bill Cody, who in 1883 started thrilling crowds across America and the world with his Wild West show, which featured riders outfitted with deluxe western regalia much fancier than what any working cowhand would use. The show's gilded image of the frontier was so persuasive that buckskin fringe and tack with ornate tooling became part of the region's culture, inspiring genuine cowboys and dudes alike.

A required stop for enthusiastic dudes vacationing in Big Horn country was the saddle shop of Otto F. Ernst, which was a fixture in downtown Sheridan from 1902 to 1975, selling jeans, checkered shirts, cowboy boots, hats, and - to serious dudes - sumptuous Ernst saddles. Saddlemakers had worked in Sheridan since 1890 (every cattle town needed someone who could manufacture and repair tack), but the panache of Ernst's saddles put Sheridan on the map. Those he sold weren't just tools. With their floral carvings, they were handsome souvenirs of the Cowboy State. Ernst marketed them accordingly, choosing names for his various models that evoked the cowboy spirit, such as the Barkey (after Roy Barkey, a rodeo star) and the Gollings (after the Western artist E. W. Gollings). He became known for his enticing catalogues and his calendars depicting cowgirls on horseback outfitted with stunning Ernst tack; traveling in his Dodge truck, he took orders from Texas to South Dakota and from Oklahoma to California.

Although Ernst's saddle shop is no longer in business, Sheridan is still the best place in the West to order a high-grade custom saddle. You can make an appointment with one of the artisans in and around town, or you can simply wander into King Saddlery, on Main Street, the best-known and most respected saddlery on the high plains - so grand that when Queen Elizabeth came to Sheridan a few years ago to see friends nearby (descendants of the ranchers who settled the

Wyoming Territory), she visited the shop. Each Labor Day the town celebrates "Don King Days," a long weekend of old-fashioned roping and riding contests and polo matches.

King, who is seventy-four, speaks with a quiet voice, in the kind of level, self-assured tone that puts a nervous horse or a skittish cow at ease. He long ago gave up riding, because his knees had been wrecked by wild broncs, but he still looks like the quintessential cowboy. His hands are magnificent: strong and tough from years of hard ranch work, yet absolutely precise when he offers a handshake or points to an interesting feature of a saddle. King first practiced his craft by turning scrap leather into wallets and belts for cowboys he knew and for tourists at the western dude ranches where his father worked. One winter in the late 1930's, when his father was working at

the D Bar H guest ranch, in Palm Springs, King found some space in the back of a local saddle shop, where he made belts and other small leather items with a wild-rose pattern. He sold twenty-five of his belts to a guest at the D Bar H, Jack Kriendler, a co-owner of the New

York club 21. When Life magazine ran a feature about dude-ranch fashions, the story included a picture of a lady friend of Kriendler's wearing one of the belts. At the time Southern California was something of a leather crafter's paradise, thanks partly to the fancy tack that movie cowboys used. One day Edward Bohlin walked into the shop. Bohlin was America's most famous saddlemaker, a full-fledged celebrity who made the silver-bedecked saddles used by Tom Mix, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers. He was so impressed by the young King's finesse with leather that he offered him a job on the spot. "I didn't take it," King told us when we visited him. "When you work in another man's shop, you work in his style. I wanted my own name."

King was fifteen years old at the time. In a trade in which apprenticeship is the only way to get ahead, his refusal was audacious. He went to Montana, where he took a job as a ranch hand and used his spare time to carve leather. In the early 1940s King worked off and on at Rudy Mudra's saddle shop in Sheridan. When he returned from the war, he went back to work for Mudra on the condition that Mudra teach him how to build a saddle.



In 1947 King opened his own saddle shop in Sheridan. From the beginning he had more work than he could handle. But he soon closed the shop, unhappy to be confined to a bench. "Twice in my life I swore I would never build another saddle," he told us. "I preferred to break horses for a living."

King still carved leather when he had the chance, doing custom jobs and occasional piecework for other saddlemakers in Sheridan and Billings. His spare-time carving was already influential. William Gardner was thirteen years old when he started to apprentice with King. Today he is one of the acknowledged masters of the Sheridan style. The two met when King, at seventeen, went to break horses at the Neponset Stud Farm, where Gardner's father was the top hand. King showed Gardner how to make his own tools and how to cut elaborate patterns deep into the hide. "We've worked together like brothers and fought like brothers ever since Don came out to the ranch," Gardner told us. "Don's son John apprenticed with me when he began." It has been said that King and Gardner could each make half of one saddle and no one could see the difference. Yet when one compares saddles that each man has made independently, there is no mistaking their different styles. King's flowers are tight and coiled, their energy contained; Gardner's are lush, spreading, and deep. The difference is subtle, like that between artists' brushstrokes.

King is reluctant to call his work art. It sounds too prissy for something as tough as the saddles he has made. Although he has won a National Endowment for the Arts grant and many other accolades for his work, he prefers to call himself a mechanic. "They have tried to put the art thing onto saddles," he told us. "But to be a saddle craftsman you first have to be a good mechanic."

Chester Hape, who is retired but still does leatherwork for pleasure, also learned much from Don King. Hape carves the intricate flower pattern that is the hallmark of the Sheridan style, but his designs appear to be continuous, with every vine and leaf and flower connected. "I will break up a vine with another vine," he told us in his studio, "but only with a single vine, so the flow is never broken. I like to loop things through other things, so your eye never stops." Hape, who is known for the precision of his carving, explains that his attraction to leatherwork came as no surprise. "All my family on my mother's side were carpenters and artists. I liked to draw and make things from the time I was little. Growing up around horses and ranches and rodeo, it seemed natural to put that feeling into saddles."

**CURVE BY CURVE,
LINE BY LINE,
THE DESIGN IN
HIS MIND
TRAVELS
THROUGH THE
TOOLS IN HIS
HANDS TO THE
LEATHER.**



**An album
by William Gardner**

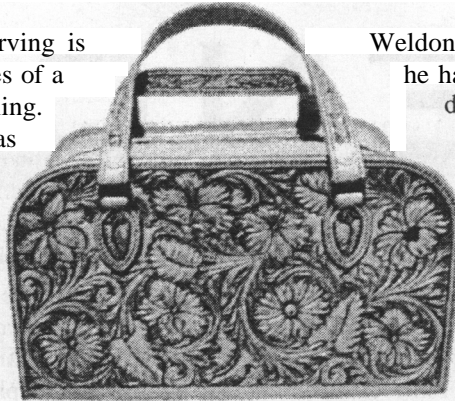
Like Don King, Hape is always ready to remind admirers that his saddles are built to work. He bristles at the notion that saddlemaking is something people do as a hobby. "I call that the Tandy syndrome," he says, referring to the Tandy Leather & Crafts catalogues long popular among home hobbyists. "You have no idea how a saddlemaker has to work for years refining and developing his art. That is why there are so few good ones."

Most of the men who are now known for making Sheridan saddles, in fact, at one time worked with or for Don King. The trophy saddles King made in the 1950s and 1960s for world-champion rodeo cowboys set the standard for the highly refined floral style. Chester Hape explains that King's generosity as a teacher is part of what has made Sheridan such a productive leatherworkers' community. "Here you work on something and you think, 'All the other saddlemakers are going to see this. It better be good!' There is a lot of competition in this town, but it's friendly competition, the kind that makes you better."

King formally retired about ten years ago, although even today he keeps up his leather-carving skills. His place at the bench has been taken by his son John, a former rodeo cowboy, who is now the saddlemaker; another craftsman, Jim Jackson, also works at King Saddlery. We watched John King transform a plain strip of leather into a magnificent belt. The small basement shop where he works is perfumed by the sweet, earthy aroma of tanned hide. King handles the leather with casual delicacy, pulling it across his palm, running his fingertips over the surface, positioning it on a cool marble block. Before it is carved, a piece of leather is wetted and then partially dried, to make it pliant. King stamps a line, straight or curved, into it and then, like a painter with a fine brush, wields a swivel knife to deepen and extend the line and give it shape. Finally he takes a stamping tool - nothing more than a nail or a quarter-inch bolt with a pattern that has been filed and ground into one end - and holds it against the cut leather as he whacks it with a mallet to create a furrow. Curve by curve, line by line, the design in his mind travels through the tools in his hands to the leather.

Chas Weldon, who lives and carves in Billings, Montana, also worked with Don King. At age forty-five he has emerged as one of the most distinctive talents among western leather carvers, and he recently built the saddles and tack for the Robert Redford movie, *The Horse Whisperer*. Although he was born and bred in Montana, Weldon produces saddles that have the unmistakable

refinement of the Sheridan style. His carving is detailed and precise, echoing the wild roses of a King saddle, and his craftsmanship is dazzling. Yet his style is also his own. Weldon has altered the traditional heavy roping saddles for which King is known, reaching back into Montana cowboy history for inspiration. "It's the Mexican vaquero way," he told us when we saw him in Billings. He pointed out the slick fork he likes on a saddle, with no swells in front to cushion a rider's thighs, and the stout horn, reminiscent of an old saddle from Rio Grande country but with all the Sheridan flourishes.



A bag

by John King

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Continued from page 1

public stockholders, so you've never heard of them. Leon Leonwood would have blushed at that catalogue, but if he got past the nylon, he'd have used the sleeping bags, at least.

Aziz is our local pizza guy, formerly a lawyer in Afghanistan, but he left with his family to escape the rough stuff, and now he has Diablo Pizza here in Walnut Creek. Business is not booming. He has a hidden location with no walk-by or drive-by traffic, and a one-line listing in the Yellow Pages, and no money to promote. Nobody knows his crust is the best. I've told him "Hey, Aziz, don't compete against Dominoes and Straw Hat and all those guys. Change your name to Aziz's Vegetarian Pizza, stop selling meat, and have twenty different kinds." He knows he's smarter than I am, and I know he's smarter than I am, but I'm right about this. I wish I could make him do it without being a buttinski.

We've all seen catalogue descriptions that end with: Imported. Why don't they say from where? They know where. Do they think you don't care where? I care. Do they want us to think, "Ah—it must come from whichever country can make it best" or "I'm sure they search the world for the best quality and value." If, after reading about our bike frames, we ended the description with: Imported. Would you wonder? They aren't.

Lots of things that used to be made in the U.S. aren't, anymore. Anything that's labor-intensive. We've gone from manufacturing, to service, to information. Try to buy hiking shoe-boots or a lightweight tent or sleeping bag (except the ones the nudists make) that aren't made in the Landa the Panda. In 1992, bicycle factory workers there made \$0.39 per hour and worked 60 hour weeks, lived in dorms, and single workers were heavily preferred over married ones. Manufacturers were hot to shift production there, because in Taiwan the hourly wage was \$4.25 per hour, and the workers were heading toward unionization. Some of the best things are imported, of course. I just think they should say where from.

.....

Weldon works alone, without apprentices, even though he has a waiting list of more than a year. He is too deeply involved in his work to share it. Cowboys, rope braiders, silversmiths, and other friends and colleagues frequently stop to gab with him as he stamps and stitches and neatly smoothes pieces of leather onto rawhide-covered wooden trees. It is mesmerizing to watch Weldon pound, cut, and caress hide, gradually transforming it into a thing of supreme beauty. "I feel sorry for the saddle-maker that somebody asks to make a saddle like one of mine," he says. "Each time I build one, it's like constructing a new bridge."

On February 22 of this year, Bicycling fired fourteen of its staff, and the publisher quit. A lot of good, familiar names are gone. Jim Langley and Geoff Drake must have half a century of deep-in-the-heart-of-the-bicycle experience between them, and they're still just in their 40s. Fred Matheny is older, but he goes back 25 years, too. That's just 3 of the 14. I don't know what you think about *Bicycling*. It was an "enthusiasts" publication, aimed at new cyclists, or at least those still on the steep slopes of the learning curve, not that there's anything wrong with that. I liked all those guys. It gave a lot of ink to a lot of the kinds of bike stuff that we don't do here, but that's because it had to get diluted to reach out to more people, so it could sell more ads. Ads are what it's all about in the magazine business, and don't think otherwise. Circulation was up, but ad revenues were down. Rodale Press, the parent, also owns Backpacker and Mountain *Bike* (Zap's mag), and said that the magazines were going to combine advertising and marketing staffs, because advertisers were complaining that they shouldn't have to deal with more than one salesperson for the magazines. This is hardship? The new people aren't rookies, or even *Bicycling* rookies. Bill Strickland and Nelson Pena are also familiar names to those of us who read mastheads; and I hear Garret Lai, formerly of *Bicycfe Guide*-turned *Bicycflist*, is on staff now. I like them all, but that's no reason not to be sad about Jim and Geoff and crew. What's going to happen to them now? I am so upset about it. I hope everything works out for everybody, but I can't imagine how it will. Good people deserve good work. If I had the loot, I'd get them going again.

.....

