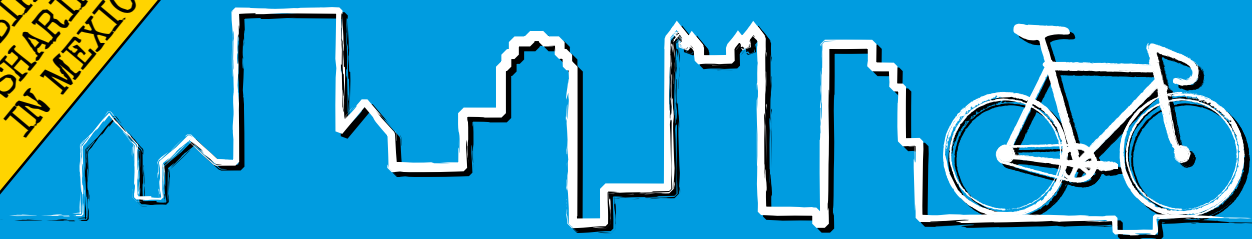


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URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #28 • November 2011



Product News & Reviews • Bike Chain Compatibility • Download this issue free online URBANVELO.ORG

A man wearing a black helmet, a purple t-shirt, and khaki shorts is riding a red bicycle. He has a black backpack on his back and is leaning forward with his right hand on the handlebar and his left hand touching a yellow horizontal stripe on a blue brick wall covered in graffiti. The bicycle is a red chromoly frame with wide tires.

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A brick wall with a yellow horizontal stripe and red graffiti at the top. The graffiti appears to say 'WAKO'. In the bottom left corner, a portion of a bicycle wheel and a red frame are visible.

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URBAN VELO

Issue #28 November 2011



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Editor
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Jeff Guerrero
Publisher
jeff@urbanvelo.org

On the cover: The 2011 North American Cycle Courier Championships in Austin, TX. Photo by John Watson, www.prollyisnotprobably.com

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Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Urban Velo is a reflection of the cycling culture in current day cities. Our readers are encouraged to contribute their words and art.

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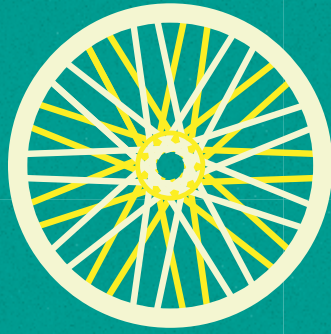
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Navy One

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“Why ride a fixed-gear bike?”

bicycles.stackexchange.com/q/1980



Editor's Statement


By Brad Quartuccio



It's been a summer of roadtrips. For someone so concerned about alternative transportation in the urban environment, it can be rather embarrassing to look back on the few thousand miles burned on the nation's highways in the name of bicycle riding. No cross-country drives or anything, but a number of long weekends with friends in the name of bike polo with a longer jaunt or two thrown in for good measure. Driving for hours, sleeping in close quarters on some accommodating person's floor, getting into and out of trouble in unfamiliar places together.

In the case of polo it has become a genuine culture all its own. Even with explosive growth the scene is still small enough at a national level that people are regularly

traveling to far-off tournaments and you're bound to know people no matter where you turn up to play. Due to the nature of the sport—lots of standing around between games for one—it has become a remarkably tight knit community in just a matter of a few years while remaining open to newcomers. But a microcosm of the larger urban cycling culture.

Close, but still welcoming. Willing to question its own conventions. Urban cycling as a whole needs to remain such as it's latest iteration continues to grow and mature. If the trending continues we're bound to see a lot more people on two wheels out there, no matter what our individual cycling poison may be. 

We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to brad@urbanvelo.org



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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Since 2009, filmmaker and social entrepreneur Dan Austin has worked to bring joy to children around the world. His organization, 88Bikes, delivers bicycles to kids in areas that have been hit with hard times. There's no doubt that there are more pressing needs to be fulfilled in such places, where war, poverty, disease and other hardships make daily life a constant struggle. But the question arises, is life really worth living without joy?

I know from personal experience how a bicycle can raise a child's spirits after disaster. When my own father died in 1983, my world was shattered. I slipped into despair and wished that I were dead, too. That is, until a brand new BMX bike snapped me out of my depression. To an eight year old, a new bike is like winning the lottery, and my first "nice" bike made life worth living again.

I certainly wish things were that simple in the adult world, but there are millions of kids out there who could use a little bit of joy in their life. Like Edith, for example, who received bike #801, paid for by yours truly.

I would have been happy to know that my \$88 donation went to a kid anywhere in the world, but I'm especially proud to know that the bike I purchased went to a kid right here in the United States. Edith, you see, is a member of the Navajo Nation, living in the far southeastern corner of Utah. You don't need to be a history scholar to know that the Navajo people have suffered tremendously, but that's another subject entirely. What's important here is that Edith, who wants to be a doctor when she grows up, has a brand new Kona to ride. And I hope it puts a huge smile on her face every time she does.



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Aya 高恩雅

LOCATION: Beijing, China

OCCUPATION: Model/Actress

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Beijing. It is joyful to ride in this city! You can see many old lanes that give it character.

在京城骑车能够看到各种有历史的建筑物，是一种享受。

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Of course my favorite city would be Beijing, because we have spacious roads and lots of bike lanes. Also Beijing has a beautiful night view.

我喜欢在北京骑车的原因是因为北京的路很宽敞，而且有超多的自行车道。还有就是北京的夜景很漂亮，所以我比较喜欢在北京的晚上骑车

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love to see the beautiful view at night, also my friends and I love to go to Gulou Street to have something to eat after we finish cycling.

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NAME: Benzo

LOCATION: San Francisco, CA

OCCUPATION: Jack of all Trades

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

Born and raised in San Francisco has been and is a great experience. Riding in San Francisco is amazing as the terrain changes as does the weather with our microclimates. Since the city is so diverse you can ride to different neighborhoods with different ethnic backgrounds and see history play out.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

By far it is still San Francisco as stated before the terrain varies and the various ethnic districts bring an international feel without traveling super far. Also San Francisco is getting more bike conscious and there is growing support for commuting in the city. Now Japan and Madrid, Spain are very fun to ride in also.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because there is a lot to see and get into. So many good eat spots along routes and now with food trucks and off the grid it makes for interesting destination spots for riding and of course the landscape is beautiful in San Francisco. Can't forget about all the interesting people here also.

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photo by Nicholas Camarillo

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NAME: Samantha Alcozer
LOCATION: Chicago, IL
OCCUPATION: Student

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

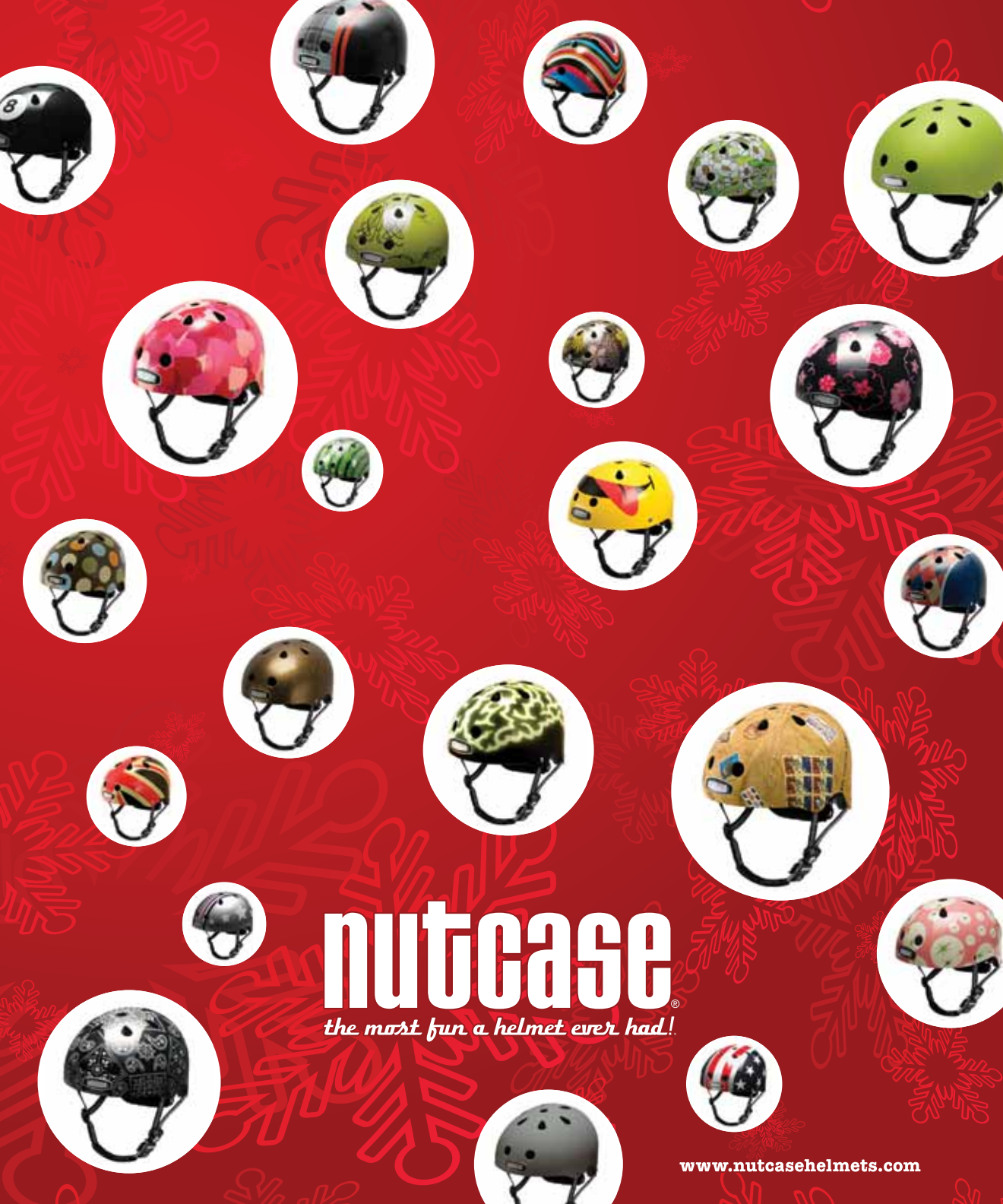
During the school year I'm in Springfield, MO—it's an awesome place to ride with really great people. Right when I moved here I met a group of bikers called the Shiftless Bastards and have been riding with them ever since.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I was born and raised in Chicago and it's definitely my favorite place to ride. I know the city like the back of my hand and it's no problem to get from place to place. My whole family rides bikes (including my mom!) so it's nice to come home and ride with everyone.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because it's quick, simple, easy, and fun. I love riding around and seeing everyone else on bikes and I love how easy it is to make friends with other bikers.



