

Summer
2006

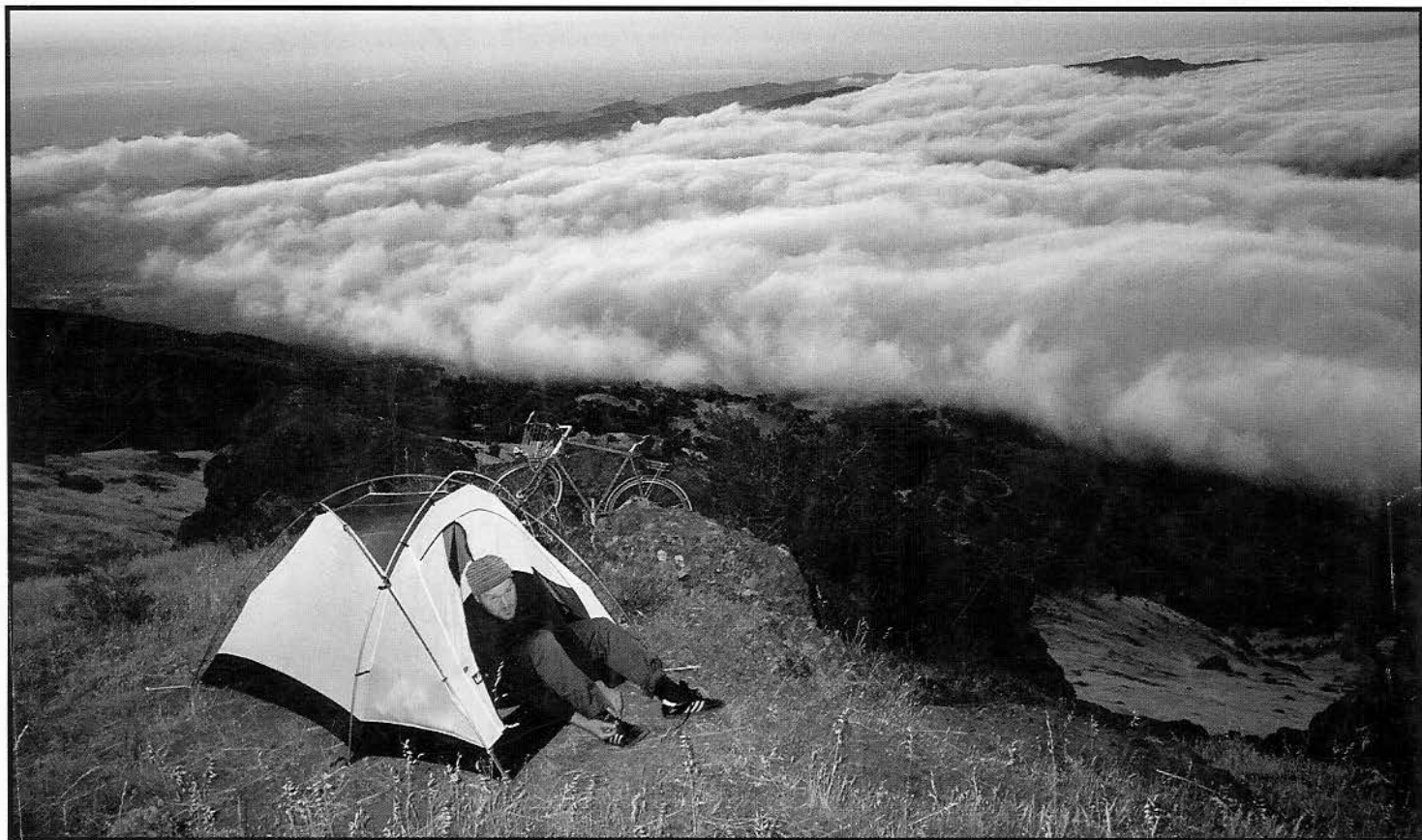


Issue No.

38

THE RIVENDELL READER

BICYCLES, GEAR, & A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO RIDING



WHEN KIDS KNEW THEIR KNOTS

CYCLING IS THE ONLY AEROBIC ACTIVITY that allows you to eat while you're doing it—and by eating, I mean mostly more than a quick squeeze of a GU packet, although that counts, too.

Whether this eating-while-doing is a plus or a minus depends on your situation.

The endless selection of sports drinks and energy bars that promise to replace vital nutrients lost in sweat make life hard for the weekend rider hoping to burn off some fat piled on during the week. You'd think, to look at the selection of athletic food out there, that these formulated food-like snacks were an essential part of any athletic program.

We're sort of being supersized, and if you ask me, it's mainly monkey business. Just like hippies who got granola belly in the late '60s, cyclists are deluded into thinking that as long as it's not pure Coke & candy, then it's all right. Ounce for ounce a Cycling Bar and a Three Musketeers Bar have about the same number of calories, but the Cycle bar usually weighs more.

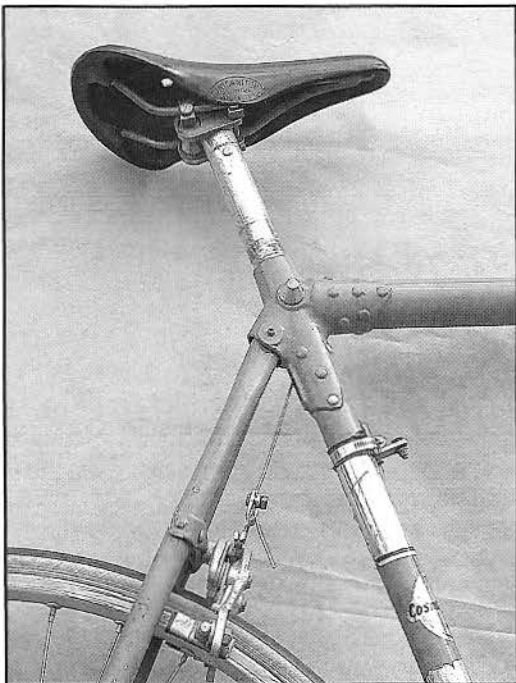
You ought to be able to ride hard for an hour without anything more than a pint of water, and that much only if you're sweating—as they say—like a pig. If you drink a pint or a quart of water before your ride, then you can safely leave that Camelback at home, and you might not

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Thirty or so years ago, Harlan Meyer of Nashville founded a company called Hi-E. It made superlight bike parts that were unlike any before or since. This is his Cosmopolitan (model) lugged aluminum bike. Few were sold, but all were interesting, and showed a level of ingenuity, if not sophistication, that no company or man has exhibited since. Harlan's latest project is pillows. I have one, and...not bad. The key feature is a hole in the middle, which lets you rest with your head in line with your neck, or on your side, without smashing your ear. —Grant

cover: Daniel at Rocky Point, the highest, hardest-to-get-to, least hospitable, but most beautiful campsite on the hill.



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need two full bottles along for the ride, either. How many times have you read that you should drink a pint of water for every half-hour of hard exercise? That was somebody's overreaction to somebody somewhere sometime suffering from dehydration, which we used to just call getting really thirsty.

The latest news on water is that we've been overdrinking it. You've probably read the studies on that, because they've been in the media for about two years now. In extreme cases, you get *hyper*-something.

I know severe drying out can hurt you, but our bodies aren't large-holed sieves. Our bodies' response to food and water evolved when storing it had survival value. But efficient storage is not helpful in times of plenty. It's the last thing we need, but we're stuck with it, and that's why it sticks with us so well.

Remember the old athletic advice, to "eat before you're hungry, drink before you're thirsty"? The trick is to not eat *until* you're hungry. I don't mean until you "feel like eating." I mean until you get an honest-to-goodness hunger pang. It's been a long time since I've had a pang.

You can train your body to get by on less, but it won't happen if you're always topping off with an energy bar washed down with a glucose-and-electrolyte blue liquid touted as a sports drink to make your feel athletic. Most of the time, if you have to chew, chew gum, and when you're thirsty, drink water. When you bring food, bring the kind you can't wolf down without a struggle. Two-handed food helps, and if you have to eat it off the bike—like walnuts in the shell or kippers in the can—it's good insurance against eating it when you don't need it.

Road bikes in the '70s came with one water bottle mount, and only fancy touring bikes had two bottle mounts. Now two bottle mounts is the new minimum—only track bikes have less—and if a touring bike doesn't have three, it doesn't quite qualify as a "true touring bike." Plus, back then, water bottles held 16oz. Now the small ones hold 20oz, and the far more popular biggies, 24oz. "Hydration packs" blacken the landscape. That's an observation, not a criticism.

I usually bring food on rides of more than 3 hours, and on shorter rides if I don't eat breakfast before riding and I want to have my meal on the ride. That's a good kind of meal to have. Food and riding are two of my favorite things, but my riding meals are not calorie-replacement opportunities that slide in between real meals and add an extra 300 to 800 calories to my daily intake and negate what I burn up pedaling.

Well, too often they actually are, but I don't want them to be. It's not the plan. It's easier to talk the talk than it is to walk the walk, but all you can do is try. If you're going to eat the energy bars, eat them as though they're candy

bars. Have you noticed that, on all energy bars and candy bars, the calorie information is folded underneath the seal seam flap? They'd rather have you read about the nutrients, and not the calories. It's hard to have a nutrient deficit these days.

The 350-calorie Honey Stinger Prut Butter Protein bar is the King Tut of athletic candy, as far as I'm concerned. The last thing I need is a box of them lying around, but they're on my list of things to eat if I ever know I'm going to die within a month. They're hard to come by in stores, but if you see one, grab it.

My latest thing is low-fat goat's milk and ostrich. I've never seen or heard of a fat one of either, and the taste is pretty good. Meyenberg goat milk is, at least. I've had others that tasted nasty.

In the U.S. there are about 10 million cows, and milk production is about 125 billion pounds a year. Worldwide, there are more than 440 million goats (44x as many), who produce 4.8 million tons of milk a year. I know what you're thinking—*thanks for listing the cow's milk in billions of pounds, and the goat's milk by millions of tons. That aids the mental bar graph.* But that's how the goat milk pamphlet put it. Still, until my ship comes in, I'm still five quarts cow to one quart goat. If I were rich, I'd be all goat's milk.

In the last issue, RR37, I said I wanted to change the name of *The Rivendell Reader* to something that sounded more generic and less clubby, to appeal to cyclers who've never heard of Rivendell. I solicited suggestions and got about 200, but the most common one was Don't Change the Name. There were some interesting plays on words, and a few names that would burrow us into an even deeper hole, but none was a clear winner, and so *The Rivendell Reader* sticks, and I'm not going to have that contest again. Thanks for liking the name, by the way—those of you who do, at least.

I think I need to say something about our website. We started on a makeover about a year ago, and it's gone dreadfully slow, with all sorts of good reasons for it. Nobody here knows how to do it, so we farmed it out, and the folks we farmed it out to farmed it out, and the next thing you know it's going on a year later and it still looks the same. But it is being worked on, and it will be good once it surfaces, and most importantly, it will be updated more regularly because we'll have the ability to do that ourselves. I know that many of you reading this must think it's ridiculous that we're in this jam with it, since websites are supposed to be easy to make, but I think our requirements complicated things a lot, and I hope the result is worth it. The next person we hire will be a whiz at them, I hope. He or she will have to have more than that to offer, but being good at websites wouldn't hurt, that's for sure. —Grant

Mail

'umb 'ands

I'm a 60-year-old who has never been active. In the 1970s I gave up riding because of hand numbness—I am a database administrator and statistician by day, and I paint for fun, so my hands are important to me. I took up bicycling again just last year, and after putting Dove bars on my commuter bike, I haven't had numb hands. I've been commuting to work for a year. The ride is about an hour, with a 900 ft climb.

I recently bought a Lemond Big Sky, with an adjustable stem, 28mm tires, room for fenders. I raised the bars as high as they'll go. I wanted to use its drop bars and STI road brakes/shifters, but now the numbness is back. I would like your advice on these options:

1. Pad the existing bar, a 44 cm Bontrager Flat Top, with gel.
2. Replace it with a wide Noodle bar, which would mean a new stem, since the current hi-rise stem has a 25.4mm clamp.
3. Go to an Albatross handlebar, lose my brifters, but be happy with cork grips, tape, more hemp. Then see if I can learn to shift your silver shifters.

My plan with the road bike, was to progress, cycling-wise. Am I sliding backward? And am I destroying the concept of my bike? —Richard of Utah.

If your current stem won't allow you to get the bars high enough to take weight off of your hands and make the numbness go away, then you can get either another stem with a higher rise to it, or, as you suggested yourself, the Albatross bar. It rises 65mm and comes back toward you, and helps a lot in low-stem situations.

If it solves a problem, it's forwards. You don't want to be the numb-handed one who has bikes he can't ride. Also, don't fret about destroying the concept of the bike. If the concept doesn't work for you, it's not your failure, but you can fix it.

Bikes get fixed all the time. Probably eighty percent of the Albatross bars we sell are for road bike conversions just like the one you're thinking about. Use the longest stem that'll fit your bike...because the bars sweep back toward you.

As for learning to shift Silver shifters—they're a cinch. I know it must seem difficult, or else why wouldn't everybody be using friction? But they're easy, and I don't really

know the answer to that question. If you want indexing with a friction option, just get Shimano bar-end shifters. They're really good, and easy also.

You have another twenty years or so of riding, and you've got to get comfortable. The Albatross bar will do that for you, and it's a good climbing bar, too. I have one on an Atlantis that I use almost entirely for steep climbs, usually on trails. I like it! —G

'himmy 'lution?

I read the shimmy and trail stuff. And, a month or so ago, an article in an engineering journal that was way over my head. The manager of our nearby hydro project passed it along. Said something to the effect that "I had no idea that bikes were so complicated." (Best part of the article for me was learning that the NHTSA had spent the money to produce a prototype motorcycle with rear wheel steering despite assurances that it would be unrideable. It was unrideable.)

Your recap a while back of Marc Muller's discussion of "steering angle" was good and touched on some of the unaddressed aspects of the general discussion. I think there's more.

About 10 years ago I had a call from a customer who'd bought a new bike from us for a few months earlier. On a group ride he took off a jacket, and while he was riding no hands for the first time, the bike wobbled. He was going less than 20 mph, so this wasn't the dreaded GreenMountain shimmy that kicks in at about 45mph.

He brought it in. I rode it, Gene, my mechanic rode it. At low to moderate speeds the bike was scary with no hands. As fast as we could get it going down here in the valley, it was fine until you took your hands off the bars. Not as bad, but not fun. Pedaling, coasting, top tube squeezed with knees, hard, gently—the bike wobbled/shimmied. We checked all the usual suspects. Swapped wheels...tires. I talked to the importer. A few days later I put it in my car for a trip to the builder. Next morning drove to Montgomery Center to give it to the importer, who insisted on test riding it. I waited. He returned after about 10 minutes and said he couldn't reproduce any deviant behavior. I got on it and I couldn't either. But the bike went up to

Marinoni, where the alignment was checked and deemed to be fine. Back at the shop, the wobble returned. I was nearly spooked. Gene said that it was obvious that the Genius (Columbus tubing) bike was smarter than we were. And too light.

The only variable that I could come up with was that the bike had overnigheted in my car in temps down into the 20's which had stiffened up the headset grease. This was October and it didn't get cold enough again to reproduce the test right away. So I figured that a roller bearing headset in place of the Campy part might help. More friction. And I went to an auto supply place for the stiffest grease I could find. Swapped parts. Wobble gone. At any temperature or speed available.

FWIW I had loaned the customer a Merlin while we messed around with his bike and he said it did the same thing. I didn't bother to try the headset swap on it. We took the small victory and began telling customers that it was just our clothes that made us look dumb.

Some time after, I related this to Francis Bollag. He told me of one winter ride he'd done which involved a brandy stop to ward off the chill. The bartender told them that they were nuts—it was 5 degrees or something. And Francis remembered that on returning to their bikes, he and his friend noticed how stiff the headsets were. But then noticed that it made no difference while riding. So we decided that headsets are way free-er than they need to or even should be. At least sometimes. In our humble opinions.

If you put feathers on your fork, keep it balanced. Just in case.—David Porter

Wow. Wouldn't it be something if it all came down to too-smooth headsets? That slightly tight was better? I'm going to test this. Not this instant, but sometime when I have the time, and I'll report on it, but first I have to find a bike that shimmies. Readers? Try it and let us know. —GP

That's it for me...

The sun was out on a warm June morning. I was riding west on Scholl's Ferry road, a two-lane road with stripes

marking the ample shoulders. I was in the farm country of Washington County, Oregon. There was very little traffic, and I noticed the sound of a truck coming up behind me. Using my helmet mirror, I looked back and saw a pickup truck. I dropped from my upright position down to the bars. I noticed that I was going 22 mph.

The truck closed quickly and as it came alongside me, I saw its blinking front right turn signal. I realized instantly that the truck was going to turn into a gravel driveway just ahead. A large mailbox was between the driveway and me. A serious ditch was on my right. I couldn't turn; there was no escape. I grabbed both brake levers and skidded. The truck braked hard and turned in front of me. It had a utility body with compartments on the sides. My first thought was to avoid going under the wheel. I yelled, "NO!" and then hit the body with my left side and fell to the driveway. My bike went into the ditch.

The truck parked a few yards away. The driver got out and headed into the house. He glanced at me, still crumpled in the gravel and said, "You should learn how to ride that bike." I was uninjured, though he couldn't possibly have known that. I considered that he could probably put his hands on a hammer or wrench, so I calmed my anger and called the Washington County Sheriff's department on my cell phone.

I waited a half hour before two sheriff's cars showed up. The deputies spoke with me and went into the house to speak to the driver. One deputy measured the skid mark from my bike. It was 20 feet long. I noticed skid marks from the truck's turn into the driveway. It was clear to me that the driver had intentionally cut me off. The deputies told me they ticketed the driver for making an unsafe turn. I got on my bike and finished my ride.

My next ride was a week later, and each car that approached me from behind caused me to pull over and stand astride my bike. I broke off the ride and returned home, and I haven't ridden since. That was June 1996. —Jay Barber, Oregon

One Perk

I live in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and am a typical bike rider. When I was younger I rode a '76 Schwinn Le Tour. I upgraded the components and rode every day. Because of that I could catch the racers during club rides. It miffed them off to be caught by a guy riding a touring bike. In 1981 I rode 1,200 miles from Boston to Tuscaloosa.

Then I joined the Navy. My graduation gift to myself after Officer's Candidate School was a Trek racing bike, one of Trek's last silver brazed, lugged, steel frames; and it was gorgeous. I outfitted it with Campy NR and Brooks Pro. It was the shortest wheelbase Trek of all time, and I never could hold a line with it, so I found myself riding less and less. The ride was just too uncomfortable.

Along the way I have added a Raleigh Sports and a Twenty folder. Both have B66s. I found about RBW from Sheldon Brown's website a few years ago. Sometimes I'd read through the site all over again, thinking all the time, "Those are the bikes for me."

In late November I was surfing around eBay. A Rivendell was for sale. It was a 60cm with medium blue metallic and good components.

I called my wife, who was working in California at the time, and half kidding-ly asked, "Can I buy this bike?" She said, "Yes dear, if you want it."

I said, "But Honey, it's expensive." She said, "Go ahead, it is your Christmas gift." I was stunned and didn't ask again. My bid won.

Last December 10 I received my catalog and RR in the mail, then drove out to my grandfather's to cut the grass for the Christmas Eve gathering. I was on a 1952 Ford 8N tractor with a bush hog attached. The grass was tall and was bunching up on the bush hog. The grass caught fire on the muffler. I shut the engine off and put it in neutral. I jumped off and tripped. The tractor ran over me and my feet were caught in the bush hog. Thank God the machine was milling down. My brother-in-law and brother saved me from bleeding to death. My left foot was gone and my right foot was mangled. I used 11 pints

of blood in the Emergency Room. My bike arrived from Boston the next week.

I was in the hospital for three months. They tried to save the right foot but couldn't, so it was amputated on Dec. 29. The left leg healed quickly but the right calf was a mess. They attached a Wound-Vac to clean it up to aid the healing, and it hurt a lot. On March 10 I was discharged and sent home to allow the right leg to finish healing. After it heals I will be fitted with two prosthetic legs and go back for more Physical Therapy. That's the short version.

The whole time in the hospital I asked my 14 year old son about my bike. "Have you taken it out of the box yet?" He would tell me it was in its box in his room. The night I came home we pulled it out. I was so happy. It was beautiful. Now it has the fenders and rack on, and it sits in my room. I so want to ride it!

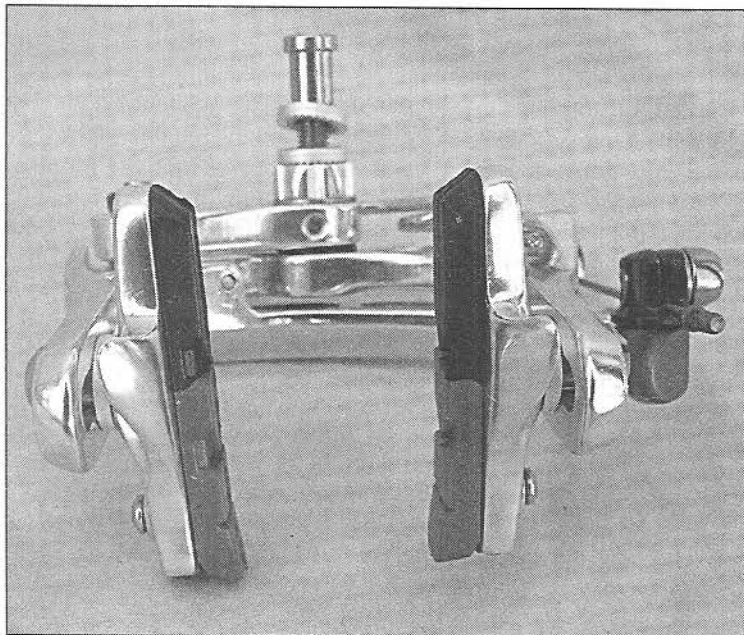
But I sit in my wheelchair frustrated. I have two stumps for legs. I know I will ride it. When I go to the hospital for therapy, I want to bring my Rivendell on rollers and use it. It is a 60cm and I am just tall enough to fit it. If I must I will add an inch to my legs (one perk of being a bi-lateral amputee).

I am so proud to own my Rivendell. Soon I will walk. Soon I will ride. I may need your advise on clips and how to keep my feet on the pedals. I do have Campy clips and Christophe straps. One day I will ride with my son from Boston to San Francisco. I do not intend to let the accident get in my way.

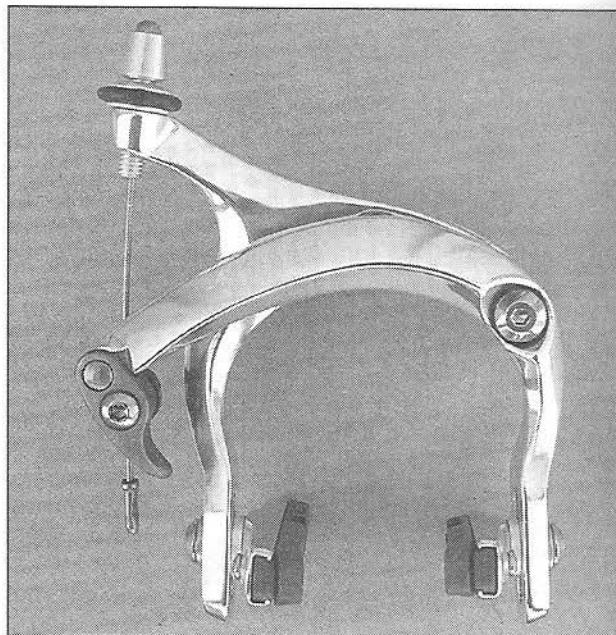
—Robert Bailey

That's a heck of a letter, Robert.

The rest of you: I've talked with Robert, and one thing led to another, and the next thing you know, he's going to write, and we'll publish in the *Reader*, sort of a progress report of his rehabilitation and riding with his new lower legs. "Writing it will be therapeutic," he said. It will begin in the next issue. Meanwhile, anybody wishing to send Robert good wishes: robertmbailey@bellsouth.net.



SILVER sidepulls come with Kool-Stop salmon-and-black pads. These are KS's "best" pads for all-around riding. They have auto-toe-in, too. We can't say they beat the pants off other pads, but they are excellent.



Here's what it looks like—sort of a one-eyed look. It's a beautiful brake, really, and its features are smart and simple, and the design is ideal for tires between 32mm and 40mm.

New SILVER sidepulls for tires up to 41.3mm wide

6

Tektro, Taiwan's top brake maker, is making the dream sidepull brake for tires between 32mm and 40mm wide. Up to now you'd get cantilevers or centerpulls for such a range. You may still legitimately prefer cantis or centerpulls, but many super sane folks don't, and it's high time a good sidepull was available for them.

At the Interbike show last year we requested such a brake from Tektro, and to my everlasting shock, were not rebuffed. It was about half an hour before the show officially opened on the final day, and Senor Tektro took out a pencil and a piece of paper and started taking notes. We requested this:

- **Reach range of 55 to 73mm.** The Saluki and Bleriot require 65mm, so it's right in the middle there. Both Tektro and Shimano make road sidepulls with 47 to 57mm reach, so there's 2mm of overlap.
- **Good fender clearance.** Current road sidepulls are too narrow, and too conical on the underside of their arches, so when you squeeze the brakes, they tend to push the fenders into the tire. You can get around it, but it's tricky. They were not designed with fenders in mind, and the new Silver brake is.
- **A high-volume quick-release that would open the pads enough to clear a tire that's 16mm wider than the rim.** So you can mount a 38mm wide tire on a 22mm wide rim, and not have to deflate the tire to put it in or take it out.
- **Dual pivot, for power.** Dual pivots have their pluses and minuses, but I think all but the hopelessly argumentative will agree that they feel good and work great, and certainly in a long-reach brake such as this, it's the way to go in a sidepull.
- **Silver, with top quality finish and hardware.**

Over the next few months we got a no-ride test sample made of ultra-brittle cream colored ceramic material that kept breaking and had to be Gorilla-glued back to wholeness. In February we got a real metal sample. It worked fine, so we said okay, make it, and they will.

Terms of Agreement

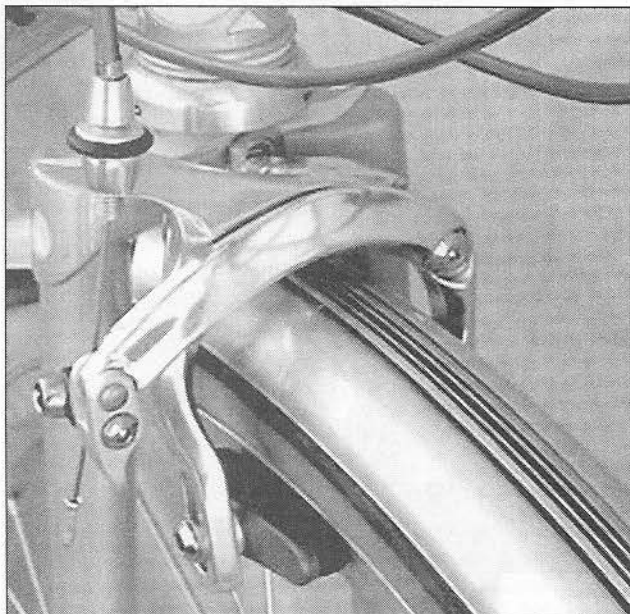
Ordinarily when Joe Blow approaches a manufacturer about a new widget, the first question is: How many do you want? Usually the answer is, "Oh, about a hundred to start, but it could grow, you know."

The manufacturer hears that and guffaws, because the tooling alone typically cost between \$4,000 and \$15,000 depending on the side and variations and other things, and a small guaranteed run of a hundred won't justify that. Even after you pay for tooling, they still want you to buy thousands every year.

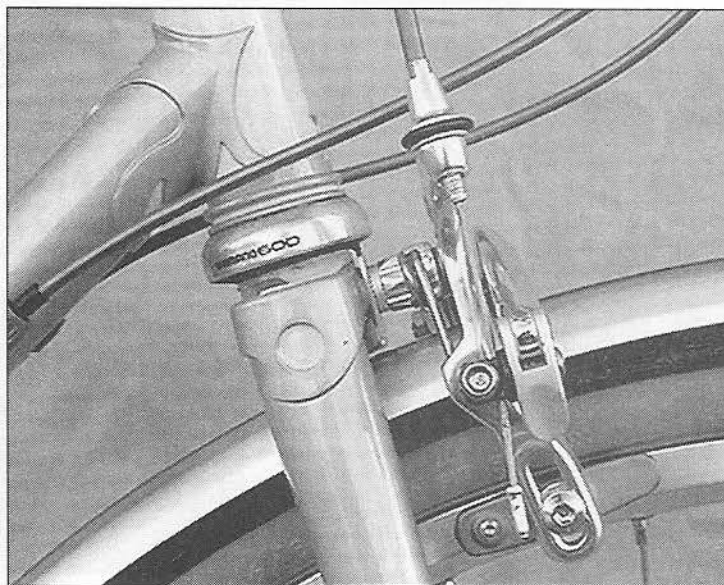
In this case, we told Tektro right off that we didn't require an exclusive, and that helped matters. But if you don't require an exclusive but the maker doesn't think anybody else will buy it, then not requiring an exclusive is no grand gift. In this case Tektro figures others *will* buy it. Why wouldn't they? If you were one of them, wouldn't you? If I were, I would.

But Tektro did require a commitment to buy—*yowza!*—\$10,000 worth of the brakes. That's a lot of money for us, but it would get us out of the tooling charge and we'd get a lot of brakes, so we agreed. Whether they hold us to the \$10,000 worth of brakes—well, we'll find out in August.