Last month there was a story in the paper about a young woman who quit medical school to test website shopping programs and provide feedback to her new employer. She and a group of friends hired on at the same time. I'm for online shopping, and I might even pay for improvements that result from her "research," but she was going to be a pediatrician, and the gist of the story was cast *offyour old* tired notions of what a job is, and make some real money fast. I wonder what Leon Leonwood would have thought about that. —Grant

RIVENDELL

We have lots of pictures of Rivendell bikes, but not many complete-bike specs. So in each issue we'll show a couple. We started it last issue, titled the section "Real Bikes," but what we mean was "Actual Rivendells or Herons." We get lots of inquiries from people who want to know how other people build up their Rivendells, in the hopes of getting ideas for their own. Besides that, we've shown precious few pictures of the bikes, and word has it you'd like to see more. So in each issue, we'll show a couple Rivendells or Herons, real bikes, and the parts the owner picked for them. Sometimes these will be new bikes Peter here builds up for the rider, sometimes they'll be bikes that have already seen plenty of use. If you have a Rivendell or Heron

PETER'S ROAD BIKE



Frame/Fork: Road std 57
 Headset: Tange Rollerball
 Stem: Nitto Pearl 11
 Handlebar: Nitto Mod. 175-42
 Brake Lever: SunTour Superbe aero
 Brakes: SunTour Cyclone
 Seat post: Nitto One-bolt
 Saddle: Selle Italia Turbo
 Front der: Mavic
 Rear der: SunTour Superbe
 Shifters: Simplex Retrofriction
 Crank: Mavic 631
 Rings: 53 x 39
 Bottom bracket: Campagnolo Nuovo Record
 Rear gears: Sachs 7sp I2 x 24
 Wheels: Mavic Reflex / Mavic hubs, 32H
 Tires: Panaracer Cat. Pro 700x28
 Pedals: Ritchey
 Frame Weight: Didn't weigh it

Fork Weight: Didn't weigh it
 Bike weight: 22 lbs.
 Approx cost: \$2,950

Accessories: ALE bottle cage, Silca pump, and an Acme Tool & Tube Tote

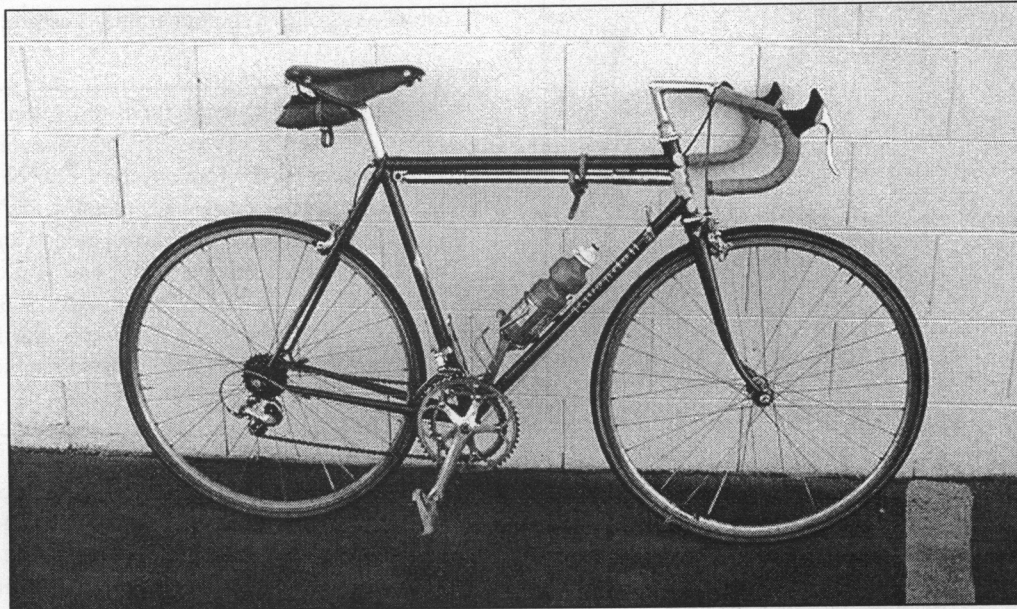
Comments: What surprises me the most is I like the way this bike rides better than my original Rivendell. I think it is because I got one size larger - a 57 versus a 56. They both ride great, I just seem to prefer this one. It is set up almost exactly like my first one, mostly by accident. I tried to use up parts I had laying around. I am trying to adhere to a rule; no bike parts that aren't on bikes. **So**, I used some stuff that is not necessarily my first choice. I think the rims are good but I prefer MA2's. The pedals I am testing, I would rather have Time's. The saddle is not a Brooks, but an Avocet/Turbo, I have ridden the same saddle since I was 18, and I am used to it. I have ridden a Brooks, and find it perfectly comfortable, but I have 5 or so of the Avocet saddles waiting to be used.

These days, this is my bike of choice.

GALLERY

and want to show it here, send us a list of all the parts, accessories, and comments. And a non-returnable photograph that'll reproduce well even on bad paper. Plain backgrounds are best. Sideviews are best. We'll work with any format you send. We have room for two bikes per issue, just eight per year, and we'll try to show a variety. Probably we'll get more entrants than we can use, so it may even come down to a random drawing. Please don't be offended if yours doesn't make it! (Rule No. 1). If these bikes are well beyond your budget, don't be offended again! (Rule No. 2).

JOE BAUDER'S No. 1 RIVENDELL

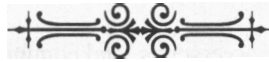


Frame/Fork: Rivendell Road, Joe Starck's #1.
 Headset: Tange Rollerball
 Stem: SR 13cm
 Handlebar: Nitto Mod. 175 x 42cm
 Brake Lever: Shimano RX100
 Brakes: Dia-Compe Royal Compe II
 Seat post: Nitto One-bolt
 Saddle: Brooks B.17 Grey, but not Ti
 Front der: Shimano 600 (old model)
 Rear der: Shimano Ultegra ('94)
 Shifters: Shimano RX100 8-sp
 Crank: SunTour Superbe Pro
 Rings: 53 x 39
 Bottom bracket: Campy Athena, 11 Imm
 Rear gears: Shimano 13 x 28 8sp. cassette
 Wheels: F: Sun ME14 32H on Ultegra hub
 R: Ritchey OCR 32H on RX100
 Tires: Panaracer Cat. Pro 700x28
 Pedals: Shimano 105 Look-style

Frame weight: ? (About 4lb 5oz)
 Fork weight: ? (About 1lb 8oz)
 Bike weight: 24.2 lb ridable (w/extras shown)
 Approx cost: \$1600

Comments: "I put this together as economically as possible, but there's not a part there that I'm ashamed about. It has a grey saddle and grey shellacked tape with old cork underneath. The saddle is a goofup—the grey ones are supposed to come with titanium rails, but this one's are steel. It was returned, I bought it cheap, and now when I crest the climb just behind the ti-railed guy, I can say "but mine is not titanium." The frame is Joe Starck's prototype Rivendell, and I bought it cheap, too. It could be a cm larger, and the rear brake bridge ought to be a few mm higher. Joe put it where Grant told him to, but Grant told him the wrong place. I've done all my road riding on the same rear hub, a Shimano RX100; the chain and cogs have lasted more than 10,000 miles, mainly because of good maintenance. I equipped it with old parts, and eventually will switch to a freewheel-style rear hub."—Joe B.

READER CHANGES, NEWS, & MISCELLANEOUS NOTES



CARRADICE SADDLEBAGS

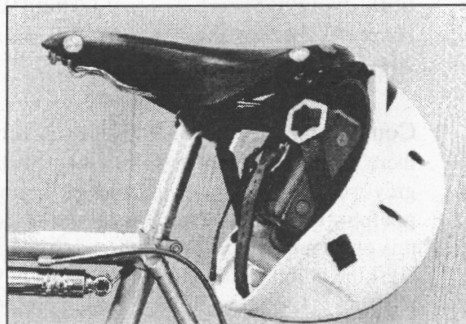
Swiss member Larry Palmer has figured out a way to carry a Carradice saddlebag whilst riding a loopless saddle. A bungee cord hooked onto the rails, around the back of the saddle, doubled back around the seat post, and up again to the other sad-



do rail. He's done it this way for 20 years, saving for a Brooks all the while, no doubt. The new Nitto Uplift may have bungee cord makers singing the blues, though.

HELMET FREE

Let's say you have a long, slow, hot climb ahead of you, and you want to do it helmet-free. If you have an Acme Saddle Pouch, here's how to hang it. It works great.



RECORD SIDEPULLS ARE FENDER-COMPATIBLE, SOMETIMES

Canadian member Chris Algeo doubted my claim that Campagnolo Record sidepulls aren't compatible with fenders, because he's been riding his Rivendell Road with both for many months now. I tried it with Chorus, and it didn't work, and so assumed the Records were the same, but apparently not.

SRAM TO DISCONTINUE MORE SACHS FREEWHEELS

SRAM-who-bought-Sachs is going to discontinue 7-sp free-wheels in a year or two. SunRace still makes 6 & 7 speeders, and they hold up fine.

CATALOGUE, NO. 5 & FRAME BROCHURE

The next catalogue, No. 5, will be out in late April. It will have what was going to be our frame brochure.

1999 COLORS

We'll try not to change them too often, but you can always check the website (www.rivendellbicycles.com) for updates. For now and maybe forever, the 1999 colors: Light blue metallic, medium blue (aqua-like) metallic, dark blue metallic; Dark green metallic, Coleman stove green, light muddy-sagey pea green; and burnt orange solid. And you can still get Painter's choice/Wild card, but that's an extra \$60, because it's off the palette. It will look good. This is the third place in this Reader with pretty much the same information, sorry.

NITTO RACKS

Nitto racks are a pain to get, but we'll still keep trying. By the time you read this, but not in time for a picture, we'll have samples of a seat-post mounted Carradice bag uplift/carrier, a front rack, and a low-rider. Watch the website for pictures, around March 20. Maybe we'll get it in here at the last minute.

KIDS BIKE

I/Grant am looking for a bike for Kate, my 10-year old. Through no fault of my own, she has come to dislike the monster bikes. She likes "round bikes," meaning round tubes, and what she's after is a downsized version of a road frame (girl's style is okay), with Priest or Moustachey handlebars, and hand brakes, and she doesn't care about gears. I showed her the Schwinn cruisers, but no; and no to the Stingrays, too. It makes me wish I had some money to play with, so I could design and have made (Taiwan?) some simple kids bikes, or at least the frames. They'd have a derailleur hanger, so you could put gears on the bike. I know the frames would be cheap out of Taiwan. But then I think it's dumb to suppose kids would like a bike like that. They could be 20lb one-speeds and sell for \$200.

I'm going to have Kirk at Match tig-weld a frame, just as a trial or prototype. It sure seems like this could be a good opportunity for someone. Frames and forks alone, or maybe with headsets and bottom brackets installed, and let the parents scavenge

the rest, and add Priest bars or something, and some rubber grips and pedals, and there you go. Burley could do it. Or Taiwan, but someone could and maybe should, and it won't be us, under Rivendell, at least. Lugged kids bikes would be cool, but there's something weird about expensive kids bikes. Who's it for? It'd be like buying a child a \$200 watch.

THE HAPPY HUMAN WILL RETURN

The Happy Human, a column that had a life in earlier Readers, and subsequently died when I lost some entries, and then never resurrected, will return in RR16. What it is: You talk about a product of any kind that you absolutely, totally love and cannot find fault with. It can be a bike part or a toilet plunger, a computer widget or a shovel, a hat or a sock. Or, if you have some other dream item that doesn't fit into one of those six categories, send it in anyway.

These are the rules.

1. It has to be without fault. If you add, in the last line or something, "The only change I'd make is..." or "Now—if they'd only just _____," then don't bother submitting it. It is understood that armchair designers have a distinct advantage over actual designers, and it's unfair for us to rub it in.
2. It has to be available, and you have to tell us where, and how much it'll cost. Avoid the temptation to rave about a good luck charm given to you by a Zulu chief, or something you bought the last one of. It's help time, not brag time.
3. Entries must be in writing. Mail, email (Rivgp@earthlink.net), or fax. Include your name.

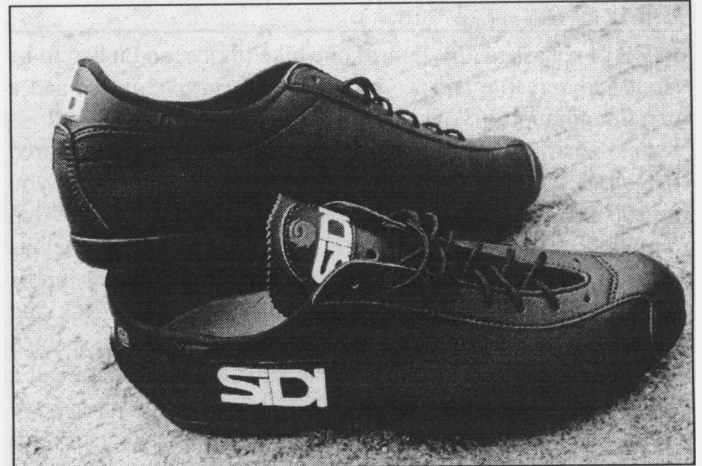
THE UNHAPPY HUMAN WILL DEBUT

The Unhappy Human is just the opposite, but with one qualification: No bike parts submissions. Slam things on the internet if you must, and whine to your clubmates on the rides, but I want to keep the Reader out of all that mess. You hate your XYZ single-speed chain tensioner/cable guide combo widget? Well, one of our other members may have designed it! You just never know, so I'm exorcising my wright to not get in the middle. Non-bike parts, however, are fair game, and what we're after here are fair warnings to stop others from buying those things. Got a watr-savr toilet that stops up every third flush, even when your 4-year old uses it? I do—the Kohler Mayfair! Got an apple corer-slicer that's so small in diameter that it jams up halfway down an average-sized apple? I do—and Krups makes it! I trust that we have no Kohler or Krups designers or heirs on board. Maybe this is a bad idea, just in case.

SIDI TOURING SHOE(S)

LOOK AT THE FINE TOURING SHOE SOMEWHERE ON THIS PAGE, AS IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY! SIDI doesn't import them, but we have an opportunity to get them, and as much as we hate-hate-hate selling shoes by mail (too many returns), we are again tempted. These have a ridged rigid sole that grips pedals. They don't work superbly with Touring pedals (the body of the

pedal is too high relative to the cage), but they're definitely acceptable with them, and they are fantastic with regular road-



It's hard to not like the look of these blackies; and they work good, *too*.

type pedals made for traditional cleats—like the Sylvan track pedals, and any pre-clipless road pedal. Good grip, good Sidi fit, made of Lorica (fake leather to escape the super high import duty on Italian leather shoes). No holes, so they're relatively water resistant, and if you want a cool summertime shoe, get a punch and put them in yourself—it's easy as pie. Classic black with a few Sidi logos. Whole sizes only. We'd be looking at 38 through 47. Price would be around \$125. You can get English leather handmade shoes for that, and we've given the address in the past, and they're super nice shoes and work better with our Touring pedals. But then you have to send to England, and if you really want a cleatlike grip, these Sidis have the edge. I'm wondering how many people know their SIDI size; and how many returns we'd get. We want feedback. Please tell us what you think. Meaning, should we carry these?

HELP! I NEED SOMEBODY

Not just anybody. I'd like somebody who works in a bike shop to write a column. One person writes it one issue, then somebody else, and so on. It should be about life in your bike shop, which suggests that you have to work in the shop or own it. Eight hundred to a thousand words, about an incident, a situation, a customer, a problem, a victory, a sale, a return, a business issue, a human interest story. It pays \$150 Rivendollars. It will be edited for clarity and to fit space. Write how you talk, not like Hemingway or Robert Burns.

ASK THE FRAMEBUILDER (OR PAINTER)

Got questions about framebuilding that none of your friends can answer? Have you ever wondered how they do this or that? Want to see photos of frames in various stages of production? Then ask the framebuilder, for crying out loud! Or do you have a question about painting, or touching up, or pinstripping, or decaling, or bubbling-peeling-flaking? The ask the painter, for criminy sakes. We have Curt, Joe, JB, Martin, Kirk, and Tim

at our disposal. Fire the questions to Rivgvp@earthlink.net, and we'll pass them along to one of those guys.

ONE BIKE OVERLOAD

In RR14 we asked "If you had one bike to ride, and it had to be stout and versatile and work-on-able and survive nature and a certain amount of owner-rider neglect and so on and so forth...what'd it be?" And we received at least a hundred responses. Too many to include ANY examples, but thank you all for writing. Many of you thought the question was "What parts did you put on your bike?" or "Using as little money as possible, and scavenging parts from wherever possible, is it possible to assemble a workable bike, and if so, prove it", and those were some of the most interesting. What you all seemed to agree on, though, was that Mutts Are Good. I don't recall a single full-Campy or full-Shimano bike in there, and we received close to 150 entries. So if nothing else, there's real-world proof that one can mix up parts from various makers and still get a bike that works perfectly.

