

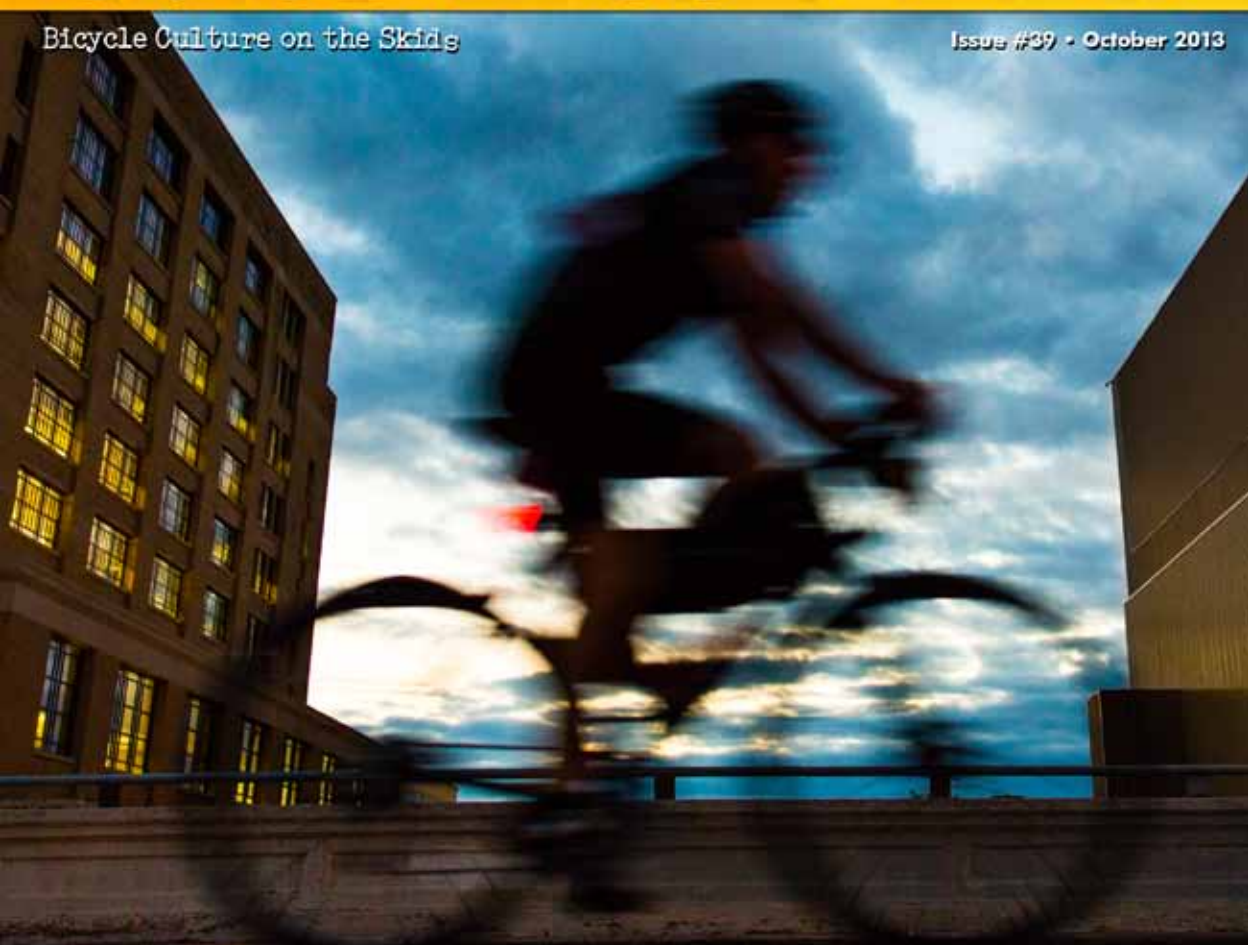
INTERBIKE & EUROBIKE COVERAGE • LATVIA • ALL-CITY • POWDERHORN 24



# URBAN VELO

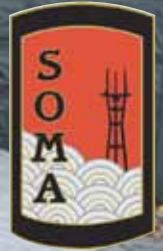
Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #39 • October 2013