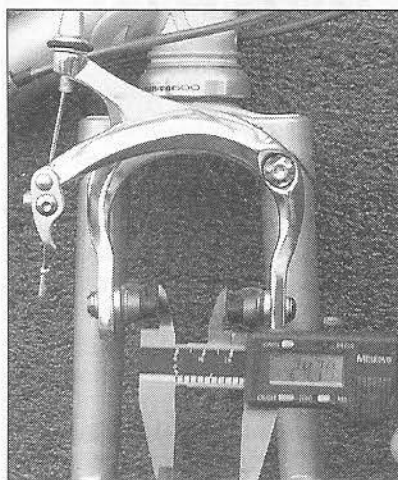
I can imagine worse things than having \$10,000 worth of these around, though. I think anybody can do that. It's so easy.



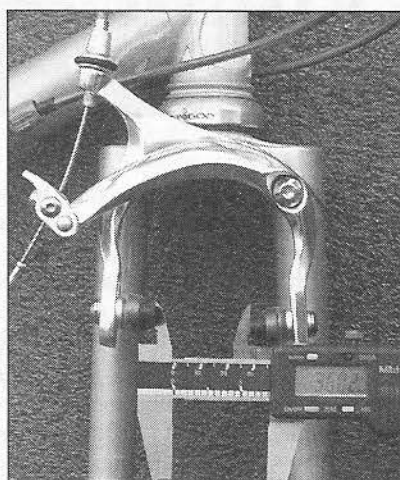
Plenty of room for a 38mm tire and a fender.



Since the Silver brake has a maximum reach of 73mm, there's no need to design the frame so that the brake shoes have to be at the bottom of the slot. There's plenty of chubby tire & fender clearance with the shoes near the middle of the slot, as shown here.



LEFT: This is about the right adjustment for a 23mm wide rim, such as the Velocity Synergy. RIGHT: The Q/R opens it up another 10 to 11mm. By adjusting the brake with the barrel adjuster UP, you can open it up even more.



At about 40.5mm, this Fatty Rumpkin is currently the fattest 650B tire suitable for the Silver brake. By adjusting the brake with the Q/R up, you can easily open up the brake pads to clear this tire. Using brake levers with integral quick-release buttons is another way to go. Not a bad way, actually.

What to call it—Silver or Tektro ?

We want to develop the Silver brand, but not by having existing products relabeled Silver. This brake was our doing in the sense that we inspired it and specified the important details, and it wouldn't have happened if John and I hadn't taken that stroll around the trade show that fateful morning.

But it's not fair to call this a "Rivendell" or "Grant" design. The chap who laid it all out, figured it all out, and drew it all up is the guy who designed it, and he's a Tektro fellow. I just want to be sure that if we get these in as Silvers, nobody will see it the same as buying an existing product and having our private label plastered onto it.

How does it work?

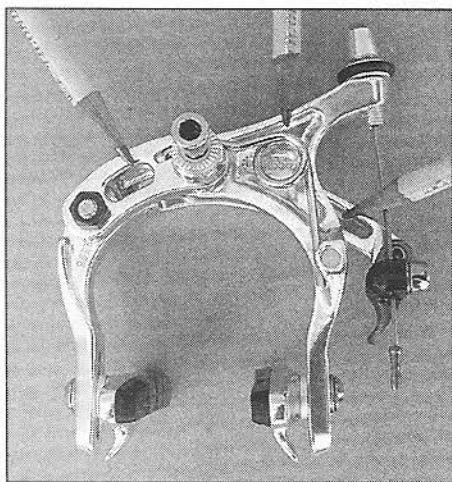
There's nothing distinctive about it, it feels just like a light-action, powerful brake.

Specifics—mounting bolts, brake shoes

It's coming set up for allen-nut fittings, because that's the Law of the Land these days, but we're trying to get ours with extra centerbolts, for nutted-type brake bolts, too. Some older frames come prepped for nutted brakes, and even allen-style frames can use nutted-style centerbolts, and get slightly easier fender mounting in the bargain. Nutted brakes allow you to mount the fender tab on either side of the bridge or fork crown, which lets you keep the brake bolt in the hole while you mount the fender on the back side of the crown (for instance); and that lets you push the fender as far as it can go off the tire without having the infernal fender tab smack into the infernal headset. It's a minor point, not worth a lot of thought, but it is real nonetheless.

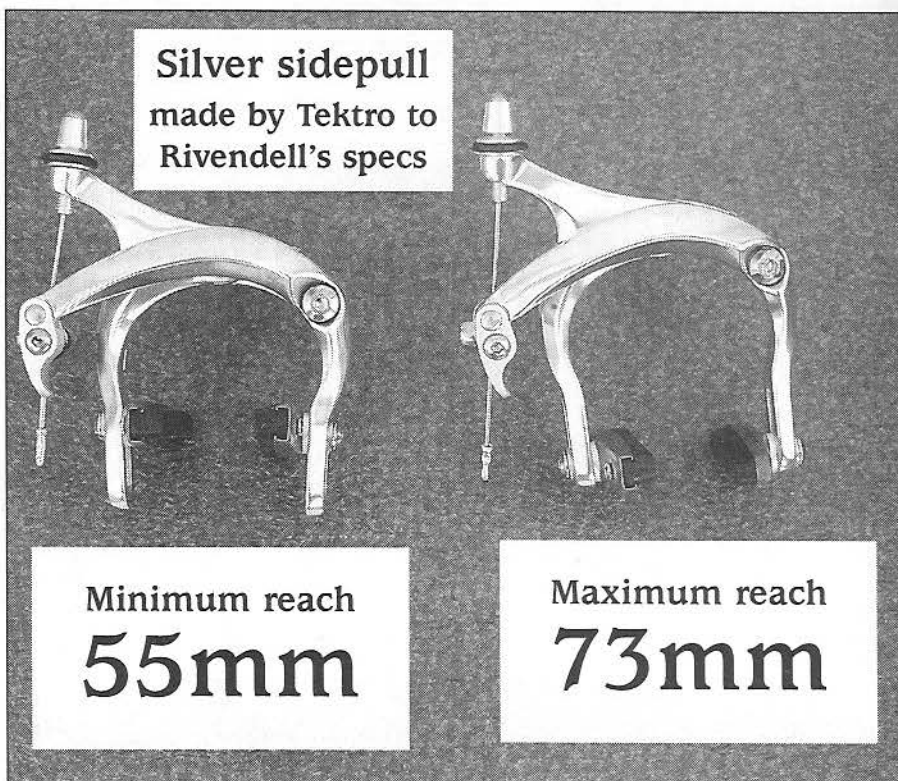
Who will use this brake?

That will be interesting to see. If product managers figure it out, they'll see it's a brake that could revolutionize road bike



TOP—At just under 12 ounces per pair, the new Silver/Tektro weighs less than a standard reach Shimano dual-pivot brake. How can that be? Scooped-out arms, my friend, scooped-out arms. That ol' pool hustler, Scooped-Out Arms.

Right—with a minimum reach off 55mm and a maximum reach of 73mm, overlaps a current “long reach” sidepull (max reach 57mm) by two mm, and heads south for another 17mm, finally stopping at 73mm.



8

design, getting out of racer-mold into something for everybody. It has such potential. If a bike designer shoots for a middle-slot brake placement (64mm on this brake), then you'll be able to fit all but the fattest mountain tires, with fenders. It's looks proportional for tires between 32mm and 40mm wide, which are the tires that work best for most of the world's rideable surfaces.

It is the perfect brake for most 700C-to-650B conversions, since it doesn't present any problems with brake cable hangers on frames that have no way to mount them. It ought to help most of the 27-inch-to-700C conversions, too. It's just an all-around helpful brake.

Carbon frame makers ought to like it, too—no need to mold on the cantilever studs onto brakes. Tandems, same thing, and cyclo-cross bikes, same thing. This brake works equally well for funny conversions (including the future 700C to 603 conversion, if we ever get the tires for it), or as original equipment for normal bikes.

Tektro introduced it to the world at the Taipei trade show, and if it strikes a chord with product managers, there's a chance we'll see it on lots of bikes next year.

If I were still doing the Bstone bikes, I'd put it on at least three models (and seven, if the sales staff didn't squawk!). But maybe it's a good thing I'm not there anymore. In any case, if it is not spec'd heavily for 2007 models, holy schmokes, what's this world coming to?

Will this brake lead to others?

It ought to, but Campy and Shimano are for racers, who use short-reach brakes that start to yelp when the tire gets to be about 28mm wide; and don't accommodate fenders, because racers don't use them. Shimano also has a commuter market

for German and Dutch riders, but they use V-brakes and discs these days. So do comfort bike riders. Country bikes are too moderate for them, too normal, not extreme anything. Shimano's latest group is called Coasting. It's targeted for people who don't ride bikes yet, and I think that's a wonderful group to go after, but in its own way, it's extreme.

You'd think that Campagnolo—with its name that translates to “country man”—would sort of use that to market a country bike group, but other than an odd foray here and there over the years, they've pretty much stuck with racing.

If “country bike” develops as a category, this brake—or one just like it—will be the brake of choice.

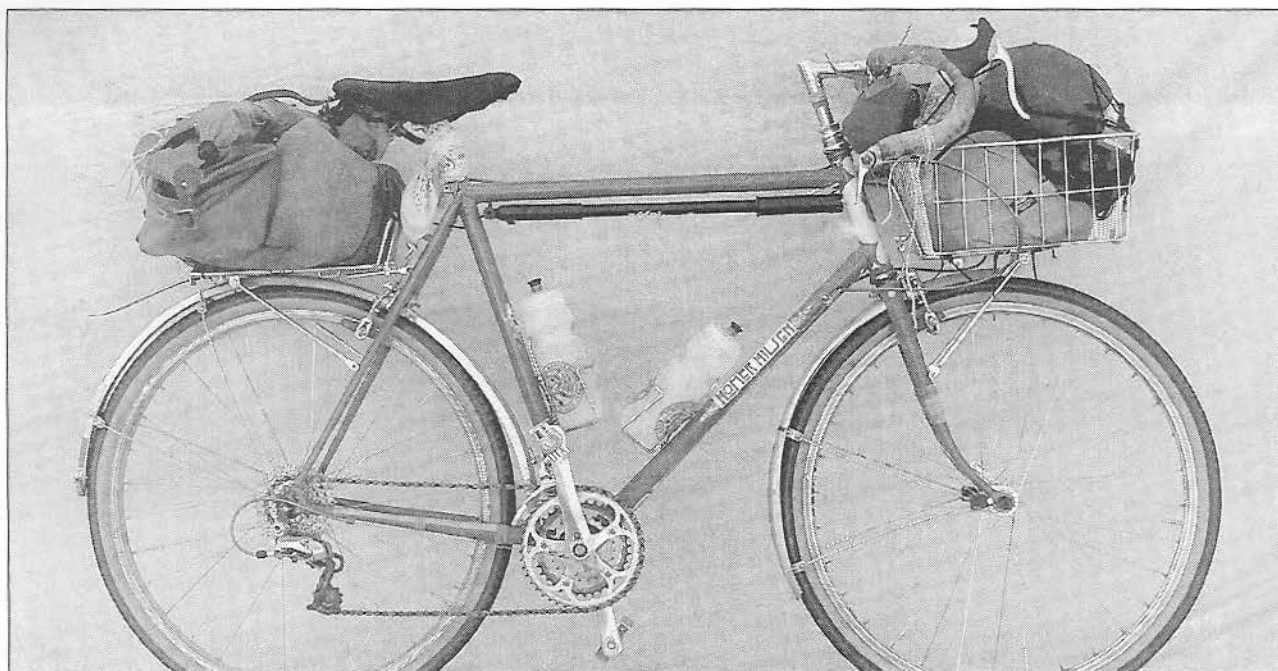
Price

\$85 per set (a bikesworth), and that includes grey cable housing, cables, KoolStop combo brake pads, the extra set of nutted bolts that you might not need so sell them on eBay, and a nice box. If we can't get the extra bolts, we'll take \$5 off the price. At press time, we don't know the answer to that one.

Availability

We're taking orders now for delivery in September, but it might end up being October. I know, a long way off, but we're lucky it's going to happen at all. And, if you need a brake with this kind of reach sooner, just get the Dia-Compe Mod. 750 centerpull, or the Paul's version Both of them work great, too. The new Silver sidepull is just another nice option for bigger road tires.

Now: Will Shimano make a country bike brake one of these years? That would be a good thing.



Hoss in back, basket in front—a good rig for a packing slob. This bike, a Saluki with trial decals on it just to test the sizing, but make no mistake, it's a Saluki—carries loads fantastically up and down and around, on streets and trails. If you prefer low-riders, fine, but holy cow and despite the load-toting theories, it doesn't get much better than this.

Why Baskets Are Good & A Good Way To Rig Them

Bags are good and so are baskets, but sometimes baskets are better. When your load is bulky and the weather's dry, for instance. Then baskets win.

The huge basket shown here, part No. 20-123, weighs 26.5 ounces, and requires a rack to lash it to. On this bike I've used an 11oz Mark's rack. The net weighs 2oz, for a Grand Total of 39oz, or 2lb 7oz in combo-talk.

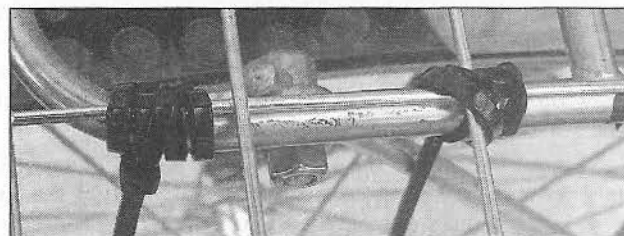
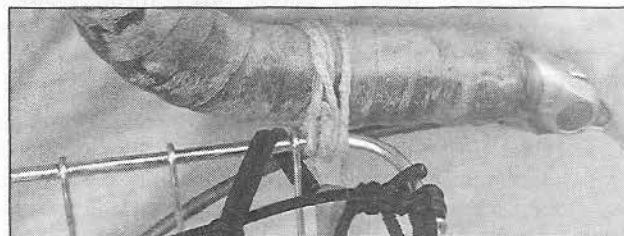
It's not a war between bags, baskets—use both. The best gear-toting system I've used for overnight with full camping gear and plenty of chow, is a saddlebag in back and a basket in front. Daniel here does the same, and it works great.

Our big basket nestles nicely between the drops of a 48cm wide Noodle bar, and if your bars are narrower, use the smaller basket—part No. 20-102. You can still fit a ton of gear in it.

The thing about baskets and nets is: You can fill the basket to twice its height and still contain the load with the net. So even the smaller basket—no problem.

Look again at the rig up there. It carries weight great. I know what the touring experts say—carry weight low here, low there, low everywhere, low low low—but I'm not convinced. When I ride this bike, I think, "Can load-carrying get any better than this?" And I always say No. It works great. I then try to figure out why, and right or wrong, I tell myself it's because weight carried higher is easier to balance and falls more slowly. We've addressed this before, years ago, and I still believe it. A blob on the end of a stick—try it with the blob high, then low. You'll see.

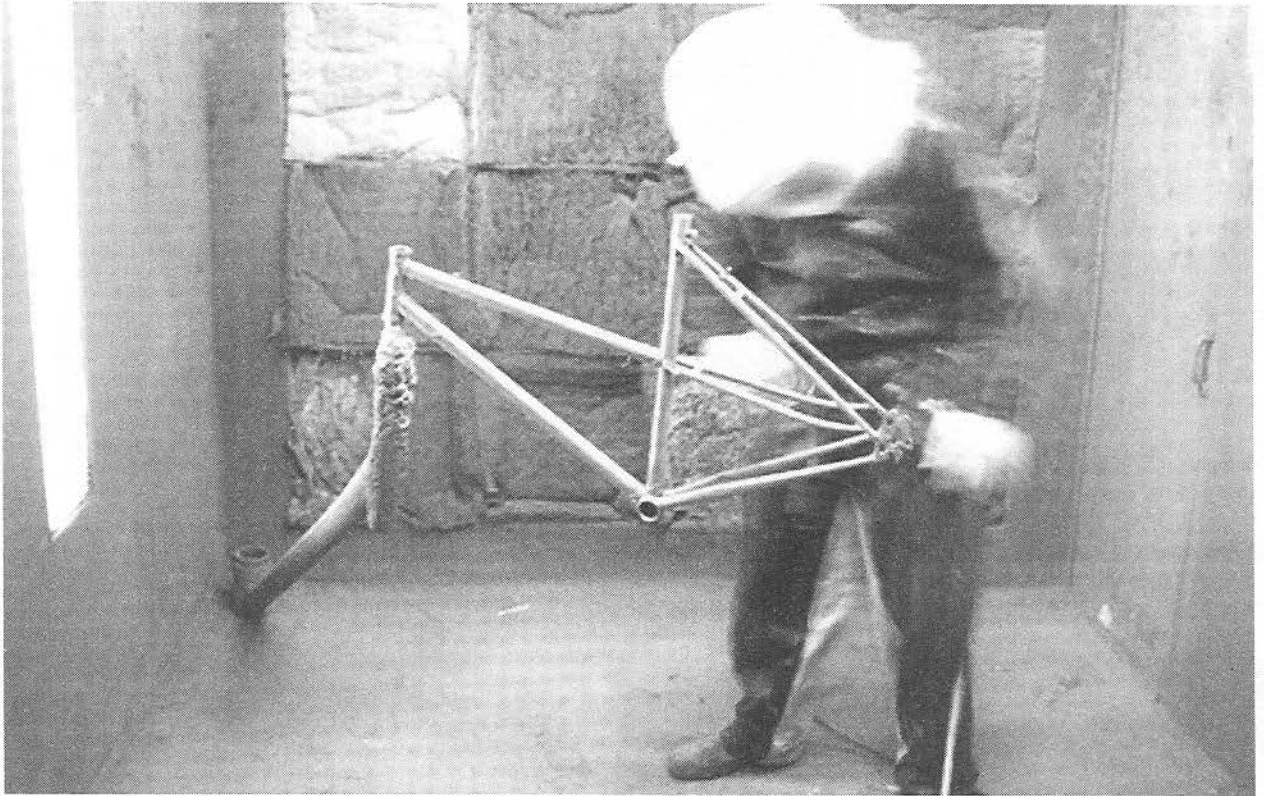
The Wald baskets we offer are the best we've seen or used, and are incredibly inexpensive. If I couldn't get another, I wouldn't sell mine for \$300. Fasten them to any rack, using zip-ties or Velcro one-wraps or tape, twine, whatever you have there. Always use a net, and you're all set.—Grant



TOP: Our biggest Wald basket fits between the drops of a 48cm Noodle bar. Six zip ties, to twines-to-the-handlebar.

MID: Twine-tie to the handlebar. Coulda been a zip-tie, I know.

BOTTOM: When you zip-tie baskets to racks, use most of the zip-tie. The load will be distributed lightly and evenly.



Rick sprays primer on a Glorius (mixte) frame. After that, he'll spray cream on the areas that get creamed—the lugs, mainly.

10

Rick Stefani, the bike painter

Thirty-seven year old Rick Stefani has painted bicycles for 20+ years, and except for a 9-month stint at a machine shop between his sophomore and junior years in high school, it's the only job he's had.

He never mowed a lawn, never pulled a weed or dug a hole, never flipped a burger that somebody else was going to eat, never tied a Windsor knot or took credit for a project that somebody else did most of the work on.

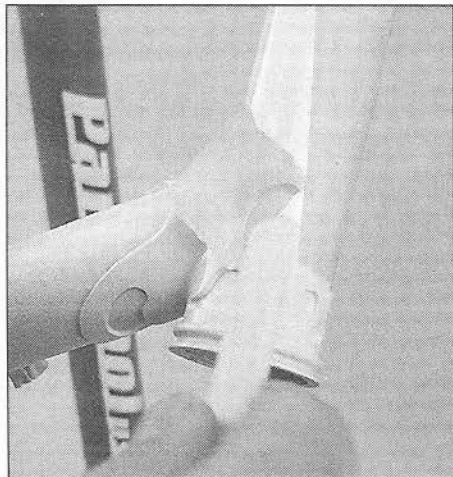
When Rick was sixteen, he went to work for D & D cycles (Dean & Dan), which sounds like a bike shop name, but in fact all they did was paint bikes. It was in San Lorenzo, California, twenty-nine miles from us now. In the eighties, if you had a decent bike you wanted to look cherry, you'd probably bring it there. D & D painted all the Ritchey bikes, and still do, and over the years they've painted twenty thousand or so frames, including prototypes, repairs and repaints for countless Bridgestone and Bianchi frames.

Four years into the job, when he turned twenty, Rick borrowed \$45 thousand dollars and bought the business. Ninety percent of the time since, Rick has been the only guy there, with complete control of the radio and no need to knock on the restroom door.

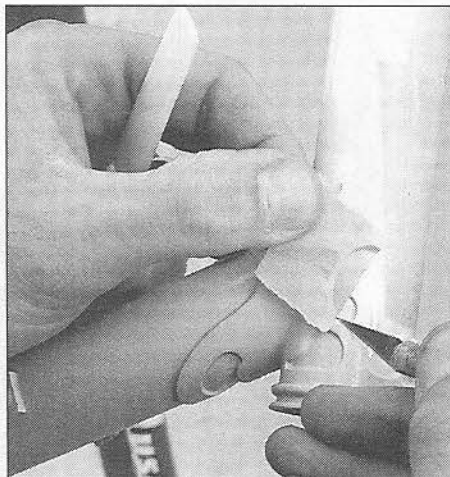
He has more business than he needs, and a good part of it is the work he does for us. We've been getting the Glorius, Wilbury, and Saluki frames in unpainted, and other than a handful that go to Joe Bell, Rick paints the rest of them. He also takes in frames for repair and hands them off to local builders for that work, who return them to Rick for painting.

Like all one-person shoppes manned by guys who know they're good and don't worry about competition, turnaround can be slow. What are you gonna do/where you gonna go? Rick isn't as slow as Joe Bell, but he's not that much faster, either. For us, either one of those guys will, with the right plead, turn a frame around in three days. But you can't cry Wolf all the time and expect it to work, so for the most part, we wait in line like everybody else does, and the wait is from one to three months.

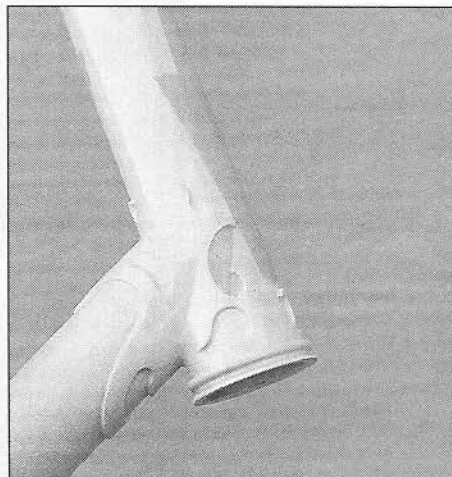
We get some of our Toyo-built frames in unpainted, and now and then a customer wants a repaint even on a new one, and Rick gets all this work. A basic one-of-our frames—which, with all the lug shoreline and window cutouts, is far from basic by most standards—takes about three and a half hours, and uses three ounces of paint. One of our mixtes, a Glorius or Wilbury, takes six and a half hours.



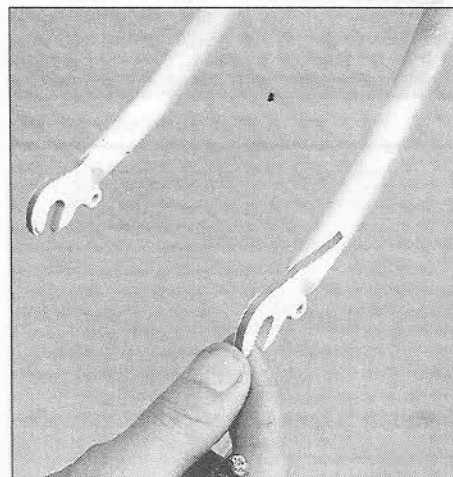
Pushing the tape into the corner of the lug, where the lug and head tube meet.



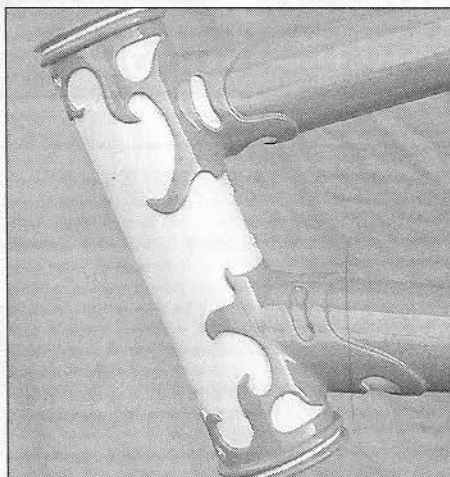
Laying tape over the lug, and getting ready to cut it with an Exact-O-Matic knife.



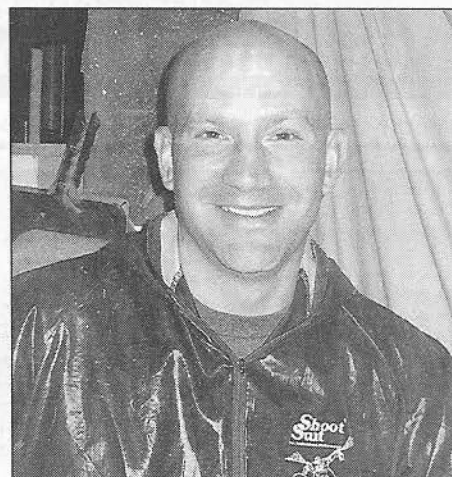
Cut tape with a sharp Exacto knife, leaving masking on the head tube only, not the lug. The last step before the final color.



Masking the fork tips with 1/8-inch tape. The pointed fork tips on the Glorius & Wilbury mixtes get painted cream, to match the head tube and lug details.



Almost finished. One lug window to fill in with cream. The ideal, in all the creaming, is to have the cream stay low, on the tube, and not crawl up the edge of the window.



Bald by choice, not because of years and years of exposure to toxic paint fumes.

When we first went to Rick a few years ago, he'd been painting mostly solid colors, and mostly non-lugged frames, at that. Those are easy. But when you put lugs into the equation, and add contrasting head tube and lug windows, the degree of difficulty and length of time don't just triple, but go off the chart. Rick had done this kind of work before, but he was nervous this time, since he knew we were used to JB's paint on our custom Rivendells, and he felt confident he couldn't match it.

So to his credit, he did the only sensible thing and called up JB for some tips, encouragement, anything to help him cope. JB could have muttered something about "I had to learn it the hard way, you should too, 'cause why should I help my competition?" But he graciously gave Rick some tips that, according to Rick, made all the difference on the extra-challenging mixtes. (If you're another painter reading this, please don't call up JB and ask for the same. Once is enough.)

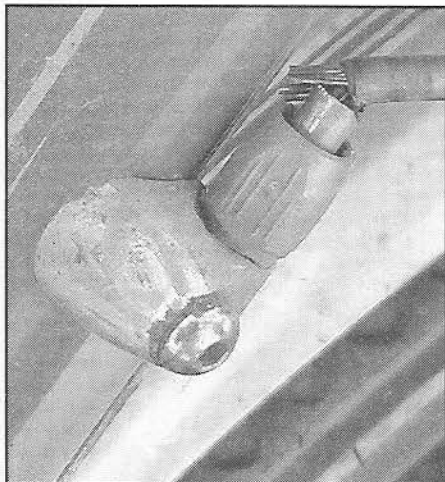
Rick lives nearby with his wife, Dawn and two young children, Ricky and Adriana. He works hard and lots and does great work.

Joe Bell on Rick, and Vice Versa

Joe Bell is widely considered the best painter in the country. He is the most expensive, too, and he paints all Rivendell and Richard Sachs frames, and a handful of other high-enders, in addition to restorations. At a trade show last year, Joe saw a Rick-painted Glorius and turned to me and said, "Well, you don't need me anymore."

I recently asked Rick to compare his skills to Joe Bell's, and he said, "I'm about seventy percent as good." JB has already disputed that, and nobody here has the eye to make that distinction, but we find it interesting that two bike painters, both at the top of their craft, would both be so humble and complementary of the other. They've spoken on the phone, but never actually met face-to-face.

Here's an interesting close-up you ought not overreact to, but beware of anyway. I didn't crimp the cable end cap onto the shifter housing. I figure, why bother? What'll happen if I don't? And nothing ever did happen, until recently, when I noticed this on my oft-ridden Saluki. I guess the cable somehow came out of the cap and never made it back in. Aha: But my friction shifting still works. I will, more than likely, crimp the cap next time.