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NAME: Luiz Henrique Carvalho

LOCATION: Sao Paulo, Brazil

OCCUPATION: Consultant

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Sao Paulo, Brazil where (unfortunately) we do not have safe streets to ride on, but with dedicated research, we can find the best path between origins and destinations. Lately I've been riding to work and I confess that I'm arriving earlier than I would by car.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Here in Brazil (and I believe worldwide), riding outside the big cities is always more interesting and safe, however I thoroughly enjoyed riding the cities of France on my last trip (urban and highway).

Why do you love riding in the city?

Mobility, agility, exercise, wellness, health, independence, and non-polluting transportation...

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LOCATION:

OCCUPATION:

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What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Why do you love riding in the city?

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city. Poetry anyone?

Email your responses to jeff@urbanvelo.org



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NAME: Moses Dane

LOCATION: Olympia, WA

OCCUPATION: Student and Employee at The Evergreen State College

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I have been riding bicycles since I was old enough to walk and I started riding fixed about four years ago. I left my home, the small City of Albany, CA just north of Berkeley, in 2009 to go to school in Olympia. Riding in Olympia is sometimes scary. The drivers, in my experience, aren't as attuned to their surroundings so using a bicycle lane is scarier than riding with traffic. When I ride with traffic, I don't have any pretense that the drivers will act a certain way because of where I am. I can ride aggressively and move where I need to get from point A to point B.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I would have to say my favorite city to ride is Albany or Berkeley. When I ride there, I feel a sense of comfort that I haven't found in Olympia. The cars ignore me, and that's how I like it. I can make decisions without the complication of a driver trying to predict what I'm going to do. I know

how to maneuver around moving cars but if they're trying to do the same with me, it adds a layer of confusion that doesn't always turn out nicely.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because I can pass cars at traffic lights and I can weave through traffic as fast or as slow as I need to and still get to where I'm going much more efficiently than the drivers that I pass. I read a quote somewhere that went something like, "When I'm riding, there is nothing else I would rather be doing." This really represents my feelings when I ride because when I'm not riding, I'm thinking about things I want to do, projects and whatnot. But when I'm riding, all I think about is the road in front of me and my legs and feet propelling me forward. Nothing but the ride is on my mind and it's one of the best feelings in the world.

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i ♥ riding in the city



Name: Joe Spuckler
Location: Plano, TX
Occupation: Bicycle Mechanic

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

Most of my riding is in Plano, north of Dallas which makes riding elsewhere in Texas look safe. Lack of traffic enforcement for motor vehicles makes getting around a challenge. You just have to be very assertive if you want your right to the road respected. *Bicycling Magazine* voted Dallas the worst city in the nation to ride; I think that is because their rider in Plano never make it back.

What is your favorite city to ride in and why?

I loved riding in Bonn, Germany in the '80s and Geneva, Switzerland too... but recently I would say Salt Lake City, because the car drivers seemed the least aggressive and it was a nice area to explore on bike.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Because I can voluntarily go car-free. I don't need a ton of polluting metal and a phone crammed in my ear to get anywhere I need to be. When I get off my bike I am not angry from fighting car traffic on the road.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city...

It's not riding in the city but, support your local velodrome if you have one.

NAME: Jonathan
LOCATION: Buenos Aires, Argentina
OCCUPATION: Bass player

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live and ride in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It's very dangerous—cars don't respect bikes but I love riding in my city anyways.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Buenos Aires because I love my country and the streets of Buenos Aires have tango and a lot of history.

Why do you love riding in the city?

When I am riding I forget everything and it's just me and my bike.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city...

I love riding my bike.



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Lucia Aguirre
LOCATION: Pittsburgh, PA
OCCUPATION: Architect/Artist

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in the glorious city of Pittsburgh, where you'll develop muscles from riding its many hills, regardless of whether you like them or not! I think that riding in Pittsburgh is like its four-season weather—different and always

exciting. While drivers and the city as a whole are still trying to adapt to the cycling community that has been emerging so strongly, I still feel relatively safe riding around.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

So far most of my cycling has only been done in Pittsburgh, but I'm really looking forward to taking a bike ride in Mexico City (where I'm originally from). Ever since they started their Sunday rides where they close the major streets of the capital for bike riding, I've heard wonderful stories about how different the experience can be. So I would love to ride through its age-old streets with my Dad and enjoy "El D.F." soon.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Being an architect and a city-girl, I love the urban environment, and I love experiencing it and seeing people and streets and buildings and the natural environment all come together while riding my bike. I also love the people who ride their bikes in my city. I love how riding my bike through Pittsburgh's all-season weather I get to experience the seasons and how they change, from rainy and soggy days, to hot and humid, to "snowmagedons," to just perfect placid blue-sky days. I also love the fact that through biking, I think I'm in the best shape of my life.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city...

Something that I've noticed is that many times people smile at me when I'm on my bike, even if I don't know them. I think this is because either I'm smiling too much from enjoying the ride, or I look ridiculous in my biking gear. Either way, I'll take it.

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BIKE SHARING IN

El Monstruo

By Andalusia Knoll

Mexico City is jokingly called *El Monstruo*, “the monster,” recognizing it for the sprawling megacity that it is. D.F. (as it is known in Mexico signifying Federal District) is continually growing in size, maintaining its status as one of the five largest cities in the world, clocking in somewhere around 25 million people. There is a clear need for a massive transportation system, and Mexico City surely has one with a combination of subway, collective vans, rapid bus transit, minibuses known as peseros and its share of bright green Volkswagen taxis. Every three minutes, the metro arrives and thousands of people pour in and out of the bright orange wagons. But one thing that this grand metropolis lacks is a good bicycle infrastructure. The privately run peseros run along the major avenues dropping off riders anywhere along the lanes of traffic and the sidewalk, meaning that the non-existent shoulder in which you would ride in is made further dangerous, and sometimes just to cross the major avenues you need to climb three flights of stairs.

For the past 15 years of my life I have been a daily bicycle commuter. Regardless if I’m living in the mountains

of Bolivia, or the snowy hillsides of Pittsburgh I always find myself commuting on my trusty two wheels. Yet earlier this year I found myself living in Mexico City, not only bikeless but actually scared of riding. I had moved to Mexico drawn by its strong social movements struggling against neo-colonial projects, but I was also drawn by an intensive Spanish Program at UNAM, The National Autonomous University of Mexico, a beacon of public education as the largest free university in Latin America. UNAM encompasses its own city with its numerous academic departments and over 300,000 students. As a massive university with its own contained city it also has its own transportation system, with eight different bus lines. But most remarkable about the UNAM transportation system is its complete incorporation of the bicycle.

UNAM operates the BiciPuma system, a university bicycle sharing system with a fleet of 2000 that boasts 14,000 daily uses. When you hear the name Puma, you may be thinking of the hip sneaker company that has recently voyaged into bicycle land, but the correct reference is Los Pumas, the world famous soccer team that calls UNAM home.



The average round trip commute for a Mexico City resident is 2.5 hours, which includes the tens of thousands of students that study at UNAM. The necessity for a bike share system runs deep with the majority of students taking a collective van to a bus to a crowded subway just to arrive at the campus entrance. I had the luck of only living a 30 minute commute away, but those 30 minutes were spent in a combi, one of the collective vans that are so small and crowded that its near impossible to reach in your pocket for your 3 pesos (roughly 30 cents) to pay the driver.

When my combi would let me out at Ciudad Universitaria I would pop out, walk through the bustling market and arrive at the main entrance of UNAM, where on one side were hundreds of students waiting for the buses that would loop around the campus and on the other side the bright green BiciCentro. This bike center is the nucleus of the BiciPumas system and upon entering it daily, I would pick out whichever navy blue five-speed bike seemed to have the highest seat, flash my student ID to an UNAM employee who would scan my ID and bicycle and the bike was mine for the next 20 minutes. Off I would go on the bike paths that crisscross the university alongside scores of students, some who use these bikes every day, and others who dump their pocketbooks in their baskets and are clearly riding a bike for the first time in ten years.

That's right, bicycles are only loaned for 20 minutes at a time, just enough time to arrive at my department, the Center for Foreign Students, but not long enough to stop and grab a bite to eat, or chat with a friend one might encounter. However, should I find myself in a situation where I would need to extend the time period I can check in to any of the seven bike modules located along the bike paths.

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The modules essentially look like bike jails and provide shelter and safety for the bikes and are open Monday through Saturday from 6 am to 5 pm with a BiciPuma employee checking the bikes in and out. The 20 minute limitation makes it difficult for students to leave the campus with the bicycle, and prevents theft. However I spoke with Rubén Vazquez Palma, the General Coordinator of BiciPumas who told me that it the consciousness of the students that prevents theft. "The students know that the bicycle is property of the university, just like the ping pong that they borrow or the books from the library. With this context, it helps us care for the bikes." This collective mindedness has deep roots at UNAM where in 1999, the 300,000+ student body went on strike for nine months in defense of public education, when the rector wanted to impose tuition costs for the formerly free university. While their student movement was brutally repressed by Federal Police forces, they were victorious in guaranteeing the right to free public education at UNAM, with students only needing to pay symbolic amounts to enroll.

Rubén explained to me the history of BiciPuma and how it started in 2005 with a mere 120 bicycles and two

modules, when the bikes were kept in tents. Students from other departments started to get jealous, wondering why the medicine department would have bicycles but the philosophy department wouldn't. They then conducted a study with 2500 students and 80% said they would be open to the idea of commuting around campus by bike. The first two modules grew to seven and the 120 bikes eventually expanded to 2000, with half of them in rotation at any time. The other half live in the BiciCentro and the two fleets rotate in and out of use, receiving maintenance on the off shift.

Guillermo Ramos has worked as a mechanic with BiciPumas for four years and his enthusiasm for bicycles shines through as he repairs countless flats. He says he's been riding and fixing bikes since his childhood and loves bikes because, "They're a mode of transportation that doesn't pollute and it allows me to exercise and arrive here in 40 minutes, much faster than if I traveled with another method." He also recounted how he has taught dozens of students to ride bikes during free courses offered during school vacations and how many have gone on to be avid cyclists.

A man with a beard, wearing a green t-shirt and khaki shorts, is captured in mid-air while performing a wheelie on a black mountain bike. The bike is tilted upwards, with the front wheel high and the back wheel on the ground. The background features a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds and a dense line of green bushes and trees. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

AJ Austin

Photo: Jake Marx

milwaukeebicycle.com



The success of BiciPumas extends far beyond the UNAM campus limits. Numerous universities in Latin America including The Polytechnic Institute in Mexico City are trying to institute their own similar bike share programs. And most notably Mexico City, inspired by BiciPumas, in 2010 launched an enormous multi-million dollar bike share system.