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# URBAN VELO

Issue #39

October 2013

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**Brad Quartuccio** Editor [brad@urbanvelo.org](mailto:brad@urbanvelo.org)  
**Jeff Guerrero** Publisher [jeff@urbanvelo.org](mailto:jeff@urbanvelo.org)

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**Contributing Editor:** Krista Carlson

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**On the cover:** A cyclist participates in the Powderhorn 24 cycling ride in Minneapolis MN, at dusk on August 9, 2013. See more on page 36. Photo by Mark Brown, [www.markrbrownphoto.com](http://www.markrbrownphoto.com)

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**Co-conspirators:** David Munson, Rachel Krause, Ryan Sellers, Sam Tracy, Gunārs Treikals, Luke Elrath and Andy Singer.

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Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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

Urban Velo is published bi-monthly. That's six times per year, on the even months. Issues are available for free download as they become available. Print copies are available online and at select bicycle retailers and coffee shops.

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Bike shops, check out [urbanvelo.org/distribution](http://urbanvelo.org/distribution)

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Contents: Eastbound on Grand Avenue at Milwaukee.  
Photo by David Munson, [www.davidmunson.com](http://www.davidmunson.com)

# EDITOR'S STATEMENT

By Brad Quartuccio



**R**ide bikes, stumble into awesome situations. It's not the only way to find unexpected fun, just the one I'm most familiar with. Heading out for a pedal with no particular destination in mind and the willingness to take an unplanned detour has served me well, both in stories to tell and people I've forged friendships with.

Take the above image, shot at a late-night, secret-handshake party under a bridge in Freiburg, Germany. An evening of aimless riding on bikeways and dirt footpaths along the Dreisam River led to us running into a fellow with a dozen cases of beer, a couple of boomboxes and some sketchball electrical wires heading into the water. The invite to come back and party

later at least seemed to be made in earnest and didn't appear to be an opportunity to be passed. None of it would have been possible without bikes, or with an agenda.

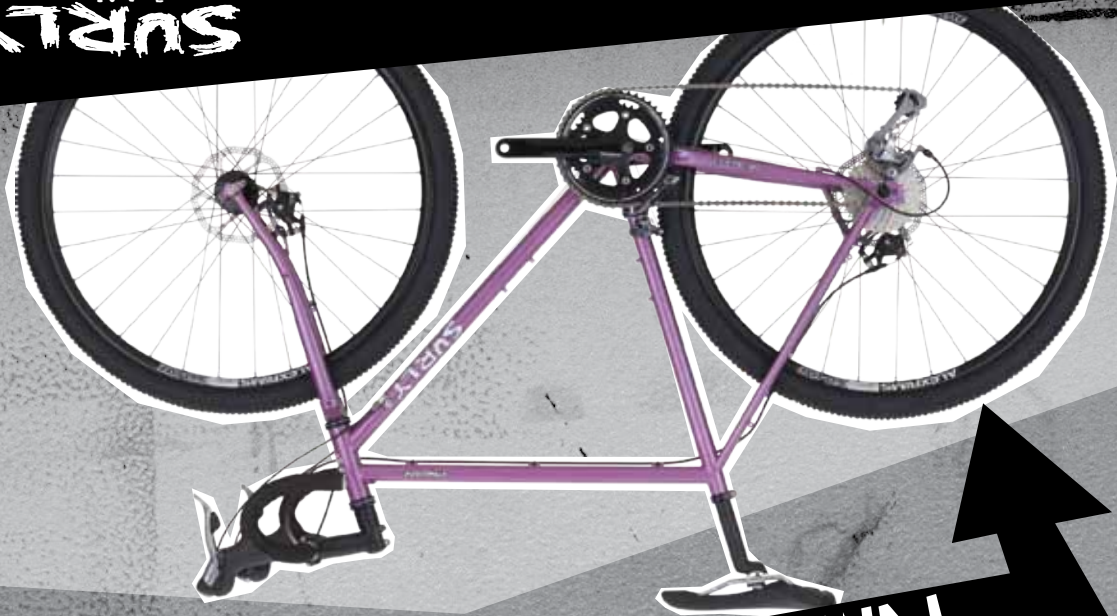
There is a time and place for more planned excursions, just not every ride. Dead ends and doubling back on steep climbs be damned, there's good stuff just waiting to be found. It's easy to fall into riding the same old familiar routes—I fall victim as much as anyone—but worth pushing into less familiar territory. Think unplanned turns, unfamiliar roads, different ways of riding.