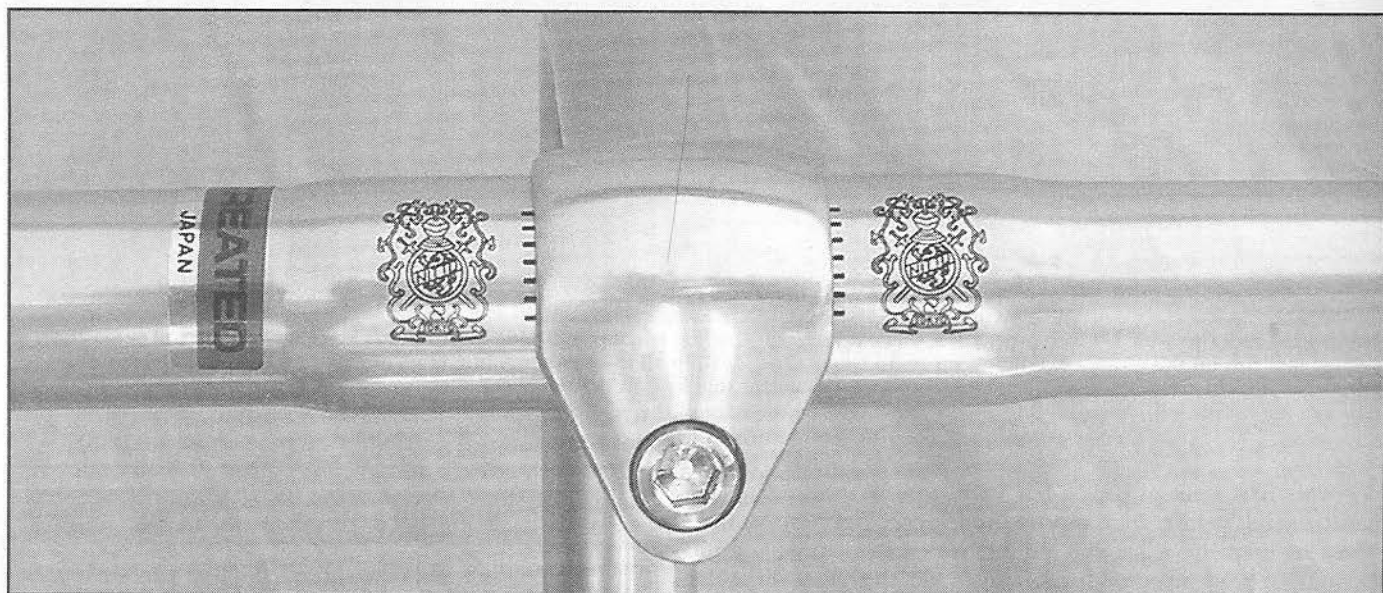
But keep in mind that those aren't broken cables you see there. They're just the exposed ends of the spiral-wound housing that's come out of the cap. The shifter cable itself is likely undamaged. If in fact it is damaged and breaks, my RapidRise rear derailleur will shift to the big cog.



Bar-end shifter housing and a particular handlebar bag set-up pushed the housing onto the caliper arm. Several cross-country crossings and dozens of brevets later, the rider noticed the wear. There's no moral to this story or lesson to be learned; none that needs pointing out, anyway. It's just an isolated, freaky thing. No need to fear bar-end shifters from now on. Time to replace the brake and keep an eye on the set-up, though.

Oye, amigos y amigas—keep an ojo on cosas, ok?

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The new Soba-bar. Like a superlight Noodle bar

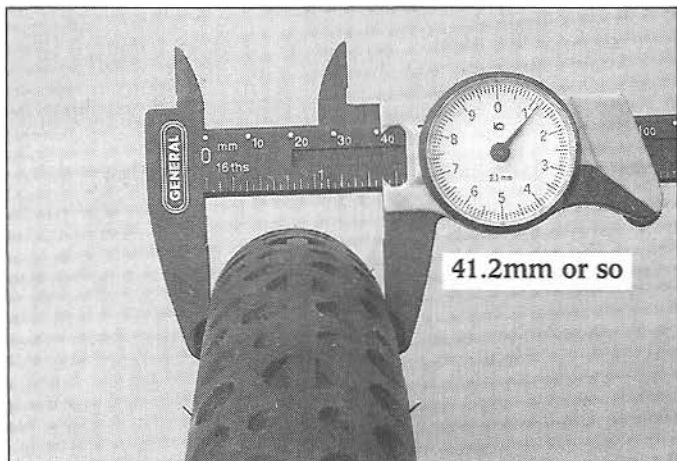
Nitto already makes some superlight handlebars, so we asked them to make a superlight Noodle bar, and this is it, and we call it the Sobabar, pronounced either *So Babar*, like the famous pachyderm, or *Soba Bar*, like the equally famous Japanese eateries. The Sobabar is about 2.5 ounces lighter per pair than the normal Noodle bar, and gets that way by means of a bulged center, instead of a sleeve; and thinner tubing. Nitto, always conservative in safety areas, refuses to make these any wider than a 46, so we carry the 41, 44, and 46. The finish is beautiful, and the crest, while not engraved, is highly visible and nicely detailed. We're sure this is the strongest sub-300g handlebar made.

There isn't any other handlebar made that stacks up nicely next to a Nitto. Nitto's curves are more beautiful, its testing is more rigorous, its pass/fail standards are higher, and other bar makers figure the bar gets taped over anyway, so why hassle with a nice finish? A Nitto bar is almost a shame to put tape on. If you must, and most of us must, at least do a bang-up job of it!

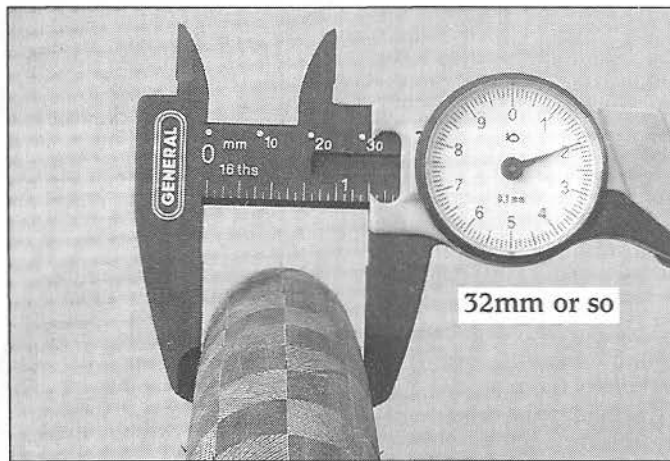
\$70, all sizes. That's \$18 more than the heat-treated Noodle bars:

41cm 16-168 44cm 16-169 46cm 16-170

Two New 650B Tires: Fatty Rumpkin & Maxy Fasty



This is about the fattest tire you can reasonably use with the new Silver sidepull. It's smooth on roads, fat enough for bumps.



At 32mm wide and only 295g in a kevlar bead, it's hard to beat the Maxy Fasty as a fast road tire.

Fatty Rumpkin: 584 x 41

Bead seat diameter: 584mm

Street size: 650B x 41

Inflation range: 30 to 65psi

Diameter: 686mm (same as Ruffy Tuffy)

Weight in grams: 390/folding; 445g/if wire bead

Casing material: nylon

Bead: Kevlar/folding for sure. Wire bead probably also.

Kevlar belt?: Nope.

Why not?: Well, we wanted it to be light and puffy, and the tread in the non-cavity portion is thick enough to repel small glass and thorns, and anyway, we expect it to spend a lot of time in dirt, away from glass & nails.

Purpose: Enough volume for trail riding over bumps and ruts, but safe, smooth cornering on pavement.

In a nutshell: A light, puffy tire with a funny looking negative tread that works great for pavement and hard-packed to shallow-dirt fire trails, and bumps.

Riding impressions: It's smooth and corners well on pavement. Its strength is fire roads and trails with hard-pack or light duff on top. It sheds mud well. Ride it soft in the bumps—30 to 35psi. I/Grant have ridden it as low as 20psi, but don't you. It's good enough all-around to be an everyday tire.

Made by/in/for: Panaracer/Japan/Rivendell!

Our price: \$42

Where to buy: From us or any dealer who deals with QBP, and most do. It's possible that QBP will offer only the wire version.

Maxy Fasty: 584 x 32

Bead seat diameter: 584mm

Street size: 650B x 33.2

Inflation range: 55 to 75psi. It will safely hold a lot more than that, but it feels plenty hard at 75psi, and there's no way in heck you're going to gain anything by pumping it up to 100 or so. If you want to do that, you've got the wrong frame of mind for 650B wheels, maybe.

Diameter: 660mm

Weight in grams: 295/folding; 350g if wire bead

Casing material: nylon

Bead: Kevlar/folding yes. Wire probably also

Kevlar belt?: No.

Por que no?: Porque we already have its tougher sister, the Nifty Swiftly. If you want fast & super tough and aren't looking to minimize weight, get that one.

Purpose: The fastest, smoothest 650B road tire, and not too skinny. Enough volume for skilled & not too heavy riders on smoothish fire trails.

In a nutshell: A fast-light-smooth 650B road tire.

Riding impressions: A good, fast tire with enough volume to run soft, for more comfort. But you don't have to run it soft.

Made by/in/for: Panaracer/Japan/Rivendell!

Our Price: \$42

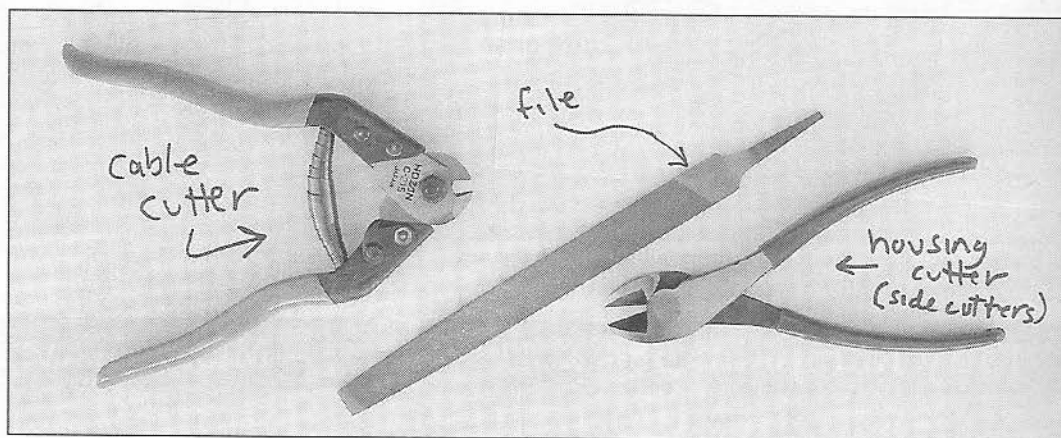
Where to buy: From us or any dealer who deals with QBP. QBP may offer it only in a wire version, not sure.

Preparing cables and housing

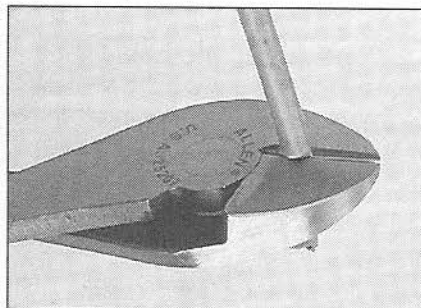
This is pretty basic stuff, but if you haven't done it before, this guide will help.

Tools. Cable cutters, for cutting cables and Shimano-style compressionless derailleur cable housing. Side cutters for cutting wound brake cable housing and crimping the cable caps. A file for de-burring the housing, as needed.

Always start with new cables, and have a supply of housing-and cable-caps.

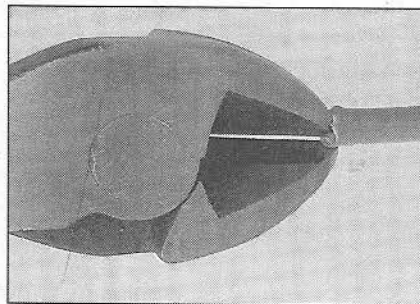


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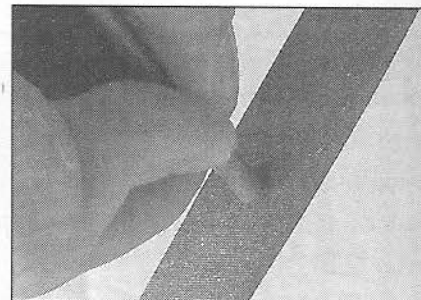
Cut the housing

Side cutters for spiral-wound brake housing, and real cable cutters for compressionless derailleur housing



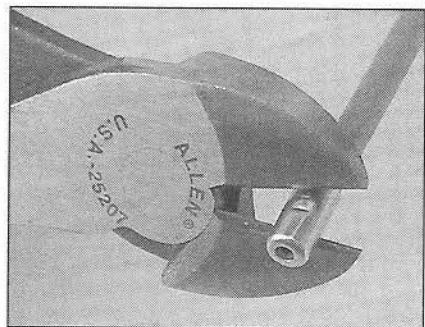
Snip the bur

Necessary only on wound brake housing, if there's a big bur. Use the tips of the side cutters. After 50, you get good.



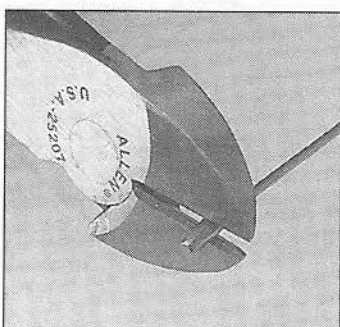
File the end

Use a fine file. Move the housing, keep the file still. An electric grinder works fine, too.



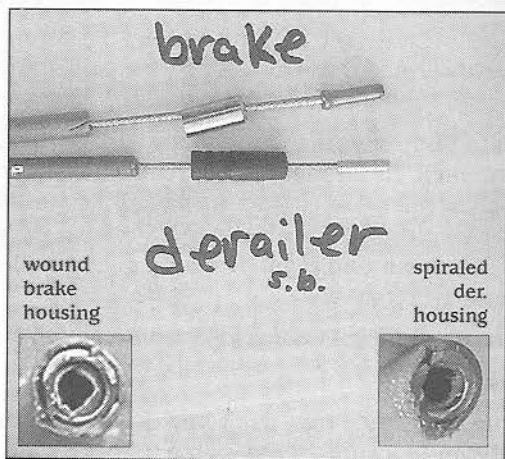
Cap the housing, crimp the cap

This keeps it on, and prevents kind of wrecking the housing and cable, and if you don't believe that, see p.12.



Cap the cable, crimp it on

You can use pliers, but a gentle hand with the side cutters works fine. If you cut the cap, you're too strong.



Brake, der cable & housing

Brake cable housing and brake cables are bigger, thicker, stronger. Because if your derailleur cable breaks, who cares? But if your brake cable breaks, that could be it for you.

Lactic Acid Is Not Muscles' Foe, It's Fuel

by Gina Kolata

This was published last May 16 (2006) in the New York Times, and it should be required reading for anybody who has ever felt lactic acid pain. It seems to wipe out all we've been told.—Grant

Everyone who has even thought about exercising has heard the warnings about lactic acid. It builds up in your muscles. It is what makes your muscles burn. Its buildup is what makes your muscles tire and give out.

Coaches and personal trainers tell athletes and exercisers that they have to learn to work out at just below their "lactic threshold," that point of diminishing returns when lactic acid starts to accumulate. Some athletes even have blood tests to find their personal lactic thresholds.

But that, it turns out, is all wrong. Lactic acid is actually a fuel, not a caustic waste product. Muscles make it deliberately, producing it from glucose, and they burn it to obtain energy. The reason trained athletes can perform so hard and so long is because their intense training causes their muscles to adapt so they more readily and efficiently absorb lactic acid.

The notion that lactic acid was bad took hold more than a century ago, said George A. Brooks, a professor in the department of integrative biology at the University of California, Berkeley. It stuck because it seemed to make so much sense.

"It's one of the classic mistakes in the history of science," Dr. Brooks said.

Its origins lie in a study by a Nobel laureate, Otto Meyerhof, who in the early years of the 20th century cut a frog in half and put its bottom half in a jar. The frog's muscles had no circulation — no source of oxygen or energy.

Dr. Myerhoff gave the frog's leg electric shocks to make the muscles contract, but after a few twitches, the muscles stopped moving. Then, when Dr. Myerhoff examined the muscles, he discovered that they were bathed in lactic acid.

A theory was born. Lack of oxygen to muscles leads to lactic acid, leads to fatigue.

Athletes were told that they should spend most of their effort exercising aerobically, using glucose as a fuel. If they tried to spend too much time exercising harder, in the anaerobic zone, they were told, they would pay a price, that lactic acid would accumulate in the muscles, forcing them to stop.

Few scientists questioned this view, Dr. Brooks said. But, he said, he became interested in it in the 1960's, when he was running track at Queens College and his coach told him that his performance was limited by a buildup of lactic acid.

When he graduated and began working on a Ph.D. in exercise physiology, he decided to study the lactic acid hypothesis for his dissertation.

"I gave rats radioactive lactic acid, and I found that they burned it faster than anything else I could give them," Dr. Brooks said.

It looked as if lactic acid was there for a reason. It was a source of energy.

Dr. Brooks said he published the finding in the late 70's. Other researchers challenged him at meetings and in print.

"I had huge fights, I had terrible trouble getting my grants funded, I had my papers rejected," Dr. Brooks recalled. But he soldiered on, conducting more elaborate studies with rats and, years later, moving on to humans. Every time, with every study, his results were consistent with his radical idea.

Eventually, other researchers confirmed the work. And gradually, the thinking among exercise physiologists began to change.

"The evidence has continued to mount," said L. Bruce Gladden, a professor of health and human performance at Auburn University. "It became clear that it is not so simple as to say, Lactic acid is a bad thing and it causes fatigue."

As for the idea that lactic acid causes muscle soreness, Dr. Gladden said, that never made sense.

"Lactic acid will be gone from your muscles within an hour of exercise," he said. "You get sore one to three days later. The time frame is not consistent, and the mechanisms have not been found."

The understanding now is that muscle cells convert glucose or glycogen to lactic acid. The lactic acid is taken up and used as a fuel by mitochondria, the energy factories in muscle cells.

Mitochondria even have a special transporter protein to move the substance into them, Dr. Brooks found. Intense training makes a difference, he said, because it can make double the mitochondrial mass.

It is clear that the old lactic acid theory cannot explain what is happening to muscles, Dr. Brooks and others said.

Yet, Dr. Brooks said, even though coaches often believed in the myth of the lactic acid threshold, they ended up training athletes in the best way possible to increase their mitochondria.

"Coaches have understood things the scientists didn't," he said.

Through trial and error, coaches learned that athletic performance improved when athletes worked on endurance, running longer and longer distances, for example.

That, it turns out, increased the mass of their muscle mitochondria, letting them burn more lactic acid and allowing the muscles to work harder and longer.

Just before a race, coaches often tell athletes to train very hard in brief spurts.

That extra stress increases the mitochondria mass even more, Dr. Brooks said, and is the reason for improved performance.

And the scientists?

They took much longer to figure it out.

"They said, 'You're anaerobic, you need more oxygen,'" Dr. Brooks said. "The scientists were stuck in 1920."

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Tire & Tread Design Facts Theories Opinions!

1. When a tire loses traction, it's the rider's fault.

Modern rubber grips dry hard surfaces, like roads, remarkably well. Barring loose gravel, leaves, and dirt, you will not slip at even a 45-degree lean, and what are you leaning that much for, anyway?

2. The road bites the tire, not the other way around.

Rubber is softer than pavement, so tire tread, no matter how "aggressive" it may look, can never penetrate pavement. The most surface contact you have between tire and pavement, is on a slick tire. If there is tread, there are gaps of air that the road can't bite.

3. Since rubber knobs can't bite into pavement, and since they DO bend when loaded (this could cause you to lose traction), knobs don't make sense for tires ridden on paved roads.

All true, but if you also ride the same tires in dirt, it may be fine to sacrifice on pavement to win on dirt.

4. Bicycle tires are too skinny to hydroplane.

Jobst Brandt says this, and I believe it. I think Avocet did a bunch of testing years ago on this subject,

5. Directional bicycle tires are a hoax. Maybe.

They're "theory-designed" tires that assume huge things that might never happen, and can't be proved. Plus, it's hard to design and conduct tests to tell what happens between the tread and the tire.

6. Round tires corner more consistently and predictably than do less-round tires.

7. When the road is wet and slimy, or there are wet dead leaves on it, or a bit of oil or paint or anything else slippery, or a layer of sand or anything else unconnected, all bets are off, don't blame the tire, just slow down and keep the bike upright.

Over the years there have been many "rain tires" in various categories (racing, commuting, city riding and so on), and they generally have fine knobs and lots of channels, presumably for the rain to use to drain away from the tread, to prevent hydroplaning. But if tires don't hydroplane, all the gaps can possibly do is collect water. I actually don't have a stance on the hydroplaning issue. I tend to think they don't. I'm of the when in doubt, side with Jobst (who is rarely in doubt) school.

8. Bike tire rubber has improved tons o'er the years.

I and everybody else who rode Specialized Touring II clinchers in the early '80s wore them to the casing in less than 1000 miles. Now a Rol-y Poly, with less actual rubber on it, lasts two and a half times as long, and grips better to boot. Tire makers brag about their own rubber compounds, but all tires are so much better now than tires were then.

9. Volume trumps most things

Air is cheap, and if you have enough of it you can ride lower tire pressures, for more traction and a cushy ride. A large-ish softish tire is a good thing, and it's not the slow slug the conventional wisdom'll have you believe.

10. Air pressure, not the casing, determines how "supple" a tire is.

If you pump 120psi into any tire, it's going to be hard, and "hard" and "supple" are opposites. Tubular tires (like most road racers prefer, or at least used to) are famous for their supple ride, and that's usually attributed to the fine thread in the light casing. But tubulars can be ridden softer than clinchers can, without risking pinch flats. So, I suspect their reputation for the soft-supple ride came out of riders taking advantage of the fact that they don't get pinch flats, and riding them softer in the first place.

By the same token-type thing, if you ride a tire with a stiff casing, and you pump it up soft, you'll get a soft & supple ride. I bet that 60 psi in a stiff casing feels like 80 psi in a supple one. Maybe it's 65:75. Anyway, the concept is simple, and you can make up your own theories/have your own hunches.

11. Kevlar bead vs Wire bead:

It's a difference of 60g, or a hair over 2 ounces. If you're as lean and fit as you can be already, it may be worth it. If not, no big deal.

12. In gloopy mud, a skinnier tire works better.

Not too skinny, but skinny enough--like, a 32mm tire, as opposed to a 40mm tire. The skinny sinks more, sometimes to the less gloopy surface beneath the slop. The slop forms a channel around the tire, which can prevent it from slipping side-to-side. The fatter tire, floating higher, will slip.

13. A bigger softer tire rolls over rocks and gets out of ruts better.

It deforms and absorbs the bump or wall of the rut at you hit it at an angle. But make it soft, so it behaves like Don (not Doc) Martin shoes. If you have a skinnier tire you can still roll over a rock that you hit pretty much straight on, but once the angle gets in there, the only way over it short of hopping the front wheel (and then the back one after that) is with a big softy. The bigger and softer the better, but tires are always about compromises, and for most skilled riders using roadish bikes on trails, 35mm to 40mm is big enough. We often ride tires well below the minimum limit, but would NEVER suggest you do the same. Seriously, no winking about it. But go as soft as the law allows.

Too cheap too good pedals

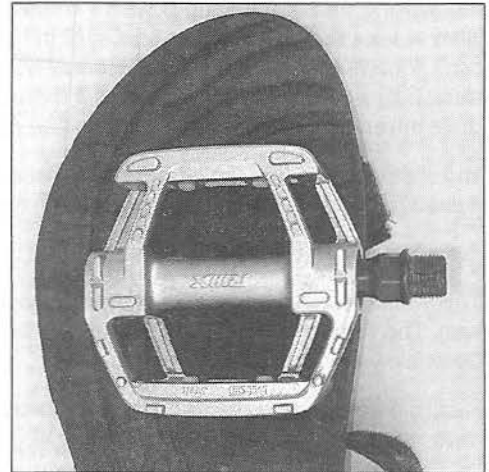
The \$20 MKS Sneaker pedal, which MKS markets as the RMX pedal for BMX riding, is so inexpensive that most people think it may be a good pedal for the money, but for that little money it can't be a good pedal actually...in fact...when all's said & done. But these pedals are terrific.

This is how we judge pedals, and how these MKS-ers stack up:

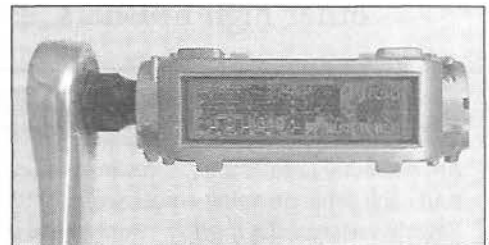
1. **Smoothness.** The MKS Sneaker pedals are smooth enough right out of the box, and get smoother with use.
2. **Weight.** At 13.6oz/385g per pair, they're right in there with any steel-spindled pedal that's not dinky. Old Campagnolo road pedals with steel cages weighed more than 400g, and nobody squawked about them.
3. **Width.** They're wide enough to support a fat foot or a wide soled shoe or sandal. Not so wide that they hit the ground unless you do something really foolish.
4. **Looks.** They won't get you a date with the prom queen, but when you're riding them, nobody can see them. Get beyond their looks. They're *pedals*.
5. **Durability.** The boron-steel spindles can take a beating. The cages can't loosen because they're integral with the body.
6. **Safety.** They have built-in & basically non-removable reflectors, so even if you're caught out at night with nothing else, at least the car-folks will be able to see your pedals bob up and down as you go.

It's normal, or at least common, to lust after expensive bike parts. Lots of times beauty & strength & relatively light weight and reliability are costly. With certain things, and I think pedals fall into this category, it's easy to chase weight year after year, as pedals get smaller, titanium replaces steel, carbon replaces aluminum and titanium, and the next thing you know you've got your 200g pedals. Then you don chunky shoes and gain it all back. If you're concerned about the weight rotating around with your foot, better to start with these and ride in Texas or sneakers. That's a light combo, right there.

Every now and then there's a really good something at a really cheap price, and these pedals are one of those. My regular riding buddy Steve rides nothing but these pedals. I have them on two bikes, myself. We sell other pedals too, and I like to spread myself around, but these are as good as any, and cheaper than all others.

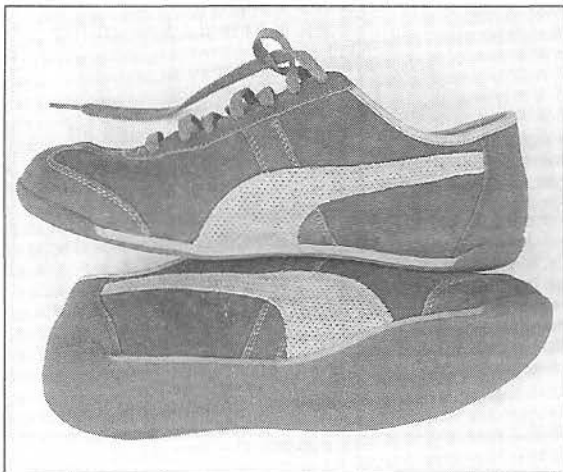


Lots of surface area and some protruding nubbins assure comfort and gripion.



The integral reflectors might save your life.

Shotputtin' shoes taking o'er the peloton



The Puma (brand) Kugel (model) shoe debuted in 1966 for shot putters such as Matt Thomas. Forty years later Puma is making the same style again, and as is so often the case, what's good for shot putters is good for cyclers, and I covet mine. *See how thin the sole is*—no need to raise your saddle to account for a thick sole, and in doing so effectively lower your handlebar, if you follow that. *See how it doesn't flare*—so if you ride in toe clips, easy in-&-out. *Feel how light!!* (just 21.4oz per pair, compared to a wispy 18.4oz for Texas of the same size, and 32oz for typical \$200 plastic cycling shoes. *Feel the grippy rubbery bottoms*—nice to have gripion!

There are lots of "casual" sneakers with sporty looks and the aforementioned details that makem good for pedaling, but when you throw in the shot putting heritage, it all comes down to the Kugel, pal. If you can't find them locally, see Puma.com. They come in a few different colors and tops, all with the same shotputtin' sole. They're about \$60, proof that they aren't made by Klaus anymore.

E-less Raven: Verse 2 results & verse 3 challenge

IN THE RR37 ISSUE WE CHALLENGED YOU TO REWRITE the second verse of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven* without using the letter e, thus reviving a challenge we introduced ten years ago, in RR6. We're going to keep doing this, because I/Grant am a big fan of the poem, of e-less writing, and of filling up pages in *The Reader*. This won't go on forever, but I beg your tolerance if you find it annoying, and consider at least that there's other bike stuff in here, and this publication is supposed to be 32 to 40 pages only, so—trees aside, you can't squawk too much. This contest may not be in every issue, but over the years it'll come and go and come again until the whole thing is finished. If you can do verses 3 through the end without e's, and do a fine job of it, we can wrap it up sooner. It is OK to use the e in Lenore's name, since it wouldn't be right to rename her.

You should really read the whole poem, because entries will be judged on tone as well, and you can't get that right unless you have a good feel for the real thing. If you don't have it in a book, no doubt you can find it online. Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven*.

Even one e DQ's you. Entries by mail or fax by Sept. 25 to \RBW/NOE • Box 5289 • Walnut Creek, CA 94596

This will not be judged by a Rivendell employee, so you can't get mad at us if you think your entry was better than the one that won. The winner and top three entries will be published in the next issue. Other than Lenore," any e's disqualifies you. Even one. Don't blow it with a "the."

Finally, don't please write us off as a company or bike maker if this isn't your cup of tea. It's not that big a deal, it doesn't distract us from more important issues, it's not why we struggle to the extent we do...it's just a little fun distraction.

Here's the second verse of *The Raven* as written without an e by the winner and three other high finishers, as selected by our judge, who wasn't anybody here.

The Real Second Verse

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books, surcease of sorrow,—sorrow for the lost Lenore
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore
Nameless here forevermore. —Edgar Allen Poe

We got more than 80 entries, and they were all good. I'm glad I handed off the judging to somebody else. My favorite phase in any was Sarah M's description of the "rare and radiant" Lenore as a "sylvan nymph, so foxy,"—no doubt the only time those words have been used together. —Grant

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Runner-ups...Runners-Up...Runners-Ups

Jim Edgar, California

Upon us looms a dank month
found, within its days no blooms
abound

Wood which burns now dying
down, gasping glows cast light to
floor.