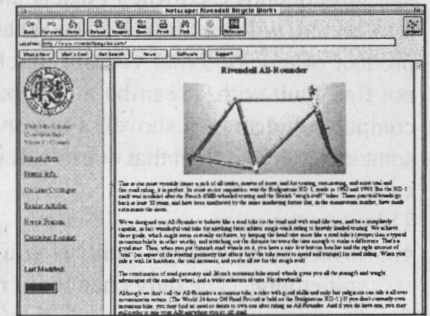
WEBSITE

Peter's working on it, and there will be many changes and updates in the next few months. Here are a few:

1. We got a digital camera (Olympus D340L) and finally figured it out. *So* expect more pictures. We're concerned with speed, though, so we'll stick with line drawings as much as possible, and go with photos when we can't get the drawing in time, or color's an issue, or we just can't resist using the new acquisition.
2. All the frame colors are up there now. If burnt orange isn't, give it a week.
3. Some of RR-14 will be up there soon. This can't possibly be great news to anybody who's reading this, since you've probably already read it.
4. Thought it never made the Daily News: The New York Times, one of New York's top five newspapers, reviewed our website on or about March 3. It said it was fine.
5. We plan to have a specials section in the web, in which we'll sell odds and ends we have around here, things like 180mm Mavic mountain crankarms, Mavic first generation right crank arms drilled for triples but good luck getting the bolts so you might as well use them as classy doubles (or singles), and other such stuff. The plan is to update it weekly, or at least biweekly. If you don't have computer access, you can call up any day and ask for the specials.
6. Also, a "gallery," where we show pix of customers' Rivendells and Herons (maybe on the Heron page) that Peter here builds into complete bikes. Without customer names (just initials, and no hometown, so the psychos can't get them), and with full specs and all, and final price.
7. If you have a question for Grant, send it to Rivgvp@earthlink.net. General inquiries and orders go to Rivbici@earthlink, but if you have some Bstone question, or a historical thing, or something not directly related to

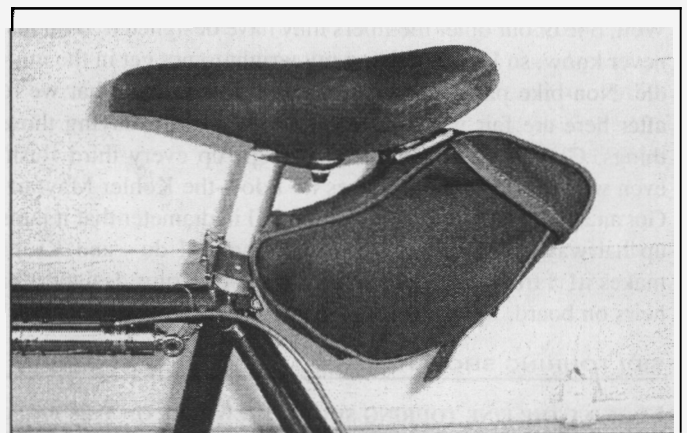
either an order or current Rivendell biz, send it to Grant at Rivgvp@earthlink.net. Otherwise, I have to do lots of cutting and pasting just to reply.

8. Suggestions for the web-thing go to Peter. Rivbici@earthlink.net. We want our website to be really good and easy, and so we welcome all suggestions.
9. A secure server is on the way. May be months away, but it's coming. Ordering from the web, even with a "non-secured" server, is at least as safe as handing your credit card to a waiter and letting him or her walk off with it and charge you. I read that somewhere, and it makes sense to me. But anyway, the secure server will happen.



FLASH.

We got a new seat bag in—a prototype, at least. It took almost a year to get it from Duluth Tent & Awning, makers of the Duluth Packs, based in Packs, Minnesota.. Here it is. Cotton duck with leather trim. We may add a few details if we can do so without mucking it up. I'm a firm believer that a pack is right when, when you get it, you think "Wow, this is great, but if they'd only just _____." Follow-up soon. Works with any railed saddle, no loops required. But it still works great on a B.17. It's going to be at least \$75, and maybe as much as \$85—blame it on the leather piping, which will do that to a pack. Sorry it's going to cost so much, but it's really deluxe, and sometimes you just have to dig deep. If you inquire about it, call it the Duluth Banana Bag, since that's probably what we'll call it, since it's made in Duluth and it's shape is not only banana-friendly, but banana-like.



Come hither, ye bananas! Your home is in me, the deluxe Duluth Banana Bag. There's also a small sleeve-pocket inside, perfect for keys, ID, and bubble gum, and outside lash points for a rain cape, kindling, or a small tripod.

BY BETH HAMMON

MOVING GOD AROUND



Saturday morning. It's September in the sky, the sun slants longer now; but it still feels like high summer in the air. I dress very casually, in shorts and a plain jersey and my cycling shoes. It's cool outside but I know it'll warm up later so I don't bother with a sweater. I hop on my bike and ride the four and a half brisk miles to the synagogue. Torah study starts at nine sharp, and I want a good seat. Arriving early gives me time to let the worst of the sweat evaporate before I go into a small room with a bunch of people wearing dressier clothes.

I like torah study because it's informal. Some of us will go to morning services afterwards, and some will not. Those of us who skip the service (usually because we went Friday night) tend to be dressed more casually, and no one minds. There's coffee and tea and fresh bagels, because an empty belly tends to mean a slower mind and this study session demands a high degree of alertness.

I like torah study because it's diverse. People come from all walks of life, and even from other congregations (and sometimes from other religions; there's a Catholic woman who often attends). There are people of every color, shape and size around the oval table in the conference room. Hugs are exchanged amid greetings of "Gut Shabbes" or "Shabbat Shalom" as we help ourselves to bagels and coffee and settle into our seats. Our rabbi comes in — a woman about my age who intimidates me with her knowledge and intelligence and, at the same time, makes me feel very welcome every time I come to shul. Rabbi smiles broadly at the people seated around the table and offers a warm greeting. She clearly enjoys this particular part of her job very much.

I like torah study because it can be intense. We turn to the weekly parsha (portion), recite a short blessing in unison, and then jump into the passage, each person reading a line aloud as we go around the table in turn. We read no more than four lines

when people start to groan and mutter; a passage has succeeded in attacking our modern, "politically correct" sensibilities and Rabbi knows we have to stop and dig deeply into the text for some insights. It goes like this very often, because as liberal Jews we are mindful of our present reality to the point of forgetting —or not knowing in the first place— what life was like in the ancient world. The conversation is stimulating, challenging, and always eye-opening for me. Some days I feel like I've been whipped along into a jet-stream and my brain comes up at the end of the ninety minutes gasping for air. I don't remember every point that's made each week but that's

okay. I can always go home and read the passage again (and often do), or I can hang onto the points I do remember and just reflect on them for awhile.

Meanwhile, I can hope for something new to come to me next year, when we come around to the same passage again. One of the things I like best about the way we read Torah is the dependability of the cycle. There's always, always more, like a promise held out before me.

After the study session ends, Rabbi rushes off to conduct morning services and many in our group join her in the Temple. I say goodbye to my friends, collect my bike in the basement, and ride up the steep driveway onto the street. The day is clear and bright, and has warmed up nicely. I start to ride towards home, and impulsively turn around and head west, towards Highway 30. The St. Johns loop will be really nice today and I decide that a longer ride is in order. After all, I reason, the beauty of Shabbat is

that I get time to do the things I can't do during the week. Being a bike mechanic, I spend my workdays fixing everyone else's bikes and seldom get to go out on my own (other than to commute, but that's hardly the same thing). So when the weather is perfect and my body feels good and it's a day off, I seize the opportunity to roam a little. After stopping at a Handi-Mart for some Gatorade and a snack to carry in my jersey pocket, I cruise through the Northwest Industrial



district and turn onto Old St. Helens Road.

Lately, when I'm out on these weekend rides and my mind gets to wander a bit, I find myself chanting some of the melodies from services. Not out loud, as that requires too much oxygen and I'm already using it up maintaining a cadence; but in my head where it can bounce around unimpeded. I shift into the big ring on Old St. Helens Road as my mental jukebox finds the tune for the Tefilah and drops it onto the turntable. It's really crazy, but chanting like this tends to help me steady my cadence and even forget about which gear I'm in. (Caution: this works best on the long flats; try it on a hill and I guarantee you'll be gasping for air, even if you're not actually vocalizing. But don't do it in heavy downtown traffic, or you may find yourself suddenly hovering invisibly above an oblong box, wondering how in hell the tune suddenly changed in midstream to the Kaddish...)

I flow along, turning onto Highway **30** at Kittridge Avenue, and bask in the breeze generated by log trucks as they rumble past. The steady whirr of rubber rolling against pavement and the quiet gnashing of the chain are an accompaniment to my internal chanting. Tunes flow in and out of my mind in a random order, segueing seamlessly while I pedal. The sky is a deep, pure blue that stretches eternally before me, filling the upper half of the world and sitting neatly flush against the dark green of Forest Park. It's a two-tone world as I signal and ease into the left-hand turn lane. My goal lies in the upper right-hand side of my view, and I am sucked into a long, green corridor that will take me up and around to the St. Johns Bridge. My own Green Monster. I shift down as the Amidah ends. My brain puts the record back into its slot and shuts off the jukebox. I will need everything I have to make this hill.

It's not the worst hill I've ever climbed, and certainly not a "bad" hill at all if you're comfortable ascending (which I am, being small and wiry; good climbers aren't made, they're born). But it is long, which can be a psych job all by itself on a warm day. I am starting to breathe harder now. I can feel my pulse in all my limbs and at the back of my head. My legs feel terrific, hard and lean and powerful; but my lungs are starting to scream and my heart is pumping like an old well brought suddenly back to life. I glance at my watch as I am buzzed by a rental truck. The backbreeze gusts me along, threatening to pick me up off the road. I note that it's about the time when, back at the Temple, they'll be opening the doors of the Ark. As I crest the hill and turn onto the bridge, my own heart and lungs suddenly open up wide, and I am slammed into a new state of consciousness by the rush of my endorphins. The congregation sings with giddy joy as the Torah is paraded around the Temple, and my head is expanding, threatening to fly right off my shoulders.

The road before me and the river several hundred feet below transform into a giant neon Yes, a thing to be sensed and merged with rather than seen. Am I seeing God? I don't know, but I can tell you that God is definitely seeing me. Everywhere I turn to look, I can feel God, or something like it, looking back at me. When you're high on your own adrenaline, you just know this stuff.

I stop on the bridge and suck down the entire bottle of Gatorade. As I lose myself in the sparkle of the river, the pounding in my brain softens and I slowly return to full density. The world feels and looks endless from up here, the river stretching to the Pacific and the sky so close I can touch the sun. I get back on my bike and wobble unsteadily to the other end of the cathedral-topped bridge, landing magically in the neighborhood for which the span is named. St. Johns is The Land That Time Forgot. With neat little houses and tired lawns, crumbling storefronts and narrow streets, the place feels stuck in Circa 1965. I am out of quarters now, and the jukebox is quiet. I am content to have a purely visual ride, like a silent movie, down Willamette Boulevard to North Portland and my house. Everything is hot and bright, and blurred around the edges. I pass a soccer field and see kids kicking white balls in the heat. They're crazy, I think. But really, are they any crazier than I am? Is their joy any farther from God than mine? What is God, anyway? If, as Rabbi's husband once suggested to me, God is simply energy, then prayer is just a way of moving the energy around. If that's so — and the longer I play with the idea, the more I think it is — then spinning my wheels can, in the right frame of mind, be just another form of prayer.

By the time I roll into my driveway, they are clearing away the last of the dishes from the Oneg Shabbat. I put my bike away and climb the steps into the house, where I will have my own little Oneg and thank God for all which sustains **me**, this day and all days.

Beth Hamon is a bicycle mechanic, musician and writer in Portland, Oregon.

Looking for professional musicians and subscriber-members who make a living by music.

Chris H., Joseph K., David G., Aaron M., Stewart A., and ? For a future RR feature. Need photograph and short bio. Contact Grant any of the various ways for more information. Nothing major, just some human-interest stuff. Photos of you in action required. Thanks.

LETTERS

WE CAN'T PRINT ALL LETTERS OR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS, AND BUT IF YOU SEND IN A STORY AND IT DOESN'T FIT IN THE READER TEMPLATE, WE MAY RUN IT IN THE LETTERS COLUMN. I WANT OUR LETTERS COLUMN TO BE INTERESTING AND VARIED, AND THE LETTERS DON'T HAVE TO PERTAIN TO ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR. EMAIL LETTERS TO RIVGP@EARTHLINK.NET — GRANT

THOSE DANGEROUS TIRE SAVER-USERS

Why don't you include tire savers in your catalogue? I've now been using them for two or three years and they have definitely reduced the number of punctures I've had. For a couple of dollars and less than an ounce per pair, they are pretty cost effective in removing a major riding hassle. Besides, they make such a nice whine as you skim along over a smooth road.

—Regards, Patrick Moore

Patrick, the last maker of tire savers quit making them because he was sued when someone put them on wrong and got them **all** jammed up. Tragic! **So** he gave the tooling to someone else (I think it was United Bicycle Tool), and they've not made any, maybe for fear of lawsuits. It's a nifty device, I used to use them all the time until I got too cool for it, but now I'm balanced again and want them and can't find them, just like you. —G.

THE BOEING-RAMADA-RIVENDELL CONNECTION

Just thought you and others might be interested in a recent discovery of mine. I was at the Ramada Express in Laughlin, Nevada last week, checking out a performance space for a show that our university theatre company has been invited to perform in. In the room with the stage was a large display of WWII memorabilia, including a section devoted to the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber. One of the more interesting artifacts was the control wheel from an early B-17, which was wrapped in what looked like thin hemp or manila twine, for gripping purposes. Apparently, from the early operational prototype model Y1B-17 through the B-17E, that was the standard control wheel.

Now, I'm still not sure I want to try it on my bike, but at least you know there have been similar applications. I guess if it was good enough for the Army Air Corps....

—Tim Fricker

LANDLORD (A POEM)

I OWN THE ROAD

aside from a few curious rabbits
it's just me and the wind
I'm streaking by houses

still in slumber
and cars
whose stone cold engine blocks sit idle
beneath dew-covered hoods
the air is morning
and I'm happy to be alive—

By 5:45 a.m.

I OWN THE WORLD

it's just me and the rising sun
aside from an occasional car door slamming
shut

and the heavy thud of a tightly wrapped bundle
of first editions

it's just me and the wind
with five miles behind me
my pulse has quickened.. .