The EcoBici program is part of Mexico City's green plan to reduce congestion, improve public transportation and encourage cycling. EcoBici was planned in conjunction with The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), which has worked in cities across the world to help them adapt to the bicycle. Dhyana Quintanar Solares, the Director of Strategic Projects with ITDP, told me they chose central neighborhoods as nodal points for the bikes as they are where 40% of the city population comes to work, and that the bicycles serve to connect the last few miles of transit. One rider I encountered during a Sunday commute to the city center reported, "I love it because before I used to drive to work and now can take the train from home and ride the EcoBici once in the center."



EcoBici is financed by the government, but operated by ClearChannel, who are in charge of maintaining the bicycles. They work on an automated system with users paying 300 pesos, or the equivalent of \$25 USD, to get a user card, which allows you to check out bikes. Ingenuously, if you return your bike back to the post within five minutes of checking it out, it is flagged for maintenance people to check on it.

While 300 pesos might not seem like a lot of money to some, it is to your average Mexican, where minimum wage is 60 pesos per day and the cost of living is incredibly high. With such huge sectors of D.F.'s population living in precarious economic situations it is hard to envision them paying 300 pesos to join EcoBici when many can barely afford to buy a 10 peso MetroCard. Especially when many can buy their own bike at their neighborhood used shop for a similar price.



I recall my first night in Mexico—I was waiting for a friend in the Zocalo, the enormous public square in the center of the city, reading the directions on the EcoBici pole, intrigued by the program. A random young hipster-esque guy started talking to me telling me, "This bike program is only for fresas. (Mexican slang for yuppies) Who has 300 pesos to join?" When I questioned Solares if the program is accessible to lower income people she explained that majority of people who work in the areas that EcoBici serve have the debit cards required to register, and being that these are the more

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Rider: Josh Boothby ★ Photo: Lingo

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affluent neighborhoods, it may very well be true. Since the program's inception some 32,000 people have become members making 9000 daily trips.

Solares also makes the point that you have to start somewhere, and that based on studies of some of the most bicycle friendly cities in the world including Portland and Copenhagen also says that you have to work your way out from the center. She says there are programs in place to help the different outlying municipalities of Mexico City implement traffic calming zones, and one southern neighborhood, Coyoacan, has published maps recommending bicycle routes. As we all know one thing that makes biking safer is more bikes, as with more cyclists comes more visibility and awareness. Solares adds, "We have done baseline measurement and found that with the implementation of the bicycle share program we have seen a 50% increase in personal bikes." As EcoBici is part of a more comprehensive bicycle strategy it is also connected with the closing of Reforma, one of the largest central roads in the city to cars from 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays. This program inspired by the popular Ciclovía program of Bogota, Colombia, allows people to ride their bikes in the city center traffic free. The city has also released a comprehensive

guide to maintaining, riding and repairing your bike that you can view on their website. "All the initiatives reinforce each other. The best way to start a bicycle culture is when you have a critical mass, to not disperse the projects, but instead to concentrate them."

Other cities in Latin America are looking north to Mexico as an inspiration for bicycle infrastructure. Mexico City hopes that will all these initiatives their cycling percentage will increase from 1% to 5% and I hope that the next time I return to D.F. I'll shed my cold feet and traverse more of the grand Monstruo on two wheels. 

About the Author

Andalusia Knoll is a Brooklyn based multimedia journalist, popular educator, and bicycle obsessive. She works as a Community Organizer with the Immigrant Defense Network, Families for Freedom and has reported for various news outlets including Democracy Now!, Free Speech Radio News, and TeleSUR. When she's not organizing, producing or teaching radio you can catch her riding her bike on the streets of NYC.

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If You Build It They Will Play

By Krista Carlson



This year the international bike polo community made its proving grounds in Seattle for the third annual World Hardcourt Bike Polo Championships. Having come a long way from its days as a parking lot game, players have become athletes and the game is now most certainly a sport. Competing hopefuls pour in from Japan and Australia, Mexico and Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland.

With 72 teams in the running, including 24 that competed in a two-day wildcard for a chance at one of the 12 coveted spots into the main tournament, Seattle became one giant bike polo melting pot, teeming with polo players and supporters. Steadily spinning on tiny polo ratios—generally under 2:1—they converge on Magnuson Park, at the Northeast edge of town.

“It’s a pretty great feeling, especially for me, for how long I’ve been playing,” Matt “Messmann” Messenger says of welcoming players from all over the globe to his home turf, after igniting the hardcourt bike polo spark more than a decade ago. “I never thought a bunch of people from around the world would be coming to my city playing this awesome, addictive game that I just started playing with all my messenger buddies back in the day. It’s a little overwhelming and at the same time incredible to have people fly into your own special club that you never thought would ever be established.”

In the months leading up to the World Championships, bike polo players across the continents immersed themselves in a common mission: Qualify for Worlds. Since facing exponential growth in the last few years, demand for a higher caliber of play has led to a common rule set, specific parameters for courts and equipment, and most significantly, structured qualifier tournaments that would funnel the best players in bike polo into a competitive arena.

In Europe, each country holds its own national championship, leading up to European Hardcourt Bike Polo Championships (EHBPC), held in Barcelona this past June. In Australia, they compete in their respective state and national events. For North Americans, a pilot qualifier system was set into place this year, running from January to July with seven regional qualifiers and the North American Hardcourt Bike Polo Championships (NAHBPC) in Calgary. Even registering for the North American qualifiers proved to be competitive: With a limited capacity at each tournament that ranged from 32 to 48 teams, online registration would open at specific times with some selling out same day.



“The biggest challenge is trying to live up to the expectation that me personally, as well as our club, has been talking about and setting the goal for ourselves. We didn’t want anything to be just sub-par. We wanted to outdo ourselves as well as satisfy everybody’s needs from all around the world and all around the country, as in the quality of courts. Mostly all of our focus was spent on prepping the surface. We had to scrape every crack that was filled out there on the courts. We had to scrape all the growing grass off the surface and then clean it out and fill it, and then coat the surface. That alone took like five days.”

Messmann and veteran player Dave “Polonie” Wells spent the week prior applying their carpentry knowledge to build out six courts for the coming barrage of games, assisted by Seattle’s club and so many visiting players, working side by side preparing the courts for a full ten days. From the Wildcard Tournament on Wednesday and ending with Sunday’s double elimination finals, polo players cycled on and off the courts in a steady flush of some 500 games.

From the first day of the Wildcard, the courts are swarming with enthusiastic polo players. Happy to see old friends, former teammates and opponents; excited to play new teams and meet the polo players they’ve heard about, or talked to online, and all the ones they’ll meet for the first time. The air buzzes with excitement, the crowd booms a fury of cheers and heckles, a roar that grows with each passing hour. Plays are shouted in French, German,

Japanese, Spanish, Italian and English—but everyone is ultimately speaking the same language, bike polo.

“We all love each other for the most part,” Rowdy says of the community. “We like to hang out and drink beers together. We like bikes. We get totally nerdy about ski poles and plumbing supplies. It’s great.”

“There’s always something new to achieve,” says Max Thomas of the team Monkey Punch from Karlsruhe, Germany. “I went to the first tournament and learned something, went to the next tournament and learned new tricks. It’s a process of seeing how you can play, what you can do and then getting there, so it never gets boring.” For Thomas and his team, competing in Worlds wouldn’t have been possible without some local sponsors that funded their airfare. “We raised 2,500 Euros for the flight tickets. Otherwise if I had to pay on my own, I couldn’t even afford it.”

Loosely associated into an international league where the only basic requirement is show up and play (though the long standing first rule of bike polo is “Don’t be a dick”), polo players are united by their common love of the same weird sport.

“We’re snowboarding in the ‘80s,” explains Leslie De Lorenzo, a Seattle player who played a key role in making WHBPC happen. Unlike nearly every other sport, bike polo has remained co-ed. And the vast majority want it to stay that way. Team names range from proud to playful: Ozeki (a sumo ranking, Tokyo), L’Equipe (“The Team,”

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Geneva), The Guardians (Seattle); Doin' it With Our Socks On (Northeast U.S.), That's What She Said (Adeliade, Australia).

"We're an underdog sport," says Seattle player Kiersten George. "The sport is growing into becoming more professional; there's more sponsors, there's more companies involved. Whether it's in Geneva or whether it's in New York, it doesn't really matter, because that's still gonna happen. As more people and more companies get involved it's going to become bigger and more professional."

Courtside, players can be found "warming up" at the foosball table and playing three's, a dice game that has become a part of nearly all polo events. "Knife fights," a one-on-one style bike polo game, is the highlight of the welcoming party at Belltown Underground, where true to the spirit the first World Knife Fight Championships are held. Throughout the weekend, moments between games are filled with scoping out the array of polo bike setups and mallet configurations from across the globe.

"I'm always impressed and amazed by how bikes evolve," says Rowdy. "It's funny how bikes continue to be modified and changed for bike polo—different ways of doing wheel covers, different wheels being built, different braking systems."

After two days of seeding, the double elimination finals kick off with an upset when the 32nd seeded team, Portland's Wizard Tactix, defeats Milwaukee's Beaver Boys, sending 2010 world champs into the loser's bracket in the first game of the day. "Now I get to play two more games," laughs Ben Miller, aka Ringer, of Wizard Tactix.

Before noon, the 2011 EHBPC Champions, L'Equipe of Geneva go on to receive an early loss as well. The two title-holding teams finish the day tied for 5th. Meanwhile Vancouver's Crazy Canucks, a team that has competed in all three World Championships, move steadily through the day undefeated. In the final game they face off against France's Call Me Daddy. The court is lined four and five people deep on every side, banging on the boards and rattling the fences. It's impossible not to be infused with adrenaline, watching the two teams of highly skilled players battle it out for five goals, an amalgamation of bike control and ball handling and strategy and teamwork.

"There's something in polo players attitudes; it's very addicting," says Kiersten George, adding, "Not only the attitude of the players and how much we're enjoying it and how into we are, but also that pretty much everyone knows how to ride and bike, and they know that they tried to ride in little circles when they were a kid and they fell off their bike. And then to watch these people and what they can do on their bike. This is clearly not just something we do once or twice a month; this is something that is so passionate for us."

As the last rays of sun fall below the trees, the Crazy Canucks earn their hard-fought victory off the joust in overtime.