"Pray for dawn," I quickly say,
"distract my thoughts that too
soon stray

Towards girl I lost that day!"—
how I miss that girl, L'nor

A singular saintly girl whom
halo-folk call "L'nor"

Anonymous now, all sorrows
soar.

Sally Shivanan, Maryland

'Twas the last month of our
orbit, oh a month so dark and
morbid.

Clumps of coals lay cooling,
dimming, dying on my dingy
floor.

Hurry up, I said, Tomorrow; stu-
pidly I'd sought a tour o'

Books to bring distraction—small
distraction from my lost Lenore.

From that girl so cool but hot
and known to all as Wild Lenore.

Plumb forgot—poor paramour.

Nicholas Rey, Oregon

Lucidly I bring to mind, a final
month, oh! Most unkind!

Old hob's still glowing ash I find,
has wrought its ghost upon my
floor.

Longing for a quick tomorrow,
vainly I had sought to borrow

From my books, to ward off sor-
row, sorrow for my lost amour

For a fair and radiant virgin
whom on high hosts dub Lenore

Always nought now, but dolour.

The Winner

Arlene Reid, Wisconsin

An, an imprint on my mind,
as I soon will January find.

As coals diminish slowly all,
and cast a shadow on my
wall.

I want tomorrow soon—
no—now, As through all
books I quickly plow

To find aid for my avid sor-
row, missing now Lenore's
tomorrow

Lost and glowing, drifting,
flowing Lady know as our
Lenore

Not known know in any
morr.

E-less Raven: Verse 3 challenge

Here's the third verse original. Use this form, writing your line under the original.
Fax it to (925) 933-7305 or mail it to RBW • NOE-V3 • Box 5289 • Walnut Creek, CA 94596

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain

Thrilled me,— filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart I stood repeating,

“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,—

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;

That it is, and nothing more. (—Edgar Allen Poe)

Name: _____ Member No. _____

Address/State/Zip: _____

B-b-but what's my motivation?

That is an excellent question. Verse Two's winner—Arlene Reid—won a \$250 Gift Certificate. The three runnersup-runnerrups-whatever each got \$100. That's how seriously we take these highbrow literary contests.

The seventy-six or so other entrants may or may not have received anything in the way of a gift certificate, but even without that, it's a good exercise.

Related reading:

Ella Minnow Pea, by Mark Dunn

Exercises in Style, by Raymond Queneau

DEADLINE REMINDER

September 25. By mail or fax only.

RBW/No-E • Box 5289 • Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Fax: (925) 933-7305

**Verse 2 with E's the only vowel
by E. Earl Weintraub**

Dejected me perfectly remembered, the preceded cheerless December

Ere every zestless depleted ember shed her specter by the deck.

Wretched me sensed keenly the expected next eve; excess self-esteem let me seek

Per the lettered best-sellers, remedy per deeply felt regret, deeply felt regret per the deleted Lenore

She. the peerless resplendent wench, she the messengers per the next sphere termed Lenore

Bereft her reference ever hence (when hell freezes everywhere!)

Note to E. Earl: I expect an equally good verse three, and while you're at it, you might as well tackle the first verse, too. If you do the whole poem like that, we'll give you something good. G



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Yes, it has that lean & clean look we all like, but this is one bike you'll be pushing up most hills. Still, it's a fun bike to ride or push, and what's wrong with a little variety in your rides, anyway?

The White Industries ENO Hub

Lets you single-speed a bike with vertical dropouts without using a chain tensioner

Most of the innovations the industry comes up with, you can have them, I don't care, what's the point and the big deal? But this ENO hub is different, being that the point is clear and it is a huge deal if you have a bike with vertical dropouts that you want to convert to a derailerless bike.

I wouldn't necessarily do that to an Atlantis, because an Atlantis with the right gears is the most wonderful, versatile bike you can ride, and stripping off the derailleurs and cassette pretty much castrates it. But we have enough of them around here to do it to one, and it ends up being a really neat bike.

White Industries is Doug White and crew, in Sebastopol, California. Doug is a crackerjack innovator, and he's leaving lots of clever things in his wake. This hub came about from an idea that one of Doug's customers—a guy named Eric, who works or worked at a bicycle dealer in Mount Kisko, New York—had. He wanted a way to ride a fixed gear on a road bike with vertical dropouts, without having to use a chain tensioner. He spake for zillions, on that one.

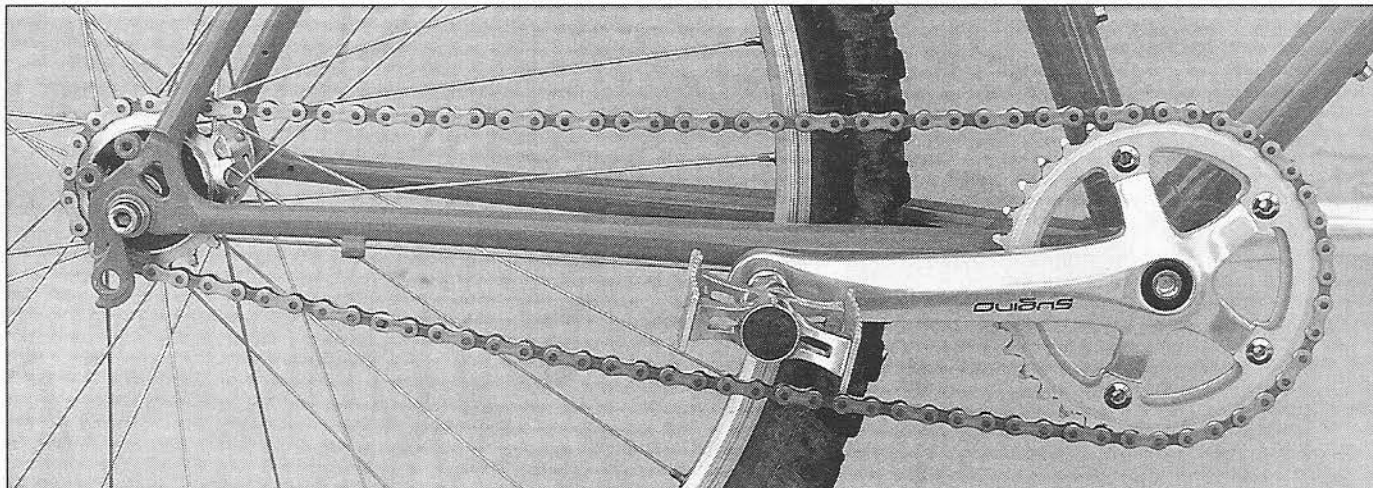
Doug went to work on a design, and came up with this

one, and with only a few refinements, has been making it since about late 2002. The date doesn't matter, actually, but the hub is smart and good.

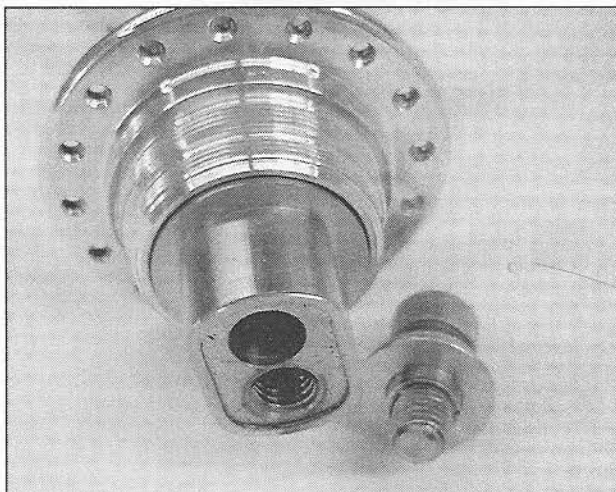
Horizontal dropouts, with slots that are more or less horizontal (but rarely actually horizontal), make tensioning the chain easy. You make the chain close to the right length, then slide the rear wheel hub forward or back in the dropout until there's no chain slack.

But most bikes come with vertical dropouts, which don't allow the back-and-forth sliding. There are separate chain tensioners out there, but you have to clamp them onto the chainstay, and there goes The Look You're After.

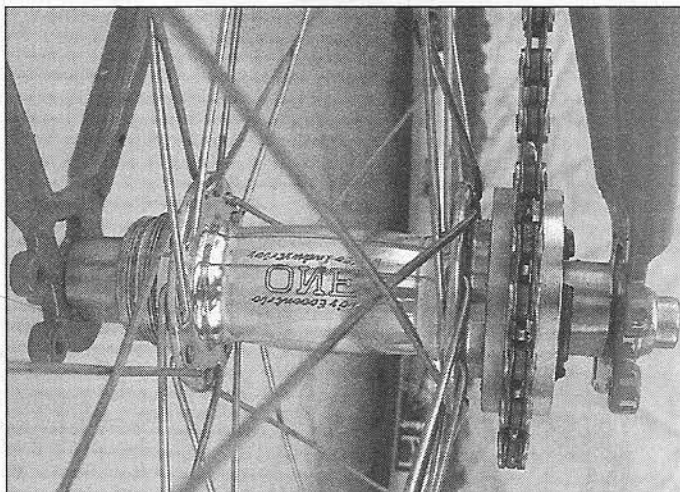
The ENO hub solves the problem by having a built-in eccentric. You just put the wheel into the frame like it's any other wheel in the world, and—well, it's harder to describe than it is to do, but basically, the axle is off-center, so it is free to move about fore-and-after just enough to tension the chain. Then you secure the hub with the axle bolts, and you're gone!



This is a delightful rig. Yes, hard up the hills, but you'll get stronger and skinnier that way. The bike sheds about two and a half pounds because of no derailleurs, shorter chain, and no 9-cog cassette. It's not the answer to everything, but if you want a single-speed experience and you have vertical dropouts, pop for an ENO hub and make your life easy.



The centered axle with the off-centered mount (the lower of the two holes above) allows the hub to move fore and aft.



The ENO model is ONE in mirror image. Note the double-threadings, so you can put a cog on both sides.

Price, availability

They're \$160 most places. Actually, most places sell them for \$159.95, but we need the extra nickel to continue our "even dollar" pricing. We stock two models, with these part numbers:

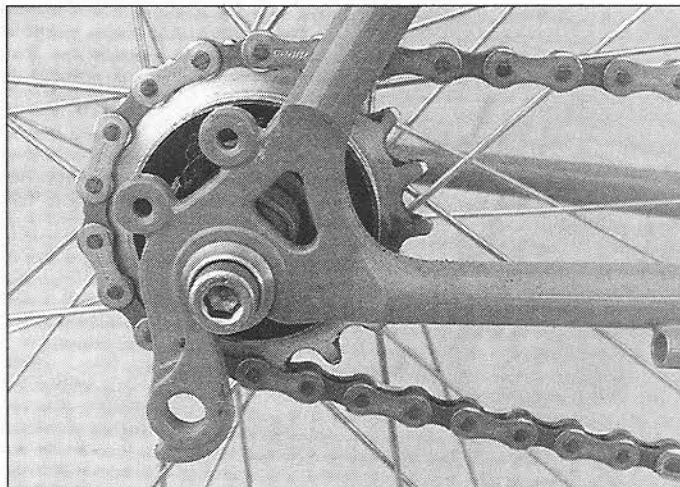
32-Holes x 130mm

Fits most road bikes: #18-231

32-Holes x 135mm

Fits most mtn/touring bikes: #18-231

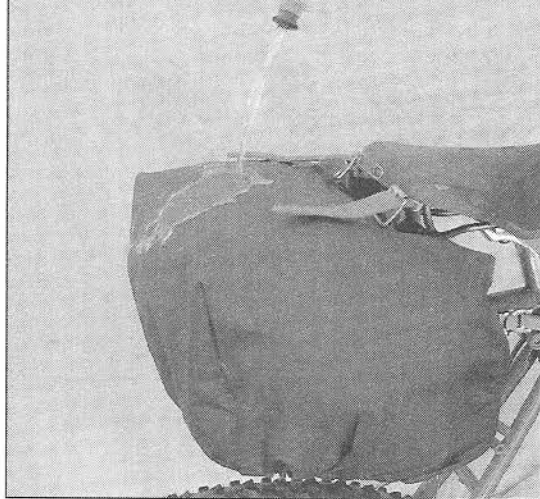
Also available other places...



Now riders of frames with vertical dropouts don't have to get bummed out when all the other neighborhood kids are converting to single-speeds. Until the ENO, this required a chain tensioner.

Deluge-proof bag covers for Nigel Smythe bags

Country 20-156, \$13



If you're going to be riding continuously in hard rain, the best way to keep your gear dry is with a bag cover.

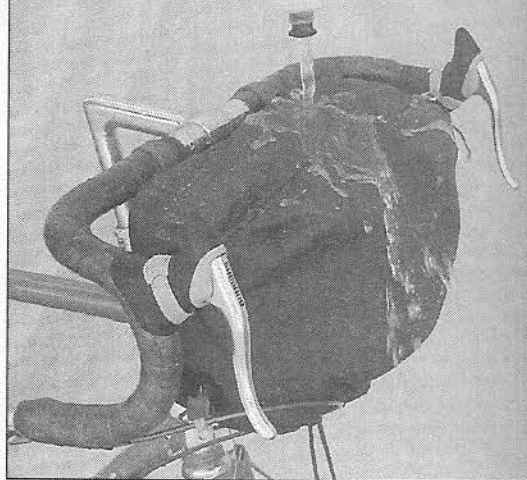
For drizzles and showers, don't bother. We're talking about floods and all-day rains when you're out in it. That's nobody's favorite kind of riding, but rain happens, and if there's no 'scaping it, these covers are a good idea.

Although they're designed specifically for the Nigel Smythe bags, some will work with other bags, as well. The Lil Loafer cover works with the similarly shaped Berthoud bag. The Seat Pouch cover works with a Banana Bag. The Bar Tube cover works with a Candy Bar bag, although it's a loose fit. You can put extra stuff inside the cover, still outside of the bag.

Some of these covers were easy to make and there's not a whole lot to them, but others (the more expensive ones) were harder. The goal was to protect the bag first, and allow access without removing the cover if it could be done without getting ridiculous. The Loafer covers, you just have to remove. No biggie. The Multipocket and Bar Tubecovers velcro slots for the main compartments, but you lose access to the rear pockets on the Multipocket. Again, no squawking allowed, because the purpose is to keep a long hard rain off, and they'll all do that. All the covers are easy to use once they're on, and most are easy to put on; but the Seat Pouch cover is a little weird in that regard. You'll see, and you'll figure it out.

Over time we'll add covers for other bags, but for now, just the Nigels.

Multipocket 20-159, \$12



Lil Loafer 20-158, \$10



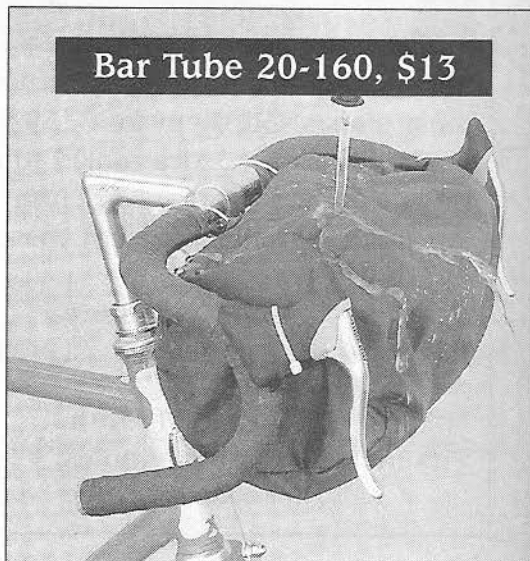
Big Loafer 20-157, \$10



Seat pouch 20-155, \$10



Bar Tube 20-160, \$13



The last batch of mixtes with the ridiculously fancy and nearly unpaintable lugs is in, unpainted. Sizes 50, 52, 56, and 58. It takes about three months to get one painted, and about two weeks to get it assembled here into a complete and rideable bike. The next group of mixtes will be made with simpler lugs that are still fancy by any standard, just easier to paint. Don't go thinking that if you miss out on one of the super-fancies you're getting any less of a bike, because it's not so. We have about 12 to 15 each of the others (super fancies) available, as of right now.

The next batch of Atlantis frames will arrive in mid-to-late August, about the same time as the final batch of Quickbeam bikes with the now-discontinued Suzue rear hub. We'll continue to get Quickbeams, but it's hard to find a perfect hub for it.

Remember the 603mm tire? Maybe not. It doesn't actually exist, but a couple of issues ago I/Grant wrote about how I thought a tire exactly halfway between a 700c and a 650B would solve a lot of problems for people who have tight-clearance 700c frames. Lots of you har-rumphed, some pooh-poohed, and about 20 of you sent in money contributing to a fund for the tire mold fund (\$17K), in exchange for which you received store credit. Well, to the chagrin of ye naysayers, we've not given up on that, and now have about \$4,000 in the 603 fund. Of course, we can redirect it if and when common sense prevails, but it's not prevailing yet. The idea behind this new size: Let's say you have a road bike that doesn't fit even a 700c (622mm) x 32. A 603 tire would let you fit a 603x32, probably with a fender too, and all you'd have to do is change the brakes. If you have short reach now, you go to standard. If you have standard reach now, you go to the Silver sidepulls. If you have a Rambouillet or a Romulus or any of our road bikes that take standard reach brakes, you go to the Silver, and with a 603 tire/wheel in there, you have clearance for a 37mm tire and a fender. It is Not a Dumb Thing. new wheels and tires would add another \$300 or so, but it would be like having a new bike.

I wonder whether any other rim maker will make 650B/584 rims, and I wonder the same about tires, too. It would be good if they did. I have heard through the grapevine that the Confreiredes 650B, the 650B support group in France, is nervous about the success and now relatively widespread availability of the Panaracer tires and the Velocity rims; its fear being that if they cut into sales of the French-made 650B tires (the skinny Michelin Megamium) and the Rigida Sphinx rim, then the French companies might not be willing to make another batch. If that's the case, I say tough and so be it, and see you later—it's not all about Frenchiness, it's about the rims and tires and availability for everybody. The 650B Cause, if it's a Cause, needs more models, and is getting them, so...don't pretend to want support and then squawk when the good stuff happens. I may be reading more into it than is there. I'll look into this more and maybe report again later, if there's anything to report.

Starting now the Saluki will be painted in Japan, a butterscotch-like color. It'll look good and improve delivery immensely, and even prevent a price increase. We have some unpainted ones left, and you can pay a bit more and choose your own color. The Glorius and Wilbury are artificially low-priced. We can't afford to do that on any others. That's the story there.

The Derby tweed sweaters etc will be back late next Fall. The owner of the fallen factory that made them is resurfacing with a tinier company still, and will make another batch of them for us. These are the favorite wooly garment for normal wear of all who have them, but they're not for everybody. They have a certain look

that either works for you or doesn't.

Although we say little about it, we've been working on a line of SILVER parts. The idea isn't to just get the name out there and compete with Ritchey etc. We have no plans for that, and it doesn't appeal, anyway. The idea behind SILVER is to make neat things that nobody else will make because they think there's no market. There are some neat things in the SILVER oven, but it's premature to talk about the particulars right now. In six months we should have at least two or three things.

We are working on another frame or bike or two, and I hope nobody thinks we're doing it just to do it. Every bike has a specific reason for it, and it's never just to add another to the mix. We won't be splitting hairs too fine, but there are a few more slots to fill, and we're going to fill them with lugged steel bikes. A mountain bike, maybe, but not one with all the latest technology. A good one, though.

Our website has been outdated for nearly a year, and it's a major headache and source of shame, embarrassment, and worry. It is being worked on, behind the scenes, with fancy promises and sky-high hopes that it'll be a rockemsockem site when it finally gets re-launched, and we're told that'll happen in August, so we think it'll happen in October. But maybe September. The slow part is designing it in such a way that anybody here can change a word or a sentence or a photo or a subsection on a whim or as needed, without having to go to a Specialty Web Person to do it, and wait a week for the comma to come out, or the "the" to get changed to "they", or "there" to "their." It will have a new gallery of photos, and some new sections that I think will be useful and good; and the online inventory will be updated twice a week. It's possible that we'll have somebody on staff who can help with it, but the thing is—going back to the plan and reason for it coming along so slowly—we want to be able to do it ourselves, without any knowledge of html or Dream Weaver or whatever.

I don't know about you, but one way I hate to waste time now and then is staring at DVDs on the racks at the rental store, not liking the idea of renting one I'm not going to like or have already seen. That happens about 75 percent of the time. I see other people there doing the same stare and worry, and I've often almost said, "Hey, how about you pick one out for me, and I'll pick one out for you?" But I don't want to be thought a weirdo. Anyway, here's a short list that may save you some time...if we like the same kinds of movies. I like good endings, and not too much strife, although I can handle the strife if the ending's good. And I like movies the whole family can watch without daddy getting nervous. Anyway:

1. Last Holiday
2. Millions
3. Nanny McPhee
4. Spanglish
5. Man From Snowy River
6. The Fastest Indian (may be R)
7. Akeelah and the Bee (not on DVD yet)

On a related note, which still doesn't relate to bicycles, an old friend alerted me that Have Gun - Will Travel shows are available on DVD. They were way ahead of their time, and you don't have to be a lawman to likem. I hope you obey the law and all, but you don't have to be Western, is what I mean. That was a good show fifty years ago, and still is.

They don't make catalogues like this anymore

The 1972 and 1973 Chouinard Equipment catalogue offered good gear, good writing, made you think, and started an environmental movement.

In 1972—decades before flash, shock value, casual chic, private humor, the *Bebe* look, and envy-based marketing, there was the Chouinard catalogue, and it has never been equalled by any catalogue of anything before or since.

The cover had a Chinese watercolor on it, and the cover stock was as thick as two 5x5's. The inside was just as different.

Other catalogues of the day were color, but it was black and white. The pages were as thick and substantial. The products were often shown in use, so you couldn't see details, but you could vaguely see that the thing being described was the thing being shown. At the time and still, it struck me as a catalogue made by the people who were intimate with everything in it.

It was gear and clothing for climbers—crampons, hex-centrics, and ice axes, ropes, packs, and clothing. The selection was small, and most of it you couldn't get anywhere else.

24

Integrated into the catalogue was a guide to using the gear. If you were a climber in the early '70s, you could get all the book-learning you needed from Royal Robbins's two tiny booklets, *Basic Rockcraft* and *Advanced Rockcraft*, and this Chouinard catalogue. Beyond that, you had to climb.

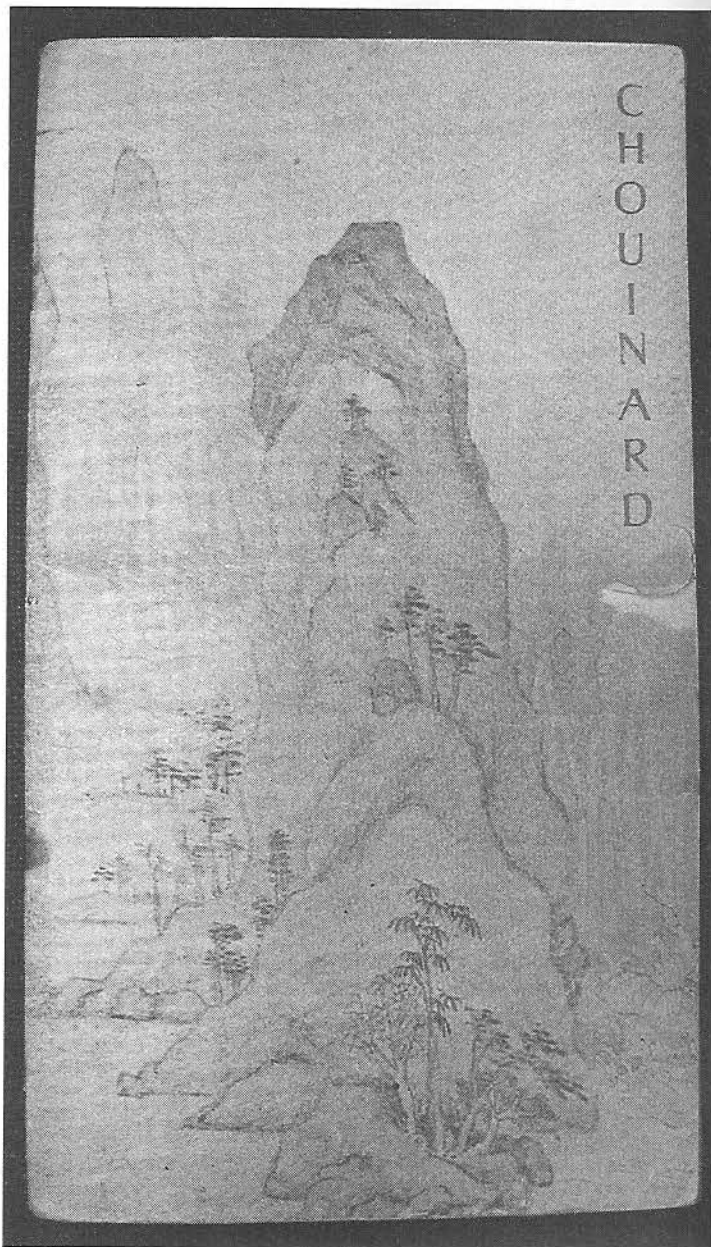
Along with its product descriptions and instruction, it brazenly scolded and wagged fingers at rock climbers for using gear and techniques that damaged rocks. This was a big deal because it was an ethical argument, and people get all mad at anybody who suggests they're doing something unethical. They say who are YOU to tell ME? Plus, rock climbers at the time were a small, independent-minded cluster of outdoor-enjoyers, who, already by their nature wouldn't take kindly to anybody telling them how to act.

But the Chouinard catalogue didn't just admonish; it introduced them to other gear and methods that didn't hurt the rock. Its effect was immediate and dramatic. You read that catalogue and cleaned up your style. You encouraged others to, too. That catalogue made you think differently.

The message wasn't presented in a heavy-handed way. It scolded you gently and made you think. I can't write like that. My writing tends to be too direct, and comes off harshly, like getting hit between the eyes with a marshmallow. It doesn't hurt, but it's still offensive.

The Chouinard catalogue delivered a more dangerous message in such a clear and soft way that it didn't have those repercussions. It was just accepted.

Other catalogues of the day were pretty good, especially by today's standards. I like the Sierra Designs catalogues from the early '70s, and the Rivendell Mountain Works catalogues of the mid-'70s were really good. A lot of our approach to bike gear parallels Rivendell Mountain Works' approach to mountain equipment, and its catalogue, written by owner Larry Horton (who now practices Chinese medicine in New Mexico)



was better than any of ours. But the Chouinard catalogue still stands out, because it changed so much.

If you want to read the whole thing, here's how:

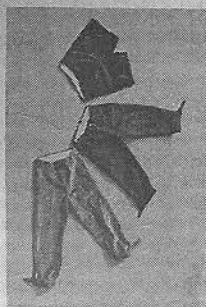
http://climbaz.com/chouinard72/ch_cover.html

You don't have to be a climber to appreciate it, but if you are a climber and you haven't read that...well, that's like being a minister, preacher, priest, or pope without having read the Bible. Can I say that? I think so, but you never know.



cord knickers

Knickers used to be baggy, and used to serve their intended purpose of covering the legs yet allowing maximum freedom of movement. But the fashion freak skiers got hold of the idea and they have since become high water pants - useful only for bar hopping. Here's a man's knicker, super-baggy and constructed of the toughest corduroy available, with a double seat and knees and wide belt loops spaced to allow hammer holsters. They come in two generous lengths so that you can let them down to the feet for those cold bivouacs. Tan.



wool knickers

These are the same design as the corduroy but don't have double knees. The fabric is a heavy Scottish wool and is a recycled wool (from old Harris Tweed game keeper's coats?) The material is extremely tough, durable, and water repellent. It will not shrink and is machine washable. Made in Scotland. Heather.

cord shorts

Free climbing (it shorts on warm sunny rock is the ultimate in freedom of movement and these Chouinard shorts are made specifically to allow this freedom. They aren't just barmudas with a fashionable collegiate cut. These are climbing shorts. The legs are short and cut wide and they have two large hip pockets that extend clear across the rear, thus creating a double seat. The material is the same rough corduroy as the knickers and the pockets are a nylon mesh that is both tough and provides ventilation. Tan.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ANCHORED

Runners around trees share with pitons the quality of being non-directional anchors: pull in them any direction and you get hold. Other runners and most nuts are more particular which way they are pulled - they are directional. A leader anticipating the specific direction he might be leading it, places his natural protection with that direction well in mind. But belay anchors are not so simple, and it is with these anchors that the natural climber must make the greatest effort and analysis. A belayer might be pulled down in a fourth class fall, up in a fifth class one, away from the rock or in a sequence of directions if the leader and he are unlucky. So the belayer must have a non-directional anchor, and in the absence of a handy tree or a permanent natural chockstone, he must construct it from directional tools.

Ideally he will be sitting on a ledge with a converging crack at the back of it that can be chocked for a pull up or out. In this case a downward pull on the belayer would be felt as an outward one on the nut. Another method is to place a nut in a horizontal crack well to the side of the belayer position, especially to the side away from a diagonal pitch, such that no force would come straight up or down on it without pulling sideways too.