By 6:00 a.m.

I OWN THE PLANET

I'm scaring rabbits back into their holes
and the sound of my rear derailleur finding
another gear

seems large in this Idaho

and I'm streaking across silent pavement unnoticed

By 6:15 a.m.

I'm not alone

The Planet, The World, and The Road

are no longer all mine

signs of life and civilization are everywhere
and I'm spinning for home

By 6:30 a.m.

with nineteen miles behind me.. .

I'm ready to share.

—Vincent A.H. LeVine, Norton

HAUNTING FRENCH BIKE

I'm restoring an early 80's motobecane 12 speed bicycle. Cool thing; it also happens to be very similar to a bike I owned at the time. I realize that this frame is goofy; i.e. threading on headset=french etc. What I need to do to complete the job is figure out the factory specs without having to get down with a micrometer. Does anyone know where I can find this information? I most likely will be purchasing the parts through you (and a combination of trades in the messenger subculture).

—Thank you, Andrew Rosenberg
email: amrosenberg@hotmail.com

Hi Andrew,

Forget about trying to find a book with fac-

tory specs. At the time, they probably didn't list them, anyway. If it's an old French bike and has French headset, it probably has French BB, too. THAT's a spec. Probably a French stem, which is **22.0** at the quill, as opposed to **22.2**. THAT's another spec. Calipers will tell you the bar diameter at the clamp; probably **26mm**, maybe **25.4**. I don't think the French were too weird **or off** on their own with bar diameters; but then again, I'm not sure. Once you've got the bb, hs, and stem/bar worked out, there's the seat post. Measure it, that'll tell you. The size may **be** marked on it, anyway. French seat tubes were **28.0mm**, rather than **28.6**. **So** the front derailleur should be **28.0**. Don't waste time looking for a **28.0** front derailleur — et a normal **28.6er** and clamp it over a wrap of bar tape; it'll work fine. Unless you're restoring it to perfect periodness for show reasons **or** something, it's probably a good idea to just get it on the road and active again. A worthwhile pursuit, and a lot **less** hassle than making it factory mint again — not to imply that you want to do that. —Grant

KIND OF STEEP FOR A BICYCLE

I have a Specialized road bike with a very steep seat tube angle of 75 degrees. I cannot get my knee over the pedal spindle in the KOPS designated position. I think I need a seat tube angle of 72 degrees because my other bike has that angle and it works for me. Are there any seat posts that have enough SPO to remedy this on the Specialized bike or should I sell it instead? I would need a 27.0 mm seat post. Thanks for whatever thoughts you may have on this. —Jack Pirson, Austin, Texas

If it's **75** deg, it must be a sub-**54cm** frame. Hmmmm. You have a couple options, maybe three.

1 Get one of our VITUS seat posts and make it fit by:

- a. Having a shop ream your seat tube to **27.2**, or
- b. Sanding the shaft of the **post** to **27.2**. It takes a while. Try to keep it round.

2 Oops. You need **3** degrees? I just noticed.

Well, if your current post has NO SPO (many modern posts don't), then the Vitus may do it. But if it has a normal amount, the Vitus difference won't make a difference, so you might want to sell the frame.

Smaller bikes usually have steeper seat tubes than bigger ones. The logic behind it is that smaller riders have shorter thighbones, and therefore don't require as much setback. I used to believe that, too, until Tony Oliver (in *Touring Bikes*, a book we sell) pointed out that body proportions are pretty much the same, so there needn't be such a big difference in seat tube angles, from small to big. As the tall guy raises his saddle, it moves back ANYWAY.

Frame designers assign steeper seat tube angles to smaller bikes out of habit; because others do it; and because it allows them to use a shorter top tube and still have room for a front wheel (so the wheel doesn't hit the downtube).

Related to the last point: 1985 was the year of the Terry clones/inspirators. (Terry is Georgena Terry, designer of women's frames with petite, Winch front wheels and short top tubes). Most of the major makers came out with "women's frames", but were chicken to go to Winch front wheels. So in order to compete with Terry's short top tubes, they just increased the seat tube angles, which allowed them to use 20-inch top tubes with 700c front wheels. It is not a solution; it's a coverup. Cannondale's short top tube model had a 78-deg seat tube angle, for instance.. There are other ways to deal with it. Good luck. —Grant

YEAH! WHAT HE SAYS!

I've been reading about the complaints you've had about frames arriving late and thought a comparison to hand built musical instruments would prove interesting. I play a concertina, which is a small, usually octagonal or hexagonal bellows driven free-reed instrument in the same family as accordions and harmonicas. The concertina was invented by Charles Wheatstone, a somewhat famous scientist for whom the Wheatstone Bridge is named. At the time of its invention (about 1829) it was meant to be a mechanical version of the Violin, and rapidly gained great popularity. The concertina has a number of buttons (usually between 10 to 28 or so) on each end that are connected to a lever that raises or lowers a pad over a hole to direct air to individual reeds, causing a note to sound. The types of concertinas I play have two reeds for each button, and they have 56 buttons for a total of 112 reeds. Being small, by necessity the concertina is rather complex

mechanically, my Aeola Wheatstone concertina is 6.25 inches across its octagonal face and within that 6 inch by about two inch area there are 28 buttons attached to levers and springs, an equal number of pads, and twice that number of valves and reeds. There are also channels and reed chambers built of wood to contain and direct the air flow. This is repeated at the other end. The bellows between the wood ends are made of hundreds of little pieces of leather hand fitted and glued together. Some of the modern builders use CNC machines to cut the various parts, but it still has to be pieced and glued together by hand. All the reeds are hand tuned by someone with a file; file a bit of metal off the end and the pitch rises, take a bit off the base of the reed and the pitch drops. Its a laborious and time consuming operation that requires great skill.

So, how does this tie into hand built bikes like a Rivendell? Both are hand built by one or two people and both can vary widely in the time it takes to get one. What are Riv's running, 8 months, 12 months from ordering to delivery? Well, hold on to your hats, but compared to at least some hand built musical instruments, the frames are just flying out the door. The two most "famous" builders of concertinas, Steve Dickenson of Wheatstone and Colin Dipper both have an approximately 3 YEAR waiting list. So, does this mean you'll get your instrument in three years? Possibly. If Colin Dipper or Steve Dickenson decides your custom concertina would be fun to build AND if it fits into their production schedule AND if you're REALLY nice to them you MIGHT see it in three years. If you don't meet the above criteria, expect to wait perhaps 5 years, and it could be years more than that. A friend of mine has been waiting patiently for SEVEN years for a Wheatstone! Why is it like this? There is strong demand for the very best instruments, and a one person operation, if they work hard, chums out about twelve per year. When something is hand built by just one or two people, ANYTHING can slow production and it bumps everything back down the line. Things like materials arriving late, wrong or not the expected quality, to the builder getting sick, or even one of his family members getting sick. A hundred things can slow a small builder that a larger company can buffer against. With custom musical instruments, don't even think about yelling about delays if you ever want to get an instrument from them, most will cancel your order, or worse, put it to the back of the pile. In the concertina community, which is very small, I wouldn't want it known that I pissed off one of the builders by yelling, they are still greatly respected by players and you just don't treat them that way.

I know that the bicycling world is different, but

I think a lot of the same principles still apply when talking about a hand built frame. A several month delay is nothing when talking hand built and if someone positively has to have it on time they should get a mass produced bike. Part of having respect for hand craftsmanship is understanding that its to the builders advantage to get their product out the door on time, if there's a delay there's bound to be a good reason for it. An elderly friend of mine did manage to hurry her concertina along. She called Colin Dipper and told him she has been waiting patiently, but if he doesn't get it to her soon she might not be alive, and she would so much like to play a Dipper before she dies. She received it several months later! Hey, any chance I'm going to see a waxed cotton bag for my m'bars before I die? —Bruce Boysen

That depends on how old you are now, how dangerous your lifestyle, lots of things. We still want one and still hope Nitto will make the rack for it. Carradice can make the bag, but prefers to have a rack first. Nitto wants the bag first. Goal: A year from now. —G

TAKING CARE OF BROOKS

I have several Brooks saddles, so I read what you say about them with great interest. You estimate that they should last at least 15,000 miles. I have over 50,000 miles on one of mine. It is 13 years old. It is on my commute/touring bike, so it gets wet regularly. It is only now starting to show some cracking around the rivets. Since I've had so much good luck, I thought I'd tell you my maintenance procedure: I Proofhide the underside 3 to 4 times per year. I use paste wax on the top, about twice a month. I've never touched the adjusting bolt. One last comment: One of the saddles is "pre-softened." A bad idea. It has never been as comfortable as the others.

—Robert Kelly

Tony Tapay asked if a Brooks leather saddle would hold up to the weather conditions when he will be riding the Continental Divide. We have used Brooks saddles on some long, wet rides in England/Scotland for 6 weeks and Ireland for 6 weeks and it rained for a large majority of the days, including a snow storm. We have had no problems with our Brooks. I coat the bottom with Proofhide and leave it on. I rub Proofhide on the top real good and then let it sit for an hour and then wipe the excess off. We use a small sheet of plastic to cover the entire bikes if they will be outside over night or we will just cover the seats with a plastic bag over night. We never have a cover on when we are biking; our butts suffice. We did ride the CD route for 10 days and did have the foam ate off of one of

the riders foam saddles. It took the deer very little time to strip the foam off the plastic shell. We had our Brooks and our bikes were covered with a small [4'x6'] plastic tarp. Nothing bothered our saddles. The deer also took bike gloves that were left on the bikes and a riders helmet was drug into the woods.....all in the want of salt. In the morning the deer stood and watched as we prepared breakfast. Obvious the deer were well acquainted with bikers. This only happened at one of our overnight stops. Use your Brooks and don't worry about it if you give it a little Proofhide treatment before those long tours.

—Judy and Jerry Specht

I have Brooks saddles on both my road bike and my road tandem and always carry shower cap in my bag in case of rain.

However, doesn't it occasionally rain in England? I realize they tend to use fenders more than we do, but there used to be a saying about British car racing: "If you've raced 3 times in England, you've raced twice in the rain." I have an English e-mail pal and SHE seems to think nothing of leaving the house during a rain storm and riding 100 miles in the rain. Do the English do anything different to their saddles than we do? Or just Proofhide the bottom and cover the top? BTW, I rode about 350 miles of the Great Divide Route last August. I have very, very good luck when touring. It rained pretty hard one night and not so hard one other night. Otherwise, it was dry the entire time. In 76, I rode all 4,250 miles of the BikeCentennial route and NEVER encountered one drop of rain.

—Bob Immler

Bob, as far as I know, the English riders just ride their saddles wet, maybe with Proofhide on them. I don't get it. It rains a lot there.

—G

Flash! Rivendell member Max V. had an ancient Brooks Pro he wanted restored, so he sent it to Tony Colgrave, a former official/Brooks. Certified saddle repairer, now freelancing. Max brought the saddle back looking as good or better than new, and a copy of the letter that follows, which we're printing here because it's interesting and may prove helpful.)

Max,

It seems very apparent to me that the old top has been liberally treated with neatsfoot oil (or suchlike) and my advice is that you should never use any sort of oil on saddle leather, as it penetrates the fibers and allows them to stretch; this makes the saddle softer and more comfortable to begin with, but means that (unless the

rider is extremely lightweight) it stretches and deforms—as well as soiling your pants! What is needed, if anything, is a fatty substance which will "feed" the surface of the leather but not penetrate too deeply; similarly, nothing should be put on the underside of the leather, as it needs to "breathe" if the fibers are not to become too dry or brittle. A light top-dressing of Brooks Proofhide (recipe is a company secret, but I guess it's largely tallow with, perhaps, lanolin) from time to time is probably helpful, although a neutral wax shoe polish (or furniture polish) might do just as well. Anyway, I've treated your new top with a dressing of Proofhide and I hope you'll find it satisfactory. I've also fitted a current Brooks nameplate, as my supply of "period" nameplates is limited. All the best,

—Tony Colgrave

Tony Colgrave can be reached at:

**A. Colgrave Wellhouse
Northiam Rye
East Sussex TN31 6HY
England**

EASY COME/GO; AND NOBODY DIED

Egads, what a blunder. My letter in Rivendell 14 gave my view on how a clincher tire supports the rim. Unfortunately, I did my original tests on a wheel which did not have a hook-bead rim, and then blithely assumed that the situation would be basically the same for all clinchers. I see now that is not the case and I must make a retraction. What I said about the tire supporting the rim as in a sling, and about the rim compression and bead tension increasing with wheel diameter does not apply in the case of a hook-bead rim.

The critical distinction I failed to appreciate was in the way the forces balance. On a non hook-bead rim, the tire and rim operate as discrete systems and the forces balance on opposite sides of the wheel. Air pressing against one side of the rim is balanced by air pressing in against the opposite side, and casing tension pulling the bead out on one side is balanced by casing tension pulling it out on the opposite side. When I (alas, too briefly) considered the case of the hook-bead rim, I simply thought this was just a way to make blowouts less likely, and I did not think through what letting the casing pull out directly on the rim would change. I now see that on a hook bead rim, the forces balance on the same side of the wheel because the tire and rim operate more as an integrated system. The air pressing in against the rim at any point is mostly cancelled by the casing pulling the rim outward at the same position on the wheel. This means that wherever there is a reduction in casing tension, the inward pressure of the air at that point is not

cancelled (to the degree the outward component of the casing tension is reduced). On a highly flexible rim, this would have the effect of creating a flat spot wherever the air presses in unopposed. So in effect, on a hook-bead rim (or on any system where the casing can pull directly on the rim), it is the air itself and not the tire which imparts the upward loadbearing force to the rim (and it does so right where the casing tension is reduced).

My apologies on this goof.

—Nicholas Wren, ngear@gvtc.com

Nick, anybody can goof up, but few people seem able to admit it in public—not that this is the New York Times, or anything. Thanks for fixing that.—Grant

IT MUST BE A WHACHAMACALLIT

My wife and stepdaughter bought a track bike at Encino Velodrome 3 years ago and were told that it was a Spectrum. They never looked closely for a name and neither did I. Because the bike had been repainted, there were no decals on it except for a Reynolds 531 on the fork. My step daughter gave up racing and it fell to me to sell the bike. It was at this point that we couldn't find the name Spectrum anywhere on the bike. However, on both seat stays at the top is stamped NOWAL. However, it is stylized and the N may be an H. The W may be a M, but this I doubt.

There is also a stylized N or H and W or M on the top of the fork crown. I got in touch with Tom at Spectrum in the hope that this was one of theirs produced under a different name, but no luck. He suggested that I get in touch with Grant since he has been in business long enough to have seen most names come across his doorstep. We have had the bike for 3 years, and since it was repainted probably several years prior to our purchase, I would guess the bike is at least 7-10 plus years old. Thank you for any help.