Step out of your zone. You might find something you like.



We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to [brad@urbanvelo.org](mailto:brad@urbanvelo.org)

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# PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

By Jeff Guerrero



**T**he other day I was riding home in the rain. I was soaked to the bone, but relatively happy because I had a bottle of locally-distilled whiskey in my backpack, and I planned on warming myself up with a nice drink once I changed out of my wet clothes. The fact that the cars, most of whom were passing at an unsafe distance, were dousing me with road spray and filthy puddle water didn't phase me. It's to be expected. Likewise, I knew better than to expect any of them to yield the right of way or to do anything that might actually help a fellow human get out of the rain any sooner. And I certainly didn't entertain any delusions about getting respect for toughing out the storm, using sustainable transportation or anything of the sort. At risk of sounding cliché I know that as drivers and cyclists we're from different tribes.

So imagine my reaction when as I'm crossing through a busy four way intersection, a trio of hip looking young cyclists blew through the stop sign and cut me off. No eye contact, no wave, nothing. To make matters worse, they proceeded to ride three abreast. Slowly.

Now I could excuse this sort of thing if it was a spirited group ride and I just happened to be at the

wrong place at the wrong time. But no, this was just completely rude. And so as I swung out over the center line I gave the trio a heaping helping of stink eye, and pedaled away without a word.

Although this was probably the most egregious incident of effrontery that I've encountered, I can't say it's the first or the last. Do we really need a formal book of city cycling etiquette? I mean, who in their right mind would get passed on a climb and then pull in front of that same cyclist at the next stoplight?

And I know cars don't drive around giving friendly toots of their horn each time they pass another car, is it really all that difficult to acknowledge another cyclist—another member of our tribe—out there on the street? I mean, we're all doing our best to make it from point A to point B without becoming roadkill. Shouldn't we feel some sort of communal bond? Think about the camaraderie that fellow police, soldiers and firefighters share, even if they've never met each other.

I imagine that the veteran cyclists who are reading this are thinking, "It used to be that way." I can appreciate that the cycling community is burgeoning, and this might just be growing pains. And that's fine. But I'm not going to give up on my idealism just yet.



Urban Velo issue #39, October 2013. Print run: 5000 copies. Issue #38 online readership: 55,000+





MASSAN FLUKER #CHROMEFAMILIA  
PHOTO BY MATT LINGO



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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Clint Eastman

**LOCATION:** London, UK

**OCCUPATION:** Concert Tour Merchandiser

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

I live in Greater London. Riding in the city is a lot of fun, as long as you are switched on at all times. Riding defensively is the only way to ride when you have to contend with pedestrians who can appear from nowhere, buses that are everywhere, and black cabs, who don't seem to want to see you.

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

Thanks to my job, I've managed to ride in a lot of great cities—Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Sao Paulo and a fair few others—but Paris is really hard to beat. Riding up the Champs-Élysées late at night is pretty special.

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

I love it because, as crazy as it can be, I find it relaxing, I know exactly how long it'll take me to get from point A to point B and it keeps me fit.

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

When you nod your head at a fellow cyclist, and they nod back at you...

PHOTOS: Brenton Salo

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¡Viva la Revolución!

# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Frédéric Le Duigou  
**LOCATION:** Grenoble, France  
**OCCUPATION:** IT Technician

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

Grenoble is a very nice place to ride, perhaps because this is one of the flattest towns in France. We have plenty of cycle lanes through the city and the commuter community is growing. Riders are well served by an association called *p'tit velo dans la tête* (little bike in my head) which provides a place to learn how to fix bikes and borrow tools.

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

I will always remember Glasgow, Scotland because it was the first time I rode a fixed gear bike. The larger the city is, the more I appreciate riding in it.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

I just hate wasting my time in the traffic jam. Riding a bike is the most efficient way to move through the city for me. It helps me to balance my state of mind.