Mostly the answer to a homiproof belay will be several anchors set in opposition to each other so the resultant will hold a pull from any direction. The simplest example would be anchoring to a single vertical crack by placing one nut in the normal position for a downward pull and another somewhere below it upside down for an upward pull. The sling of the upper nut is run through the sling of the lower then clipped to the belay so a downward force is held directly on the upper nut, while an outward or upward force will

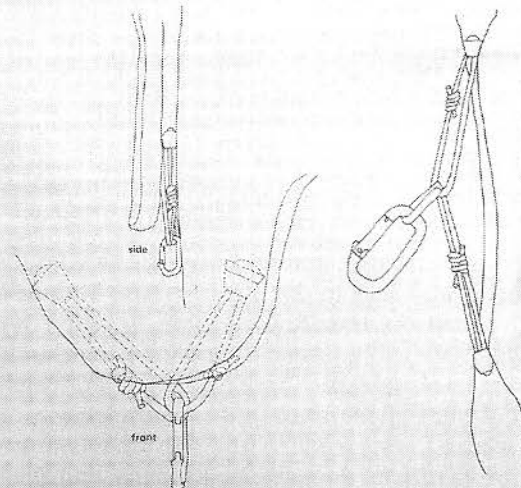


Figure 6

Figure 7

Two excerpts from the 1972 Chouinard Equipment catalogue

The 1960s marked an awakening in American climbing characterized by a vast increase in climbing activity, closely paralleled by a corresponding improvement in technique and equipment. Significant climbing advances have resulted. On the other hand, this combination is producing a serious problem—deterioration of the climbing environment. The deterioration is twofold, involving the physical aspect of the mountains and the moral integrity of climbers.

No longer can we assume the earth's resources are limitless; that there are ranges of unclimbed peaks extending endlessly beyond the horizon. Mountains are finite, and despite their massive appearance, they are fragile. Although alpine tundra, meadows, trees, lakes and streams are all endangered, our primary concern is with deterioration of the rock itself. Granite is delicate and soft — much softer than the alloy steel pitons being hammered into it. On popular routes in Yosemite and elsewhere the cracks are degenerating into series of piton holes. Flacks and slabs are being pried loose and broken off as a result of repeated placement and removal of hard pitons... Equally serious is a moral deterioration. Armed with ever more advanced

gadgetry and techniques the style of technical climbing is gradually becoming so degraded that elements vital to the climbing experience — adventure and appreciation of the mountain environment itself — are being submerged...

Even now existing techniques and technology are so powerful that almost any climb imaginable can be realized, and the fear of the unknown reduced to rote exercise.

...it is the style of the climb, not attainment of the summit, which is the measure of personal success. Traditionally stated, each of us must consider whether the end is more important than the means. Given the vital importance of style, we suggest that the keynote is simplicity. The fewer gadgets between the climber and the climb, the greater is the chance to attain the desired communication with oneself — and nature...

As we enter this new era of mountaineering, re-examine your motives for climbing. Employ restraint and good judgement in the use of Chouinard equipment. Remember the rock, the other climber — climb clean.

— Yvon Chouinard & Tom Frost

Using pitons on climbs like "The Nutcracker" is degrading to the climb, it's originator, and the climber. Robbins must have been thinking of that climb when he wrote, "Better that we raise our skill than lower the climb." Pitons have been a great equalizer in American climbing. By liberally using them it was possible to get in over ones head, and by more liberally using them, to get out again. But every climb is not for every climber; the ultimate climbs are not democratic. The fortunate climbs protect themselves by being unprotectable and remain a challenge that can be solved only by boldness and commitment backed solidly by technique. Climbs that are forced clean by the application of boldness should be similarly respected, lest a climber be guilty of destroying a line for the future's capable climbers to satisfy his impatient ego in the present — by waiting he might become one of the future capables. Waiting is also necessary; every climb has its time, which need not be today.—Doug Robinson

Man of Letters

by Alec Wilkinson

MATTHEW CARTER IS OFTEN DESCRIBED as the most widely read man in the world. Carter designs typefaces. He is universally acknowledged as the most significant designer of type in America, and as having only one or two peers in Europe. A well regarded British type designer named Dave Farey once told a reporter, "There's Matthew Carter, and then there's the rest of us."

Carter is sixty-eight. He is British, and he lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He works in a room in his apartment. He has designed type for magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Wired*, *National Geographic*, and *Business Week*; and for newspapers, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Guardian*, in London. He designed *Verdana*, for several years the signature typeface of Microsoft; *Bell Centennial*, the typeface used by A.T. & T. in the phone book; and type called *Galliard*, which has been used by the U.S. Postal Service on a stamp.

Carter has a partner named Cherie Cone who lives in California and sees to the business side of their firm, which is called Carter & Cone Type. Recently, he's been engaged with three projects. One involved designing type for *Le Monde*, the French newspaper, which wanted a different appearance; one, still under way, is for Yale, where Carter teaches (the university wants a typeface for its official documents, its signs, and the work of its students and faculty); and the third was for the *Times*. The *Times* wanted for its magazine an alphabet of the face it uses to print its name. All the paper had were the letters that spell "The New York Times."

A typeface customarily has two hundred and twenty-eight characters, including letters, accents, numerals, fractions, ligatures (the structures that in certain faces join letters together); commercial signs, such as those for the dollar and the euro; and punctuation marks, ampersands, and peculiarities, such as asterisks and daggers for footnotes. A type designer typically produces four versions of a face: roman—that is, upright—letters, italic, bold roman, and bold italic. Such a grouping is called a family. Carter has designed sixty-two families, which include two hundred and sixty-three faces. A few designers may have designed more—no records are kept—but not many.

Carter designed the typeface for the phone book in 1978. He was then working for a company in New York called Mergenthaler Linotype. The previous face had been in use since 1937. A phone book lasts longer than a newspaper, but not long enough to justify its being printed on good paper with good ink. Subscribers had told the company that the current type, called *Bell Gothic*, was too spindly to read easily. It looked starved, they said. No known typeface read clearly at the size the company wanted. They refused to make the type larger, because adding pages was expensive. The phone

company's instructions were that, regardless of the design, the same amount of information must appear on the page.

Carter tried making all the numbers different sizes from each other, as they are in certain antique typefaces, but when he saw the numbers printed it looked as if they were faintly vibrating. The phone book is set in four categories of type: one for names and numbers; one for addresses; one in boldface, mainly for businesses; and one for entries called sub-captions, which is used for listings contained under a heading—the departments of a museum, for example. Carter's solution was to make the typeface for addresses narrower, and the one for names and numbers wider and heavier, which saved space and therefore a lot of money.

There are graphic designers and artists who like to enlarge type to see whether anomalies appear. If you substantially enlarge the "B" in *Bell Centennial*, the white space looks like two bells lying on their sides. Carter says this was unintended.

Carter is tall and lanky. His carriage is erect. He moves gracefully. When he was young, he had brown hair, but now it is gray and long enough to be pulled back in a small ponytail, which makes him look a little like a barber. He has blue eyes, an aquiline nose, and a cleft in his chin. He talks out of the right side of his mouth. His skin is pale. He lives with a woman named Arlene Chung, who is an artist. His manner is polished and gracious, so it takes a while to realize, mostly from hesitations in his speech, and the measured quality of his voice, that he is not given to revealing himself easily.

Choosing wine in a store, Carter looks for a bottle that has type he designed on the label. He likes to watch movies with an eye out for anachronistic appearances of type. In a movie set in 1939, he saw a document printed with a version of a typeface called *Snell Roundhand Bold*, an elaborate script which is used mainly for monograms, engravings, and on the menus of fancy restaurants, and which he designed in 1972. (The script was based on the handwriting of a seventeenth-century British writing master named Charles Snell.) Another time, at an antique auction, he saw a poster announcing the sale of slaves, which was being offered as genuine. He noticed that some of the writing was in a typeface invented in the nineteen-fifties. He thought it was strange that someone would take so much trouble to forge a document and then be sloppy about the typeface, but people tend to think that typefaces have always existed. Not long ago, a lawyer called him. She had a woman in her office who had tried to claim a piece of property her father had left her. The woman had been taken aback when her father's business partner presented a document, with a date of 1981, in which the father wrote that he was giving the property to the partner. Carter was able to confirm for

the lawyer that he hadn't designed the typeface used in the letter until fourteen years later.

Carter was born in London in 1937. His father was a typographer and a designer of books who became a historian of typography. His mother had trained to be an architect but never took the steps to qualify, and worked as a draftsman instead. Shortly after Carter turned two, the war began. The family lived in London, and when the bombing started they bought a small house in Croydon, a suburb south of the city. Carter's father was drafted, and not long after that the family was evacuated. Carter, his mother, and his younger brother were able to take very little with them, and no toys that Carter remembers. To teach him to read, his mother cut an alphabet for him from linoleum. "Gill Sans," he says, "a popular typeface of the time." She also talked about his father and his work and showed him books his father had designed.

Carter and his mother and brother eventually returned to the house in Croydon. He remembers his father's steamer trunk appearing one day in the house's front room. In it was a type-founder's mold. His father had been stationed in Jerusalem and had worked on a typeface for Hebrew.

Carter thinks that his father must have explained to him how a type mold worked, because he remembers pouring melted clay into it, when no one was around, to try and make a piece of type, and his father's displeasure.

CARTER LEFT FOR BOARDING SCHOOL WHEN HE WAS SEVEN. At school, he was a misfit, he says. He liked art, which no one considered important, and bebop, which the school disapproved of. His father was called to the school and told that unless his son reformed he was unlikely to amount to anything. The meeting did not have the result the school had hoped for. For one thing, Carter's father didn't know what jazz was; Carter explained it to him later, and he saw nothing to deplore. For another, he thought that the housemaster conducting the meeting had been rude. "My father was austere, but he was very principled," Carter says. Even so, one of Carter's signal memories of school was the housemaster's telling him, "Carter, you'll never be a gentleman"—meaning a banker or a bishop or a general.

At seventeen, Carter was accepted at Oxford. Most entering students had been in the military and were older, so the school suggested that Carter, who had asthma and couldn't serve, take a year off before attending so that he wouldn't be so much younger than everyone else. His father arranged an internship for him at a printing company in the Netherlands, in Haarlem, called Enschede en Zonen. Since the late nineteenth century, type has been made by machine, but Enschede

made type by hand, using techniques that hadn't changed for four hundred years. Carter was apprenticed to a cutter of type called P. H. Radisch, who was eccentric and secretive. Enschede had bought a machine to manufacture type. Each night, Radisch removed a part from the machine and on his way home dropped it into a canal. Eventually, the machine disappeared entirely. Radisch had for years refused to train anyone to succeed him but had lately taken on an assistant. The assistant was "willing to tolerate an amateur," Carter says. Carter sat between the two men, and though Radisch said very little to him, the assistant was helpful. Carter was one of the last men in Europe trained to cut type by hand.

At school, he was a misfit. He liked art, which no one considered important, and bebop, which the school disapproved of.

With a needle, a type cutter scratched the outline of a letter on the end of a thin shaft of steel called a punch. Then he began scraping steel away from the borders of the letter. "It's a subtracting exercise," Carter says. "You remove the steel, and the letter is what's left." The type cutter made his own tools, small and fine files and chisels and gauges. Working in steel was like carving in marble, Carter says. If he made a mistake, he lost his work. The severe penalty for an error, or for changing his mind, meant that

"you thought hard before you embarked," he says. Such thinking helped him form his judgment. Carter could produce a letter every few days. Radisch took a day to make one. Since the letter was backward, it wasn't really possible to tell by looking at it how accurate it was. The steel, filed and polished, shone slightly, which made the surface appear to be uniform even if it wasn't. A cutter could judge his work by heating the punch in the flame of a candle, which removed any oil left by his hands or moisture from the steel's being cold. Then he blew out the candle and held the punch in the smoke. When it was blackened, he moistened some paper by breathing on it and pressed the punch gently into it. The image was called a smoke proof.

Carter stayed a year at Enschede. Seeing that he had a talent and the ability to apply it, he shed the poor opinion of himself that he'd had at school. He decided to pass on college and make some kind of life in typography. He did not expect his parents' approval, but they withheld it only briefly. His father died in 1980. He used to say only that he thought that the conversation at the dinner table might have been more interesting if Carter had chosen another field.

Most of us see a page of type as black marks against a white ground. Type designers see white space interrupted by black marks. Each letter has a boundary on either side called the side bearing. The letter "O" has the same bearing on each side, but most letters do not. The space within the letters is called the counter. The counter

within the “n” must be at least in proportion to that within the “m” for the letters to look right in company. In addition, the counter of any letter must agree visually with the bearing. One means of helping settle the space between letters is a serif, the ledge of embellishment on the feet and shoulders, and sometimes halfway up the shaft, of letters in typefaces that are called serif faces. Serifs also make letters easier to read. Without serifs, “I” is difficult to distinguish from “1” or a lowercase “l.” Carter says that words such as “Illinois,” “Illicit,” or “Illogical” written in a face without serifs can look like a picket fence.

In designing an alphabet, someone is designing a set of parts that must work in concert and in any combination. Initially, he has no idea how they will. David Berlow, a designer at the Font Bureau, in Boston, worked with Carter at Mergenthaler and was one of his partners at Bitstream, a company Carter founded with three others in 1981. “When you start a typeface, there’s only a tiny part of the process that’s visual,” Berlow says. “You make decisions about what I am designing and why am I doing it. Matthew is notable for always making good decisions. He is very fond of saying that designing type involves a billion possibilities. Once you make your first decision—serif or sans, say—half a billion decisions remain. And when you make your second—the thickness of each character, perhaps—a quarter billion remain, and so on. Old style or new, until finally you’re down to ten thousand questions. Designers often get caught between two decisions, and those decisions occur somewhere just before you draw the first ‘A.’”

According to Tobias Frere-Jones, a type designer in New York at Hoefler & Frere-Jones, designers don’t regard the alphabet as a linear sequence. Instead, they tend to see round letters (“O,” “G,” “C,” “Q”), square letters (“H,” “F,” “L,” “T”), and diagonal ones (“A,” “W,” “X,” “Z”). The classic approach to type design is to begin with the capital “H” and “O.” “Just drawing the ‘H,’ there are a number of choices to make,” Frere-Jones says. “How substantial? How wide? Are there serifs, and, if so, how broad, how thick? When you get to the ‘O,’ you have to decide how heavy the heaviest part of the letter should be. There are reasons it can’t be the same as the ‘H.’ If the heaviest part of the ‘O’ is the same as the heaviest part of the ‘H,’ the ‘O’ will look too thin, because the ‘O’ reaches its heaviest weight only for a moment, whereas the ‘H’ gets to hold that maximum weight all the way to the top. Also, if you draw the capital ‘H’ and ‘O’ at the same height, that ‘O’ will look too short, so the base of the ‘O’ has to fall a bit lower than the ‘H,’ and the top has to rise a bit higher for them to seem compatible.”

Perfect geometry appears to form the basis for many typefaces, Frere-Jones says, “but in fact the eye will

become confused if it sees pure geometry. The forms will seem stiff and labored.” Designing type involves a kind of stagecraft—“organized cheating,” Frere-Jones calls it—so that the eye will accept as symmetrical forms that are actually imperfect. “All sorts of fancy footwork goes into type design,” he says, “and if it’s done well you’ll never know that corrections were made.”

A letter that many designers try to draw soon after the “H” and the “O” is the capital “R,” which has parts of all three classes of letters. Also, it is something of a show-case letter. “How the designer negotiates the ‘R’ can make it distinctive,” Frere-Jones says. “Carter’s ‘R’s are very robust—they’re almost kind of proud. If you look at the cap ‘R’ in Verdana, the Microsoft face, which almost everyone has on his computer screen, I think it’s a beautiful shape—the way the tail comes out quite far to the right. It’s declarative.”

I print up forty or so pages, and when I first see them I feel suicidal.

Twenty years ago, Carter began drawing on a computer. He prefers to start with the lowercase “h” and “o.” He proceeds carefully, because any misjudgment multiplies its effect as he continues. He does a “p” and a “d” next, because they include elements of the “h” and the “o” and also are inversions of each other. “If some-

thing looks awful with your ‘p’ and ‘d,’” he says, “you know something’s wrong with your ‘h’ and ‘o,’ and you revise them.” Next he might draw a “v,” because it involves new considerations. “You get half a dozen letters, and you work on them again and again until you feel confident,” he says. When he has collected enough letters to feel that his decisions are sound, he begins printing proofs of them in combinations—“ab,” “ac,” “ad,” and so on.

“The heavy lifting begins when the alphabet is finished,” Carter says. “I begin then to see how the letters go together to make words, how they line up next to each other, how they sit on the page or the screen, how they work with the punctuation and the symbols. I print up forty or so pages, and when I first see them I feel suicidal. Nothing is working. If it isn’t working, I don’t necessarily know immediately why it isn’t. It simply looks bad. Then starts the long process of going back and making changes here and there. You change something one day, and the next day you change it back, because you realize that it wasn’t the problem. Nothing gets better, you despair, until one day you’re looking—you’ve changed something small—and you realize suddenly you’re looking at a typeface.”

Like architecture, typography and type design are servant arts. It is all but universally agreed that type is intended to convey ideas and should not aggressively draw attention to itself, except in advertisements or signs or trademarks—what is called display typography—or perhaps in fine printing. Avant-garde typographers

whose intention, according to the designer Jonathan Hoefler, is “to do with type design what Joyce did with words and Stravinsky did with music” print texts that are meant to be difficult to read, to be deciphered like a code, but type designers tend not to be occupied by the notions that engage typographers. Type design is a practical trade, and a type designer is typically an artisan whose attention is brought to bear on solving a problem, usually legibility. David Berlow says that when a designer shows him a typeface that he would like him to distribute, he asks who will use it. “If there isn’t an answer, I don’t have an offer,” Berlow says.

Type cannot help but provoke associations. The absence of serifs suggests modernity. Gothic forms suggest religion or the law. Carter doesn’t care how type is used. He cares that it can be read. “People who use typographic designers and typographers have ideas about the emotional content of type,” he says. “All along I’ve had to focus on the job.”

That type should be serviceable and undemonstrative was stated, nearly as a manifesto, by a critic named Beatrice Warde, in 1932. Some designers and typographers take her remarks literally and feel they no longer so rigorously apply, and some see them as flexible and essentially still pertinent. Carter falls into the second group. In “Printing Should Be Invisible,” an address delivered to the British Typographers Guild, and later collected in “The Crystal Goblet,” Warde said, “The book typographer has the job of erecting a window between the reader inside the room and that landscape which is the author’s words.” He might build a stained-glass window that is beautiful to look at, she says, but a failure as a window—that is, he might set a book in type so ornate that it becomes impenetrable. The reader’s mental eye, she said, should focus “through type and not upon it.”

Warde also told the Typographers Guild that the most important purpose that printing can achieve is to allow ideas to be transferred from one mind to other minds. Type used well was invisible, she said, just as the right speaking voice went unnoticed. “There is nothing simple or dull in achieving the transparent page,” she said. “Vulgar ostentation is twice as easy as discipline. When you realize that ugly typography never effaces itself, you will be able to capture beauty as the wise men capture happiness by aiming at something else.”

Carter does not regard himself as an artist. An artist works with private images, he says, and he works with the alphabet. As a designer, he thinks he is a little unusual in that he doesn’t have a background as a calligrapher. He doesn’t draw well, either. “I could never make a pen go where I wanted it to,” he says. In an interview published in “Typographically Speaking: The Art of Matthew Carter,” he told Margaret Re, “Although I couldn’t write particularly well, what calligraphers called a ‘good fist,’ I could see in my mind’s eye what I wanted the letter to look like, and I could perfectly

understand the sequence of the pen strokes that went into making the letter. I just couldn’t make the pen do it.” To draw the outline of a letter by hand, he used French curves and straightedges, then colored it in.

Carter enjoys designing type for inhospitable environments. “Many of the projects that have interested me most,” he says, “have involved somehow the instruction, Make a typeface that will work at tiny size when printed on newspaper at very high speed in ink composed of kerosene and lampblack—all the lowest standards of production.” Before he designed Verdana for Microsoft, in 1993, the typefaces on computers were adapted from type used in magazines and books and newspapers. Because the resolution on computer screens is so imprecise, the letters looked scrawny and wan. Microsoft wanted its new typeface to be as legible as possible. Carter was aware as he worked that the point might soon be reached where more text was read on computer screens than was read on paper, and that the purpose in designing this face was not simply that it print handsomely but that it also look good on the screen. The limitations involved did not discourage him. “If you’re working on something such as a screen font, you have to get yourself into a certain frame of mind, because of the coarseness of the situation,” he says. “What you’re designing can never be perfect—you’re not looking for a platonic ideal. You’re looking at two lower-case ‘e’s and trying to decide which is less bad.” Carter is fond of an observation made by the architect Charles Eames, who said that he was often aware of working with constraints, but that he never made compromises.

“If you’re going to make a molded chair seat, such as Eames did, there are certain forms you can’t make—the plastic will break on you,” Carter says. “I have a temperament that likes puzzling over problems. It’s plain there are constraints here. You haven’t got the fittings to make it right. When you paint a portrait, you have the brushes and the paints, and how you make the image is up to you, but if you’re making a mosaic, you have a harder time to capture a likeness. If that’s what you’re doing, there’s no point complaining you’re not using oil paints.”

On a computer screen, Carter would display writing set in his design, and, on another screen beside it, he’d display the same words set in Microsoft’s face, MS Sans. Then he would back up slowly until he could no longer read one or the other. “It’s a crude way of doing it,” he says, “but it works. If you degrade it, you learn.”

Verdana is a sans-serif face. Carter couldn’t be sure that it would be used to make words—it might simply appear in a line of code—so he put serifs on the capital “I.” “Disambiguating is what psychologists call it,” he says. “Making sure that people know what they’re reading.” The “O” he drew nearly the same width all the way around, which is regarded as a modernist touch.

Carter does not depend on inspiration. “I don’t get bolts

from the blue," he says. If you gave him a blank sheet of paper on a Monday morning and asked him to design a typeface, he says, the paper would still be blank on Friday. He likes to visit cemeteries and take photographs of the lettering on gravestones. The early New England stonecutters used no font he recognizes and sometimes mixed upper- and lowercase letters. For a few years he has been working on a typeface based on their styles. The bulk of his work has involved historical typefaces—faces, that is, that have reference to earlier styles. Type designers have always been backward looking, partly for practical reasons. Experimental designs are unlikely to find a market. In addition, all of the great historical designers, seeking an ideal, devised their faces from earlier models or from inscriptional or hand-written examples.

The alphabet was organized into capital and small letters around 800. The capital letters derived from inscriptions on Roman monuments, and the smaller letters from handwriting. Initially, all printing imitated handwriting. The first book that could be easily carried around was printed in Venice in 1501. It was called a pocket book. It was printed in italic, which was thinner than the other styles of type, and was said to be an imitation of Petrarch's handwriting. Printers kept their letters in cases arranged before them on a table. Each letter had a compartment. Capital letters were kept in the upper case, and small letters in the lower case. How many copies of each a printer kept on hand depended on the work he did. Dickens used a lot of vowels. Lord Macaulay used mainly consonants. Tastes in typography have always been narrow. When John Baskerville introduced a typeface in England in 1757 which was thinner than Caslon, the dominant face of the period, people thought that it was so shocking by comparison that the strain of reading it would make them go blind. Attitudes about type are still restrictive. "There isn't much latitude in the manipulations a designer can perform on the individual letters," Carter says. "Only so much can be done to a 'b' before it ceases to look like a 'b.' Its meaning is fixed and cannot change much. As with a piece of classical music, the score is written down—it's not tampered with—and yet each conductor interprets it differently. I'm what historians call a presentist. I know I can't look at the great French designer Garamond's work the way he did, in 1561. That would be like performing music written in the sixteenth century on the instruments it was originally played on. Even if we did that, it wouldn't sound as it did to Bach. The phrasing would be different, or the attack, or the tone. In designing a historical face, I am performing it. There is tension in the interpretation. It's how the tension is handled that defines success. I'm comfortable working with the tension that exists between the functional need for legibility and the aes-

thetic need to be slightly different."

Any artisan, Beatrice Warde said, must learn to resist his "natural preference . . . for whatever looks difficult." A Carter typeface is notable for its elegance. "There's a reservation to his style," David Berlow says. "Matthew doesn't put elaborate features on characters, to catch attention. Everything is carefully executed. This is the hardest part of type design." A reader is not likely to be able to identify the distinctive elements of a Carter typeface; he will only notice that it reads fluidly. "But, if you take it apart, it's fascinating to see the relationships he

has created among the letters," Cyrus Highsmith, a designer at the Font Bureau, says. "Everything seems to fit. The deeper you go into the structures and the network of relationships, the more you find. And when you find something that doesn't fit, it's always there for a very interesting reason. Everything he does is deliberate and controlled but full of life." When Carter was young, designing type was a clanish and abstruse pursuit. A young

designer was expected to labor for years before he produced an acceptable alphabet. Ten years' engagement in the trade was regarded as the amount of time necessary before an aspiring designer might deliver a good lowercase "g." Or people would tell Carter, "There's only a couple of good type designers in every other generation, and we just had a few in the last one."

Computers make anyone a designer of type who wants to be one. A novice at a computer might make eighty versions of a letter in a day. Carter thinks that the ability to design letters on a computer means that more adventurous typefaces are being drawn. The difficulty for someone learning the trade on a computer, however, is telling the difference between a face that works and one that doesn't—deciding, that is, which seventy-nine letters to discard. "I think it helps to learn in a situation where you have had fewer choices and only one chance to get it right," Carter says. "I would never tell a young designer that he had to go through this recalcitrant method, or that he would be better if he learned how to do it the way I did, but somehow you have to develop judgment. You do it by seeing your work in use. Before you have a body of work, you have to learn from others. Are the lines straight or loose? Is the 'h' too big alongside the 'o'? Or too thin? Does it look like it's going to fall over? Has the 'D' got so boxy that it looks like a 'G'? Do you like what you have or not? You have to force yourself to form an opinion. If you haven't got discernment, you simply repeat what you're used to."

Carter returned from the Netherlands in 1956. Having learned a lapsed trade, he moved in with his parents. He painted signs and did lettering work. He sought punch-cutting jobs but found hardly any. At the time, there may have been fewer than half a dozen punch cutters

Carter likes to visit cemeteries and take photographs of the lettering on gravestones.

employed in Europe and America. In 1958, he moved to London, as a tenant of his aunt, and found work with a group of designers who were tired of the plainness of British type and were, Carter says, aspiring to an international style. When they saw something they liked, they asked him to draw it. Meanwhile, *The New Mechanick Exercises*, a journal concerned with typography and printing, put a photograph of Carter cutting a punch on its cover. "Mirabile dictu," the magazine said, "a new and extremely promising hand-punchcutter has lately emerged and set up business as an engraver of steel punches, lettering artist and typographical designer. His name is Matthew Carter."

In London, Carter was taken to lunch by one of his father's friends. "He had done well in life," Carter says, and "he summoned me and said he wanted to make an investment in my career." He asked Carter what he could do for him, and, without knowing why, exactly, Carter said that he would like to go to New York. He gave Carter three hundred pounds, and in April of 1960 Carter arrived in the city. Much of his time he spent visiting graphic-design studios. "It's hard to recall, in these days of the global village," he says, "how different design was in different places. I had grown up in a type-making privileged situation, and I'd had my year at Enschede and my time in

London, and I was cocky, but once I got to New York and saw the level of work the designers were doing—in magazines and advertising, in posters you would see around the city, at the exhibitions I attended, the entire aggregate impression—I was made abruptly and forcefully to realize that I knew nothing." He felt that he was faced with two choices: to slink home or to resolve to stay. "The cowardly part of me could have gone back to England and pretended I hadn't seen all of this design," he says. "Or I could decide, 'Wake up, Matthew, you've been living in a fool's paradise. You crossed the Atlantic and found something that knocked you sideways, now it's your move.' "

In the spring of 1960, the John Coltrane Quartet played its first engagement. Carter was in the audience. Over several weeks, he heard them three or four times. "Sometimes they played the same songs in the second set as they played in the first," he says. "Not because they were lazy but because they wanted to surpass themselves, or find something in the music that they hadn't found earlier in the evening. They were that acute." Listening to them, he decided that he owed it to himself to try and stay in New York. "Their seriousness of purpose was a lesson," he says. "Four great geniuses who would knock themselves out every night when instead they could have coasted. I felt I could have been dishonest enough to return to England and say I hadn't

seen great design. But I couldn't somehow pretend that I hadn't heard the John Coltrane Quartet." As it happened, Carter couldn't find work in the city and went back to England, where he worked as a designer, but in 1965 he was hired by Mergenthaler, whose offices were in Brooklyn.

While Carter had been working at Enschede, in the Netherlands, his father was visiting Antwerp to catalogue type for the Plantin-Moretus Museum. Plantin was one of the great printers of the sixteenth century, and 1955 was the four-hundredth anniversary of his first work. The building that had been his premises had remained in his family until the early nineteenth century, when it was given to Antwerp as a museum. To prepare a catalogue for the anniversary, the museum had engaged Carter's father. For centuries, no one had

examined the archives in the museum's basement, which included boxes of antique type. While his father was in Antwerp, Carter made several visits.

"Soon as I showed up, I was put to work," he says. "We'd be in this little attic room, and someone would deliver a box from the basement, and we would scrub away at the punches, clear off several centuries of dust, then try to identify who had cut them." Carter was keenly aware of the contrast between the task he was laboring to learn and the examples he

held in his hands. Plantin's account books still existed, and Carter felt his imagination stirred as he read the entries in them.

"I was eighteen," he says. "I had the run of this temple of typography, and I would sit up in the middle of the night and think about it. Opening a drawer and finding these materials, some of them known, some not, and just handling this stuff in a very informal way—the best work of the finest period of typography—there was a feeling of a presence, and the sense of being part of a continuum of typography, of being locked into a history. I'm someone without the slightest religious bent or superstition, but spending those hours after the museum closed—and so intimately with those materials—moved me."

When I asked him once how he had come to have such a feeling for type designed in the distant past, he thought for a moment, then he said, "I feel that I know the ghosts."

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You have to force yourself to form an opinion. If you haven't got discernment, you simply repeat what you're used to."