—Peter Weiner, weiner@jetlink.net

Yes, well, Tom K. is putting the pressure on, isn't he? My guess is that it's a Nagasawa. He's a Japanese builder, and your description of the stylized whateveritis pretty much fits his fork crown. A few years ago, maybe still, he was regarded as the top builder of track bikes. Koichi Nakano, ten-time World Sprint champ, rode one. If anybody out there has any other comments, let's have 'em.—Grant

KEEPS ON TICKING

In response to Tony Tapay's letter in Rivendell Reader issue 14 Hamilton does indeed still make at least one automatic, mechanical watch. It's called the "Viewmatic" (wonderful

name). It is an absolutely terrific watch: classic styling, sweep second hand, date window, see-through back (so you can view the mechanism), "water resistant" (although not, I suspect, to 100 meters). Hamilton is a great old American brand name (Hamilton, Pennsylvania), although the Viewmatic mechanism is Swiss made. The Viewmatic comes in two basic flavors: a gold case with a silver face and a black leather band, and a gold case with a white face and a brown leather band. Nothing extra or unnecessary. Like a Rivendell bicycle, this watch will "never be any more or less out of style than it is now;" it cannot be mistaken for a Rolex or a Casio (not that there is anything wrong with those watches). It keeps excellent time. The Viewmatic is not cheap (\$375 list). I expect, however, that a Viewmatic will last forever if properly taken care of, you will be able to get it repaired if it breaks, and you will never have trouble finding a battery for it. The Viewmatic is available at discount (approximately 25% off) at www.wristwatch.com. I have found [wristwatch.com](http://www.wristwatch.com) to be a speedy and reliable vendor; their pricing is very competitive.

—Jeff Lee, jeffjoylee@earthlink.net

FANCY JAPANESE BIKES & HYBRID BAR-END SHIFTER CONCERNS

Part One: I have a pen pal in Japan who maintains a site dedicated to the preservation of the history of Japanese bicycles. An interesting fellow, about 50, who during daylight hours is the postmaster in a small postoffice. He just sent me an URL that you may be interested in. Unfortunately for us, the text is not accessible, but there are some beautiful pictures of classic randonneur bicycles. Check it out. http://www.gld.mmtr.or.jp/~endoh/poly/poly_index1.html

Part Two: Maybe I'm all wet on this, but doesn't the conversion only get you part way there? About 10 years ago I was taking apart the new fangled Shimano bar ends when I discovered that you could bolt a downtube shifter in there. I quickly whipped in my simplex retrofriction downtube shifters and was off. But the throw sucked. It took huge movement of the converted lever to cover the entire range of the freewheel. A quick look at some old bar ends showed that their barrel was bigger, thus requiring less travel to move the cable. So, I gave up. But I always wanted to make just a lever that would allow me to transfer the guts of my simplex to a new lever with a bigger barrel. I assume that you must just put up with having to pull hard on your converted lever. True? Or am I all wet?

—Just another cyclo obsessive

Dear Justan: You were close! The Simplex

retrofriction levers have a drum diameter at the cable groove of just 14mm. That's neither good nor bad when they're being used as downtube shifters, but as you noted, it's not enough for a bar-end. But they're the exception. Most dt shifters are fatter than that. SunTour's are up around 19-20mm, and the throw is fine. They still move more than a regular bar-end, but not tons more, and the greater movement is an advantage, because it gives you a bigger working window for each gear. The best bar-end shifters I've used are hybrids made with SunTour Sprints or SunTour Superbes. —Grant

THE ENGLISH/HOMEY WAY

Internal geared hubs and single speed setups are simple, reliable and inexpensive. Why not offer them as an option (along with your comments and user information as with other products) for the city cyclist, commuter, tour (pannier) rider. I have put over 4,000 miles on my Shimano Nexus 7 set up. Thus far maintenance has consisted of one adjustment at about 500 miles....that's it. How many derailer/freewheel or derailer/freewheel setups are that reliable and maintenance free? I mention the single speed because for a large portion of the population, little more is needed. *Offering an option of having horizontal dropouts on your Rivendell and Heron bikes would allow single speed and internal gear hubs to be used. Maybe something to consider! *Also Nitto track bars make a great bar for a real world road bike. I have them on one of my bikes. Since the drop is so deep, about 174mm, I can have the top of the bar a couple inches above my saddle height for comfort and still have low drops for efficiency when in a headwind or wanting to make time. I am a tall (6'5") long limbed rider and have not found another bar that allows such a nice combination. That's all for now. I will follow up with more later.

—Thad

The frames already have horizontal dropouts. You must be new here. No doubt most of us can all get by with fewer gears and less bike than we ride, but the same can be said for calories and cameras and cats. As for internal gears—there's lots of smart stuff that we don't get into because we just can't get into everything. Besides, for me, whatever points internal gears score in reliability, they loses in intimidation. The challenges facing most riders aren't mud and grit contaminating their external gears; it's finding time to ride and maybe even a good place to do it. I'm not anti-internal gears, but external gears are pretty reliable, and when there's a problem, the solution tends to be pretty accessible. For Rivendell

Reader purposes, I'd like to see an article about them, sort of an Internal Gear Primer For External Gear Pedalers. I'm sure Sheldon Brown's website is full of this stuff, and maybe he'll do something for the Reader. —Grant

e.e. PETE THE BRIT

i'm wondering if you can help me with a little problem i have. basically i'm a student in england and i need some (well lots) of information about bike building. i.e. such as types of materials used and methods of manufacture. i also need to find out about the basic mechanics behind a bike, such as trail and rack angle etc. Please can u reply even if u can't help—Pete

Here's the shortest complete answer I can muster:

Materials: Steel is best, Titanium second, aluminum third. Carbon fiber is fourth. Bamboo is fifth, thermoplastics are sixth. Methods: Brazing with lugs is best. Let the other methods duke it out for second through sixth. Long chainstays are good, short ones are bad. Low bottom brackets are good, high ones are bad. Shallow seat tube angles are good, steep ones are bad. A bike that's a little too big for your friends' psychological comfort is probably the right size. Moderate head tube angles are good, and trail figures between 2.2 and 2.5 inches are what I Like, depending on the bike's purpose. Racks should be angled fairly level. V-shaped rack sides are not as good as squarish ones. —Grant

BUT DOES THE WALL STREET JOURNAL REFERENCE RR ARTICLES?

I was going through and purging some files during the ice storm here in IL and came across something from the Wall Street Journal dated 9-10-96. An article titled "The Bicycle Loses Ground as Symbol of Childhood Liberty" was headlined Greeley, CO. The explosion of organized sports leave children with considerably less free time for discovering the world on their own. The article also stated that parental curbs on how kids use bikes was also a factor. A police spokesman said he sees fewer kids riding bikes on the affluent west side than when he was growing up there, but adds that bike riding is even less common in the work. Some are quoted as saying that the loss of independence can carry a price, such as depleting a child's confidence and willingness to venture into new territory. One mother noticed that her girls often have difficulty making decisions: "They ask me really simple things." Bikes are indeed more than physical education. Regarding the Kelly Takeoffs, you will find that there is truly nothing new under the sun if

you check out the data book, page 160. There in 1952 are thematically similar shifters! I have just installed the Nitto cage on my suitcase-travelling Merlin Mtn with S&S fittings. Since the bike is on the road a lot, and it isn't practical for me to perform the time-consuming chores to ensure clean camelbaks or bottles, I like the fact that the Nitto is not a fixed diameter but slightly expandable, and it can be used to accommodate off the shelf bottled water in several brands of differently sized bottles. Now if only they would/could make one to fit 1L bottles since the Blackburn can no longer be found. What about that for a Rivendell project?

—Ken Wehrenberg

Ken, that's pretty interesting, that bicycle/liberty/confidence/exploring thing. When I was 8, I and my friends used to ride 7 miles or so to go bowling (I spent my Indian head nickel collection at Rheem Bowl one summer afternoon), and we'd see other 8-year olds on the road, too. These days, I think there are too many psychos and perverts out there, or maybe there's just more awareness of them, and parents don't want their children at risk. And there are so many more cars on the road. My ten-year old doesn't ride by herself yet, and I'm sure I wouldn't want her to. Maybe in a couple years, with pepper spray at the ready.

The Data Book was two feet behind me, and I read your note and turned to that page, and sure enough. I think Chris Kelly's version is better, but I have to admit I'm more comfortable with liking it, now that I know it's not so new after all.

Another Nitto project? Yow!—our batting average is low enough already. I'm still waiting for the seat-post mounted Carradice saddlebag uplift/carrier, the standalone Low Rider, the front High Rider, and the universal fit 3-piece mini-rack/low rider system. —G

MAYBE WE CAN HELP HERE...

I am sorry to say I have to cancel my frame order. I was dreaming of this frame for a long since '95. When I found Rivendell out of nowhere I was so happy that I will give up everything except Macrobiotic. I had a friend who was extremely logical and rational and who could not sense people's feeling. He had bankruptcy and gave up social security for the reason of income tax, which you don't have to pay also and he too. He could not get reasonable job because of those reasons but wanted buy a house because he noticed the difference between mortgage and rent fee. I wanted help him and also I was planning to go back to Japan. I, therefore, let him use my

credit cards. Then I changed my mind not to go back. He did not like my change and small other reasons. He started to blame me and he cut our friendship. He took money and comfort living in his own house over our friendship. I still want to help and change him so I decided to pay back to credit cards and hop he will realize what he's done to his almost last friend in future. In Edgar Cayce book says "The only thing we have to do on this planet is to learn perseverance and compassion." I think this is one of those lessons for me. I can not take bicycle with me after I die, but this lesson. I am really so sorry, Grant, Peter, Joe, and Allen but I don't want to regret in future. Please forgive my change-mind for personal reason. I wish you being healthy and happy and chewing well.

—N.S.

Note to readers: I pay income tax just like everybody else, nothing fishy there. N.S. is a Japanese member living in the states (these states). He has \$300 down on his bike. We're sending his deposit back, so he can put it toward the debt his friend imposed on him. There are 3,400 of you out there. For every Ten Dollars you send for N, we'll kick in ten and give you \$10 off your next purchase. To minimize our labor, we'll create an invoice for you with a \$10 coupon already on it. Then whenever you order, the computer will bring up your \$10 credit automatically.

Send separate checks made out to Rivendell, and write N Fund in the memo section. Or if you want to do a credit card contribution, just state that it's for N.

LIKES THE HYBRID B-E-SHIFTER

I am overwhelmed and in awe. Your conversion of the Dura Ace Bar ends to the SunTour Sprint levers is nothing less than miraculous. We are talking the single malt Scotch of shifters. Smooth and delicate. If I could smell 'em, I'm sure they'd have a rich bouquet. In 25 years of riding I have never felt anything as slick, responsive, or finely tuned. The union of shifter-derailleur is near perfection. Of all the gizmos I have thrown onto my bikes over the years this is by far the most money worthy. —Craig Montgomery, Tucson

Readers: Craig is referring to our grafting of a SunTour Sprint downtube shifter onto a Shimano bar-end shifter mount. Now that the old SunTour bar-end shifters are gone, this is the only way to get power-ratcheting on both levers. The bad news is, it costs a lot—\$65 for the Shimano shifters, and then you throw out (or set aside, whatever) the shifters themselves, and buy some SunTour Sprints (or

Superbe Pro No-Lats) and mount them onto the Shimano bodies. For the few wealthy-and bold types who go for this, we sell the Sprints for just \$15, and supply instructions. So you get the best bar-end shifting imaginable for \$80...which is still less than most modern shifters, and worlds more satisfying to shift with. The ratchet is fine and light, the lever is longer than the old bar-end shifter levers, and when used with 6 or 7 speed freewheels, you can shift with the finesse of an angry milk cow kicking over a bucket, and still get the gear. Not to imply that skill-free shifting is the dream; all I'm saying is, you needn't feel that opting for this semi-custom setup is going to bite you in the fanny down the road, because it won't. —G

ONE GUY'S EXPERIENCE WITH Q AND PHIL AND CAMPY AND TRIPLIZING HIS OLD SCHWINN PARAMOUNT

The Q-factor on my triplized Paramount is 140mm. The inside edge of the crank arm come to within 6 or 7mm of the frame on both sides. The chain ring clears the frame by 3 or 4 mm. The frame is spaced 126mm in the rear, has a 68mm BB shell, and I still use 5-speed freewheels so I moved some of the rear axle spacers from the right side to the left side. This improved the chain line and allowed me to remove most of the dish from the wheel. It works well. The Phil BB is a 113. I adjusted the Phil off center to the right in the BB shell, an acceptable amount.

But it is still within the tolerance as indicated by Phil. I am using a pre-78 Campy N/R road double crank with a Willow triplizer middle ring and a 32 tooth inner ring. The pre-78 is important because after that, the way the N/R crank fit the axle changed to accommodate the raised lip on the front of the N/R front derailleur. I think that a 115mm or 116mm Phil would be required to do the same thing with a post-78 N/R crank. On my other 4 bikes, I use 113mm Phil BB with N/R cranks too.

At any rate, I love the Phil BB and appreciate Phil's willingness to stand behind its products. I recently bought a used Phil BB off the web. When it showed up, I found I could remove the bearing units from BB shell and axle by hand. I thought this was a no-no so I called Phil. They said for the price of new bearings (\$25) they would replace any part of the BB that was no good. What a deal! So I sent the thing in, but forgot to pull out the used lock rings. When the package came back, it had new bearings, new axle, and new (in the box) lock rings too. Too much!

—David White, Seattle

PROGRESS REPORT



IF YOU HAVEN'T READ THIS BEFORE: THE PROGRESS REPORT IS MY PERSONAL JOURNAL OF STARTING AND MAINTAINING THIS BUSINESS. IT'S MOSTLY SO I HAVE A RECORD OF HOW IT WENT, AND SO MY CHILDREN WILL, TOO, SINCE AT LEAST ONE OF THEM, ANNA, IS TOO YOUNG TO FIGURE OUT THAT I REALLY DO HAVE TO GO TO WORK IN THE MORNING. THERE ARE UPS AND DOWNS, BUT IT'S NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY OTHER BUSINESS IN THAT WAY. —GRANT

Dec 2. It's been a tough life since my dad died. All the loose ends, the current family issues, and Rivendell is in chaos in so many ways. I'm out of control, ordering too much stuff, Peter's getting frustrated, tensions **are** higher than they've ever been, but the good part is, we're reading the same books and working at improving it together. I'm actually optimistic. One change is that we're going to get more systematized in how we do stuff & junk. Order entry, getting the mail, opening it, processing orders and returns, ordering new items, replenishing inventory, everything we do right now haphazardly. I've even thought about uniforms, only because we're sort of in the habit of being a mail order company that doesn't see people, **so** we're getting messy (except Peter and Allen and Joe, which leaves me), but people seem to come by once a day these days, and it's embarrassing to be caught in my slippers and the shirt I slept in last night, or something. I don't know how uniforms would go over. We'd provide them, just stuff from Beans and Filson and whoever else, and they could always wear a Rivendell T or polo shirt, and we could get sweatshirts, too. Maybe I'm overreacting, but we've reached the point where we just can't rely on being the groovy company anymore. We can **still** be that way, but internally, we need to get cracking. Two orders misshipped to **J.S. Too** many new items in insufficient quantities to even catalogue. Readers constantly late. Frame orders backed up almost a year—and growing. We need help now, so we're reading **some** books and may take some classes and talk to people.