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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** David Hall and Kristy Dactyl

**LOCATION:** Raleigh, NC

**OCCUPATION:** Engineer and Transportation Planner

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

Raleigh, NC is a mixed bag for riding. There is an urban core which is great for cycling and a growing greenway system but once you get too far outside of the city it has all of the typical issues that come with suburban sprawl. The population is littered with transplants from all over and the cycling culture is unfolding as new people arrive with a bike in tow. We have sat through many city hall meetings and successfully advocated for new infrastructure, including bike lanes. Raleigh's first on-street bike corral will be installed this spring. It's a very exciting time to be in Raleigh.

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

We both moved to Raleigh from Madison, WI. Let me tell you that people who cite Portland as the quintessential biking utopia of America need to travel more. We love Wisconsin for riding, cycling culture, courteous midwestern drivers, multi-modal streets and some of the best bike shops in the country. If the city of Madison doesn't offer enough, you've got some of the best road riding in the country right at your doorstep.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

In downtown Raleigh nothing beats a bike for transportation. You go about as fast as a car but you never have to worry about parking. Since the weather here is mild in the winter, we can ride all year round.

One of our favorite things is giving the requisite "ding of the bell" as we pass friends' homes. We like the attention that we get downtown when we ride our tandem to special events and restaurants.

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

We like riding in Raleigh so much that we've spent four months with a bunch of our friends putting together a 10-day bicycling festival called "Oaks and Spokes." We encourage all of our southern neighbors to come to Raleigh and pedal around with us!

Check out [www.oaksandspokes.com](http://www.oaksandspokes.com)



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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Daniel

**LOCATION:** Osnabrück, Germany

**OCCUPATION:** Research Assistant

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

I live in Osnabrück, Germany. Riding here is fun of course, because riding a bike is always fun. But sometimes it is hard, too. Osnabrück is a typical German city converted for cars back in the 1970s, so sometimes cyclists have to fight for their rights.

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

I don't have a favorite city to bike in. I pretty much

like to bike everywhere. Although big cities with a lot of traffic seem to be fun.

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

Because it is the fastest and healthiest way of mobility. There is no traffic jam for cyclists. You can take short cuts. Lots of benefits!

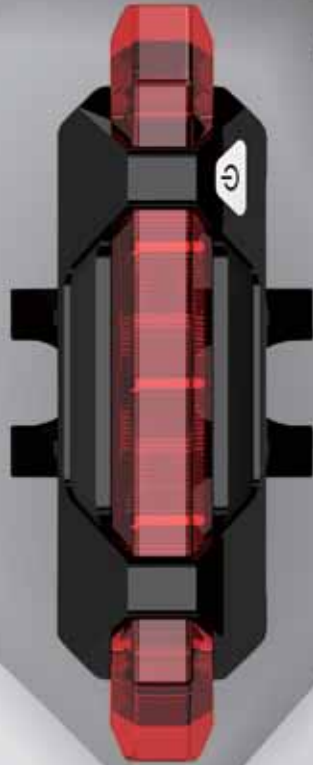
**Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?**

All I can say is go ride your bike and have fun. Occupy the streets!



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# Tradeshow PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Coverage from Interbike & Eurobike



## Raleigh Tamland 2

Gravel racing is hot, with Raleigh jumping in with the disc brake equipped Tamland 2. With a longer offset fork and a slightly extended wheelbase as compared to a cyclocross bike the Tamland is just as at home on epic rides or as a daily commuter. The bike has a double butted Reynolds 631 steel frame and Ultegra-level spec and a serious enthusiast or pro-commuter price of \$2400.

[www.raleighusa.com](http://www.raleighusa.com)

## FABIKE

FABIKE stands for the Flexibly Adjustable Bike, a compromise between a road and cyclocross bike meant for today's performance oriented rider that is looking for a single bike with a couple of personalities. Custom sliding dropouts allow for either geared or single speed drivetrains, and allow the user to swap between 120 mm track or 130 mm road rear spacing. The frame and the fork allow clearance for up to 35 mm tires and feature FABIKE's linear pull brakes on the reverse of the fork and under the chainstay for a clean and aero look. The full carbon frame has internal cable routing throughout, with the cables fully encased even under the bottom bracket. The frame, fork, headset, brakes and seatclamp weigh a combined 1.9 kg and sell for \$2600 in six different color treatments.