Handlebar RAMP, REACH, DROP, and the oft-neglected SWOOP & RETURN

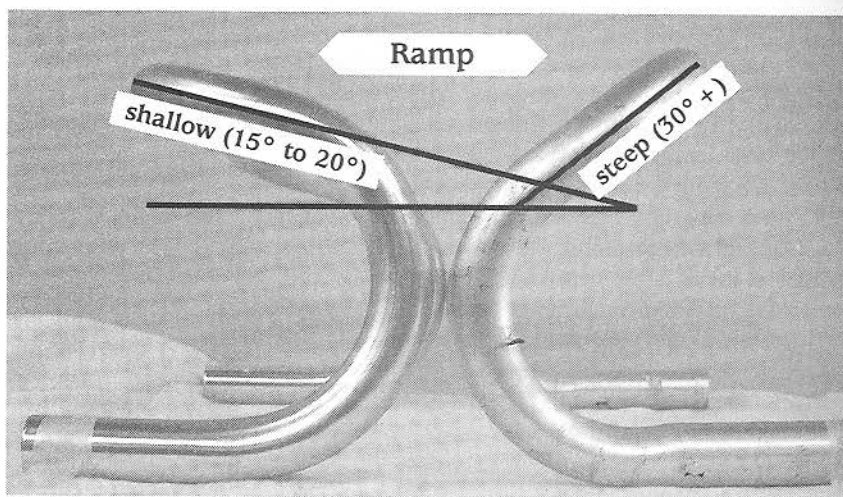
Bar makers and sellers, for the most part, don't talk about or list handlebar dimensions. They say it's carbon fiber and weighs negative a million grams, but they're mum about what matters. It didn't used to be that way, but these days it seems they're either afraid to scare you off with "tech talk," or they think you don't care, or maybe they don't even know.

Ramp is not a universally acknowledged technical term; we made the name up, because there wasn't a name for it. But named or not, it's something you feel every time you ride a drop bar, and it warrants a name, and "ramp" got there first. It's the angle of the part of the handlebar that joins the top of the bar to the brake lever part (the curve, "the hooks" or whatever you like to call it.

I think it's the most important physical dimension of a handlebar, because it has the most dramatic effect on comfort. A steep ramp feels lousy, because your hands are always trying to slide down to the brake levers. You can't relax your grip, or down your hands slide until the stop at the hoods, and maybe you don't want to be leaning that much. Maybe you just want to hold on nice and behind the hoods, in sort of the "ready for anything and comfortable as all get-out" position. But a steep ramp won't let you do that without a tight grip, and a tight grip leads to tensioned arms and locked elbows and no shock absorption, and the next thing you know, riding's not fun anymore.

A shallow ramp, on the other hand, lets you rest your hands behind the hoods and relax, no need for a grippy grip, because the ramp is so shallow that there's no tendency for relaxed hands to slide down.

I first noticed "ramp" on a Nitto handlebar drawing. I saw lines similar to the ones in the photo here, labeled in degrees, and that's when it occurred to me that there was something in handlebars beyond width, reach, and drop. Some of the bars had 32-degree ramps, and some were as little as 24. That



Ramps vary from 15-degrees to 65-degrees. Anything above the mid-twenties gives you a definite feeling of sliding down. Nobody can honestly like that.

explained a few things, and I started thinking more about ramps.

The proper way to set up a drop handlebar is with the ends pointing downward about 10-degrees, effectively rotating the bar backward and flattening any ramp by the amount you rotate it. So, a 24-degree ramp, on a bar rotated up 10-degrees, becomes a 14-degree ramp.

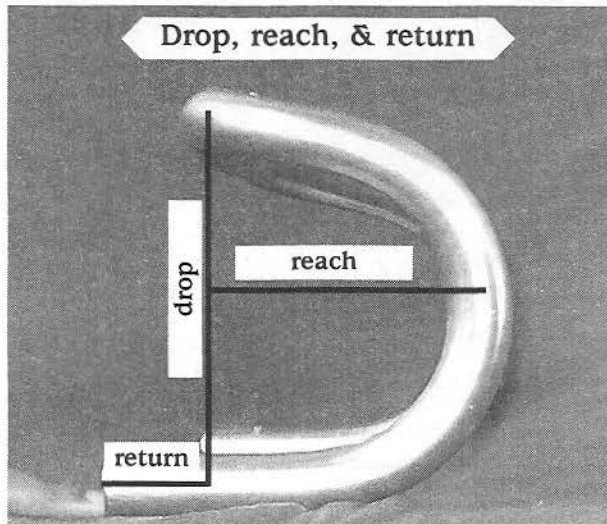
Aha! But when you start with a 15-degree ramp (such as on our Noodle and Soba handlebars, that 15 becomes 5, and the area behind the brake lever body gets almost flat. It's really nice like that.

You'd think, given the effect of steep and shallow ramps, that "ramp angles" would be normal parlance in handlebar circles, and that manufacturers would list them along with width. That's the best way to educate people.

But in fact, nobody ever talks about ramps. They talk about material and weight, with diameter thrown in now and then. That's dumb and a shame, but I don't think it's part of a plot to keep us underinformed. Ramp is important in the context of handlebars, and if you're buying a new pair of bars, yotta consider ramp. Since makers don't list it, just put the bar on a table and eyeball it. Rock it back about 10-degrees to simulate its inclination on your bicycle. If the ramp then appears to be fairly flat, it probably is, and if that's the case, you'll probably like it.

You can't change your bar's inherent ramp, and if rotating your bar back about 10-degrees doesn't flatten it out enough for you, bite the bullet and get a new handlebar. That's not us trying to sell more handlebars; it's just a fact.

Drop, reach, & return



DROP is the distance between the top of the bar and the bottom of it, and as long as the bar has a constant diameter, the measurement is the same whether you measure from the top of the tops to the top of the bottoms, or from center-to-center, as shown here. The shallowest drops I've seen are 120mm, on some Randonneur bend handlebars. They flared out a lot, which is necessary in a drop that shallow, because without the flare you couldn't get your hand in the curved section.

The deepest drops I've seen (and used) were some 3TTT track bars, years ago, that had 175mm of drop. That's a whole hunkin' lot of drop, but track racers I guess need to get low down, and that must help.

In normal road bars, "deep drops" are around 150mm or more. Medium drop is around 140mm, and shallow is 135mm or less.

REACH is the distance from the top (say, the center of the clamp area) to the forward-most point of the handlebar, as

shown up there. On a handlebar blueprint it's measured center-to-center, but practically, the easy way to measure, if you must, is to place the bar on a flat surface with the curve against a vertical wall, then measure the forward part of the top to the wall. It is weird form to set this up in a bike shop, and they'd be justified in taunting you in front of customers; but that's how you do it, anyway.

In the grand scheme-o-things, short reach is 82mm or less. Some women's bars have 65mm of reach. Medium reach is in the 'borhood of 88mm to 95mm. Long reach is beyond that, and the longest I've seen is 120mm.

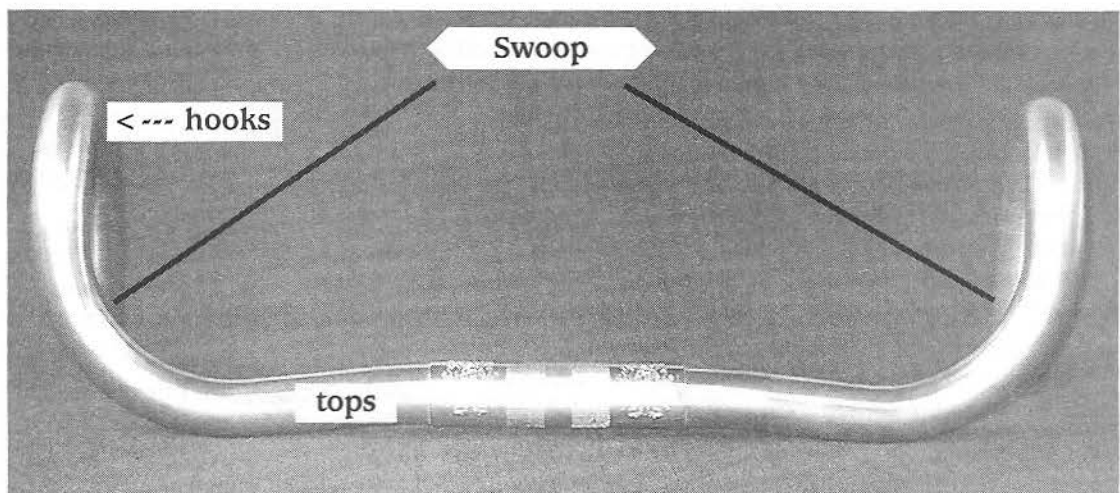
There's a relationship between drop, reach, and ramp, and it's obvious what it is when you study the photo here. Basically, if you want a shallow ramp and a short reach and a deep drop, you're not going to get it. Or, if you want a steep ramp and a long reach and a shallow drop, good luck again. Study the photo there and you'll understand why.

RETURN is another made-up term to describe how far beyond the clamp the end of the handlebar returns toward you. I'm feeling funny about using so many made-up names, but I've got to call them something. Anyway, I don't know the range of returns—what's a lot and what's a little. I know that when you put bar-end shifters on a bike, the shifters stick out more and effectively add "return" to the bar, and so sometimes riders who for whatever reason knock their knees on bar-end shifters...they like to chop about 10 to 20mm off the "return" to add more knee room.

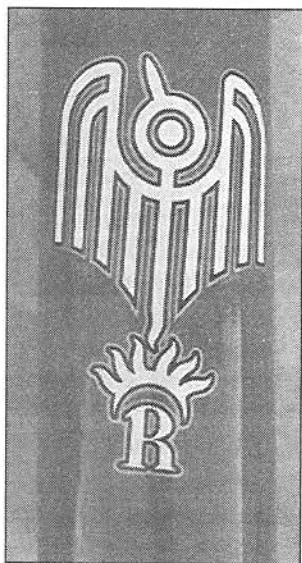
SWOOP is another of those unofficial terms, like "ramp." "Top radius" might be even better, but hasn't the ring, so for here and now it's swoop. Swoop is the radius of the curve between the tops and the hooks.

Now, if you spend a lot of time on the tops and like lots of room there, you'll get that by means

of a tight (smaller radius) swoop. But then, when you're down on the drops and throwing the bike side-to-side in a vicious sprint, your upper wrist may hit the handlebar. For that reason, track racers and criterium racers, who never ride the tops but do sprint a lot, use bars with high-radius swoops. These bars are called "criterium bend" handlebars, and they're lousy for riding on the hoods or the ramp, because they don't put enough handlebar under your hand, and your hand tends to slide outward. Combine that with slick bar tape (like the old Benotto kind) on a hot, sweaty day, and you'll hate climbing hills even more. A swoop like the one shown here, on this Noodle bar, is a good one. Normal.



Resurrectio



Top: Down tube decal.

We didn't cut off the graphic; there is no N.

Far left: Head tube decal

Sort of a generic Native American-style bird or something practicing the grand art of resurrection.

Just left: Seat tube decal

Same bird.

These decals are made for us in the Carolinas by SSSINK, the top bicycle decal maker in the world, actually. Every top American bike, and many less-than-top American bikes have decals from these fellows (Screen Specialties is their official name).

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Resurrectio decals for changed old bikes

Lots of old bikes get made over with parts quite a lot unlike the originals, and when they get new paint in the process, they're essentially new bikes, too. The bike is more than the frame, in other words. Usually you can't even get the original decals, but you want something on there, so we had these decals made.

That's when these universal, come-one/come-all decals may be useful. *Resurrectio* is Latinesque for *I fixed up this old bike and now it looks new again*. Customer and graphic artist Jon Grant created the art for them. The in-fill is cream, with a black and gold outline. This combo looks good on just about any color. We've never seen it miss.

Decals come in "clear-coatable" for times when the bike gets new paint and a new clear coat over it, and non-clear coatable, for applying on top of the paint.

If an experienced bike painter and decaler is painting your bike, let them mount the decals. If you're painting the bike yourself or taking it to a General Powder Coater who isn't decal-savvy, get the kind not for clear coating and follow instructions.

Applying them is a cinch. You strip off the backing, lay it down, rub it in with the barrel of a Sharpie, rub more. Let it sit some. Rub more. Make sure you get the edges, rub more, then peel off the clear layer, and you're all set.

We donate the proceeds to charity. Not "five percent of the post-tax profits after we've covered our costs and paid ourselves handsomely for the work we've put into it thus far," but All of the Proceeds, which amounts to about \$5 per set.

We give that to the River Valley Women's Shelter in Arkansas. They're one of our three main charities. We have three minor ones, too.

You can order by phone, mail, or online. If you order only decals and nothing else, the shipping and handling charge is \$4. That's more than the postage amount, but try as we might, we can't get our shippers to work for free, and so it goes.

Clear-coatable Resurrectio decal: 31-453, \$10

Non-clear-coatable Resurrectio decal: 31-454, \$10

Bit of a downer

The worst part of my job by far is when somebody gets mad at me or us for any reason. When you mix in emotions and misunderstandings and different histories and enough people, something is bound to happen sometime. Almost always, these things remain private, but when something happens by email, it's a click or two away from the whole world, so even if it starts out private, it may end up public. You never know who's going to flame you or start a blog defiling the company, people, products, all of that. We get it more because we're more accessible than many companies, and I get it more than Famous Politicians and World Leaders do because my email address is. On the other hand, *The New York Times* doesn't print mean things about me or Rivendell, so it all balances out. It's the anonymous who come out ahead.

Several months ago a customer bought a Quickbeam. He or she and his or her workmates went over it inside and out and discovered some things that he or she didn't expect or like or misread or something and poisoned the water, and now he or she's had it with us. His or her name is withheld in the correspondence below, which I'm reprinting only because there's some good information in it, and that may be the silver lining. A private makeup meeting is hereby requested. —Grant

To Grant--

You may have gotten my original email forwarded to you from Brian, if not, here is a summary of my concerns with my recent Quickbeam experience:

The seat tube was buckled under the seat lug indicative of over-heating when brazed. The seat stays to seat lug brazing was also over-heated and resulted in voids due to the zinc having been boiled out of the bronze. The chainstay to chainring clearance was less the one-half millimeter (a credit card was tight), the paint was the worst I have ever seen on a production bike and the seat tube wasn't reamed (paint and tube distortion).

When a customer has concerns such as I had, the first thing said should be "what can I do to help", not the "gee, I've never seen that on a Panasonic before" response I got when I reported it. A \$1340 bike is a big purchase for most of us and I trusted Rivendell to deliver \$1340 worth of goods. The feeling that I get (and my experience is that I'm not alone) is that any fault (defect) in regards to a Rivendell product should be forgiven and regarded as "character." Items such as these are not "character," they're defects and should be addressed as such.

I purchased the bike knowing that I would have to sell bikes and equipment to finance the QB and as such I kept the QB in the box (which, in hind sight, was a huge mistake) until I had the money to cover the purchase price. I trusted Rivendell; my Atlantis and Rambouillet experience gave me confidence that the QB would be a quality product. I cannot relay my sense of disappointment when I opened the box. The quality would not

have been acceptable on a \$250 Giant, let alone a bike in the price range of a Quickbeam. My disappointment was doubled due to having sold so much of my equipment in order to finance the bike (most of us need to make some level of sacrifice to afford your bikes).

While I was please with the fact that Rivendell did take the bike back, and that I was offered another bike, overall I was disappointed with my Quickbeam experience. Due to the nature of the defects, I would not have trusted another Panasonic built bike, once bitten, twice shy.

I'm really not sure where I wanted this email to go, other than to vent. I've spent a considerable amount of money with Rivendell, along with many recommendations to friends, and I guess I just expected more. As I think back over my experiences I can't help but think that Rivendell is losing touch with it's customer base. My advice would be to stop chasing pet projects (603!?) and start focusing on the customer. Stop chasing obscure wheel sizes and eleventy-seven different types of bags (that most likely won't be in stock) and focus on service. I get a hand signed thank you with each order from Wallingford Cycles, you would do well to emulate what Bill and Diane are doing. While you have a loyal following, cyclists are fickle. What was last year's hot trend is this year's swap meet discards, my recommendation would be to focus on the core of the business and avoid those which drain your focus and energy.

One last note. While I semi-admire your dedication to your suppliers, keep in mind that it is the customer that pays the bills. I have corresponded with several people (a result of my equipment

sales), who were unhappy with the overall quality of their QB's and, surprisingly, Rivendells (I think Waterford built, but still...). I think you would do well to drop Panasonic as a supplier and source the next batch out of Taiwan.

Regards, _____

March 27, 2006

Hi _____,

I did get it, and I'm sorry for any bad experience you've had, and for the bad feelings you have for us and the way we do business. We try hard, and letters such as yours will spur us on to do better. Thank you.

A "response" to your concerns would inevitably lead to a debate, and I may not know much about picking vendors or customer service, but I do know that it's not good to argue with customers! You've been such a great customer all these years, so that goes quadruply so with you!

Best to you, and apologies. Grant

Grant,

This has been banging around in my head and I have to vent, you can hit delete now if you'd like.

My commute allows me plenty of time to think and I think I accepted your apologies to soon. I've come to the conclusion that your answer was nothing more than a passive-aggressive attempt at sweeping my concerns under the rug with a thin veil of apology.

If you had been concerned about my customer experience, you would have replied as soon as you read my email. "Great customers" shouldn't be ignored when they have such a completely disappointing experience. I truly doubt my experience will spur you to do better. As a matter of fact, I'd bet money that the bike I returned was sold to someone else and was not returned to Panasonic

and melted down as it should have been.

Over the years I've gone from being excited about doing business with Rivendell to being embarrassed to ride my Atlantis and Rambouillet because of your celebration of the "fringe element" attitude (deer stalkers? dressing like a hobo to ride a \$4K bike? Joe Bell paint jobs and zip-tied fenders?). You are a highly polarizing company in a highly polarized business, unfortunately the road you have started taking in the last few years is one I no longer want to go down. I could go on but, for me, it all boils down to this: I spent a lot of money, spent a lot of time telling people about Rivendell. Rivendell was much more than just a bike shop to me, I was an enthusiastic supporter and when I had a very bad experience, you let me down. And for that you've lost a customer. — _____

Dear _____,
I don't want to argue with you, but I think you may have talked yourself into something. I can't control that, but if it's the case, I again apologize.

At one point, initially, I wrote a longer response to your letter, and it wasn't aggressive, just explanatory, but I decided against sending it, since you'd seemed to have your

mind made up, and it was a no-win situation for both of us. I still have it on my computer, actually.

We don't see things the same way, clearly, but I hope that we can recognize that and still get along. In the big picture, we have a lot in common, _____. I wish you didn't see me as a scoundrel, or passive-aggressive, or whatever.

I don't want to continue the debate. I'll assume you want your membership fees refunded, and I'll do that today. I am sincerely sorry.

I bought the Quickbeam for myself, by the way, and so far, so good.

Best, Grant

Grant,

My mind has been changing over the years as Rivendell's focus has changed, the QB was what pushed me over the edge. Please don't worry about the membership fees, it would cost more than it's worth to refund them and I won't cash the check.

As far as seeing you as a scoundrel, please don't put words in my mouth (email). Your response to my concerns came across to me as passive-aggressive. I can't stand passive-aggressive behavior (personal hot button).

"...but I decided against sending it, since you'd seemed to have your mind

made up, and it was a no-win situation for both of us." FWIW, I did not have my mind made up. FWIW, I think a longer, more in-depth email would have most likely struck me that you were concerned about my experience. When I sent my initial email my mind wasn't made up, the short "sorry 'bout that" just hit me wrong.

BTW, you're too nice buying that QB. If it had been me, that bike would have been back on the boat to Japan. Your supplier deserves to know that the bike was unsuitable for sale to your customers. Again, don't protect your supplier's feelings at the expense of your customers.

And one apology from me. I probably shouldn't have addressed this issue via email, I never quite get my point out exactly the way I want to, email is a {bad} conveyance for relaying "deeper" messages and probably creates more animosity than it resolves. And maybe I made too big off a deal about it, it's just that I sold a lot of stuff to make the money for the QB, bikes that I really liked, parts and bags that I could have used and I'm feeling pretty stoopid for it....._____

Here's my original response that I didn't send because I felt it was too aggressive and and maybe offense-ive. In retrospect, I should have sent it, because the worst thing happened, and maybe it wouldn't have if I had. G

Hi _____,
I'm sorry you aren't happy with any of this. We do try, but we are not perfect by any means. I am torn between responding and risking coming off as defensive, and not responding at all and reinforcing your image of us as uncaring.

I did not respond earlier because I felt we'd blown it with you and this was a losing battle. I don't want a battle at all.

Since you wrote again, it's clear to me now that not responding the first time was not the right response! So now I respond, nervously but thoroughly, and I hope we can make peace.

The first things I'll say is about the frame; the second will be an apology.

The buckling isn't a buckling in the sense that the tube folded or bent. It is a common enough occurrence that is actually has a name: It's a "heat bulge."

When I say it is a "common enough occurrence," I don't mean to imply that we see it a lot; only that in the past 25 years I've seen it maybe twenty times on a range of frames, and only on good ones, including on two Quickbeams. I'll tell you why that's the case, not to defend it, just to explain it. (As a matter of fact and interest, Italy's most prestigious builder was "famous" for his heat bulged seat tubes!) To understand the explanation requires some knowledge of tubing, so I'll start there.

The butts on the top tube, down tube, and seat tube on high quality frames are typically 0.8 to 0.9mm. Even a millimeter is thin, but those are even thinner. The down tube and top tube are double-butted, meaning they're 0.8mm to 0.9mm at both ends. The seat tube is single-butted, with the butted end at the bottom bracket end.

The upper end of the seat tube (typically) is not butted, but is the same 0.6mm as the mid-section of the other tubes. On

heavy-gauge steel tubes, the wall thickness is 1.2mm or more.

Why no butt at the top end? Because the seat post itself functions as a "super-butt" there, and should slide into a tube with parallel walls and a consistent inside diameter. A butted tube doesn't have that.

And yet the top of the seat tube sees more brazing action than any other part of the bike. The top tube and seat tube join there, with two seat stays joining them. All at that one relatively small juncture.

At brass-brazing temperatures, which are higher than silver-brazing temperatures, sometimes, every now-and-then, the thin, 0.6mm section of the upper seat tube responds to the heat by expanding slightly. The bulge in the frame we sent to you was one of the most-slight ones I've seen, in fact.

_____, on a purely white-glove analytical level, you're absolutely correct in being horrified by it. But at that level, the dust-mites that are living in both of our eyelashes are even more horrifying. It's more of a problem in your head than on the bike. I am not saying "you're nuts," I'm just saying that that Quickbeam's seat tube will outlive generations of riders, and that given the low riding stress on that joint and the seat post that reinforces it, it will never, ever fail there.

On the distortion of the seat tube on the inside:

The seat tube is on all of our frames is 28.6mm (O.D.) The walls, as I've said, are 0.6mm at the top. When you do the arithmetic (outer diameter minus twice the wall thickness), you'll see that leaves an ID of 27.4mm. So why is the seat post a 27.2?

Because heat distorts. It blows it up, deforms, and tubing shrinks and goes nuts during the heating and cooling. Ultimately it cools out-of-round, and needs to be reamed round again. After all of that, you lose about 0.2mm, and the seat post

requirement ends up at about 27.2mm.

To me, this imperfect process is beautiful and distinguishes frames and samurai swords and other fine things made by hand with fire and steel, from things made other ways. I can understand how the dustmite-like processes and reactions I've described can be unnerving. I understand that you work with aerospace engineers who, watching out for you and sincerely meaning to shed light on the situation, may have thrown fuel onto the fire. (Your reference to zinc being burned out of the brass is no layman's comment.) Nobody is wrong, nobody has or had bad intentions. But thoughts planted have a way of rattling around and raising a ruckus, and that you took the time to vent suggests to me that they're still rattling around.

Rich here worked for most of his career as a mechanic for UA. He tells me that about one third of the QC engineers there had worked as airline mechanics before becoming engineers. Two thirds went straight to engineering without having wrenched. It was Rich's experience that the engineers who had wrenched were inevitably more tolerant than those who hadn't. They weren't slackers as engineers, and on the other hand weren't any better engineers. What they had that they others didn't have was a perspective born of experience.

You have this experience in daily life, which is why you don't worry about dust mites in your eyelashes. But when something out of your normal sphere of experience comes up, it is quite understandably disconcerting.

My own sphere includes steel, brazed, lugged bicycles, so what worries you doesn't worry me. Please don't take that to mean that I don't care about "the little stuff." I do, and I respond to it, and everybody who works with me will attest to that.

The paint didn't look bad to me. There is a difference between a perfectly fine (as opposed to perfectly perfect!) factory paint job, and a custom paint job that costs \$200 to \$600. It's not that one is bad and the other good. I'd even say the factory paint job is the better value. Joe Bell is the most expensive painter around, and the way he talks about his paint jobs is, "They pass the hairy eyeball test from 6-inches away" test. At \$500+, the standard is higher than it is on the Quickbeam, but that doesn't mean a relatively quick factory prep-prime-spray-clear-coat paint job is lousy. You don't look at it with a hairy eyeball from half a foot away. You look at it with normal eyes from three feet, and if something jumps out at you, you get closer to see what's up.

The voids in the seat stay brazing are a typical response to heat, and as voids go, they are not all that bad, and don't compromise the integrity of the seat stay attachment. They are on the underside and not visible unless you look for them. I've seen way worse on unpainted frames that cost much more made by builders whose names you know and who build great frames. Those seat stays are stuck on there for good.

Note

Printing this may not have been a good idea, but I figured if I removed the name, what's the harm? But you never know what'll come of it, and I slightly fear that I've roused the sleeping dog, so-to-speak. I hope not, though. In the old days, in the first ten or so issues, I used to include a personal journal of my thoughts and fears about the business, and it was helpful to me, to get it out. How else does it come out? I quit that when the aftermath (reader responses, to me and online) got to me, and I haven't done it since. I can talk about woes with my wife, and I do, but I don't want my concerns and stuff like this to dominate our together time, so this time, I thought I'd put this in here. There's some good information in it, about brazing or whatever.—G

Your comparison to a \$250 Giant is painful, with no disrespect meant to Giant. There is a lot of good in the bike you returned. I bought it myself and will ride it hard. I debated selling it as a returned frame, but that would have required telling the story, and even the telling of the story would exaggerate what I think are problems so minor that they aren't problems at all. I know you see it differently, but that's bound to be the case, given our different histories.

As for the customer service issues you brought up: I am sorry. I think, when the person you spoke to said, "Gee, I haven't seen that before," he was being honest and trying not to be defensive. His choice of words weren't bad, but they didn't convey his concern well, and that is regretful.

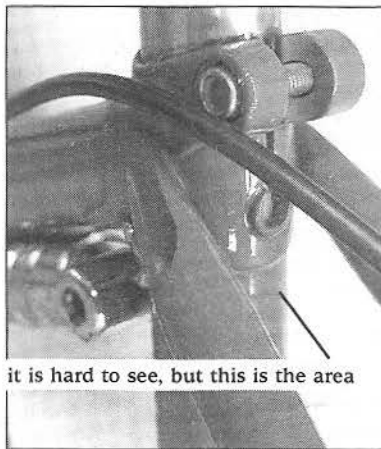
We have never regarded flaws as "character." If this is indeed our reputation, I am horrified and need to reevaluate myself and this business. But in any crafted object, as opposed to a molded one, there are telltale signs that people had a hand in it. There are slight variations and inconsistencies that don't mean beans. Some guy rubbing a finish onto a piece of wooden furniture may have as a goal to make it look perfectly plastic and fake, but it's never going to be that way, and isn't any worse off for it, either.

Panasonic is a wonderful supplier. It has the highest ISO evaluation (I am a bit out of my league here with the specific verbiage) of any large bike factory in Japan. It has (and uses!) a bike testing facility that would knock your socks off. Beyond that, for a company that turns out upwards of 500 thousand frames per year to even consider making us runs of 75 to 100—it's just unspeakably incredible and generous. To you it may be a big Japanese corporation, I don't know. To all of us here, Panasonic is the people we work with. They're people we know to have the highest integrity and concern for quality and reputation.

To suggest that we write them off and "go to Taiwan" is a well-meant suggestion, but not one that I'm ready to take, at this stage of the game. I think if you knew what I know about Panasonic's quality, you'd be just as comfortable with them as I am. Going to Taiwan is a completely separate issue.

—, thanks for writing. I truly am sorry that you've had such a bad experience. Your complaints are legitimate because you believe the frame to be defective. I hope I've addressed your concerns in a way that lets you keep your dignity, as I try to keep some myself.

I hope you will continue to support us, but I suspect it's too much to hope for. If you like, we can cancel your subscription, refund your for the past 3 years, and make a \$100 charitable contribution in your name to some good group. This should end on good note, after all this.—Best, Grant



it is hard to see, but this is the area

LEFT: A close-up of the back of the Quickbeam's seat tube, showing the extent of the bulge.

It is no more difficult to see in this photo than it is in real life. The owner is correct in that ideally there would be no bulge at all. But it is structurally insignificant and will not grow or lead to anything bad. This bike has seen a few thousand miles of fairly hard use on and off roads since.



Spencer, our first employee, got this 52cm Road Standard in 1996 or so, and has done minimal maintenance ever since. One thing I like about this bike, and most of our bikes have the same deal, is the nearly identical clearance between the rear wheel and the seat tube, and the front wheel and the down tube. It's not functional or important to have that balance, but it kind of looks good, don't you think?

38

An old Rivendell. One of the oldest. Spencer's.