I looked up investment casters **on** the internet and came up with a whole directory of them, so I faxed **33** of them inquiries. I've just about given up hope of finding a U.S. caster, since all the ones I've spoken to want to work only with huge airplane makers. But we got a few replies, and one of them at least sure sounds good. The new lugs are completely designed now, and they look spectacular, and I think we'll have enough money to get them made, and they'll be on the Matchbuilt frames. We have to get that project rolling. We need it badly. We can't have yearlong waits, so if we go to Match for all the All-Rounders and maybe half the LongLows, Joe can concentrate just on the Roads, and everyone'll be happy. Joe's capacity is about 100 frames a year. I don't know what to do about the frame brochure. It seems silly to put one out and have the information not be accurate or up to date **or** valid for at least half a year, but we don't know what it'll be like then. Colors will change, and colors were at one point the only reason for doing the brochure—in the first place.

Dec 3. The caster I had high hopes for can't do it. He said "these lugs were made with resin or plastic molds, not wax, so it's not up our alley." But he sent me to a competitor, "a great guy I've known

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for years," and I called the fellow up and our conversation this morning went well. He said "if our parts fail, helicopters fall out of the sky," and also said he'd made some bike parts before. He's a small business, likes to do runs of 5,000, but often does runs of 20. So anyway, the first guy, the guy who recommended him, is sending him the parts I sent as samples, and we'll get a quote and hope it's not twice as expensive as Taiwan. The thing is, Taiwan castings are good, but I'd like a little better communication, and there's nothing terrible about getting them made here. There's one other caster with a chance. One other positive response, I should say; so if this one doesn't work out, we'll try one more, and then it's off to Taiwan.

RR14 should be finished today, and will go to the printer in three days (monday) and will be auto-mailed by Thurs at the latest, and that'll barely be in time for Christmas, and there's a bunch of Christmas things in it. I hope it doesn't get tossed out with the other Christmas catalogue clothing catalogues. We get about 5 a day.

Dec 7. The RR is at the printer now and should be mailed this week. Tim Isaac from Match came here yesterday, and we talked about the new frames and lugs and all that. Match needs xxx volume, we can offer them x volume, and they have to make up the rest with bikes for other people. Schwinn Paramounts, and maybe a few other, but not many people are doing lugged bikes these days, so we're feeling some pressure there. In the past we've talked about selling through dealers, but there **are** problems with that, and I don't think we're ready to take on those problems yet. One is margins—these are not high-profit bikes in the first place, and either the dealer makes money **or** we do, or we split the amount of profit that's reasonable for ONE, and nobody happy. **But** we may need dealers to get the volume up to a sustainable level (**for** Match, at least). Tentatively we'll come up with a program for dealers starting in the Fall. I don't want to introduce it at the Trade show, but it would be a good time to kick it off. I wish we could contact interested dealers soon, and plan for it, and work out the details. I want the bikes fitted the way we fit them, so nobody buys a Rivendell too big or small. I want a system that anybody can use, and I want dealers who are committed to it and who will follow it through. How do you get them to actually care about it, though? They'll care if they make a lot of money, but that's mostly for the owner. How do you get the employees to care about it? We'd need to do clinics, for one thing. That's fine, but it would cost a lot to travel there, so we might need a video. Proquality videos cost too much money, so...maybe just instruction manuals will be okay. Maybe **an** audio cassette? This is sounding like fancy business. Anyway, we got orders for about 170 frames this year, and will deliver fewer than 80, and current lead time is 11 months...so we

gotta do something. If we could get just 25 dealers who will buy 10 frames a year, then we can make it work. We can't offer payment terms, and they all want that. So they'll have to pay with a credit card. Before we do that, we have to get our daily life in order. We're far behind in that way. There's so much changing we need to do, and everything seems to matter just so much. It's a lot of pressure. We need time to work on things that affect our longterm health, but there's too much day to day stuff to do, and we can't neglect that, because it's what pays the immediate bills. We need help.

Dec 12. It's funny how certain days will always be known as elementary school friends's birthdays, and this is Tom Sucek's. Our members are so diverse, one of them's bound to know him. Anyway, I'm working on ads we can't afford to place, for various magazines. It kills me to see \$15,000, \$20,000, and \$40,000 ads that say nothing. We're going to try to be in VeloNews, Bicycling, Tandem (we have stuff that's good for tandems), and Adventure Cyclist. Usually a company's ad budget is 3-4% of gross sales. We can't afford it, although the mags would say we can't afford not to. I've written five ads in a day and a half, doing other things, too. They're okay, and somehow we'll track them to see if they do any good. Peter and I decided we want to have 5,000 members by the end of 1999. I think I should have begged each of **our** current members to give a membership to a cycling friend for Christmas. Lots of ideas come late.

Match is building 10 frames for **us**. If they're as perfect as I think they'll be, we may offer them to existing All-Rounder orderers. I need to order more Vitus seat stays, but I'll wait to hear if Columbus has any, first. Reynolds doesn't make the ones I want.

Dec 15. We need the biggest week ever to avoid dipping into **our** \$8,000 tooling fund/savings. If I'd gotten RR14 out a week earlier, maybe it could have come close to happening, but now, no way. Dang. We owe Persons \$3k, someone else \$6K, and it's a payroll week. Meanwhile we're supposed to be moving on the lugs. I got a tooling quote today from a US caster, and he says the tool will be about \$2,000, which is about half what Taiwan wants, and a fifth of what most US casters want, so I'm wondering what's wrong with it. Maybe his piece price is really high. Anyway, he wants more info on the bb shell, so I sent a sample to him, and maybe he'll bail out then. I'm feeling uneasy about even dickering around with US casters, since we know Taiwan does great work, and to them it's just another familiar piece with a new variation. Match is building some bikes for us already, but it would be good to have the new lugs. The old lugs are really nice, but the main thing is the bb shell, and every time we use a HJ, it costs us tons more money in the piece itself, plus the fillet

brazing. So we have to move on it. We made one last change to the lugs, a cosmetic one, and they'll be really good.

I've been handing out internal notes lately, about things we have to do better. I don't know how they're coming off, but I'll know in a week or so, because I'm sort of asking for interaction. We need to do things better.

The place we want, across the driveway, the one that would be perfect for us, the landlord will probably rent to a hi tech warehouse, because they'll take the whole space, so she won't have to divide it up, and she won't have to put in bathrooms and separate electrical. We really want that spot badly, and it would be *so* good for us. We could get organized better. The spot we have now is just a maze of connected cubbies, two floors, no good open warehouse space, virtually no office space, so the warehouse and office overlap, and the shop is downstairs, and we have offsite storage...it's a mess. I think our landlord (landlady, I guess) figures she'd have a hard time renting this to anybody else. Anyway, I left her a long letter this weekend, making a pitch for that space, and she came up today feeling bad about us probably not getting it. Nobody here wants to move far. The cheaper spots are out in the boonies, and it would be really inconvenient for everybody. Our lease is up in April. We'll probably sign it again here, for another year or two, but sheesh. I think people who come by are really surprised and disappointed.

Dec 29. It's stressful at work these days. Today was pretty bad. Our Joe is off, so it's just three in the office, and we all doing too many things at once. The day after tomorrow, Curtis, who is 15, is coming in, and maybe he'll end up working for us a bit here and there. He can help open the bottleneck we have in shipping. Peter's been really frustrated with things, and that stresses me out. We have our spats, and it usually goes like this: P: You buy too much stuff, you get too many balls in the air at once, you go back and forth on things, you set a bad example, and it makes it impossible for me to do my job of making the office run right. Me: Give me an example. P: The new lugs. First saying "Match will build only All-Rounders, and now it's them AND LongLows, and maybe Roads, too. You panic about getting orders out, so panic fills the air, we rush, we make mistakes. First you're all hot about the stem lugs, now you're slowing down on those, and it's the frame lugs. The frame brochure, which everybody wants, still isn't out. Things like that. Me: I didn't know how far we were behind, and I see Match as our savior. I see it as planning ahead, and we need the new lugs for them to do the job right. We're getting really low on some of the other road lugs, anyway, and we need another seat lug anyway. Lugs take forever, so we have to start now. The stem lug samples aren't perfect, the ball's in the caster's court to fix it, but he's not replying to my email. I'll try again tonite. I'm concerned about shipping orders, because we don't get paid until we ship. I think Peter feels as though I'm undermining him, but I'm not trying to, so I tell him to write down stuff, I'll follow it, and we should have staff meetings at least once a week, to talk about what things are wrong, inventory issues, whatever. It's busy, we're understaffed, and we don't have time to manage the work, to organize it and get rid of the bugs, because we're working in it all the time. Many mornings, it'll be almost 11:45 before we even have time to acknowledge each other's pres-

ence. Allen's the alien, though. He's calm through the stormy times, virtually errorless, efficient as a shark, and he juggles as much as anybody. I don't get it.

Both Peter and I are reading lots of books these days. Corporate Lifecycles, The Goal, and E-Myth are the biggies. We're both so full of ideas from them. He's read Corporate Lifecycles, and refers to it as his book. But I have a copy, too, and I gave him a copy to read, so it's partly mine, too. I'll read it. I know it's good. He throws terms at me from the book. I'm vaguely familiar with them. His book talks about business lifecycles, using the many of the same terms as human lifecycles. Courtship, infancy, adolescence, prime, maturity, and a few others. He wants to rework Rivendell according to his book. I've read E-Myth, and I call it my book, or sometimes the blue book. It has some of the same ideas, but doesn't cover all of the same areas, and it has its own vocabulary. The big deal in Emyth is systems, so I'm driving Peter nuts with talk about how we have to systemize every single operation. His take on that is that he already has systems in place, but we don't follow them. So to that I say "then we need position contracts" (another emyth term). I gave him an audio tape of it, and I think he's almost through with it. That gives him the upper hand, because he knows my book better than I know is. But now I'm reading The Goal, and it talks about bottlenecks and things, so I'm coming at him with a whole new vocabulary. We both want to institute all these ways and ideas, but we're both too busy with day to day stuff to do it. We need help. The Emyth people have a website, and they say "fill out this form and get a month's free consulting!" so I did it and haven't heard back. "We'll be in touch within 4 days," they said, but it's been ten. Some of the blanks I filled in were financial, so I figure they figure we can't afford them. Tonite we had maybe our tenth after-hours chat, and I hope it ended okay. I think it did. I told him I was learning some neat stuff and wanted a chance to work with it, and he said "I've been trying to do all those things all along, and it's frustrating to me that NOW you (want in on it)." I said "Okay, I've been ignorant up to now, but look at the good side—the boss is on your side now, and we can do it together, and I'll be useful in this way." He said "So much of what makes Rivendell work is already YOUR area—the frames, the Reader—and I want to feel like I'm contributing, too." (And now I'm homing in on it.) So, well, we finally worked it out. There's nobody I'd rather work with or have in Peter's place than Peter, and we're trying to shape it up, and I will help without hurting.

We're both concerned with frame delivery. I ran out the schedule, and we're booked through January 5, 2000. That's if Joe can build two frames a week, and that may be impossible. So that they're a bottleneck, and Match can help a lot. The problem is that most of the 100+ frames we have in the queue were ordered as Joe-builts, and the people are expecting Joe-builts, and somehow we have to shift a good lot of them over to Match. It's hard, because they've read about Joe in RR12, and he's now a brazing god (well deserved), and nobody's heard of Match. If they knew what we know about Match, it would be no problem to shift half the load over, ease Joe's burden, ease our financial terribility, and help Match get off to a good start with us. We need to introduce our customers to Match. I wish they could all have a tour.

THAT would do it. If they could just *see* the frames, and talk to the builders, and know what we know. We'll do a story on Match, and I hope it is taken the right way. I don't want people to read it as a desperate attempt or anything. The fact that we're desperate doesn't make Match any less qualified. They're building some prototypes for us now, and we'll have them in a month.

Tim and I are working on the new lugs every day, and they really are wonderful. Some people will say "overdone!" but they need to take of their sandals and see the lines and curves in the context of modern day bicycle frame joints. Zen lugs are not appropriate right now. If lugs die, they deserve to go down gloriously. The new lugs are the prettiest I've seen (naturally), and they're smart and simple, if you just know what to look for. What's wrong with a curve here and swoop there? It's not "gilding the lily" —there is no lily on a tube, and a generic lug or line of bead welds just leads to raucous decals and demonic tube configurations. I'd much rather have an interesting joint that gives you something to dwell on and discover. They're strong, and have rounded spoons in the right places, windows for filling in, and some features that no lugs have ever had before, and that all lugs should have, and that if anybody sets out to make some other lugs, they'd be fools not to copy. That's how I see it, anyway, but what do I know?

Jan 4. Joe S. is back from Christmas vacation in Wisconsin, and he called, and we had a good talk. He said "I'm turning over a new leaf this year," meaning he knows how important it is to everybody that we get the frames more regularly, and he's going to get cracking. I brought up the idea that Match could build the forks, and he said maybe, but he might be able to save time by hiring an assistant to help with some of the non-major work (not the brazing, etc). Something's got to work out. In two or three days we see the Match-Rivendell forks. We're going to need a frame prep-er this year. Someone to clean all the threads, face the headsets, install and great the headsets, and bottom brackets, too, if needed. Maybe Match can do some of that, like Wford did. I hope. It's not required, because we can handle it, but it sure would be nice.

My email's not working. I'm receiving messages, but they're not going into my IN box, so I can't read them or find them. Kind of frustrating. There are at least 7 in there now. I can see them being read, but then POOF! and they're not there.

Jan 12. I feel like I have *so* many balls in the air that I can't control them. RR15 has to go out by Feb 15, with all the Match information and photos, so I have to go up there soon. It'll be fine. Then the catalogue. I need to rewrite some things, use some of the others, and I can't find part one of it, the first half, on disk. Just from p 44 onward, which means I may have to type a lot of stuff all over again. We're going to streamline stuff, eliminate stuff that drives us nuts, focus on stuff that we know we can get. The big disappointment is the Nitto rear racks. *So* beautiful, but so hard to get. A goal for this year is to not be *so* strapped for cash all the time, and one way we can do that is sell the stuff we already have, and not add new and hard to get stuff that ends up backordered and shipped for free. We need to get someone in to help ship, and maybe work weekends, shipping or entering orders. PG or A.L. or maybe even PH, I don't know.