[www.fabike.it](http://www.fabike.it)



## ACROS Hydraulic Drop Bar Shifters

Hydraulic shifting control has come up in most every engineer-nerd conversation about bikes since Magura proved that brakes could work reliably, and then when Shimano introduced the short lived Air-lines downhill shifting system. ACROS out of Germany makes a flat bar hydraulic shifting system, and was showing their prototype drop bar system. Shifter bits grafted onto a Formula drop bar disc brake lever showed that the system could work even if the rapid prototyped parts on the floor were too brittle for real-world use. Interesting stuff, with the promise of precision shifts each and every time that is not influenced by the elements gunking up a cable system, even if running a "to" and "from" hydro line to the front and rear derailleurs adds complexity, and honestly the flat bar set on the market didn't shift perfectly in their demo setup. [www.acros.de](http://www.acros.de)





## Nutcase Gen 3

The Nutcase Gen 3 features a slimmer profile than previous Nutcase helmets, and for the first time has a snap-in removable visor. The helmet also features a removable rear dial adjustment system, something skaters have asked for, and people sporting pony tails may appreciate. The EPS foam has been tuned to prevent head injury, moving more foam to the front section of the helmet where most fall impacts occur and having a bit less on the sides and back while still providing more coverage than racier helmets on the market. Available in three shell sizes with various glossy solid colors and other graphic packages as one would expect from Nutcase. [www.nutcasehelmets.com](http://www.nutcasehelmets.com)



## Hiplok D

Staying true to the goal of wearable locks that are not locked to your body, the Hiplok D is an industry standard u-lock (referred to as a D-lock in many other countries) with tabs for clipping it to a messenger bag strap or belt, or carrying it on the outside of a pocket. Easy to use, it's a pretty seamless and useful addition to the lock. The Hiplok D, along with the original chain Hiplok and Hiplok Lite models now use a new curved key for more reliable use than flat key models that can easily jam if not inserted fully before turning. Available in a number of color combinations for \$84. [www.hiplok.com](http://www.hiplok.com)



## Fairdale Taj

While it's not the first pro model bike to bear Taj Mihelich's name, it's definitely the one he's most excited about. After admitting defeat on his 29" design last year, his new 26" BMX cruiser is said to be dialed. Built with bombproof components and geometry that's relaxed enough to cruise around on all day, it's also more than capable of some urban assault. Expect to pay about \$600 retail. [www.fairdalebikes.com](http://www.fairdalebikes.com)

# All-City <sup>MPLS</sup>

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Photo: John Watson

## Fahrer Kurier Expandable Pannier

Fahrer is a bicycle bag and accessory company out of Berlin making unique bags out of recycled building wraps, truck tarps and boat covers. Each bag or at least run of them is based on available materials and colors—you likely won't find another one just like your own. The Kurier bag is an expandable pannier bag that zips flat to have little air resistance when empty or just carrying a notebook or two, but then unzips to the pictured size, enough for most commuters. Includes an integrated shoulder belt and the Ortlieb Quick Lock 2 mounting system. [www.fahrer-berlin.de](http://www.fahrer-berlin.de)



## Pashley Speed 5

One of the more eye-catching bikes has to be the Pashley Speed 5. Built from Reynolds 531 steel, the Speed 5 harkens back to days when bike racers were gentlemen first, and athletes second. A 5-speed Sturmey-Archer hub, 90 mm drum brakes and Brooks Swift saddle are just a few of the component highlights. Available, naturally, in British Racing Green, the Speed 5 is proudly handmade in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. [www.pashley.co.uk](http://www.pashley.co.uk)

## Trickstuff Rohloff Trigger Shifter

Trickstuff was showing off this rapid prototyped version of a Rohloff trigger shifter, also compatible with Pinion gearbox systems. The first of its kind, not much other information was available at this time, but I'm sure this will be of interest to various Rohloff riders interested in alt-bars, or otherwise not interested in twist-shifting. [www.trickstuff.de](http://www.trickstuff.de)