How do you treat a fine old bike? The answers range from "don't ride it, just enter it in the odd concours that comes along every few years, and plan, one day, to enclose the gemstone in a huge block of plexiglas" to "ride the heck out of it and hope for the best."

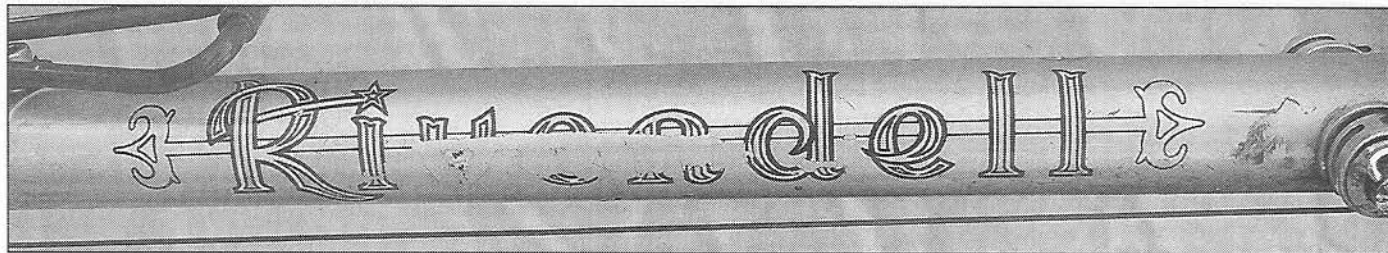
Spencer Chan does the latter, and his bike shows it. It's one of the most attractive Rivendell's I've seen, and let me tell you, I love them all. Really. But Spencer's stands out, because it has the most dilapidated, wrecked-up paint job of any I've ever seen. It looks as if it's never met a pole it didn't rub against. There aren't any dents, but there's everything else.

See the bar tape? There's never been any. I don't know why Spencer never wrapped it with tape. I think he planned to at one point, but discovered he liked the smooth feel of polished aluminum, and that was that. If you've never ridden a bike with untaped bars, let me tell you, it's kind of neat. They're so round, and smooth, and surprisingly unslippery. They're hotter when it's hot out, and colder when it's freezing, but between about 50°F and 100°F, no problem.

He has non-aero brake levers. With aero brake levers, you've got to tape the cables to the bars. You could do that with electrical tape and still keep the smoothness, but you lose the roundness.

The bars are Nitto track bars. Everybody who sees track bars (or "criterium-bend bars"; same thing) likes the serious look of them, with high-radius swoops that scream out "ride me on the drops or not at all." That's because they're lousy for climbing on the hoods, since there's no bar beneath the heel-fat part of your palm when you grab the hoods; and the tops next to the stem don't offer much of a straight section to clutch lightly as you cruise gently around. The purpose of the abrupt sweep forward is so you can sprint off the saddle and lean forward in the drops without having your wrist hit the handlebar. I don't think Spencer rides that way a lot—maybe through the odd yellow light—but for whatever reason he likes these bars, and in another decade when we show it, I expect he'll have the same untaped bars.

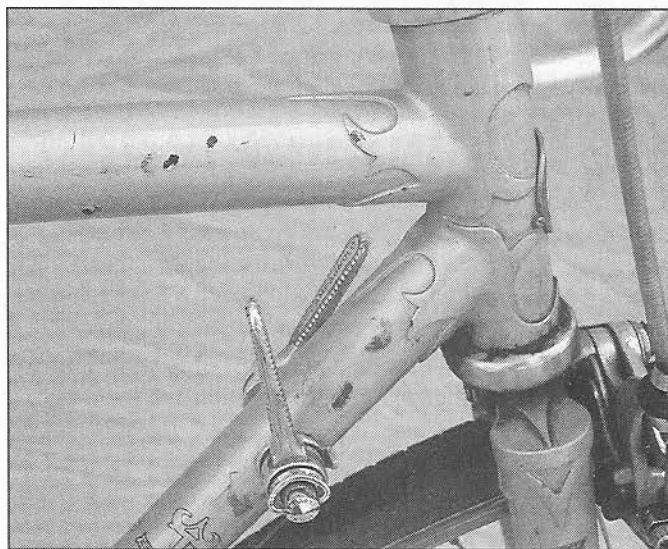
The SunTour GPX derailleurs are a weird bluish grey color, as were most parts in that group. They're bizarrely mated with a Simplex front derailer, and I doubt there's another bike on the planet with this combination. Simplex is classique, GPX is SunTour at its most desperate—I believe it was one of the only derailleurs SunTour ever marketed as one of its own that it didn't actually make. I could be wrong about that, but I think that's right.



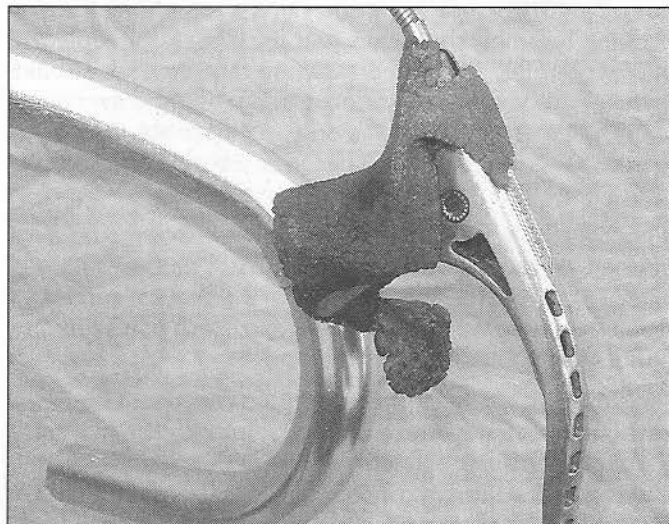
Our earliest decals had what we called "spear" backgrounds, and this is one of them. With lots of beausage (a word we made up combining "beauty" through "usage," and pronounced "byoo-sij," not "bow-sauzh.") If you must pronounce it at all. In any case, "beausage" as a word and a concept will have a minor but continuing role in our propaganda, so if you plan to continue with us, file that away.



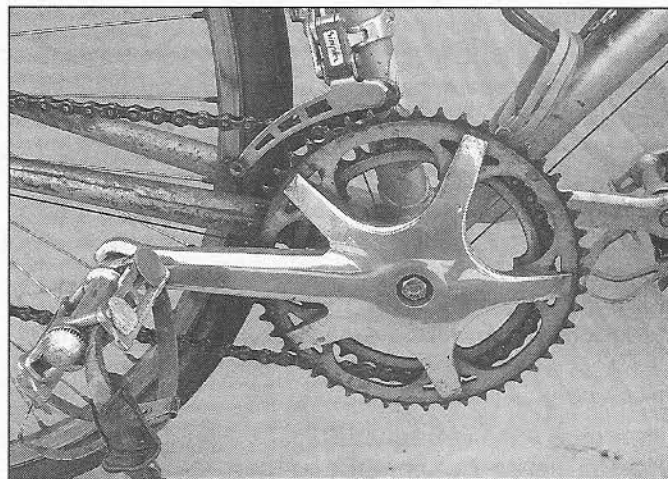
Spencer used to ride a Brooks, but has a bit of inner racer in him (my opinions), so here he is now with a WTB saddle. The Carradice Longflap bag looks like it's dragging on the tire, but an older model Nitto Saddlebag support does its job to keep it well off the rubber. The bag itself attaches to a no-longer made widget that allows saddlebags to attach to saddles without bag loops. The combination of the support and the rail isn't tidy, but it works.



A good shot of the nicks and scratches and bare spots that some people, all sane, would say warrants a new paint job. I don't know how it looks in this picture, but in real life, the bike is still clearly beautiful. If it's beautiful under the paint, it's beautiful even in need of new paint. Maybe even more.



The pure gum rubber hood on this Superbe Pro brake lever (like its mate) is *fhaarfrumnu*, but when the decay happens over time, it doesn't look so ugly and you come to enjoy the dangling scabs. Also, Spencer has never taped his bars. They feel smooth and surprisingly not slippery. It's a nice feel, and I could see copying Spencer on this one, for a while. But then he'd think, "Hey, Grant's copying me." It might not be worth it. The ends are plugged.



The Mavic 631, one of the most sought-after cranks of any era, was also known as the "starfish" crank. It had a 130mm bolt circle, which limits the inner ring to a 38 or 39, and that's a major mark against it by our current standards. But the crank is nice-looking and has a low Q-Factor (is narrow between the pedals). Note the buckle pads on the toe straps are quite inside out, but they still work. Rubber bands dangling from the bottle cages are useful as anti-wheel flop devices for parking. Around the valve step, then the down tube, then the valve stem again.

Merinos caused that?

by Woody Lane, PhD.

Slamdunk Callahan held up the newspaper. "Look at these real estate ads! Are we going crazy? It seems that everyone is looking for land — buy, buy, buy, then sell. Make a fortune, guaranteed. It reminds me of the dot-com frenzy ten years ago. At least our sheep industry is stable."

We were sitting at a corner table in the Confused Chromosome Club, quaffing root beers. I looked up from my glass and sighed. History and Slamdunk really didn't get along.

"Well, maybe it's stable now," I said, "but not in the past. We've been there before with sheep."

"OK big guy, when did folks ever go crazy about sheep?"

"Try 1810. Right here in the U.S. — with merinos. Sheep caused enough hysterical speculation to make the dot-com bubble look like child's play. Not only that, but the merino craze changed things that still affect us today."

Slamdunk put down the paper. "Merinos live in Australia and South Africa and New Zealand. They're a rare breed here in this country."

"Not back then. In the early 1800s, merinos were king, even in places like Vermont and Ohio. Their story in America began, more or less, in 1801."

"Well ... " I could almost hear Slamdunk turning the mental gears, "Hmmm ... that rings a bell. Wasn't there a famous ram named Dominic or Don Ameche or something?"

"Close. But a little history first. Merinos were originally developed in Spain, probably from Roman stock. The Spanish royalty jealously guarded their monopoly on this genetics through the 1700s. Kind of like the way the New Zealand currently forbids export of their Drysdale sheep. In any case, back then, trying to export merinos from Spain was not good for your health. Although the Spanish king occasionally gave royal gifts for political purposes, like the merinos he gave to France that were raised near the village of Rambouillet, he looked dimly on anyone else trying to break his monopoly.

"But in 1795" I continued, "Spain signed a treaty with France that secretly permitted them to obtain additional merinos. Around that time, a fellow named DuPont came to the U.S. to escape the French Revolution. He was interested in agriculture, and with his French connections, he successfully imported one merino ram lamb from France in 1801 — the famous "Don Pedro" ram. One thing led to another. Dupont

bought a large farm in Delaware, used Don Pedro and his progeny extensively, spread those merino genes to thousands of sheep in the area, and built a woolen mill that specialized in merino fleeces. Also around that time, two other well-known Americans who raised sheep — Robert Livingston, who had signed the Declaration of Independence, and David Humphreys who had served with Washington in the Revolutionary War — imported merinos from Europe and published glowing reports about their fleece qualities and wool prices. The market reacted immediately. Remember — the cotton gin was still a new invention, so the number one fabric in the world was wool. And merino wool gave the fledgling American textile industry something to crow about. By 1810, the demand for Spanish merinos had exploded throughout America."

"Dupont? Isn't that the same name as the mega-giant chemical company — the one that makes plastics and herbicides and nearly everything else?"

"Same name, but it was Dupont's son who built the original gunpowder factory that became the huge corporation. The kid did well." It was too tempting, to say, "Maybe that's why the merino demand was so explosive."

Slamdunk ignored my humor. "So how do those Spanish merinos relate to our real estate boom?"

"Prices and speculation, my friend, prices and speculation. By 1810, average merino rams were selling for over \$1,000. No town could consider itself in the sheep industry unless it boasted a \$1,000 ram. And we should consider this: these prices occurred when the average daily wage of a worker was only eighty cents, which equates to a wage of \$250 per year. By my calculations, that's a 4:1 ratio of ram price to annual wages."

I continued, "Let's put those merino prices in today's money. Assume a worker today earns a modest salary of \$20,000. Using the same 4:1 ratio, the merino ram of 1810 would be worth \$80,000 today. Have you seen any rams sell for that lately?"

"In other words, back then, merino rams could be fantastic investments. And everybody got into the market — military officers, government officials, sea captains. Buying and selling merinos reached a feverish pitch. For example, a local census in 1815 listed 8,000 sheep within one mile of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and nearly all of them were merinos. The War of 1812 helped keep wool prices high, but then prices plummeted when that war ended. A pound of fine wool that had brought

\$1.50 in Boston in 1815 sold for only 35 cents two years later. The merino market collapsed."

I grabbed a handful of peanuts and took a sip of my root beer. "Speaking of Pittsfield ... in 1807, merinos were so popular that a fellow named Elkanah Watson brought a couple of his prize merinos to the public square in downtown Pittsfield to show them off. No doubt a publicity stunt, but what could a guy do when he didn't have an Internet website? Anyway, in 1810, Watson convinced twenty-five fellow shepherds to show their merinos in the town square. The public loved it, and the local Berkshire Agricultural Society decided to sponsor it as their annual agricultural show, or as they preferred to call it, an agricultural fair. The idea caught on. Within ten years, counties all around New England were holding their own sheep fairs. Other states picked up on this as well. With their popularity, these fairs began to attract side events, like woolen companies displaying their merchandise, and local women holding spinning competitions. Soon each county was proudly sponsoring its own annual fair. And they still do. Elkanah Watson's original display of merinos in Pittsfield was the beginning of our county fairs.

"Also, you remember the old American method of classifying wool — those terms of half-blood, three-eighths blood, quarter blood? Where do you think those terms came from? Full-blood merinos were the gold standard in the U.S., and the market needed a way of relating the other types of wool to that gold standard."

Slamdunk thought for a while, ruminating on his peanuts. "When you described those original imports, you said 'more or less'. Does that mean that there was

something else, at a different time?"

"Well, now that you mention it..." I sipped my root beer, "there was an earlier importation, kind of."

"Don't tell me that someone did something illegal?" Slamdunk looked horrified. "I would be shocked, I tell you, just shocked if our sheep industry had engaged in unscrupulous activities!"

I ignored the barb. "It occurred in 1792 — nine years before Dupont imported his Don Pedro ram. A fellow named William Foster from Boston was in Spain on business. A shrewd Yankee, he saw the potential for Spanish merinos, but he was also aware of the harsh penalties for exporting them. So he enlisted the help of some locals, cloak and dagger and all that, and at great risk managed to smuggle a ram and two ewes onto a ship. He risked his life for those merinos. Anyway, they eventually arrived safely in Massachusetts and were transported to a friend's farm in Cambridge. Foster had to sail back to Europe quickly, but he left instructions with his friend. Apparently his communication skills weren't exactly perfect. A few months later, Foster inquired about the sheep, and in due time received an enthusiastic letter from his friend, who said that those animals cooked up just fine and were delicious. And could he send more."

— — — —

Woody Lane is a nutritionist in Roseburg, Oregon. He operates an independent consulting business "Lane Livestock Services" and teaches nutrition, sheep, beef cattle, and forage workshops across the United States and Canada. email: woody@woodylane.com

This story first appeared in *Shepherd Magazine*.

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Another in a category that is quickly becoming known as Crank-Forward designs, the all yellow-and-black Rans FUSION.

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The Rans Fusion, a “crank-forward” bike

By certain ingrained and tightly held ancient standards, the bike up there looks odd. But hidden beneath its *whoa, Nelly* appearance is a lot of brains, comfort, and a fantastic design for lots of riding.

RANS, the well-known (and mentioned here just in case you're out of that loop) Kansas-based recumbent maker, calls it a “crank-forward” design, and we'll abbreviate that from now on as CFD. You may recall an earlier review of the Vision (brand) Thoroughbred (model)—the first modern CFD bike. Vision was a recumbent maker, too. It closed down two years ago, and a handful of other CFDs sprang right up.

We're reviewing the Fusion because the RANS guys came by with it, and one thing led to another. They let me have it for a couple of weeks.

Like other CF designs, the Fusion was immediately amazingly comfortable. The wide seat and high bars made sure of that. I felt like I was sitting in a motorless go-cart, or a lounge chair; pretty good.

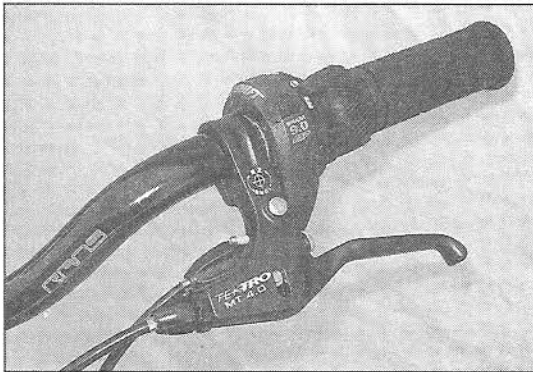
One thing about all CFD bikes is that, because of the low angle of the seat tube (37°-39° on Rans models), you can move the seat to the right pedaling height and flat-foot the ground while you're on the saddle. If for whatever reason you cannot risk a fall and the added security of the instant-human-kickstand makes the dif-

ference between relaxing and fretting, then the Fusion will let you relax.

The Fusion, like the T-bred before it, is not two-thumbs up on steep hills. I couldn't put my body weight over the pedals to help accelerate from stop signs, or help climb hills. I rode a couple of long and steep and familiar climbs that I do all the time and I know how long it takes me, and on one of them, a 2000-foot elevation gain that usually takes me 37 to 39 minutes if I'm halfway trying, took me 49:50. Another climb that usually takes me 16:30 took me 22:11. If you're counting seconds.

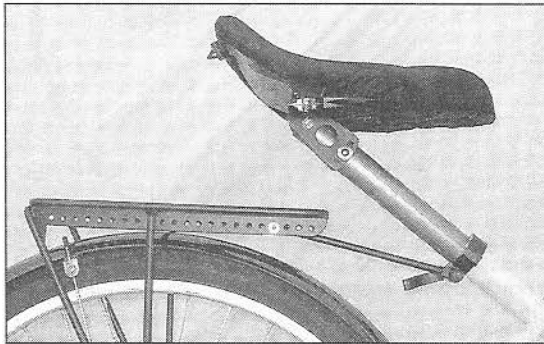
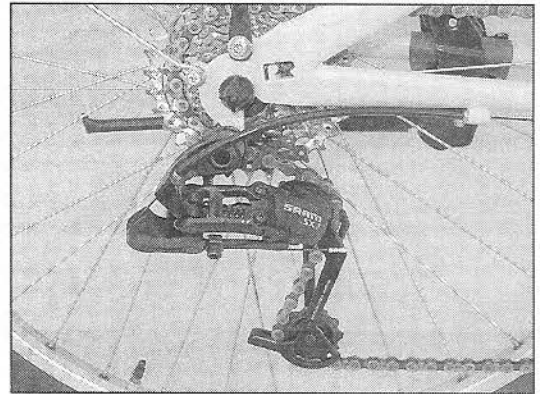
That's just the fact, but don't overreact to it. Use a regular old bike if you're climbing hills. Or if you're nimbly noodling downtown on-and-off sidewalks, and now and then sprinting through a yellow light—because quick accelerations in downtown traffic aren't the Fusion's strength, either.

What is, is flats and downhill. True, you have to get up the hill to enjoy the descent, but if the hills you have to get up are more measly than the monsters out here, don't worry about it. It'll still take you longer, but on a short hill all that means is you get a bit longer workout, and burning calories so we don't get fat is one reason we ride bikes, isn't it? It's not all about fresh air in the face.

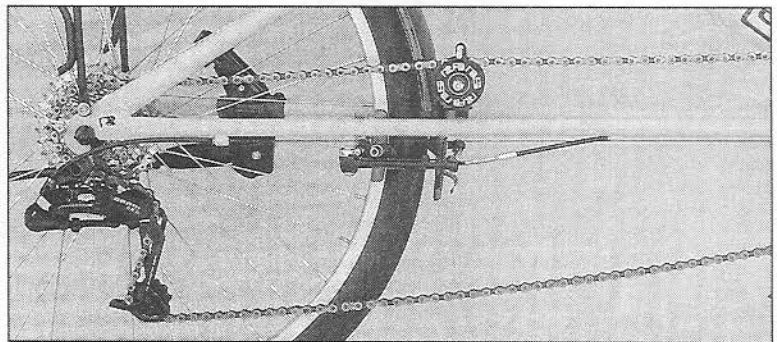


LEFT: SRAM twist-grips worked perfectly. I wish twist-grips had a friction option—we'd use them now & then if they did. Tektro brake levers.

RIGHT: It looks like a rear derailleur, a SRAM model with a cut-out cage. We don't see many of those around here, but I hear they work fine, and this one sure seemed to. So, no problems, there.



This saddle is as comfortable as it looks like it ought to be. It's wide and firmly plush, and as you pedal it rocks a bit in an ergonomic sort of manner. It's hard to compare it to a regular bike saddle, but let me say this: If I had to sit down on one saddle all day long and write a paper or read a book, this one would win. For pedaling, it works great, too. Which is nice, since on a CFD bike you virtually never get off of the saddle.



So much for our bikes having the longest chainstays in the bizness. The FUSION's chainstays make ours look like pencil stubs. They're one mile long, which is necessary and practical and normal for this style of bike. Since you're sitting back so far, the chainstays have to be super long, just to get the wheel behind you, so you don't sit on top of the rear hub and feel every bump. There may be other reasons, too. In any case, it means a super long chain, too, which is why the chain roller/keeper thing is there.

Around here we have a great network of flat, converted rail trails, and the Fusion is perfect for those; or any flattish riding, really. If you have carpal tunnel hands and ride only in flattish areas, the Fusion is the bike to get. But you don't have to have carpal tunnel to like it. If it were lugged, I'd get one myself, because it's such a pleasant bike to ride. On many of my rides I'd be thinking, "Hey now, would this be any better on my (Quickbeam, Rivendell, Atlantis, Saluki, Rambouillet)?" and I usually distracted myself before answering.

RANS makes another CFD bike, the ZENETIK, that has skinny 700C wheels, an aluminum frame and carbon fork, and weighs about 7 pounds lighter than the FUSION. I rode one of those, too, and with the same effort, fitness, and breakfast, I rode six-and-a-half miles and two thousand feet up the local mountain in 49:50 on the FUSION and in 47:15 on the ZENETIK. I ride it in 37:00 to 38:00 on my normal bike. It costs more, and for quicker rides or something may be the way to go.

Back to the FUSION: I like it best for what it's best at: Super comfortable riding on flattish roads, and any downhill that dares get in the way. My position was relaxed, and that position seems to relax your mind, too. I don't feel as aggressive. As a rider-of-uprights, I

felt a bit like an animal baring its belly, and even though I could put my foot down in a second, I still felt more trapped on it than I do on my normal bike. But, there are certain times when the position is a nice break from normal, and overall, I liked the bike a lot. If I was a bit richer, I'd get a FUSION, lugged or not.

A recumbent rider might think they climb great, and are nimble in traffic, because recumbents don't exactly. But every design has its strong points, and I'd say the strong points for the Fusion and Zenetik are comfort and flattish riding, and rides of less than two hours.

Whether this or any other CFD bike makes sense for you is one thing, but I think this style of bike serves an important purpose, and should be the first choice for lots of riders and lots of people who don't ride but want to. It's an example of a thoughtful design that can come about when bikes aren't designed for competition.

Everybody likes to pedal a bike, everybody likes to sit in an EZ-Boy, everybody wants to be comfortable, and that's what these bikes are all about. I had to address the climbing issue, because they flat-out don't climb like uprights, but they do many things better, and if you don't need one in your bike rack now, you probably know somebody who does.



A be-fendered A. Homer Hilsen ready for bags, baskets, whatever you got. Stuffed with function and good design, it's a beaut to look at, and it gallops over everything it sees. The final one will have mid-stay braze-ons for the rear rack, double-tapered seat stays, and a non-paper head badge.

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Introducing the A. Homer Hilsen. A Genuine, Official *Country Bike*

The Saluki, our 650B-wheel du-all bike, stops at 62cm, because 650B wheels look too dinky on a bike any bigger. But it's such a great, all-purpose bike that we wanted to do the same kind of bike in bigger sizes for riders who can't fit it. So we're coming out with its 700C equivalent, in sizes 57 through 67, and its name is the A. Homer Hilsen.

During its development, the A. Homer Hilsen was named the Honus Wagner, after the early 20th century Pittsburgh Pirate shortstop. You couldn't be around here for fifteen minutes without hearing *Honus Wagner, Honus Wagner*.

But it turns out *Honus Wagner* is trademarked. So we contacted the firm that represents the Heirs of Honus (and Marilyn Monroe, Louis Armstrong, and about fifty other famous people), and started two months of talks and negotiations. Not full-time, mind you. We were optimistic enough to have completed the decal art for Honus Wagner, but then the contract included a few unexpecteds that killed the deal for us (who were already stretched to the max), so we didn't sign. Instead, we holed up in our Model-Name Think Tank, and after about an hour and a half, emerged groggy but giddy with the Pope's Diamond of names. It is one of life's great mysteries, why A. Homer Hilsen hadn't already been taken.

We explored names from Middle Earth, geography, birds, fish, and mammals. I never liked combo-computer names, like Lexus & Futura & Diamante, that sound precise, smug, and high tech. As bike names go, A. Homer Hilsen is their antithesis, and oddly enough, it was free.

The A. Homer Hilsen is the most versatile bike it is possible to make with sidepulls. It's a road bike you can tour with, a touring bike you can ride trails with, a trail bike that's fast enough for clubs rides on the road. It's a brevet bike, a commuter, a daily everything bike with the appearance of a classic road bike, but with a five-times bigger bag of tricks. It is a Country Bike.

This boasting isn't wishful thinking or fluff lies. It's versatility comes the way versatility always comes—by means of properly dimensioned tubes and properly located bridges, which lead to the clearances that fenders with manly tires need.

Up until now, that clearance has been impossible with hi-class sidepulls. The 57mm reach Shimanos, like the ones that come stock on our Rambouillet, are fantastic brakes for tires up to about a 32, and with the right frame details (such as we put into our Rambouillet), you can use them with tires up to 37mm wide. That's great!

But when you ride 32-40mm tires most of the time, and want sidepulls and fenders, the smoke signals are clear: It's time to make A. Homer Hilsen your blood brother.

Don't get one if you LIKE THE IDEA of a versatile bike, but can't let go of your racing fantasies. Lasso it only if 95 percent of the time you'll ride tires bigger than 700x28, and want to fit fenders with tires up to 700x38. For all purpose road-n-trail riding, that's not a bad way to go.

The plan was too have Toyo make the frames, and in time that'll likely happen. But Toyo needed a longer lead time than we could live with, so we contacted our old friends at Waterford, and since they had the capacity and were game, they'll make the first fifty or so.

Don't go thinking, "I gotta get a Waterford-made one," out of a belief that a Toyo-built isn't every bit as good. Both shops make superbe frames, and we're equally proud of both. The long term plan is to send work to whoever can meet our quality standards first, and our delivery requirements second. So, that's that.

The tubing will be road-gauge, lighter than Atlantis tubing, about the same as Rambouillet tubing—the idea being that it's not a sidepull version of our Atlantis touring

bike, but more like a Rambouillet, with country-bike clearance, for a larger range of tires and fenders.

Inevitably, inescapably, beyond a mere *most probably*, there will be the question of which bike to go with—the Saluki, the Bleriot, or the A. Homer Hilsen—if your size lets you ride either of those. We say get the Bleriot if you want the best value and are on a budget. Don't take that to mean the others aren't stupendous values, but a frame and fork for \$750 or a complete bike for \$2,000 or a bit under is impossible without the lower cost of Taiwan labor. Period.

Choosing between the A. Homer Hilsen and the functionally identical Saluki is more difficult. If 650B wheels still scare you—despite their increasing popularity and availability—or if you plan to use the bike for Third World travel, get the A. Homer Hilsen. I have one of each, and have been riding them both equally, in identical conditions, loaded and unloaded, on roads and trails, and I can't tell any difference. You can pick by color or name or the slight differ-

ence in price. A Saluki costs you less because it costs us less, not because it's less of a bike.

The A. Homer Hilsen isn't revolutionary, but *retro*lutionary, or maybe *resurrectionary*. Almost every non-racing bike made before the Era of Racing's Influence—from the Schwinn Varsity to the Dawes Realm Rider—was laid out a lot like the A. Homer Hilsen is. What makes it special now, is that the A. Homer Hilsen is a fancier, better bike by far. It costs a lot more, too.

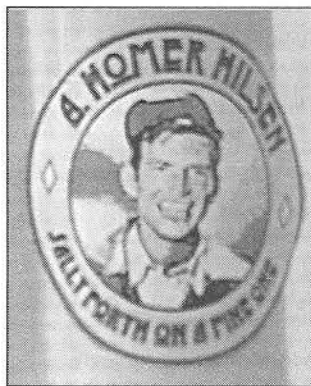
Now with the Silver sidepull about to happen, it's easier to design a good bike like this. You could just as easily put on a Dia-Compe centerpull or a Paul, but centerpulls of any kind still give some folks the willies (not me), and we expect most of the A.H.H. bikes to be built up with the Silver sidepull.

If you want a special bike with a smart design, beautifully made by hand with fire, steel, and lugs—get an A. Homer Hilsen—the first semi-official Country Bike. I hope it's not the last one.