Next week or so we should have some Match-

built, and I'll see more when I'm up there. It's a relief to have the new lugs done, but now the long wait. It's not as though the current lugs are worse, or the new ones better, but we're really low on the current ones, and the newies will be slightly easier to build with (no need to braze on a head tube extension, mainly).

Yesterday we met with Randy Bunton, the machinist who makes stuff for just about everybody in the bike biz, and he'll be our source for seat binder bolts, at least.

Jan 19. Good day, bad day. The lugs are being made, the stem tubing is due in a week, so we can make some testable prototype stems, the last puzzles of the Match-built frames are solved wonderfully, but we're short about \$6,000 this week and won't make payroll unless we pay stuff with a credit card. I could dip into my personal savings, which I had none of until my sister and I split a small bank account my dad left us, but I was hoping to actually use that for some savings. Mary's worried about the bills. We need to be shipping more frames faster. Joe needs more money and fast this week, and I told him I'd try to pay him early, but the thing is, we don't have the money, and we just need to ship more frames. We start inventory tomorrow, and it'll last 3 days, and we need to get stuff out. Mary asked "can't you do a flyer or something to raise some money fast?" and maybe we can. A two-pager to get us through. We have some ownerless frames. We have three show bikes that we could sell for lots of money, but we need them for the Seattle and Portland shows. In some ways things are so hopeful, with Match and all, and the new lugs and the stems, but they're also so desperate right now. I'll loan us my \$5,000, and Rivendell can pay me back over the year. We've got to get money. And we have to quit buying things. We're streamlining the catalogue offerings, and that'll help. Then, as long as we get 8 frames a month, that's TWO a week, we'll do okay. I hope we don't get many more cancellations. Those guys really hurt, especially if they've already nearly paid off their frame.

Jan 23. We're finished with inventory now. Because of it, which lasted 3 days, we didn't ship much last week, and we maxed out the LC to pay the bills and make payroll. We were \$1,000 short a whopper, but it's at least reassuring to see that we can trace it directly, exactly, almost to the dollar, to the new lug tooling. The Flyer's going out next week with some luck, and that'll help us. Then we have an ad in The Bike Trader, and that may help, too. We've got enough stuff that we ought to be able to hunker down for a while and just replenish stocks of the wooly underwear and sox and Phil stuff.

Joe says he'll get his 8 frames finished this month, and that'll be great. I've decided No Frame Brochure, at least no separate one. It'll be part of the new catalogue, and that way we'll save lots of money. The whole point originally was to show the colors, but with changes in the program and all, it just grew to be so much more than that, and then we were going to print 1,000 of them, but even that would cost \$2,300 or so (at 16 pages), and it would give us just a thousand copies. So it makes more sense to do it up in the catalogue, print 7,000 of them, mail them bulk and save a few thousand there, and maybe sell more frames because we have 7,000 brochures out there instead of 1,000. We've decided on the colors, and we'll send chips to all the orderers and put them on the web,

We're looking at a new place. I don't want to move any further north than we have to, but that's where the cheap places are, and that counts for something. Not lots, but something. Our lease is up in April.

January 27. Spring 1999, which is now, is a pivotal/critical/important-and-nervous-making time for Rivendell, and it all has to do with Match. We need Match, Match needs us, and we both feel uncomfortably the same about our futures together. It's not that we aren't committed to them, or the other way around. The thing that makes us nervous is how to present ourselves as a new alliance/team/whatever in a way that simultaneously inspires confidence and urgency without seeming desperate. It is a challenge, because the feeling of desperation and urgency is overwhelming. It is so overwhelming that it steals the thunder of the frames, and it seems like a lie to hide it.

The skills are in place. The people and machinery are in place. What needs to happen now is a vote of confidence, and it's my nervous-making job to get it. That's a challenge because the easy way for me to write things is to just say what I'm thinking or feeling, and what I'm thinking is I hope we sell lots of Match frames, and what I'm feeling is nervous about it, and if I seem nervous and even admit to being nervous about it, how does that inspire confidence? Aren't I supposed to be a beacon of stalwartness or something? Do I have to now cover up for the sake of the business, and our future, and Match's future? Match is counting on us to buy a bunch of frames, maybe at least 200 this year, and if we can't do that, we're both going to suffer. They've already had to lay off half the staff, and these are super people and skilled frame builders. When they were building so many Paramounts, we were just hoping they could make room for us. Now that the Paramount project is slowing down, we're as important to them as they are to us.

I went up there yesterday to see our first frames. They look fantastic. The clearances (on the A/R) are ideal, and that's the most challenging part of the frame. What's best is that they have a dedicated fixture to nail it every time. Tim doesn't believe in adjustable fixtures, and I'm all for that. Beyond that, there's a go/no go gauge, just as a double check. It works perfectly; really smart. I shot some pictures, which we'll put in this Reader, and the catalogue, and the web; and I even got to braze tube-stumps into a head tube. It makes me appreciate brazing even more. Curt was coaching me the whole way. It'll be a desktop ornament, as if I need another one. Anyway, it was so good to see those frames. They looked perfect and measured out perfect. I wish we could set up a Match tour for people who live in that area. I hope my nervousness about the future doesn't interfere with my confidence in the quality of the frames. It's complicated, and I don't like things that way.

Feb 4. Oh my. An A/R customer finally got his bike and now wants to return it. Peter built it up just as he requested, with Ergo levers and Campy derailleurs, and it worked perfectly and looked beautiful, and now he's returning it because he's having trouble with the shifting, which he attributes to "used Ergo levers and rear derailleur." We don't even stock that stuff. We special ordered it for him! The bike is perfect. He loosened the rear derailleur cable, for some reason, and tried to readjust it, but he's not familiar with bikes and didn't do it right, and rather than own up to that, it's our fault for selling him "used parts." He's in his

mid 50s, hadn't ridden a bike for a decade, then bought a Serotta Ti last year, it didn't fit him and he wanted a more versatile and comfortable bike, so he got an A/R. We've spoken to him at least 5 hours on the phone, and he was always so—nervous about every last thing, and so indecisive. It's okay, a big purchase, and we understand all that, but he was really "high maintenance" from the start, and now he accuses us of selling him used parts. And he wants all his money back! Peter talked to him and said "no used parts!" I left a message on his machine telling him we'd send him money for new parts, he could buy them himself, and we'd pay a local shop to install them. I hope he gets back to me. Maybe it's not worth it. Maybe he'll find something else about the bike, and we'd be better off getting it back now, since he's had it just a month or so and probably hasn't ridden it, than a year from now after he's ridden it and crashed it or whatever. Now, at least, we could get \$2,000 for it, easily, maybe. Yikes. It reminds me of the time I was working at REL, back in 1978 or so, when we had a sale on Madsus Birkebeiner cross country skis—the prettiest, oil-finished, well-made skis in the world at the time. Beautiful, 36 laminates of wood, no paint, no glossy varnish even, just natural stain and oil finish. On sale for \$36, from \$85 or something, which was a bargain even. So \$36 made them cheap enough for anybody to buy, and anybody did buy them, and they took them home and in preparing the bottoms with pine tar (you "burn it in" with a propane torch), a dozen or so people managed to burn the skis, just blacken the bottom, charcoal-ize them, and they wanted their money back. Great! Let's ruin some fabulous skis, then get our money back. It's not exactly the same thing here, but close enough. We don't filter out customers, we don't do background checks, we don't know if they're regionally notorious for quacky behavior related to bicycles or anything else, and as a whole we're lucky to know them. But once in a while, the psycho gene surfaces, and we deal with it. Peter's really bummed because he's being accused of cheating with used parts and lying about it. Peter's the most honest guy I even know. I once scratched a rear derailleur on a new bike, but it was the tiniest scratch, really superficial and not noticeable unless you were six inches from it staring right at it, and Peter insisted that he replace it anyway.

I hope I can talk the guy out of it, and then wipe out this Progprep entry. We don't have \$2,500 to refund him. We can get it, but the line of credit is all tapped out, and it'll take a while.

Feb 9. What a day today's been. We've been in a panic about seat lugs, and we were arranged for a wire transfer to Everest for more of them, \$1,764 worth, and in the meantime we were digging through drawers and asking Richard S. if he had any he could spare, which he did, and then Tim called Wford and asked if they had any left. And they did! Just found them, a couple boxes: So I caught the wire transfer just in time, and now we got our \$1,764 back, and aren't so panicky anymore. Today we also got in my Match All-Rounder, a sample that's perfect, and I'll send it to JB tomorrow to paint. The clearances look great, and the brazing is perfect. It's a nice frame. For sure, and now I've got to pick a color. Some green it'll be, and if not that, blue.

Feb 11. We actually got 5 frames in today, plus the one the guy returned because he thought it had used parts. The parts look fine. Brand new. There's

a little chip on the black rail of the B.17. It's about 3mm square. The brake levers look brand new, since they are. The rear derailleur cage has a few chainwear scratches on it, which you can see if you look hard. Peter said he shifted off the cage once, when he was adjusting it. The repacking job the guy did was terrific, though, and almost too terrific, like he'd had a lot of practice. What lesson do we learn here? That everyone's potentially a nut? I don't know.

Another thing to deal with: A customer got an orange frame, and that was one of the 5 that came in. I tried to talk him out of the orange, this new orange, because I was a little nervous about it. He was adamant, and it's here and I can't stand it. I called him and told him I didn't like it and was in a bind because it would cost a lot to repaint, and it would be bad for us and for morale if we had to eat the cost ourselves, and I was hoping he'd say he'd split it and be glad and trusting. He said he wanted to see it first, so could I email a picture? I don't know how to do that, and email colors aren't always true, so I took a real picture and FedEx'd it to him for Monday. But the thing is, I'm going to look like a wacky dictator in the office if I say "don't send his frame yet; he may want to change the color." Our guys could probably use a little raise now and then, and when we waste money like this, it can't be good. The thing is, I don't want that frame out there representing Rivendell, so it's in our best interest, moneywise and everything else, if he gets another color. It was dumb of me to think there was even a chance that he'd say "do what you want to do and I'll pay half." I mean, that is just stupid, and I had no right to hope for it.

We have to get color chips. JB says he'll paint us sheets of plastic we can cut up into squares. Then we'll do a mass mailing to frame orders, and we'll put them on the web with some qualifier like "this one looks true," or "it's not as dark as it appears here," or something. Then on new orders, we'll send the chips and give people \$25 off if they decide in writing within one week. And if they change after that, we get the \$25 back. I don't know how we'll do it, but we've got to do something.

We finally mailed the new schedule to the people with frames on order. I wonder how many will cancel, or switch to match, or stick with Joe. It's kind of a mess. It is so important to our healthy and to match's existence that we send match at least 250 frames a year. Not just that, but they should be frames they can build without losing money, which means building four of a size in the same run. Saves set-up time, helps things go better. We'll see. We have to do it, actually. It's all going to fizzle out fast if we don't. Will stems save us? Reynolds says the tubing will be here in a week or so, and the lugs will be here on March 14. So match can build real stems and we can test them, and maybe, if all goes well, they can be ready by May. But there are so many tests and testers, and still some details to fret about, like—is the clamp bore right? How much force will it take to move the steel? Will the plating be too thick, so the quill won't fit into the steerer? They look good, but will they work?

Carradice says its new fabric is passing all the tests. It's coated in Scotland. They're sending a sample next week.

Feb 14. An email Valentine note from the fellow who got so mad about the Cyclo-X frame a few months ago. A nice one. Yay!

March 8. We had a good week last week, and mostly it was due to the flyer we sent out. We've sold 41 stem futures so far, at \$100 each, and that's \$4100 right there, and that's almost to the dollar how much we were able to put toward our line of credit, which is still up there at around \$30K.

The Match-buils are trickling in and looking spectacular; a good thing. I'm still fretting madly about the road seat lug shortage, and hoping we get the new lugs in a month or so, so there won't be any delays. I don't know where the seat lugs could be. The new lugs will save us. I'm concerned about Match's survival, and I think I got a way we can help us and them. Sell bikes to bike clubs, direct. We can find out the addresses somehow, like on the internet, and then send out packages with information and a proposal. There must be something like 700 clubs in the country, and if just half a person per club bought a frame, it would help out tons. Regular manufacturers can't sell to bike clubs, because they have dealers. We can, because we don't. Not that we never will, but right now there's just not enough money in the frames for that. So, we'll try bike clubs. But there's no time. The day-to-day work soaks up all our energy, and doing this right means being organized, and having all the lugs in, and being able to deliver at least within 3 months, and I'm not sure we can do that. It's Spring, and now's the time to get going on it, but we aren't prepared.

Probably before we try something new, we should get the old stuff wired, and we're far from that.

The lugged stem is looking fantastic, and we have a testable sample, but I'm a little concerned about its weight. I figure in a 10cm with a 160mm quill, it should weigh no more than 360g. But even at that, it'll weigh more than a regular old Cinelli. It has a longer quill, so that's got to count, and maybe if it were a straight-across comparison, same quill length, ours would come in less. I don't want to get nuts about the weight, but I would like to actually sell some of these, and they will be around \$150 as soon as we're able to deliver, and at that price, people will want to know. I mean, they'll ask. I would. But there's no way to take a whole lot of weight off. A titanium bolt? A magnesium wedge? Reynolds may make us some lighter gauge quills, but it's already at 1.7mm, and Nitto uses 2.0mm, but ours is 853. Maybe we can go to 1.5mm, but that has to be it. Anyway, testing will tell the story. We should have 50 sets of lugs in a week, and Match can braze up ten more stems for testing, and then we'll send them off and wait for the results. Nitto will test them, but their results will probably take five months. Specialized will test, Titec will test, and maybe Ross S. will test, too.