## Sandwichbikes

Flat pack goods make perfect sense in our global supply chain by minimizing warehouse space and shipping costs through making the consumer do the final assembly, and passing the savings along. Think IKEA. Sandwichbikes was showing final versions of their \$1000 flat pack bicycle made from two "sandwiched" pieces of weather coated plywood with a few important metal bits in-between. One could say that a \$1000 coaster brake only bicycle isn't passing along much value besides novelty in the sort-of-DIY kit, but there are people looking for just that, and you aren't going to see many others riding these in town. It all fits in a box much smaller than the standard bike box, with tools included for assembly. [www.sandwichbikes.com](http://www.sandwichbikes.com)



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## Quoc Pham Hardcourt Clipless Shoes

As a London trained fashion graduate and discerning cyclist Quoc Pham got into the cycling shoe business in 2009 with his retro-chic perforated leather shoes. Available in both a mid and low cut version, the Hardcourt is made from synthetic fabric with an EVA lining rather than the leather of other Quoc Pham shoes to provide splashproof footwear that should last for a few seasons of daily riding. The Hardcourt comes in any color of black you would like and is compatible with two-bolt SPD cleats. Final US pricing is not available, but expect them to run around \$250 per pair. [www.quocpham.com](http://www.quocpham.com)



## Lezyne Zecto Drive

The latest in USB rechargeable lights from Lezyne are the Zecto Drive Pro (left) and Zecto Drive. The Zecto Drive Pro features two white LEDs with a peak flashing daylight output of 160 lumens, with a red LED with a peak 40 lumen flash. The standard Zecto Drive has three white LEDs (also available in red for rear use) with a peak 80 lumen output. Each features a strapped or clipped mount, various flash and constant modes, a smart switch requiring an extended push, and a raised bevel that adds side visibility. [www.lezyne.com](http://www.lezyne.com)



rider: Eric Kremin of the Beaver Boys



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The Marco is the first ever Polo specific bike shoe. It is an asymmetrically padded high top, designed with a fiber glass reinforced shank. Equipped with a stitched outsole as well as an internal molded heel cup, the Marco is light and efficient.

\* Coming Winter 2013/2014 \*

[www.dzrshoes.com](http://www.dzrshoes.com)





## Speedplay Brass Knuckle Pedals

The Brass Knuckle is a flat pedal at its most minimal at 13.5 mm tall, just a hair bigger than the 12 mm spindle. The wide spindle gives this pedal its strength, and the brass knuckle design makes for a lightweight (and eye-catching) platform. Spindles on the Brass Knuckles are built with two cartridge bearings and one needle bearing, and are serviceable via a grease injection port. Chromoly and titanium options will be available for \$180 and \$400 respectively.

[www.speedplay.com](http://www.speedplay.com)



## Ortlieb Messenger Bag XL

The Ortlieb Messenger Bag XL is designed for hauling serious loads in all conditions. Features include 60 liters of capacity, roll closure, a padded back panel, and options for internal organization. And you know this thing is made to hold some serious weight when you take a look at the bottom panel—it's designed so that the bag can stand on its own. As you might imagine, professional-grade equipment demands a professional-grade price. Expect to pay around \$385.

[www.ortliebusa.com](http://www.ortliebusa.com)



## Surly Hurdy Gurdy

Anyone that has gotten rad with old school horizontal road dropouts has pulled the wheel out of place no matter how tight the skewer. Instead of hacking track end chain tensioners to work you can now use a stainless Hurdy Gurdy to hold it in place. Compatible with bolt-on or QR axles. [www.surlybikes.com](http://www.surlybikes.com)

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## Bianchi Lupo

The \$1049 Bianchi Lupo is a 9-speed, Sora-level spec version of the popular Volpe. A classic do-it-all chromoly steel cyclocross frame and fork, the Lupo features as standardized parts as it gets, cantilever brakes and the clearance and braze-ons for whatever your next adventure or commute may require. A great platform for entering the realms of road rides, dirt trails and light touring in one.

[www.bianchiusa.com](http://www.bianchiusa.com)



## Fyxation Six Fyx Six-speed Track Bike Conversion Group

Has your track bike jumped the shark? For roughly \$300 you can give your 120 mm spaced track or single speed bike a six-speed makeover with the Fyxation Six Fyx group. The Six Fyx group uses a custom 120 mm cassette hub and short, six-cog cassette along with a 46 tooth front ring, an axle-mount derailleur hanger and Microshift bar end shifter and derailleur to give a track bike a speed boost. The group ships with bolt on cable guides and only requires that you provide your choice of 9-speed chain to make it all work together. \$300 for the kit with a pre-built rear wheel, \$250 for it if you're providing the rim and wheelbuild.