"It feels surreal because we finished second a couple times," Rory Crawley says of his team's win. "I think we expected maybe we could win, but I don't think that many other people thought we'd win so it feels amazing."

After a raucous awards ceremony, adrenaline levels begin to subside and weary polo players and fans migrate to a local pub for dinner and drinks. In the coming days scores of visiting players explore Seattle by day and gather at the Cal Anderson courts for pickup at night. Even after five days on nonstop polo, there's no letting up.

"It's all about playing longer," Messmann says. "Every game to 11!"



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Ride East, Roll Easy

By Navy One

Death made me a man.

I'll never admit it, not now, not rolling Broadway on my bike, my single-gear. But s'true. Losing my parents last year forced me to grow up. To hunt their killer. The man with the tattooed knuckles. I got nothing on him but those fists and they clobber me, always in my thoughts, my dreams.

Riding Broadway, New York's Mississippi, I catch green after green. I'm 18 and don't expect anything less. Life's forever green, no? John races right behind me. On roll-erblades way too fast for him. Which is where I come in.

He reaches and grabs the rattly rack on my fender to slow down, dragging his back brake. Like some bladers, he never learned to stop. Quick-like. No hockey-T, no side edge. Never. We got us all greens, he yells to me. We have this conversation every day. An old married couple, we are. 'Cept for the old part. And the married, couple thing.

Yup, I shout. A car cuts in front of me, and I let loose. Look sharp, I bellow at the taxi. The driver flicks his bored eyes at me, in his side mirror, and we meet. For a second. Before he ruffles them away. Taxis. Me and them do not get along. Me and them. Do not. I got stories.

You going all the way downtown?

To Houston, John replies, letting go of the rack and standing upright. He pronounces it Houston, like the Texas town. Us, who are all City all the time, call it Houston. But he's a Texan. And you can always tell a Texan. You just can't tell 'em much.

Knuckles, I say to John. He has heard this conversation too. Me and knuckles. And he humors me. I give him his Houstons, he gives me my knuckles.

Any luck? He asks.

That tattoo girl down on Bleecker drew a picture of the letters. She gave it a name, something Gothic. I turn silent and let the wind, from a side street, wash us all over before continuing. Hate and Love.

Hate and Love?

What the guy's knuckles said, I say. I no longer have any emotion. I'm a machine. The man who took my father and mother had gothic lettering across his knuckles. Well, the first inch of his fingers, but s'easier to say knuckles. Love and Hate. Love on the right and Hate on the left. I know 'cuz he was a lefty and he pushed the barrel of his 45 (slide slid all the way back) into my chest. No bullets, thus the slid slide.

You working a full shift? I ask him.

Yup. Four new movies.

I nod. It is Friday and new movies, of course, pop on Fridays. But you can't tell him nothing. Remember that there Texas thing?

My walkie scratches static from my bag's strap, sashed across my chest like a Frenchie officer, and I squawk it.

Two going downtown, I tell my dispatcher.

Can you pull into Hell's Kitchen? She rasps back. No one calls it Hell's 'cept her. I'm texting you the address. Westside, way over. 4th floor.

Got it, I say into the mic. Got to let you go, I tell John. He is silent. He has a good, bad sixty blocks to blade downtown. And no one to help him stop.

Still, he says nothing and we separate at the circle, the one with the big gold dude on horses.

I cut west. At the next red (surprise, a red) I dig into my biker shorts and find that slip of sweaty notebook

paper. I had once copied down all the tattoo shops and sure enough, there's a Hell's Kitchen. For me to case.

I glance at the address texted to my phone and then I stand up on my pedals and kick it. A left and then long straightaways. The thought of another tattoo parlor puts wings on my legs and I power through six, quick greens. No traffic. My stop looms and I pull up short. My chain-lock knows good and well what I want and it don't complain as I wrap it through my tire and then frame and around a crooked no-parking sign.

Into the residential building I run. One prim proper lady stands with her twin husband at the elevator. I try not to breathe hard, but I breathe even harder in trying not to. I get onto the elevator with them, up to the fourth floor. I do not like residences. The inhabitants could have a gun or something else. Like a Liberace record playing too loud. That was if folks still spun records in New York. Or Liberace.

My knocking echoes down the hall. Away from where I want it to go. But a man cracks the door, and then slips his chain off and invites me in. On a draft table are those blue drawings. Blueprints. He slips 'em into a tube and I put it into my bag and I am off with hardly a grunt.

Thanks, sir. I always thank the customers, but not too much. And sir, ma'am 'em. I want them to remember, but not to request me. Remembrance brings tips. A request brings other pick-ups and I could be clear down Gramercy and some guy high up Westside wants me, and only me, to run his blueprints. No way. The boss is all about service. Not for his pack mules, us, but for the miners needing their gold biked 'cross town.

I get the elevator, down through the lobby and out to the street. Some big guy in velvety sweats stands looking at my bike. I had played the New York game long enough to know that he would'a thrown my wheels into a sudden truck if he could'a. But I had me one of those tough chains. With a tiny u-lock on it.

You like 'dat thing? He asks.

I don't know which 'dat he is talking 'bout, my bike or the lock. But since I like them both, I reply to him, yeah, it's great. And I pull the chain through and I stand on my pedals and pedal away from him. With my chain wrapping my waist.

I don't trust big guys eyeing my ride. I don't trust track suits either. Not velvet ones. Not any ones. They say Russian and not good Russian. Not cuddly bear Russian, but mob.

Two blocks over is the tattoo parlor. I breeze through one light, still on my pedals. And then another. I roll my bicycle up the sidewalk and get off. Walking, I peer into

the shop. A sweaty bald man hunches over another guy, tattooing in that spot, the small of his back. Which is not too small. On a female, it's called a tramp stamp; but on a male, I ain't sure. Maybe champ stamp? What's he thinkin'?

I stare at the tattooist. He looks familiar. He turns and nods at me. I nod back and catch sight of his hand. Hate is emblazoned across his fingers, between the knuckles. I look away, anywhere, somewhere, and push my bike, with someone else's arms, into the road.

Then, I am breathing one breath faster than hyperventilation. I am riding down some side street. I take a left too fast, like I was some bad-azz bike messenger. Which I may be. My slicks screech. The roll of blueprints pushes at my back, jabbing me. To remind me to ease up. At Broadway, I kick out left before cutting hard right. And then I am up on my pedals pedaling through. Fast.

Ahead, I see John. He is riding. Three blocks downwind. Leisurely, with his arms behind his back. Like some middle-age broseph on a frozen lake in Minnesota. In winter time with a rum toddy sitting happy wherever it is rum toddies rest. His tummy, maybe. If men have tummies. And don't surrender them at age twenty-one for guts. Some men maybe never drop their tummies. Not me.

I don't say anything, but close one block close, and then two, hurtling my bike down Broadway. I pull up next to him.

I saw it, John.

He is not surprised, which surprises me. Me too.


I stare at him as we slow to a red light.

Where?

All over, he says. There. He points to a bus stop's advertisement. Of a magazine cover, covering one wall. I creep up to it slowly.

Tattoo convention. Convention Center, John says.

It is my turn to nod. The mag cover: tattooed men all with their hands extended. Hate and Love. Across all of their knuckles. In ballpoint ink. A promotion.

I breathe. Again. Easier. Harder. Taped to the bus stop is a flier. For something not related, a church service. I pull a tab off. Sunday at 10. Amsterdam Avenue. I gotta go. To put this hate and love thing behind me... To get my peaceful tummy back. To sleep. For once. 

About the Author

Navy One is a prior enlisted Arabic Linguist, current naval officer. Before the Navy, he worked as a NYC bike messenger for one of the larger companies. He currently blogs at www.themellowjihadi.com.



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SE Bikes Draft Coaster

Simplicity is a common theme amongst many urban cyclists—a good part of the popularity of single speed and fixed gear bikes come the reliability of not having a bunch of shifting bits. And then there is the much sought after clean aesthetic of track bikes and their bare handlebars and lack of cables. The SE Bikes Draft Coaster is spec'd in this vein, but with a coaster brake that makes some of us instantly go back to about 12 years old and want to lay down a big skid. For others the \$330 Draft Coaster represents a no frills, easy to understand and ride entry-level bike that looks the part of the cool-guy bikes outside of the coffee shop.

The Draft Coaster is built on the same high-tensile steel frame and straight leg fork as the popular Draft, with only real difference being a Shimano coaster brake rather than a fixed/free rear hub. The bike rides fairly well, with short 410 mm chainstays, 72/74° head/seat angles and wheelbases from 1000-1035 mm throughout the 700c size range. The bike ships with 28c tires, but has clearance for ones a size or two larger at least, with fender and rear rack braze-ons making it as commuter friendly as you'd like. Some are quick to point out the hi-ten steel frame and write the bike off—aside from some extra poundage

around the middle there is nothing wrong with hi-ten steel for an entry level bike. With a steel bar, stem and post my 61 cm test bike tips the scales at 27.5 lbs.

The story with the Draft Coaster isn't the frame however, it's the coaster brake. Other than some select people out there, coaster brakes are largely overlooked for adult bikes, or pushed aside for beach cruisers. It's a shame really, for experienced riders they can be quite fun and for people getting on their first bike since childhood it doesn't get much simpler. Ripping around town on a coaster brake is a blast, though it takes some getting used to at speed—between pedal positioning for maximum power and pumping the brake to prevent overheating and fade on long downhills there is a learning curve to riding one in traffic. The fork is drilled for a front brake, but I'd like to see the Draft Coaster actually come with one—a coaster brake and fixed cog have the same ultimate braking power (even if a coaster brake has better modulation and is far easier to brake with), and the same potential pitfalls in the case of a dropped chain.

The Draft Coaster is available in seven sizes between 47-61 cm with a 650c wheeled 43 cm version also available.

Check out www.sebikes.com



Abus Bordo 6000 Folding Lock

The Abus Bordo 6000 folding lock is designed for medium to almost-high security situations as it's reportedly as strong as many U-locks on the market. It offers the functionality of a cable lock, namely the ability to lock your bike to an irregular or wide diameter object, and/or to lock the frame and wheel(s) at the same time. But unlike cable locks, the Bordo's 5 mm thick steel linkages are not easily snipped with a bolt cutter. And while it's true that all locks can be compromised, many times the thing that matters most is whether your lock appears tougher than the one locking the bike next to yours. In my opinion, the Bordo looks the part reasonably well.