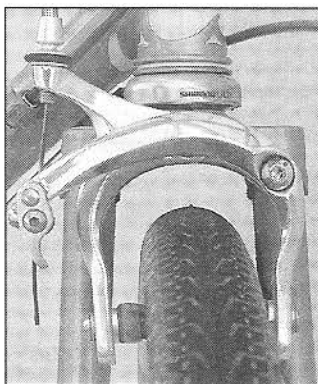
ABOVE: The down tube decal. The Honus Wagner decal looked about the same. Both are based on the Dyer font, but normalized some for easier readability. Dyer himself might not agree. The letters are cream-filled with a dark blue outline and a fine gold halo, and are made in North Carolina, by Screen Specialties—easily the best decal maker in the country, and in all likelihood, the world. Nope, they won't sell you Bstone decals.

RIGHT: The seat tube decal has the same letter-coloring as the downtube letters, and the "omer hilsens" are dark blue. The background is cream, to match the head tube. It is 5 3/4-inches tall, and will sit just above the seat tube bottle bosses. Just for the record.



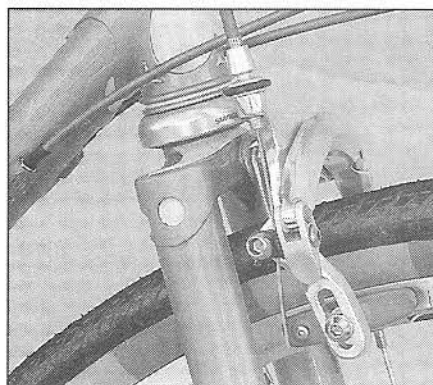
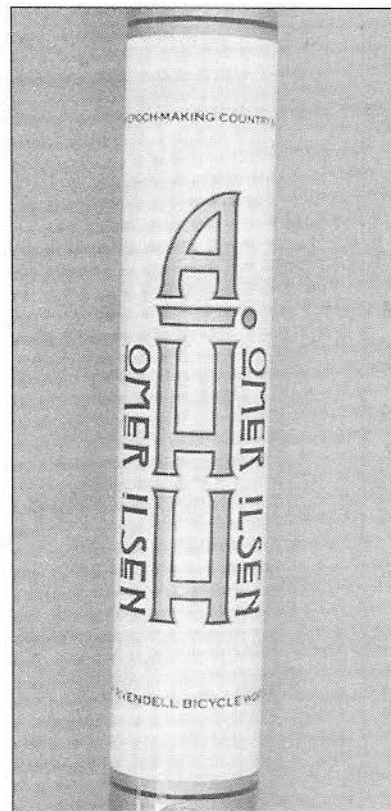
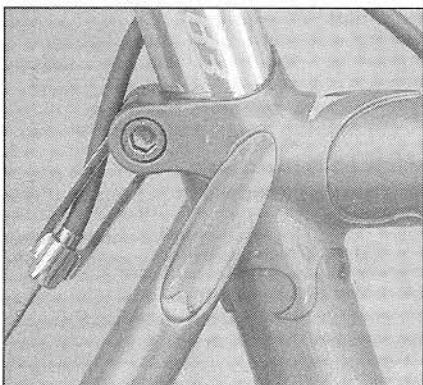
LEFT: This paper mock-up head badge of Eb Dawson (of Green Acres) was an early front-runner, but we were concerned about lawsuits, so we ultimately went to another style that's still being developed. Sorry, Eb fans. We know you're out there.

RIGHT: A 700x35mm Pasela tire easily fits under the Silver sidepull. The frame will fit up to a 40mm tire with a fender.



LEFT: The sample was built-up with a Silver sidepull up front and a Dia-Compe centerpull in back, which is why you see the cable hanger there. Also, the seat stay shown is a single-taper 16mm job, and the finals may have double-tapered stays. Probably. We'll see, it all depends, but probably.

RIGHT: A 700x35mm Pasela tire easily fits under the Silver sidepull. You can fit up to a 38mm tire with a fender. Even a 40, actually, but we don't want to brag. The fork crown is the same we use on the Saluki, Rambouillet, Quickbeam, and many custom Rivendells. Although these pix don't show it, the A.H.H. has braze-ons for Mark's rack, on the fork and the seat stays.



Turning an A. Homer Hilsen *frame* into an A. H. Hilsen *bike*

The frame lends itself to lots of different parts kits, but here are some good suggestions. In these examples, we've put Moustache H'bars on the trail-riding version, but don't take that to mean you can't tour or sport-ride with them, or that drops ain't for trail-riding. These are examples only. It's mainly the wheels that define the character and range of the bike, anyway. Likewise, gearing should suit you. If your trail rides are flat, use the 27t "Speedy Homer" cassette; and if your club rides are social and hilly, use a 32-tooth. There are lots of ways to personalize your build, and we're good at helping you pick the best combo. We guarantee only harmonious Hilsens. (If it turns o

Speedy Homer

a light road bike

PART	DETAIL	PRICE
FRAME & HEADSET:		\$1600
S. POST:	Nitto S83	\$60
STEM:	Tech Dlx	\$42
BAR:	Sobabar	\$70
BR.LEVR:	Shimano	\$48
BRAKES:	Silver	\$85
F. DER:	IRD compact	\$55
R. DER:	XT RR	\$90
SHIFTERS:	Barend	\$70
CRANK:	Sugino XD	\$110
BB:	Tange	\$40
WHEELS:	Mavic sport rim, DT butted spokes, Shimano LX hubs.	\$270
CASSETTE:	x9/12-27	\$55
CHAIN:	9sp	\$21
TIRE:	700x32/pr	\$70
TAPE:	cloth	\$10
PEDAL:	?	\$?
SADDLE:	B.17 ti	\$150
ASSEMBLY:		\$210
Subtotal		\$2965

Notes

The XT rear shifts well on 27t cassettes, but has capacity to 34—useful if you later go lower. For the lightest wheels, use kevlar-bead tires. Don't need a triple?—build it as a double. Shifters—either indexed Shimano (with friction option) or non-indexed Silver, with super smooth action, if you don't want the indexing. We can do STI as well.

Our assembly is absurdly fastidious, and at \$210, a bargain. Each build takes 5-6 hours. Too long! But really good. Freight goes at the actual rate—we don't profit from it, not a cent.

Woody Homer

touring/ramblin'

PART	DETAIL	PRICE
FRAME & HEADSET:		\$1600
S. POST:	Nitto C. Fellow	\$55
STEM:	Tech Dlx	\$42
BAR:	Noodle	\$52
BR.LEVR:	Shimano	\$48
BRAKES:	DiaCompe ctrpull	\$85
F. DER:	IRD compact	\$55
R. DER:	LX RR	\$64
SHIFTERS:	Silver barend	\$75
CRANK:	Sugino XD	\$110
BB:	Tange	\$40
WHEELS:	Synergy rim, DT butted spokes, Shimano LX hubs.	\$270
CASSETTE:	x8/11-32	\$50
CHAIN:	8sp	\$15
TIRE:	700x35/pr	\$70
TAPE:	cork	\$12
PEDAL:	?	\$?
SADDLE:	B.17	\$70
ASSEMBLY:		\$210
Subtotal		\$2823

Notes

This has an 8sp cassette, because the chain is easier to replace a link on, but that's a small point, and if you're predisposed to 9sp, get it. Basically, this is the most versatile set-up, only because the tires are midsized. There's no reason not to get a ti-rail B.17 and the lighter Sobabar is far from a dumb choice, if you're weight-conscious tourist.

Our assembly is a bargain at \$210. Each build takes 5-6 hours, and is nursed along with insane attention to detail. Shipping cost is the actual rate—we don't profit from it.

Lewis & Hilsen

trails

PART	DETAIL	PRICE
FRAME & HEADSET:		\$1600
S. POST:	Nitto Frog	\$75
STEM:	DirDrop	\$42
BAR:	Moustache	\$50
BR.LEVR:	Shimano	\$48
BRAKES:	Silver sidepulls	\$85
F. DER:	IRD compact	\$55
R. DER:	LX RR	\$64
SHIFTERS:	Barend	\$65
CRANK:	Sugino XD	\$110
BB:	Tange	\$40
WHEELS:	Synergy rim, DT butted spokes, Shimano LX hubs.	\$270
CASSETTE:	x8/11-32	\$30
CHAIN:	8sp	\$15
TIRE:	700x37/pr	\$70
TAPE:	cork	\$12
PEDAL:	?	\$?
SADDLE:	B.17 Special	\$95
ASSEMBLY:		\$210
Subtotal		\$2836

Notes

A drop-bar trail versions make just as much sense, so long as you get the bars high enough. The DirtDrop stem is Nitto-approved for dirt riding and the Tech Dlx is not, but when Nitto "approves" a bar for trails, it assumes huge foolish Americans doing dumb things, and if you're skilled and sane and midweight, no problem.

Brian, Mark, or Daniel (until he goes to Germany for a year) make sure you get more than your moneysworth with that \$210 build fee. The bikes are tight, smooth, and work perfectly.

What does it ride like, though?

The A. Homer Hilson feels like any Rivendell-designed bike. When you get the right size and set the bike up in a normal way, you have a good position and feel comfortable on it immediately, no matter how new it is, no matter what you're used to.

With 32mm tires pumped to 95 psi, it feels like a fast road bike. Not a race bike, thank goodness, but a fast-enough road bike. It has zip. With 35mm tires at 40psi, it feels perfect for fire roads. It turns easily, but doesn't overreact to wind. The most we've put on it so far is about 22 pounds, and it handled that wonderfully, even on fire trails, and that was with a 185-lb rider. If you weigh less, you can carry more. All in all, it combines the best of a late-'60s road bike with the best modern materials and craftsmanship. It's a good, smooth, bike you can ride anywhere.

A. Homer Hilsen Geometry

Size	STA	HTA	R	TT	D	CS	SO
57	72	72	5.2	57	8	45	83.1
59	72	72	5.2	58	8	45	85
61	72	72	5.2	59	8	45	86.9
63	72	72	5.2	60.5	8	45	88.8
65	72	72.5	47.5	62.5	8	45	90.7
67	72	72.5	47.5	64.5	8	45	92.6

Size is from center of bb to top of seat tube. Standover (SO) is calculated to the center of the top of the top tube (TT), and is based on a 700x35 Panaracer Pasela tire, with a radius of 345mm. And it's approximate. **Reminder: Why nothing smaller than a 57?** Because its equivalent is the Saluki, and in sizes smaller than 57cm, the Saluki's 650B wheels are more appropriate and allow better proportions and frame designs. From 57 to 62cm, both sizes work. But then as you go bigger than a 62, the 700c wheel is better. All numbers subject to change on a whim without notice, but that's unlikely to happen.

Sizing

(PBH = pubic bone height; SH = saddle height)

PBH	SH	Size
84 to 85	73.5-75	57
85 to 87	75.5-77	59
86 to 88.5	77.5-79	61
88.5 to 93.5	79.5-84	63
94 to 98	83.5-88	65
99 to 102	88.5-92	67

How to measure: Refer to p. 83 of the catalogue. Any questions, ask. If you have a Rambouillet that fits, just go down one centimeter.

Colors, Graphics

A nice blue with cream details. Custom colors, + \$100.

Get the whole dang kit-n-kaboodle

By 9/2 we'll have AHH cycling caps (\$10), bottles (\$4), and T-shirts (\$18).

All half price with the purchase of an AHH frame or bike.

Availability

We're ordering them built as we get orders for them, and as I write this we've sold maybe a dozen. You should count on about 3 to 4 months from the time you order to the time you get it, but it's difficult to guarantee anything with hand-built bikes, so if you're in a real bind, the A. Homer Hilsen isn't the bike to order. Although we expect good delivery from September on.

**Frameset: \$1600
Whole bike: (\$2900)**

size	part no.
57cm	50-628
59cm	50-629
61cm	50-630
63cm	50-631
65cm	50-632
67cm	50-633

See p. 46 for a better indication of the cost, but \$1600/\$2900 are good numbers to think on. There are always ways to add \$500 or subtract \$100 or so.

The 1st Annual A. H. Hilsen Poetry/Songwriting Contest

Write an original poem of any length, or rewrite the words to a well-known song, using A. Homer Hilsen (bike or person) as the hero of the song. You may use the letter E. Submit entries to grant@rivbike.com. In the subject field, write Your Name/AHH entry. We'll publish them on the site and maybe a few in a future RR, and if we like them a lot or admire your bravery, we'll give you a \$20 gift certificate. All submissions become our property. You can use them too, but consider your reputation. They don't have to be good. Here's one to get you going. It's best read with either a French or a combo Scottish/Indian accent.

A Grand Ol' Life With A. Homer Hilsen

'Tho travel wide and far, do I
O'er stoney paths, 'tween fields-o'-rye
Past foggy crags, where the lost sheep bleat
I tell you true, 'tis no grand feat—
I ride A. Homer Hilsen!

Aye, my bike do take me far
To lands I couldna' see by car
Beyond the reach of mail or phone
But ne'er do I feel alone—
I'm with A. Homer Hilsen!

At times it is m' campin' bike
When out to wilder lands I strike
With crusty loaf and shelter small
My worries—I forget them all
My balm: A. Homer Hilsen!

The siren's call o'-the race-man's steed
Tempts me not—it's a fragile breed.
'Tis steel & lugs, joined strong with fire
And room for mudguards & fatty tire
Told me: A. Homer Hilsen!

Sure, now and then I get the urge
For speed; and I be known to surge
Far up the road, at such a pace
Above, the geese concede the race
To my A. Homer Hilsen

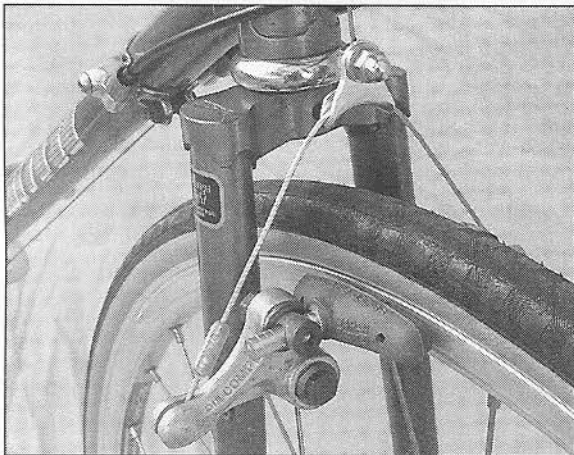
So, day by day and week by week
There is no other mount I seek
My stalwart pal in cream and blue
I'll strive to be worthy of you—
Majestic A. H. Hilsen!

Alas, years hence when I'm rid' out
My joints so stiff; so bad's my gout
That I canna' push the pedals 'round,
An' I stay at home all armchair-bound
I'll bequeath A. Homer Hilsen...

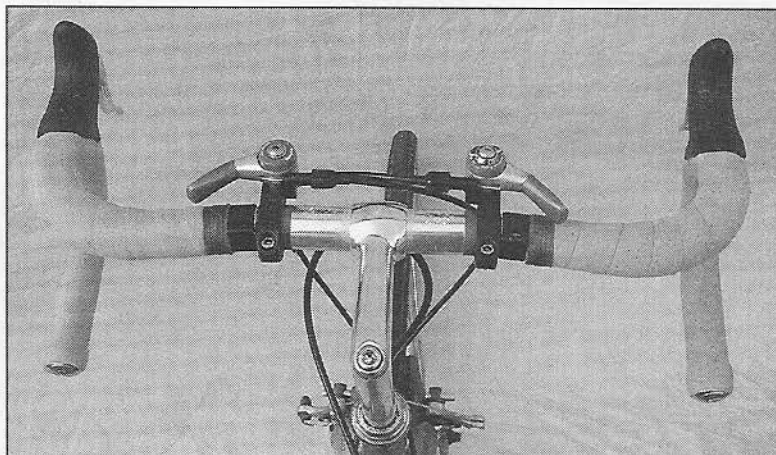
To a lad I know, his character strong
His smile as wide as a June day's long
Who'll ride her on adventures new
Of the sort I canno' longer do
Roam on, A. Homer Hilsen!

And if that plucky lad has time
Mayhap he'll regale, in song or rhyme
Me, after dinner one fine night
(A long shot, sure—but still, he might!)
—With tales of A. H. Hilsen!

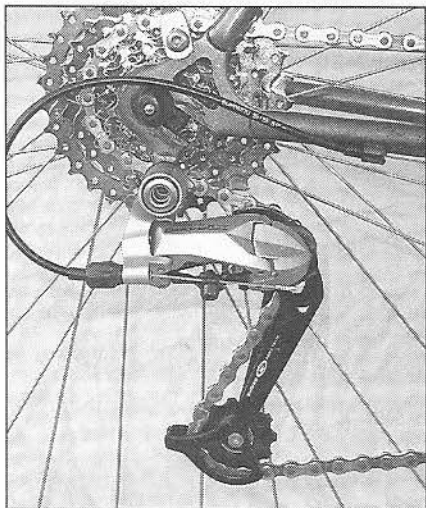
Oy, when I'm long gone & that lad's
grown old
His rides no longer swift, nor bold
His joints, alak, all stiffened up
Then soon 'twill be his own grandpup
Who rides A. Homer Hilsen!



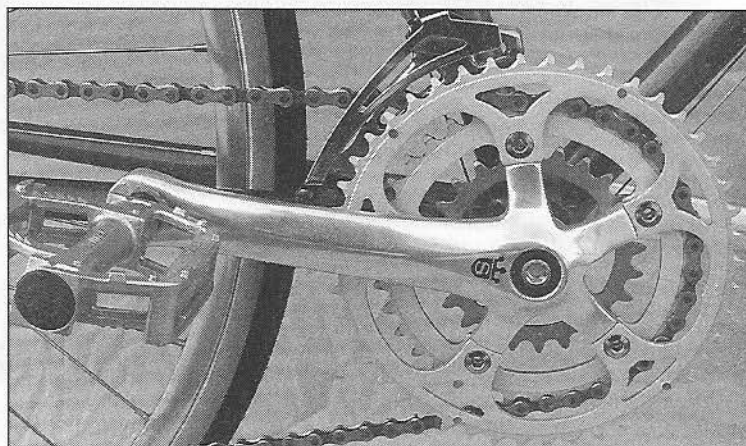
We kept the brakes, put on new pads, and swapped the 27-inch wheels for 700c. Most 27-inch wheel bikes have frames better designed for 700c wheels than most modern made-for-700c frames. Did I say that right?



Clean, simple, easy, wonderful, sensible shifting. Try it and you won't not like it. It kind of rules out a handlebar bag, but a mini front rack and a Little Loafer or some other kind of small bag will do. Paul's Thumbsies are smart, smart. They're mounts for Shimano bar-end shifters. Good job, Paul.



The Shimano LX Rapid-Rise rear derailleur is our top-seller these days, and it ought to be. Reverse action is easy to learn and makes a lot of sense, and it should probably be the normal way, but it's not.



The crank is the one almost all of our bikes get—the Sugino XD2. It's the best value in a crank today, and in a 110% sane world it would be the most popular crank on every non-race bike \$1000 and above.



Here's Greer, \$900 poorer but a bike happier, with her made-over Miyata. Look at the high bars, low gears, interruptor brake levers, and convenient-as-all-get-out shifters.

Yes, it's the same frame, but it's a nice frame. Well-made in Japan, still straight, no damage to it, and certainly no reason to retire it in favor of a much lesser new frame without its rugged heart and tasteful styling.

If Greer rides through the Winter, she should put on fenders, especially since there's room.

Shortly after this photo was taken, Greer got a Big Loafer for the rear rack, and it fit perfectly. The saddle? Well, it's no looker, but if it works it works, and she says it feels good, so why change it now?

A little shellac on the bar tape? Sure. That way they won't get as dirty.

Cycle Tucson Update

by Maynard Hershon

Early last November, as you've read, I got scared off my bike. I'd been riding year-'round without a significant break since 1974. Sure, I'd been frightened but I never quit. This time I climbed off for seven months.

Two months after I stepped off the bicycle, I got knocked off my nearly stopped motorcycle by a car. The car came around a corner in my lane. The result would've been the same had I been pedaling - or walking in the street.

The collision— my first with a car in 42 years of motorcycling, totaled my motorcycle and broke a vertebra in my lower back.

I replaced the Kawasaki, my only motor vehicle, and began motorcycling again, more convinced than ever that Tamar and I live in the wrong place. I moved here for the cycling, no kidding, but Tucson has ruined it for me.

I'm struggling to maintain a reasoned distaste for this city but it's a losing battle. Perhaps I'm way off-base about this place. Maybe it's my biorhythms or something about how I relate to people. Maybe you're reading one guy's faulty judgments about a blameless town, the Athens of the desert SW.

All that said, I feel sure that if Tamar and I continue to ride here despite the warnings, one of us will be hurt. We've been dancing in a minefield. Should we be surprised when we hear loud noises?

I am cycling again, but not often and not enthusiastically. As of today, July 10th, I've been out on my bicycle six or seven times. I do the same ride each time, on the quietest roads I can find here on Tucson's sprawling east side.

Remarkably, while I was off the bike our city received the second-highest award, gold I believe, for bicycle-friendliness. Tucson is said to be trumped in cycling warmth and fuzziness only by Davis, California. Right.

We do, like Davis, have bike paths. Unlike Davis's paths, ours are lightly traveled, unconnected and not generally useful. Our miles of bike lanes are sandwiched between 50mph traffic and strip mall entrances, where no cyclist wants to be.

I can't imagine the standards used by the worthy folks who administer these awards, nor do I know what blessings prompt cities to lobby to win them. Our earning this prestigious award does make me wonder...

If Tucson's streets, bike paths and bike lanes are so safe and inviting, why do so few people commute? I'll bet more cyclists commute in January in Minneapolis or Boston than do here in our temperate winters.

Why do local recreational and sporting cyclists overwhelmingly drive to the starts of rides? If you do that - drive to and from rides and only ride in groups - cycling here is not so bad. It isn't great but it's probably survivable.

Unreasonable as it sounds, I'd like to be able to ride alone on occasion. I'd like to feel safe commuting on my bike. I'd like to pedal to group rides and pedal home afterward. I'd like to get around on my bike - without fear, without sensing or experiencing hostility. I can't do that here.

I've agonized about why it feels so unsafe in Tucson, why folks drive so fast and so carelessly, why they're so mean in or out of their cars. It's not just Arizonans or rednecks or soccer moms or SUV drivers or depressed fat people or senior winter visitors. It's equal opportunity hostility.

All is strife here. Someone wins, someone loses in every situation, every chance meeting - a thousand tiny face-offs a day. Courtesy's so 20th Century. Stroll by the Gap or Abercrombie. Look at the posters. The scowling models aren't trying to make friends, are they? They're cool. They've got attitude.

Attitude is what's happening. Contempt is what's happening. Tinchorns who've never done anything, never been anywhere or been anybody, swagger like rock stars - but you? You're insignificant and in the way.

People need to win, to dominate, to show their disregard for others, especially if the others are easy walking or riding targets.

I think I'll drive close to you and act as if it's no big thing. If you react, I win. If you freak out, I win big. What the hell are you so upset about? I didn't hit you, did I?

Maybe other places are this way. If they are, then they suck too.

At the end of the Reader piece about the day I was scared off my bicycle, Grant and I asked for your letters. We asked for your support or criticism - and for your thoughts (pro or con) about places to live and ride.

Grant received and forwarded to me more than 50 emails in response to those pieces. Nearly every writer identified with my fear and frustration. Only one or two felt I should just shut up and ride my bike.

Many of the letters are profound and personal. Grant and I were repeatedly blown away by the contents, by the sentiments and thoughtfulness and erudition. I am super proud of my connection with Rivendell and with you.

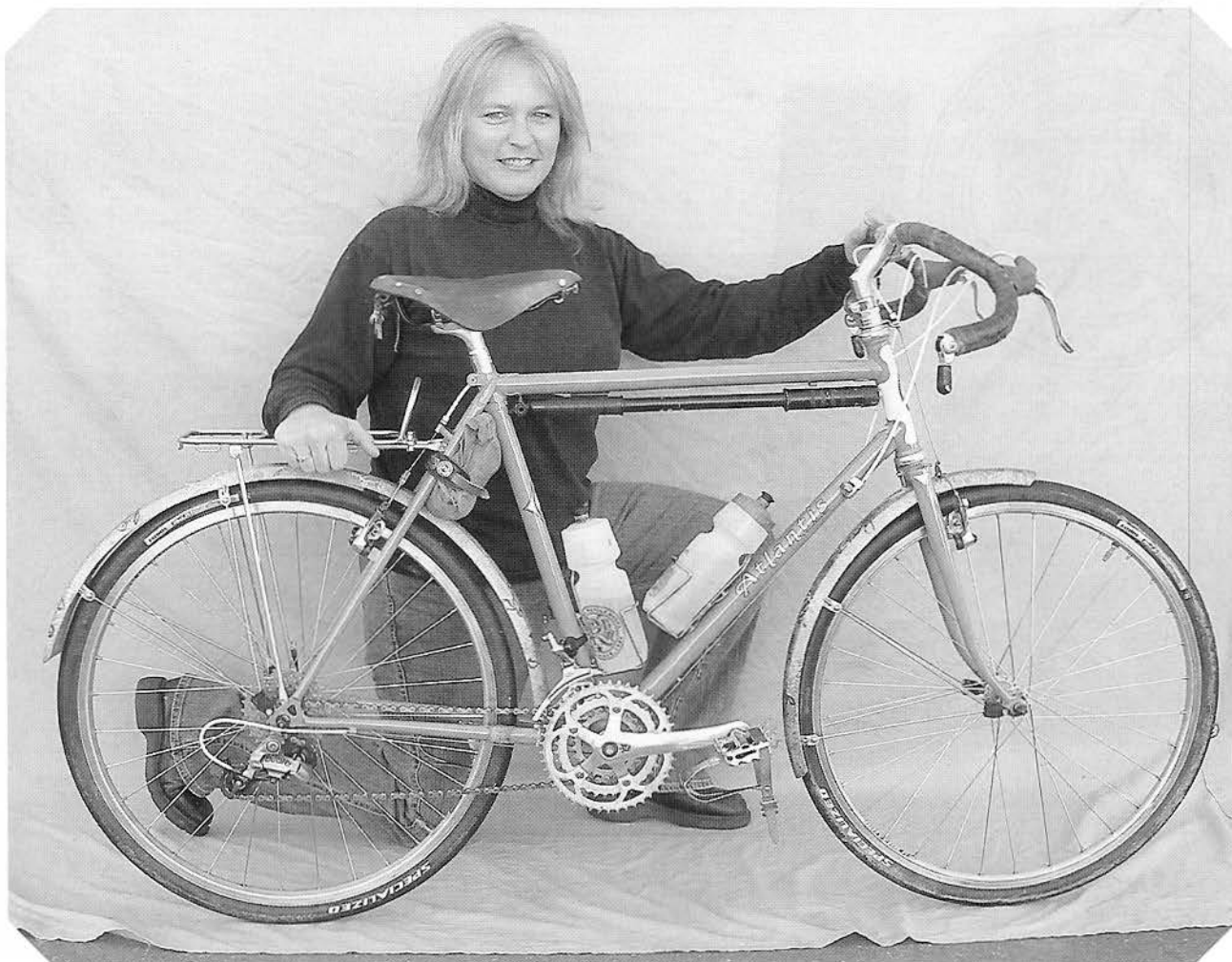
Since I began riding again, my feelings about cycling have changed. I no longer think of myself as a real bike rider. I didn't ride for months. I don't ride in company. I don't train or commute. I don't think about fitness or speed any more.

I no longer wear Lycra. Instead I wear t-shirts and walking shorts. I'd like to explain that attitude, the feeling that Lycra is no longer appropriate attire for the kind of bike rider I've become, but I can't.

I was sure I'd get saddle sores or abrasions on my bottom from riding in casual clothes, but I don't. I don't get waved at by my old friends in their club gear either. I'm wearing a helmet and cleated shoes, but my t-shirt betrays my Fred-ness. I don't mind.

I'm not ready for wool shorts, Teva sandals and a seersucker button-down, but I have drawers full of slick spandex that's no longer in service. Feels like false advertising.

Tamar and I are looking at Portland, Eugene, Austin, Denver and Bloomington, Indiana. We'd like to feel like bike riders again. We'd like to feel we live among civilized folk, not barbarians. In Tucson, that was too much to ask



April and her 47cm Atlantis, equipped with WTB drop bars.

51

Who rides an Atlantis? April does, for one...

NAME: April Rene' Manns

AGE: 43

JOB: Research Analyst-Kaiser Permanente, Oakland CA

YEARS RIDING: 3

HOW I GOT STARTED: My best friend got back into riding after a long hiatus. I saw her joy, so naturally I wanted some joy as well, so I got out there.

TYPICAL RIDE: Usually along the San Francisco Bay Trail in the evenings or early morning to various points of interest. On the weekends I try to climb out of the flatlands into the East Bay Hills or I go over to Mt Diablo in Walnut Creek and take a spin up and then ..down. I also do some riding in the far end of the South Bay where my aforementioned best pal resides, and there we ride the country roads into the Redwoods or to other local small towns. I like to be gone all day whenever possible.

DREAM RIDE: To gather a group of like minded and kind

hearted individuals to do a tour of the Southern states and enjoy those warm water beaches and green rolling hills.

RIDING GOAL: Something I am currently working hard at is being able to keep up with my jack rabbit fast friends on long climbs and not lose my endurance.

WHY THIS BIKE: It spoke to me. Being green to riding, I wanted and needed a stable, well designed bike frame. I fell in love with it on paper and more so when I came for a test ride. I already had a road bike, and it wasn't really that comfortable or fun to ride. My Atlantis is so comfortable I could nap on it. So stable I can make mistakes and not have a big problem. It helps that the bike is beautiful.

FAVORITE BOOK: EAST OF EDEN by John Steinbeck and THE SPARROW by Mary Doria Russell.

FAVORITE MOVIE: Brighton Beach Memoirs, M*A*S*H*, The Others

FOOD: Sashimi, sweet iced tea, cornbread from scratch.

RIVENDELL BICYCLE WORKS

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