[www.fyxation.com](http://www.fyxation.com)



## Paul Components QR Skewers

Paul Components started out in 1989 with a set of quick release skewers and is getting back into the wheel-holding business 25 years on. Available in black or silver in early 2014, the pair of skewers feature an aluminum body with a stainless steel cam, arm and skewer. [www.paulcomp.com](http://www.paulcomp.com)





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# Handcrafting A Business

VINCENT RODRIGUEZ TALKS BIKES, COFFEE, EDUCATION

By Rachel Krause

Photography by Ryan Sellers

Vincent Rodriguez loves maps. “Maps tell the story of where you’ve been, where you’re going and where you want to go,” Rodriguez says, as he holds a bag of his own hand-roasted coffee beans, aptly titled “Maps Coffee.”

Rodriguez, who opened his own bike shop and café in June, is entering uncharted territory as the only major frame builder in Kansas City.

“In other cities, you can throw a rock and hit another frame builder.” Rodriguez says. “I don’t have that here. I don’t have other people locally to talk to or collaborate with.”

Despite being on his own, Rodriguez opened up his bike shop/café/frame builder’s studio in Old Town Lenexa, located about 15 miles southwest of downtown Kansas City in a historic strip across the street from a set of train tracks. Rodriguez’s shop is a reflection of the bike culture in Kansas City. It may be young and unassuming, but thanks to a few passionate individuals, it’s finally gaining momentum. In the three months the shop has been open, Moka Velo has become more than a bike shop. Rodriguez has crafted more than a retail destination for cyclists; he’s created a community.



## Growing A Brand

The beginnings of Rodriguez's frame building business, VR Bicycles, started as a mere personal challenge.

"Every year I give myself a challenge," Rodriguez says. "Last year, I built a bike."

Rodriguez took a welding class and got his hands on a jig borrowed from Britton Kusiak, owner of Volker Bicycles. Vincent was ready to start working on his first frame. The first bike wasn't easy.

"With any project, it will either make you or break you—that first bike broke me," Rodriguez says. "I made a tiny little mistake that I should have adjusted from the beginning. I found myself at a point of, here I am: I already spent \$500, do I fix it or scrap it? It took another week to fix it all."

Rodriguez has completed 17 bikes, each a little different from the previous. One bike, deemed "Poltergeist" has a steel emblem of a ghost on the seat tube. A bike he built up for the 2013 North American Handmade Bicycle Show as a new builder has mustache bars and a carbon fork. Each bicycle has its own personality and quirks, but all of his bikes have one thing in common—a respect for the materials.

There are no logos or decals on Rodriguez's steel bikes—just a copper headbadge with a small carved out 'V' in the corner.

"I want them to be a conversation piece for people, not about advertising or marketing," Rodriguez says.

Rodriguez spent two weeks in March learning from David Bohm at the Bohemian Frame Building School in Tucson to perfect the art of his fillet brazing technique. David Bohm says it is unusual for existing frame builders to seek out further education and coaching.

"Vincent did and that says a lot about how he wants to progress and grow in the business," Bohm says. "He has some wonderful ideas about what he wants for his bicycle and overall business, and I have no doubt that sometime his name and brand will carry a connotation of quality."

"There is a romance and special quality to making the miters by hand," Rodriguez says. "It takes more time, but getting my hands on the file to feel the work makes it that more special."

Rodriguez says that he has been surprised by the level of interest people have shown in steel bicycles.

"With steel bicycles, someone is able to reminisce to the moments of riding their first bicycle and the freedom that comes with that and being a cool kid on a bicycle," Rodriguez says. "Steel is real."

Rodriguez spent months tending to his frame building business until last December, he decided it was time to make the next natural step—open up a shop.



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**NiteRider**  
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## Brewing The Idea For A Shop



Rodriguez spent 18 years at Starbucks, working up from a part-time barista to a multi-unit manager. Despite earning a six-figure salary, he decided to quit his job.