Until you get used to the unique design, the Bordo is not quite as easy to manage as a cable lock. But once you're familiar with the way the linkages unfurl it's not difficult to whip the lock out and secure your bike. It's also nice that the Bordo folds into such a compact unit, although it has to be sheathed in the supplied case in order to stay folded up. The case is quite well designed, with the option to either bolt it to your frame's bottle cage mounts,

or to use the supplied strap system. At 1030 g the Bordo is certainly not a lightweight lock, but when mounted to the bike it does seem reasonably unnoticeable.

It's nice that the steel links are coated so protect your frame's finish. But more importantly it's nice that the lock mechanism is highly pick-resistant (a Bic pen is not going to work here). The lock comes with two keys, and additional keys are available. It's also possible to order multiple locks that fit the same key (consult your local Abus dealer).

Finally, it's worth noting that Abus locks are made in Germany. Not just assembled in Germany, though, they actually forge their steel in Germany. For what it's worth, they are one of (if not the only) lock manufacturer who can claim that their locks are certified lead-free. And ultimately, you can be sure that with local manufacturing comes an increased level of quality control.

The Bordo 6000 is available in red, white or black in 75 or 90 cm lengths. It retails for \$129.99 (90 cm), \$109.99 (75 cm).

Check out www.abus.com



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Milwaukee Bikes Polo Guard

Milwaukee Bikes was one of the first companies to take fixed freestyle and hardcourt polo seriously, and have continued to support each discipline as they've grown and matured. One of their long-standing polo products is the pictured polo guard—a one-piece 35t chainring and bashguard. Keeping your chainring covered is not only a good idea to protect relatively delicate chainring teeth, but perhaps more importantly to protect yourself and others.

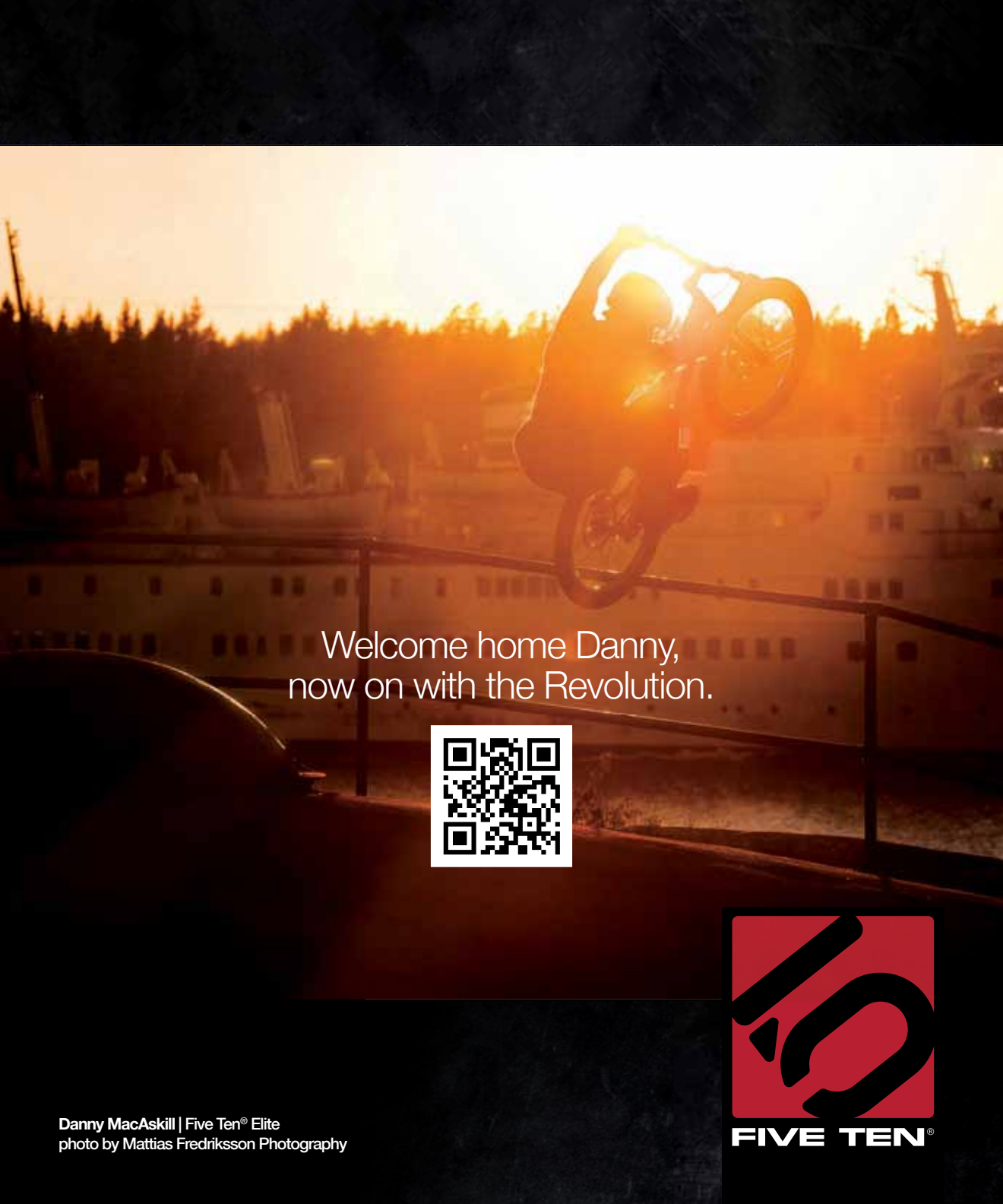
There is no doubt that the \$100 Polo Guard is a high end option, there is a certain price premium that comes with the one-piece machining as compared to a conventional separate chainring and bashguard setup. Materials-wise, Milwaukee spared no expense as the guard is CNC machined from 7075-T6 aluminum, the same material that many high end rings are machined from for maximum hardness and longevity.

The design features a 7 mm thick guard section—wide enough to resist bending and denting, and also wide

enough to not act as a blade itself as a filed off ring or ultra-thin guard can potentially do. Compatible with most 1/8" single speed chains, the guard covers the top of the chain perfectly. It should be noted that while most 1/8" chains have a 9.5 mm pin width, some measure a hair wider, as do many masterlinks.

Two models of the Milwaukee Polo Guard are available, each with a 5-bolt, 110 mm bcd interface. Pictured is V1, created to mesh perfectly with the readily available, hidden bolt, Sugino XD crankset (available as a package deal of guard and cranks for \$130). V2 is for all other 110 mm bcd cranks with five visible bolts. Installing the hidden bolt of the V1 is a challenge as the design doesn't allow any space for a tool behind the crankarm. I found that a dab of threadlocker on the female end of the chainring bolt was enough to keep it in place to get it almost tight, and have had no problems since. Available in either silver or black.

Check out www.benscycle.net



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Danny MacAskill | Five Ten® Elite
photo by Mattias Fredriksson Photography





Teva Pinner

The Pinner is Teva's take on the ideal bike-commuter shoe. Styled after popular BMX/skateboarding shoes, the Pinner has a flat outsole made from sticky rubber that grips platform pedals well. The shoe's midsole features Teva's proprietary Mush padding, which they claim is the secret ingredient in making their famous sandals so comfortable. The heel also features additional padding to protect against sudden dismounts and to make walking all that more comfortable. And the uppers are made from suede and synthetic leather for a combination of style and durability.

So, the big question is, how do they perform? I have to say, pretty much as you might expect, save for the fact that they feel like their sizes run a tiny bit smaller than I would like. They're essentially a skate shoe, so they're well padded which makes them fit snugly. Unfortunately all that padding and snugness equates to a minimum of ventilation and some serious sweating on hot days. The soles aren't especially stiff like you might expect from a cycling specific shoe. Rather, they're just kind of thick feeling, which makes them feel sturdy against the pedals.

Aesthetically, I like the subdued color scheme. And the Pinner's garnered vocal approval from the inner city kids I work with at my day job.

The Teva Pinner shoes are available in black or tarmac (pictured) and retail for \$80.

Check out www.teva.com

Ergon PC2 Pedals

Ergon calls their flat pedals "contour pedals" and perhaps the reason is obvious. They're far from flat. The different curves serve to enhance power transfer, promote correct foot position and relieve pressure points. Perhaps the most noticeable aspect is the wall along the inside edge of the pedal that follows the shape of your shoe. This serves to consistently position your feet during pedaling.

I've seldom felt any discomfort that I can directly attribute to using flat pedals, so I can't really attest to their claim of relieving pressure, but the PC2 pedals definitely feel comfortable. It took a few rides to get accustomed to them, but they never felt awkward, just different. Another unique aspect is the use of grip-tape instead of traction pins. As any skateboarder will tell you, grip tape is an amazing thing. The PC2 pedals maintain traction in the rain, but I can't imagine that will be the case in thick mud or serious snow.

The PC2 pedals definitely have a distinct look, and it's not exactly the look that many urban fashionistas are after. The large integrated reflectors aren't removable, and there's no way to attach any sort of straps. But for serious cyclists who eschew foot retention, yet wouldn't mind a more technical oriented platform pedal, the PC2 might be worth a look.

The PC2 pedals come in size small (maximum shoe size: EU 42 / UK 7.5 / US 8.5) and large (minimum shoe size: EU 43 / UK 8 / US 9) and retail for \$69.95.

Check out www.ergon-bike.com



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Panaracer RiBMo Long Term Update

Since I first reviewed the Panaracer RiBMo back in September '08 they've remained a favorite city tire of mine, particularly due to the flat resistance. They are not race tires, and don't ride particularly well when it really comes down to it, but in the city keeping tires inflated is normally of much more concern than the finer points of tire ride quality. They handle predictably, and wear slowly even if you skid frequently on a track bike or playing polo. The pictured 26" x 1.5" tire was just retired after six months of constant use on the polo court. No penetrating flats the entire time, but after skidding through the first layer of threads it was time to replace it. Six months of use skidding on the back of my polo bike on our relatively rough courts works for me, I can't say I'd ever expect much more from any tire out there. Still a favorite, I swapped it out for the exact same tire model. Available for around \$35 each in a variety of 26" and 700c sizes.

Check out www.panaracer.com

Chrome Soma Laptop Bag

The Chrome Soma is a pretty interesting little laptop bag. It's the size and shape of a small backpack (13.5" wide, 15.5" high, 5" deep) but it's got a single sling-style strap like a messenger bag. It's more of a general use backpack than a cycling bag, but it definitely works well for bike commuters as well as college students, airline travelers or anyone who needs to travel with their laptop in tow.