The clamp is staying round during clamping. The fit is good. I hope it all works. It won't be a disaster if the stems fail the tests—then we'll just go back and strengthen it here and there. But I can't imagine they'd fail. One thing that occurs to me is that the 853 needs to be heated before it can air-harden and gain its full strength. And the quill isn't heated during brazing, so what do we do? Torch it up until it starts to glow, and then let it "air-harden"? I'll talk to Tim and to Reynolds about this. And we can test them both ways. Next month I'm going to start taking some classes in how to make Rivendell better. We just need to run a tighter ship, make fewer mistakes, follow through better, not forget to order stuff, keep better records, all that stuff. It's overwhelming most of the time, and I can't imagine doing this for widgets

March 15. Got back from the Portland show last night, and had a horrible time getting home. Missed connections, didn't have tickets, lots of things. I finally took a shuttle with a Libyan driver, a 50 year old former exchange student/political refugee. I'd been feeling crappy about work and pressures, and thinking I can't handle it if it gets any worse, just too many things to do, and to much pressure, and what have I built here that's going to cave in on me, and where's my real life, the one that I can relax in? But he and I were the only ones in the car, and there was a huge traffic jam (it was past midnight), and I asked him lots of questions about his life over here, and he has no family here, and is single, with no medical insurance, and so he watches what he eats and reads books on nutrition and takes vitamins and works out at the Y three days a week. He hasn't been to a doctor in 20 years, he was halfway through his PhD in international relations, but his student loans were getting so high, so he quit to pay them off, and still, now, all those years later, he owes \$12K and figures he has a few more years. He hasn't ridden a bike in 12 years, and the last time was for five minutes. He works 11 pm to 7am, sleeps most of the day, and I think I'm luckier than he is. Work has to change, though. We need to do stuff that will secure our future, but there's no time. I want to sell to bike clubs. Dealers can't do it, because they don't have the reach. Manufacturers can't do it, because they have dealers. So how do we approach clubs? It's not easy, but I think we have to do it. We need to get mailing lists, or just mail to the clubs and hope they pass them on to the members, but they don't have any incentive to, so how do we have that happen? We need to fix and improve the web site. Peter's doing a good job with it, but has no time. Maybe every Wednesday he can stay home and do it, but then we're understaffed here. We need someone to prep frames and pack them, and maybe that'll be Curtis, but he's still in school until summer. Peter shouldn't be packing frames OR prepping them. We've got to get organized and settled and have time to do what we need to do, but on any given day there's too much to do to do that; and that's a good thing. I think we need another fun-timer in there. Someone to enter orders and help ship. We're living paycheck to paycheck most of the time, but it seems to me that another body in there would improve things a lot, reduce errors, reduce the stress level, and help us make more money so we could afford him. Or her. It doesn't matter, but it's not easy to find the right person. I don't want a Yes-man, or someone who just thinks it'd be a thrill to work for a bike company. We need someone who really wants a job and can more than pay their way, and is good with people, and never bses anybody. David A. is a good bet.

This Reader's almost a month late. No, it is a month late, but things kept changing. The next one will be on time, and anyway, the flyer we sent out helped bring in some money, helped get us over the hump.

I sent off the stem for testing, and we should have results in a week. In the meantime, we're making some changes to the mold and the quill. The clamp seems perfect, and seems to stay round during clamping. It looks good, and we've sold 50 of them so far, at \$100.

Today we got a prototype seatpouch bag-type thing in, from Duluth. Based on the Gilles Berthout bag John B. loaned us. It looks good, but will cost a lot. We'll see. GP

SPRING FLYER

NEW, NORMAL, & LIMITED QTY

Christophe Brownish leather toe straps— \$7

We've wanted this color for many moons. There's nothing deluxe or laminated about them, but when was the last time your sprint warranted a laminated strap? These are good, and if you want to deluxify them, add the ALE toe strap buckle covers, for another \$5.

ALE Buckle covers— \$5

All leather pads that put a layer-o'-leather between the buckle and your shoe/foot. That makes even a tight strap pretty comfortable. Protects fancy shoes, too.

Deore Front hubs, 32-hole, no q/r skewer— \$15

Silver, good quality.

Kelly TakeOffs — \$ see below

A great alternative to STI and ERGO, not just for poor riders who can't afford them, but for discriminating ones who want more versatility in their shifters, and to be able to shift from more hand positions. Use with any downtube shifter. Left and right. JUST BECAUSE Chris Kelly (and not Shimano or Campagnolo) makes these, and just because they're so much less expensive, doesn't mean they aren't as good or better. The ONLY minus is that the tube that attaches them is slightly in the way of a full finger grip—but it's a minor deal, and you can make it better by rotating the TakeOffs inward, toward the center of the bike. You'll figure it out. Sold two ways:

Takeoff Kit: Includes cables, housing, downtube shifter adapters, and Takeoffs. \$75

Takeoffs Solo: Takeoffs without the cables, housing, and downtube shifter adapters. \$40

Brooks Conquest saddle—\$60

Honey brown. It's similar to a Brooks Pro, but with coil springs. Many people find it excessively comfortable. On bumpy trails, the coils work. Surprise! Needs no lubrication or maintenance. We have 5 and don't plan to stock them anymore.

Brooks Pro - Women's—\$60

The prettiest saddle Brooks makes. Has shining, sparkling, glamorous, amorous copper rails, with the familiar and lovely honey brown leather. Wider in the rear (245g) than the B.17, to better support women's ischial tuberosities. Good mate with the Nitto Uplift and a Carradice bag.

BOESHIELD/T9 chain lube—\$7

Have you ever wondered how it is that Boeing-built aeroplanes are so remarkably rust-free? Here's your answer. Boeing had it made up special, and it's also a great chainlube, which is how they market it to the earthbound. It works great, lasts long, and we like it. We still sell White Lightening, but we'll probably go to Boeshield in the future, since it does double duty. (Luber and anti-ruster.)

Clarks Cables—\$5

No color choice. You get brake and derailleur cables, so even if you hate the housing color, you still get more than \$5 worth of cables.

Ritchey Force Road stems, 90-deg x 80 x 26Ø—\$18

Bstone surplus. Good for small bikes that fitcha. Short, 125mm quill, but if the small bike fits ya, that may be okay. Made by Nitto, so you know they're deluxe.

SunTour Cyclone Front Der—\$20

A classic from the days when SunTour was having fun. Light, band damp. The cage is narrow, so it fits with all cranks.

Campy Alum Toe Clips, M only—\$5

If your shoe is between a 39 and 42.5, these'll do you. Blue box Super Records, lighter than bubbles, beautiful, and long lasting as long as you don't squash/scrape them.

Frame Saver—\$12

Steel frame, not-yet-Framesavered? Joint the ranks of the paranoid-yet-wise, and protect that frame. One can does 3-4 frames. Protects any bare steel. Wipe up the mess with WD-40 or some gentle degreaser.

Phil Hand Cleaner—\$8

Most enviro-type hand cleaners these days are orangey and slimey, which is nice if you like orange and slimy. But you know what's weird? Cleaning grease off with slime; and besides that, the slimy stuff takes forever to rinse off. Phil's hand cleaner is brown and gritty and doesn't smell like anything. It's all natural and biodegradable, works far better than anything we've tried, and rinses off immediately. The Taj Mahal of hand cleaners.

Huret Jubilee Time Trial Downtube Shifters—\$14

Right side only, braze-on style. Friction. Smooth, beautiful, and without cables.

Campagnolo Gran Sport Brakesets—\$60

Short reach, nutted, complete with cables and housing and levers and all. In the green Campy boxes. They look fine, work great. If these don't sell out at this price, they're going into the catalogue at \$75, and you don't get to refer to this flyer and ask for this price.

Rivendell Cycling Caps—\$8

The classic cycling cap shape. Orange or Greyish Blue. Say which.

Logoless Water Bottles—\$1

Normal sized. Made by Specialized. White, green caps. Less than cost.

Touring Bikes, da book—\$40

You can hate touring and hate touring bikes and love this book. That's how good it. Lots of good, hard to find information on frames. Written by a custom framebuilder, and he talks about things nobody else does. Printed in England and widely unavailable in the United States. I'll bet Amazon.com doesn't even have it, but please don't check.

Avocet Fasgrip 700x35—\$24

Avocet makes the best cornering tires these, with all that rubber, have to be the best of any. They're not much heavier than a Conti 700x28, but they're fatter and last longer. If your frame has good clearance, these will provide a luxurious ride. This is about the same volume tire that racers rode in the late '30s.

99 Year Subscription/Memberships—\$200

If you expect us to be around a while, want to give us a boost, and don't want us to bug you every year with a subscription renewal card, and the \$200 hit won't hurt you too much, and you see it as a way to actually save money in the long run, then send us \$200 and we'll sign you up 99 years, the maximum our computer can handle. We have 20 such members so far, and the money raised has made life much easier this past month. After 50 years, not transferable to heirs.

Campagnolo Rallevé Rear Derailleurs—\$90

Version Two. Brand new. Version Two is different from Version One, and if you have to ask

"How?" then these aren't what you should be buying. Huge wrap and shifts to 32-34t.

NITTO-For CARRADICE UPLIFT!!!!!!!!—\$30

We've been wanting this for two years—a beautiful, versatile, simple widget that let's you carry a Carradice even if a) your saddle's too low. This lifts it up about an inch, which is usually all it takes; and b) you ride a loopless saddle, like a Brooks Pro, a Turbo, a Selle Whatever, or one of those new anti-impotence jobs Specialized and Terry brag about. Mounts on the seat post. Prototype is on web page and somewhere in here. Delivery late April. Order now, and if you know any PBP riders, tell them, too.

more

**Daylight come and me wan' go home:
Introducing the Duluth Banana Bag—\$75**

We might as well get a few orders for these, before they actually arrive. What's your incentive to order before they're here? Price! If the final versions come in where we think they're going to come in, the price will surely be higher than this; and if that means we sell them only to the Coach / Dooney & Bourke crowd, well, that's what it means. In the meantime, here's a good chance to get a really nice bag at a price that's cheaper than what it will be later, and if you're reading this after our catalogue is out, you have to go by the catalogue price. Delivery when we get them, and we'll add \$5 shipping then, too. Olive cotton duck with brown leather and a brass buckle.

Sugino AT crank arm set, 170mm—\$30

We've nearly run out of bottom brackets that make these work as triples, but member Ed Braley says a 122mm Shimano cartridge bb with a 3mm spacer on the right side works great and results in a sub-150Q. We don't sell them, but your LBS may. Has 110/74mm bcd, so you can ride it as a double, with rings down to 34t. With chainring bolts.

USED / DEMO / HOMELESS / SHOWBIKE SALE

Perfectly good frames that have histories or stories that make them unsellable at normal prices; or in some cases, we just need the money more than the frames. The idea: Minimum prices, minimum explanation, a rapid yet painless yet rewarding transaction for us all. We'll use the camera-rating system, 1 through 9 plus NM (near mint), M- (mint minus), and M (mint). Also, W=Waterford-built; J=Joe-built. Priced low for forgiveness, and returns for credit only! We cannot send pictures, but after March 20 we'll have some pics on the web (www.rivendellbicycles.com) Prices include freight. **Phone-in orders only.**

- 58cm Longlow (W)**, short top tube, silver. 7. Seat binder area is functional, but mangled; otherwise it would be NM. Fixable by a builder, but no immediate need. For cantilevers. Includes HS and BB. **\$400.** Complete bike, typical good parts **\$730.**
- 59cm Longlow (W)**, light met green. 9. For cantilever. HS, BB. Good for rider up to 5-9 with saddle height around 75cm. **\$600.** Complete bike as is **\$730.**
- 57.5cm Road (W)**. Purple w/gold decals. 7. Proto. Chainstays 1cm too short (around 42), and cs bridge location requires deflation before removing rear wheel. Fewer than 50 miles. Henry James crown. Stronglight HS. For rider w/saddle height 74-75cm **\$380.**
- 63cm Longlow (W)**. Originally built for magazine test ride, never tested or built up. Repainted a blueish green color (as a sample); with painted head tube. Standard tubing (with 28.6mm downtube). For cantilevers. MINT! For saddle height 80-81cm **\$780.**
- 62cm Longlow (I)**. Semi-vertical Ritchey dropouts. Original rear dropout was crushed by UPS, no other damage. It was replaced, frame was repainted (by JB) New Pea Green w/full cream detailing. Fancy lugs, 28.6 downtube. For saddle height 79-81cm **\$880.**
- 54cm All-Rounder (J)**. A show bike. Ridden less than 6 miles. Coleman green with creamy details. Everything new and deluxe, bike in Mint condition. Moustache h'bars. Frame only **\$1,100.** Complete bike. **\$2,300.** (Save \$450 or so)
- 63cm Longlow (I)**. Show bike, MINT, fewer than 3 miles on it. Tealy blue with cream detailing. Ti-B.17. Fancy lugs, 28.6 downtube. For saddle height 79-81cm. Ritchey triple. cus-

- tom/hybrid bar-end shifters, grey shellacked tape, Frog post, super wheels, etc. Complete bike only, **\$2300.** (Saw about \$700)
- 61cm Road (J)**. Another show bike. Light blue metallic, cream details, Ritchey. B.17-Ti, grey shellacked tape, Phil wheels, deluxe everything, and fewer than 4 miles on it. Small chip near dt shifters, otherwise 9++++. Good for saddle height around 78cm to 80cm. Ritchey triple. Frame w/hs, **\$1100.** With BB. **\$1200.** Complete bike, **\$2,200.**
- 55cm All-Rounder. (W)** A prototype. Burnt orange, no extended head tube missing head badge (you can glue one on; we'll provide it). 5 condition. Good for saddle height of about 81 to 82 or so. Frame-fork-headset, **\$320.**
- 52cm All-Rounder. (I)** Silver with blue window fill. Really newish, but used. The previous owner is getting another size. Unfortunately, his name is already on the top tube, and that's why we're selling it, with a new headset, for just **\$900.** If you're good with sandpaper or have a friend who can erase stuff like this, count your savings. If you want it freshened up with a new paint job (your choice, with window fill and no name), price is **\$1200.**

Note: Prices are low and please don't ask for changes. These are good frames, but we need the space and money. This will not be a regular feature.

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AS USUAL, RESTRICTIONS APPLY. NOT GOOD TOWARD FRAMES

SEVEN
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MINIMUM \$90 PURCHASE

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NINE
RIVENDOLLARS

MINIMUM \$160 PURCHASE

Good Through June 6, 1999

Members only, not combinable

READER SURVEY

Your name _____

1. How many issues of the Reader have you read? (about) _____

2. What's your favorite section? _____

3. If you've read a lot of issues, can you name 3 stories or articles you particularly liked. _____

4. Who would you like to see interviewed? _____

5. Who would you like to have as a regular contributor/writer? _____

6. What sorts of columns or features would you like to see more of? _____

7. Are the headlines too dumb or obtuse or distracting? (They're used for identification purposes, because they're easier to remember than issue numbers.) _____

8. Rivendell Reader frequency: Ideally, how many per year? _____

9. Have you seen our website? (www.rivendellbicycles.com) _____

10. Do you have any suggestions for it? _____

11. Should we be open for business on Saturdays or Sundays? _____

You may submit this by fax or mail. If you do it with an order, you may take a dollar off that order, even if you're already using a coupon that says "Not combinable," which they all do.

Thanks.

Fax to (925) 933-7305 or mail: Rivendell Bicycle Works, 1561-B Third Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA 94596



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