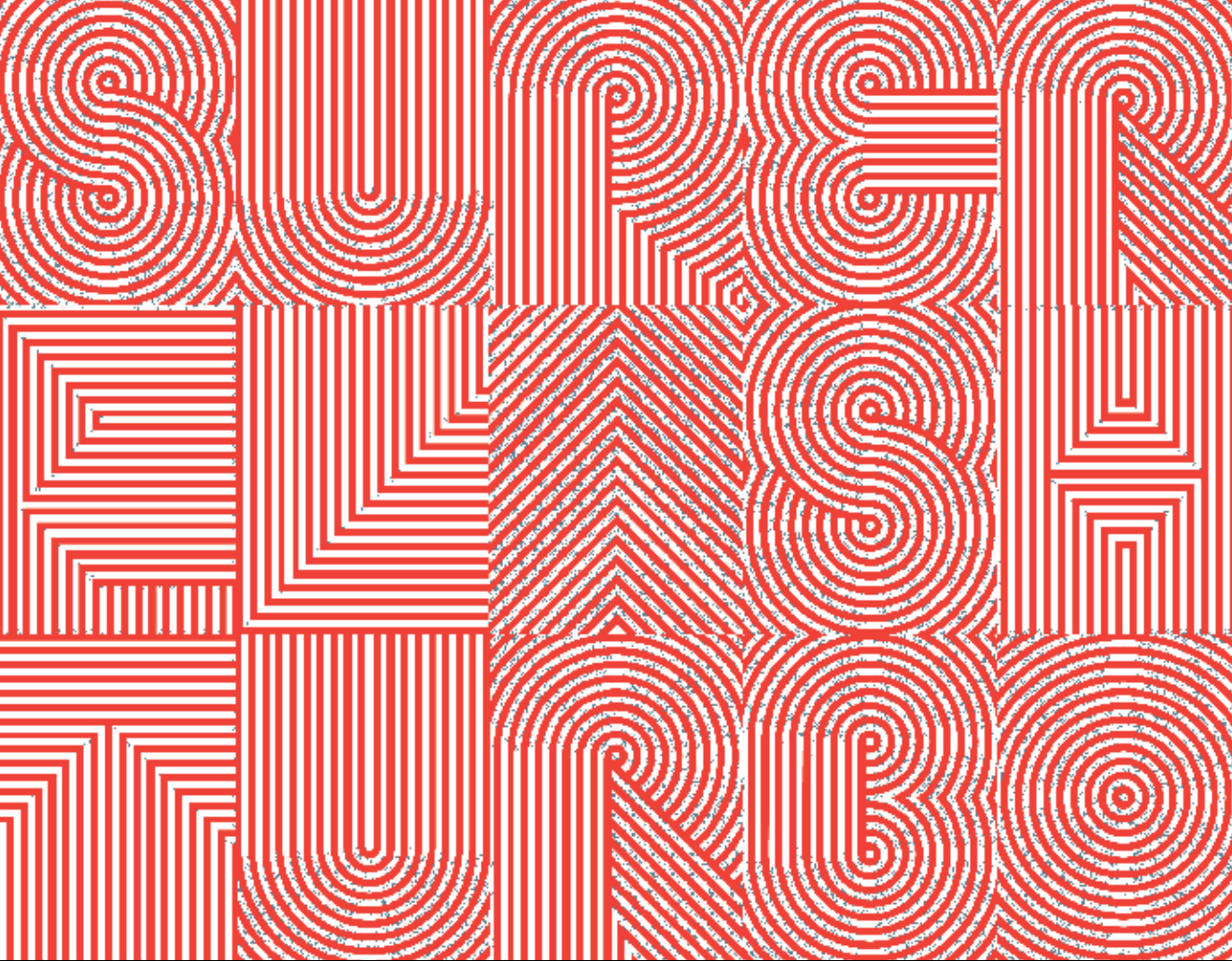
Construction highlights include a gusseted 1680 ballistic nylon outer shell with an 18 oz weatherproof truck tarp liner inside. The shoulder strap is padded and has a quick-release seatbelt buckle (with an integrated bottle opener). The cross-chest strap is easily stashed in the outer side pocket when not in use, and there's a basic nylon handle for carrying it like a briefcase, too.

The padded laptop compartment is 11" x 15" which is claimed to hold up to a 15.4" laptop. It fits my 13" Macbook just fine. The internal organizational pockets are well thought out, with large pockets for magazines and paperwork

The Chrome Soma is available in black on black, or red on black and retails for \$140.

Check out www.chromebagsstore.com





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planetbike.com





All-City Wallner Pro Pedals

All-City is a brand focused on quality urban parts at a reasonable price point. Their Wallner Pro pedals are meant to bring a more serious pedal with the touches of the nicer things in life down to a more reasonable price as compared to some of its pricey counterparts. Available for about \$45, the Wallner Pro track pedal is a no-nonsense, sealed bearing pedal for the rider looking for a quality traditional caged pedal either for use with clips and straps or as a double-sided platform.

The difference is in the small touches. The pedal body and pedal cages form a large (for this style of pedal), concave footbed for a solid grip, and the toe-clip mounts on the cages themselves are threaded to help prevent bolts from coming loose. The windows in the pedal body are large enough to fit even the thickest laminated traditional straps. The axles allow use of both a 15 mm wrench and a 6 mm hex key—while not a detail that would stop me from buying a pedal having both proves convenient time and time again. Months of use have left the pedals no worse for wear—I expect them to last for some time given the overall quality feel and their performance up until now.

For people who prefer caged pedals or clips and straps, the Wallner Pro is a viable choice for a pedal that will last for years of daily use. It has a large enough platform that my size 12 shoes felt fine with no cramping, but people used to BMX-style platforms may find them smaller than they'd like. The Wallner Pro pedals weigh 270g per pair and are available in black, silver, white, gold or red.

Check out www.allcitycycles.com

Cane Creek 110 Headset

Headsets have always been at the very core of Cane Creek's product line. In recent years they've limited their component offerings in order to focus on the things that they do best, and to improve even their highest quality products.

Although Cane Creek owned the patent on threadless headsets, and thus commanded a licensing fee from any competing brand, the consensus has always been that the other American headset manufacturer was king of the heap. And so Cane Creek took aim and introduced their own ultra high-end 110 Headset series.

In Cane Creek's own words, "The 110-Series represents the best a headset can be. Cane Creek's 110 features optimal materials, the most effective seals and the best aesthetics in the market today. Cane Creek is so confident in the strength and durability of the 110-Series that we stand behind each headset with a 110-year, no-questions-asked warranty. All backed by Cane Creek's unsurpassed customer service."

As far as I can tell, the 110 lives up to the marketing speak. It's made from 7075-T6 aluminum and the machining and workmanship border on fine art. The bearings feature twin seals so that each one only has to perform one job—keep grease in or keep contaminants out. They've also designed a compression ring that not only helps ensure precise installation, but helps spread forces out over a longer section of the fork's steerer tube.

Of course, frugal cyclists will ask if such a high class headset is really necessary, and the answer of course would be no. I've been using an inexpensive Cane Creek headset on my polo bike for years, and it still works like new, despite the abuse it takes. On the other hand, there's nothing wrong with appreciating nice bike parts. And it's nice to support a product that's machined out of US-made aluminum billet in Fletcher, NC. If you want the best for your bike, Cane Creek's 110 series is worth checking out.

The 110 series headsets come in a variety of styles. The 110.EC34 model (tested) retails for \$140.

Check out www.canecreek.com



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As utility cycling continues to grow in the United States, **Soma Fabrications** has decided to jump into the market with their Tradesman Cargo Bike modeled after the classic design of the Schwinn Cycletruck. Designed to easily haul 40-50 lb loads on the lowered front deck, expect the frameset to run about \$600 when it becomes available. www.somafab.com



Strider has introduced the ST-3 for toddlers 18-36 months old. It weighs all of 6.4 pounds and has adjustable bars and seat positions, along with smaller bars to fit toddler's hands. The polymer tires never go flat, and the bike has footrests for when kids get more confident and can coast for a bit. Available for about \$130. www.stridersports.com



The **Pedal Pushers Club** has just issued their \$32 Bike Polo shirt. Classic business casual look—show your love of bike polo at the next IT-department meeting. I can't imagine a certain guy named Ralph will find the humor in this, so pick one up quick if you're into it. www.pedalpushersclub.com



The new half-watt **Ilumenox** Phyro lights feature a versatile "soft tie" mounting system that allows them to be mounted to traditional handlebar and seatposts, as well as to baskets, racks, small tubes and more. And, even when the Phyro lights aren't on, they act as reflectors. www.ilumenox.com



Many city riders prefer soccer style shoes—the leather uppers tend to wear well, the shoes are usually free of extra bulk and fit well in toe-clips, and the flexible soles work well with platform pedals. For this year the **Onitsuka Tiger Mexico 66** is available with a cycling specific nod, namely a longer wearing harder rubber sole and reflective piping. Available for about \$85 in black or yellow in sizes 4-14. www.asicsamerica.com/onitsukatiger



aarn_wrks_dsn has recently released their 47 tooth, 144 BCD track rings. Meant for aggressive urban riders, the rings are machined from 6061-T6 aluminum stock and available in either black or clear anodized finishes for \$67. www.44rn.com



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SE Bikes Soda Pop

As urban cycling continues to mature, more kids are looking up to the scene and wanting to get involved early with similar styled bikes for them. SE Bikes has introduced the Soda Pop 20 and 24 for kids looking for a street track bike more their size. The Soda Pop 20 is meant for riders 4' to 4'8" and has a coaster brake to keep things simple. Available for about \$300 each. www.sebikes.com

LDG S-Line Track End



Livery Design Gruppe is a frame and component manufacturer out of Huntington Beach CA making some classy looking bikes and components with a certain flair for over the top yet functional design.

Case in point is the new S-Line of frames and their unique track ends with a sleeve that the axle fits through that then slides on the frame itself, reminiscent of old school adjustable length track stems. www.liverydesigngruppe.com

KMC Kool Knight Chain

New for this year is the Kool Knight chain, a 1/8" chain for BMX and fixed freestyle riding that utilizes a half link design and directional "L" shaped links that when installed completely cover and encase the chainring and cog for protection during grinds and crashes. Even with the unique design the chain can be shortened using a standard chain tool. The Kool Knight will be priced at about \$45 when it becomes available in fall 2011. www.kmchain.com



DZR Shoes 2012

DZR came onto the scene pretty strong over the past year with their clipless compatible street shoes. For this next year they've expanded their offerings into another line of shoes with stiffer soles and wide straps to hold your foot tighter. The soles have a steel shank in them and are noticeably stiffer than their previous shoes, perfect for more performance riding or off road pursuits. www.dzrshoes.com



Lil Wayne's Mixie



Yep, you heard it here first, Lil Wayne rides a mini velo. So does Wiz Khalifa, Chris Brown, Rick Ross, T-Pain, Ice Cube and even Justin Bieber. Pictured here is the greatest rapper

alive's custom Mixie. www.mixiebike.eu

Pro-tec Riot Street Helmet



Pro-tec is one of, if not the, original skate and BMX helmet manufacturers. For 2012 they're bringing their helmet expertise to the current urban cycling scene with the Riot Street, an \$89 helmet with an integrated visor similar to other designs we're all familiar with.

The helmet is remarkably light with an in-mold shell and internal channels for ventilation. www.pro-tec.net

Fyxtion Gates Pedal Straps

Fyxtion got into the pedal game a year or two back, and now released their \$44 Gates Pedal Straps. Similar in design to other hook and loop, over the foot new-school style straps, one main design difference is that the strap itself is longer for easier use with fat skate style shoes or winter boots. Also available as a package deal with the Gates pedal for \$60. www.fyxtion.com





Dahon JiFo 16 Folding Bike

The new Dahon JiFo 16 is a bike designed for the last mile or two of a multi-modal commute. The bike is ultra compact due to the 16" wheels, and is equipped with quick release pedals and a telescoping seatpost. At just under 20 lbs the one-speed JiFo 16 is pretty light, but the real story is how quickly it folds—under 7 seconds. This top of the line Dahon will be available for \$900. www.dahonbikes.com



A.N.Design Works Folding Bikes

A.N.Design Works is a Tokyo-based company who hope to make inroads into the global bike market with their decidedly unique yet affordable designs. The A-Lee folding bikes feature well-hidden hinges that make them hard to distinguish from an ordinary diamond frame bicycle. At just \$400 retail, these hi-ten steel bikes might be exactly what a lot of people are after in a commuter. www.and-style.com.

Virtue Bicycle



Virtue is a new San Diego based brand who is able to offer complete bikes at roughly \$300 retail. And amazingly, their frames are 100% chromoly, including the fork. www.virtuebike.com

Swrve Cycling Apparel Gloves

Swrve had their new gloves on display, featuring carbon fiber knuckle protection, passive venting between the fingers, and fingertip pads that allow you to use a touchscreen smartphone without having to remove your gloves, a nice touch for anyone who's ever tried to answer the phone and it just won't respond. Available in genuine leather for \$75 or synthetic materials for \$35. www.swrvecycling.com



Light & Motion Urban Headlights



Light & Motion has been a pioneer in the urban headlight market for years now, and their latest Urban line is pretty much exactly what today's commuter needs. The 180 lumen model is \$99, the 300 lumen in \$130 and the 500 lumen is \$160. www.bikelights.com



Bern Helmets Squid Pro Model

Kevin "Squid" Bolger is a veteran bike messenger and co-owner of Cyclehawk Messenger in NYC. Squid's pro model Bern Brentwood helmet features the Cyclehawk wings graphic, which are also available as a sticker pack. We're told that Squid will have said sticker packs with him on the streets, and if he sees you out there wearing a Bern helmet, you just might "get your wings." www.bernhelmets.com

INTERBIKE'S URBAN AFTER HOURS

By Davey Davis



Las Vegas is still Vegas, in case you were wondering. It is still an urban planning joke, still headlining people you forgot existed, still giving away custom choppers, and it is still the last place on earth one would expect to find a Brompton locked up next to a Waterford. Yet mid-September every year spritzes of bike commuters break up the heave-and-wait flow of the Strip's traffic, providing drunken tourists another fleeting spectacle at which to shout. The bikers shout right back, understandably enough—Sin City gives everyone an open hand to depravity, and anyone who's swooped down a hill with their hands in the air screaming like a viking knows that bikers can be hooligans when the occasion calls for it. So to the land of Fear and Loathing, welcome. Whether you are interested in spinning until you puke, ripping around a miniature track on a BMX of dubious tuning, copping free beers at every turn, visiting strip clubs with genderqueer vegans, or diving brakeless at top speed against the flow of traffic, there couldn't be a better, or stranger, location for Interbike.

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The thing is, none of the above really has to do with the ostensible point of the annual expo, which is for retailers to learn about the next year's wave of bicycle innovation. People go for the business, but also for the perks, sometimes exclusively. In the last few years especially bike kids have been using Interbike as a chance to hold informal urban events in the form of alleycats, roller sprints, and mini stage races. Wednesday night brought fifty or so riders to the Double Down, an off-strip punk bar, for roller races by Salt City Sprints and, predictably, a beer chugging contest for bike schwag. The next night two recent fixtures, the Mash Drag Race and the King of Vegas Alleycat, occurred back to back, sending brakeless fixed gears, crusty roadies, and ex-messengers bowling through stoplights and curb-hopping around the the escort-hustlers.

Everyone knows there'll be other alleycat racers, random events, and chances to win a useful component or two, so they make the trip, some loosely associating themselves with a local shop in order to get expo credentials. Jessica Gilmore, a courier from Legal Messenger Inc. in Salt Lake City, came out to the show for the first time and proceeded to win fastest woman in the roller sprints and in the King (Queen?) of Vegas race. "I can race in Salt Lake, but I'm usually the only girl who competes and the same crowd's been showing up for three years. Interbike is a fun way to see how I'm doing against other fast people. It's fun to meet people there, make friends, visit them in their cities." Just like the sanctioned businessmen inside the convention center, people are there to network and rekindle friendships with others who could take the week off, pile in borrowed vans, and burn across the desert. Hernan Montenegro, Los Angeles-based winner of the 2010 King of Vegas race, has been coming out for eight years. "It's the one place I know I'll see a lot of my friends from all over the world and we are all gonna have a good time. This year I went representing Orange 20 bikes, where I work, but I really didn't talk to vendors or anything. I just hung out with all my friends."

Others, like Crihs Thormann, came from farther afield. Crihs, a staple of New York's bike and messenger scenes, won the King of Vegas race in 2009 and came back to defend his title, winning the MASH drag race by sneakily skitching the final sprint to the finish. LA was pissed. Like with

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the Wolfpack races or other big regional events, there's some heated city rivalry, but it mostly ends well. Jen Whalen, also of New York, was pleased to see a different vibe to the competitive alleycat circuit. "People were mad, but they were being silly about it, joking around. That's the kind of stuff that people punch each other over in New York. It's nice to see the West Coast is still chill about it." The LA/Wolfpack contingent were especially eager to sweep the races, as one of their local riders had been run down that day, and they were riding in his honor.

The city repping takes on a particular flavor with the natives of Vegas, who for whom a knowledge of the city is a double-edged skill. Before the King of Vegas rumors were circulating that Nate Grill was the guy to follow for out-of-towners, due mostly to Hern's success following him in 2010. For the majority of riders, says Hern, Vegas can act as a proving ground. "It's a gray area for everyone. About 70% of the racers are from out of town. So it really shows who's the better street racer, who can perform better under pressure in an unfamiliar city." Brad Adams, of Road Runner Bags took second in both races and credits the city's insane urban emphasis on cars in creating a dicer race. "Vegas intersections are meant to hold a mass number cars and trying to break through that when there is bumper to bumper flow was unbelievable. I honestly could not tell you how I did it. It still boggles my mind." In the end LA took the podium for men, with Edgar winning the race. There was much singing, dancing, dogtags, and In-N-Out burgers to be had.

After a week of nursing Outdoor Demo injuries, digesting Vodka and Cliff Block Shots back to back, and getting kicked out of classy casino night clubs for wearing SPD's, we confirm: Vegas is still Vegas. A cab screeches up to pick a fight with the washbuckling gentleman on a mini fixed-gear who just slapped a sticker on his bumper, and the night draws to a close. Bromptons and neon, gliding contrails through the glitz and dust of the Strip. 

TRAFIK Photos courtesy of Trafik
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CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL DEALER FOR AVAILABILITY

Jakarta's RECORD FIXED GEAR RIDE

By Lauren Zumbach



Most days of the week, you'd need to be crazy—or have a death wish—to venture into Jakarta's rush hour traffic on a bike. On Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, though, you'd be in good company. Two days a week, for a few hours at least, the city's endless traffic jam turns into a fixed gear bike jam.

For fixed gear enthusiasts, Jakarta is an urban playground. No one seems certain how the psychedelically painted single-gear bikes became so popular in Indonesia's largest city, but Dian, one of the Jakarta's early adopters, says there are now over 1800 fixed gear owners in Jakarta and at least 4000 throughout Indonesia.

That's a big number in a city notorious for its lack of opportunities for outdoor exercise, and even more impressive is their dedication. 1522 fixed gear riders, plus an additional thousand other bikers, turned up at one of the city's malls, Epicentrum Walk, on a Sunday night in June to attempt to set a world record for the most fixed riders hitting the streets at once, crushing the 1000 rider target.

Cyclists like Adi said they were just out to have a good time, enjoying some well-deserved refreshments, camaraderie and live entertainment after the ride, organized by Jakarta's bike community, Tremorz. But Dian, a Tremorz founder, said he hoped the record could also fuel momentum towards creating a more bike-friendly city.

He said interest in biking began building in 2007, as people grew increasingly frustrated with hours spent sitting in their cars. The fixed gear craze came later—even in 2009, Dian says Tremorz, then called "Gowess," only had about 20 members.

Whatever the reason, sales of the brightly colored bikes exploded, and now Tremorz attracts at least 200 members each night they ride. Riders are hoping to turn that popularity in concrete action making it easier to choose cycling as their go-to method of transportation, rather than just a for fun.

Dian is making the switch, which helps him save money on fuel costs, and the 40 minute drive to his office is a more enjoyable 15 minutes when he travels on two wheels. But even he hasn't been able to give up his car completely.

"For longer trips, I still need the car," he said. "And they don't do anything to make it easy for riders here."

Separate bicycle lanes, bicycle parking areas at malls and showers at offices are all on Tremorz members' wish lists - simple additions that would make it easier for Jakartans to keep their cars off the roads.

"We believe that Jakarta won't be able to handle its own traffic management even in just the next five years," Dian explained. "We try to share with members that if we only switch our mode of transportation to bicycles, we gain a healthier life, new friends, and it's just easier to get around."



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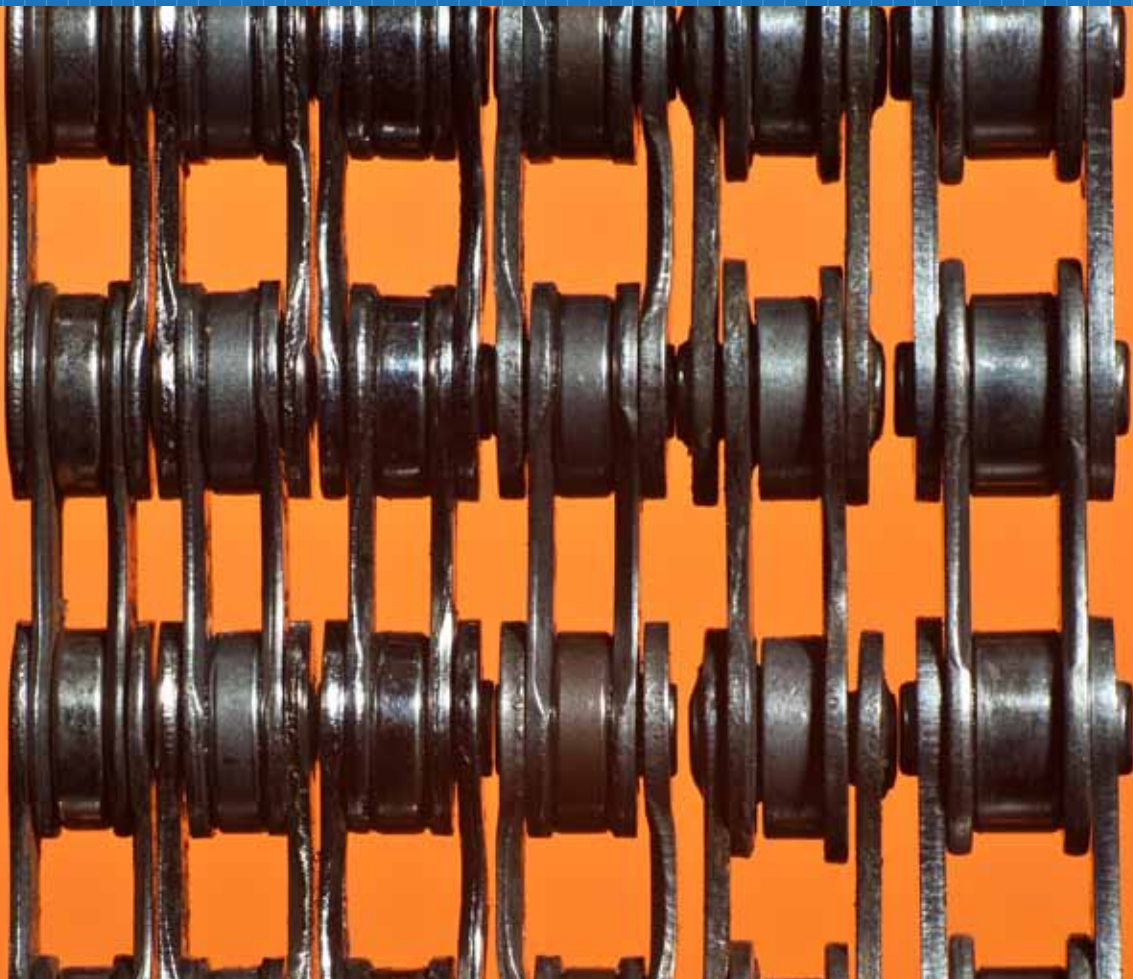


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Chain Width & Compatibility

By Brad Quartuccio



Left to right: Campagnolo 11-speed, SRAM 10-speed, Shimano 9-speed, SRAM 6/7/8-speed, older 5-speed, KMC 1/8" single speed bicycle chains.

Nominally there are two widths of bicycle chain on the market—1/8" and 3/32". This number refers to the interior width of the chain, with the wider 1/8" chain used on single speed and internally geared bikes, and 3/32" width chain on multi-speed derailleur bicycles. But when it comes to 3/32" chains there are a number of different external widths available, usually referred to in marketing terms by the number of rear cogs or speeds that the chain is compatible with.

The narrower 3/32" chain is necessary for derailleur bicycles as the cogs are thinner to provide space for multiple gears, and as manufacturers have continued to add more speeds to drivetrains cogs and chains have continued to lose some from around the middle, even if only by tenths of a millimeter at a time. This has all brought up some compatibility concerns worth having a working knowledge of to prevent shifting problems and incompatible component purchases.

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Chain Width Compatibility Notes

Generally speaking, and as with most bicycle component compatibility questions, sticking to the manufacturer's recommendations will likely yield the least headaches. Beyond that, some common sense can go a long way when selecting a replacement chain, as a simple count of the the rear gear cluster will tell you which replacement chain to purchase. Sometimes you find yourself fishing in the parts bin, coming up with an 8-speed cogset and 9-speed chain to finish the build—Will it work?

Starting at the single speed end of things, 1/8" chains are not compatible with derailleur systems, though they will work perfectly fine on 3/32" chainrings and rear cogs in a single speed configuration even if the side-to-side fit seems loose. The thinner 3/32" chain is perfectly suited to

single speed use given the ring and cog are 3/32" width—multi-speed chain will not fit on 1/8" chainrings and cogs. Contrary to popular belief, single speed and fixed gear bikes have stuck to the 1/8" standard more out of tradition and habit than the chains being any stronger—in fact, most 3/32" chains are just as strong or stronger than 1/8" chains simply due to more money going into research and development, and the chains generally being of overall higher manufacturing quality.

Multi-speed chains are available in multiple external widths, marketed by their "speeds" rather than the measured width, as it can vary by a tenth of a millimeter or two between manufacturers even for the compatible chains. In most cases, bicycles with derailleur drivetrains up to and including 8-speeds can use compatible chain, usually about 7.2 mm wide, no matter what speeds are listed on the chain. If the box mentions compatibility with 5, 6, 7 or 8-speed bikes, it is compatible with all of them. The old school, wide 5-speed chain on your Dad's old "10-speed" isn't commonly available anymore, and isn't really worth ever putting back on a bike at this point in time as even the least expensive modern day compatible chain is superior.

As the speeds increase, the compatible chains narrow along with the cogs and chainrings. 9-speed chains are up to 6.8 mm wide, 10-speed drivetrains are 5.9-6.2 mm wide and Campagnolo 11-speed is a mere 5.5 mm wide. It is generally possible to use a narrower chain on a lower-numbered drivetrain (ex. 9-speed chain on an 8-speed cassette), though it's an unnecessarily expensive choice as 9, 10 and 11-speed chains command a premium price. In some cases the narrower chain can get stuck between the slightly wider spaced front chainrings of 6/7/8 speed systems during downshifts, or hover inbetween wider spaced rear cogs during shifts. In practice it doesn't occur that often, but is nonetheless a possible complication. While some people report success going the other way by one speed, (ex. 8-speed chain on a 9-speed cassette) it is not recommended as it can cause temperamental shifting and possibly excessive rubbing on the front rings or derailleur cage.



For more chain tech see Urban Velo #8's Bike Chain Stretch, #10's How To Use A Chain Tool, and #16's Masterlink Tech at www.urbanvelo.org/tech.

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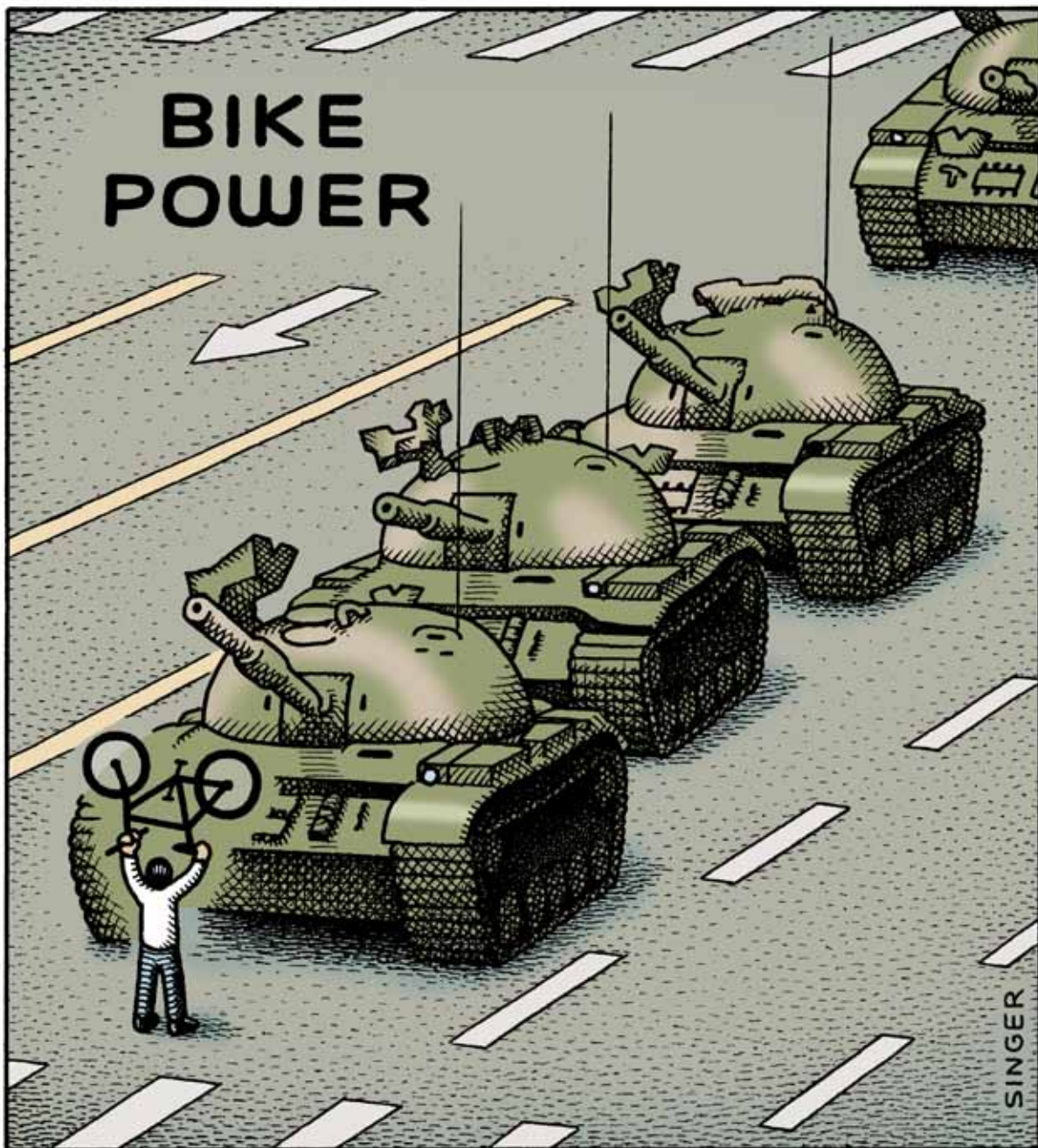
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