“I just wasn’t happy anymore.”

After months of research and scouting locations, Rodriguez opened Moka Velo in June. The shop is home to a coffee bar where Rodriguez will serve his own Maps Coffee Roastery coffee and a cyclists’ lounge where riders can rest. The mechanics area often transforms to a classroom in the evenings where Rodriguez and his shop manager David Dye teach classes on frame building, bike maintenance and coffee tasting.

Despite his new immersion in the cycling world, Rodriguez hasn’t forgotten his roots in coffee. Rodriguez took a roasting class from Boot Coffee Company in March to learn how to properly roast—something he never learned in his years at Starbucks. A coffee bar is located in the middle of the shop, and Rodriguez plans to buy a roaster soon to begin roasting his own beans in house.

“I would love to do some coffee profiling—get some die hard coffee fans and do some taste testing as well as one-on-one roasting sessions where you can pick your coffee, and I will coach you on how to roast it,” Rodriguez says.

Much like Rodriguez’s own desire to keep educating himself on frame building and coffee roasting, Rodriguez wants to provide educational opportunities for the community that has welcomed him so warmly in Lenexa.

“Educated, informed customers are going to be the ones that come back time and time again and become lifelong customers,” Rodriguez says.

Three weeks after opening up shop, Rodriguez hosted an introduction to frame building class that brought together 25 individuals to hang out in the back room and listen to Rodriguez talk about his philosophy and process of building bikes.

There was no course fee to attend. Rodriguez only asked people bring a six-pack of beer or a donation of canned foods, as part of his canned food donation program for local Kansas City food bank Harvesters called Tins for Tubes. (On a typical day, customers can donate canned goods and receive a tube in exchange.)

“What I’m really hoping to do is to build a collective community of Kansas City frame builders,” Rodriguez says.

Rodriguez has also hosted a bike maintenance, introduction to coffee, and women’s cycling classes in partnership with a local advocacy group, BikeWalkKC. Rodriguez has expressed interest in supporting the female cycling community and recently decided to sponsor a local women’s cycling club, Velo Vixens KC. As a new shop owner, Rodriguez says he needs all the help and support he can get, which is why he has reached out to the community to help sustain his business.

“I feel like I’m the new guy,” Rodriguez says. “I know a lot about operations and business, but I also know I need to ask for help. I need to create those connections that are sustaining. Working with other bike shops and community groups is important.”

Britton Kusiak of Volker Bicycles, is supportive of what Rodriguez is doing for the bike community and supporting frame building in Kansas City. However, he points out that Rodriguez is going to face a lot of challenges.

“I think what Vincent is doing is great,” Kusiak says. “He’s growing a community, hiring good people and working with people in the right way. He’s doing good work, but when it comes down to it, when you build someone a \$2000 custom frame, the customer pretty much wants your children as well. There’s a lot of expectation that comes with it.”

Rodriguez is optimistic and hopes that within the next year, Moka Velo is the number one sought after shop in the area, for both the bikes and the coffee.

“We hope to be the shop that is engaged with our customers,” Rodriguez says. “I want to show them how to ride safer, enjoy their bikes more and be a community supporter of both bicycles and coffee. My hope is to take the opportunity to grow this brand and make it something truly special.”



# THE DYNAMIC DUO

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- + Part Number CSMX-TAW
- + 10 Speed 11-36
- + Aluminum Spider
- + Aluminum Cog Lock Ring
- + Champagne Finish
- + Weight 341g

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## HUB:

- + Part Number S2K
- + 2 Speed Kickback with disc brake mount
- + Aluminum Cog Lock Ring
- + Champagne Finish
- + Weight 341g





Participants in the third annual Powderhorn 24, named after the south Minneapolis neighborhood and park that is home to the ride, cumulatively logged enough miles to more than circle the earth. Teams and individual riders traversed the ride's five-mile route for 24 straight hours, turning 27,435 total miles between the 350 participants. The top individual rider, "Troublino" Loretta Trevino, logged more than 300 miles in one full day, unofficially obtaining the title of the ride's "Biggest Badass." The top team, "The Murder Cats Turbo Crew," logged more than 400 miles.

The Powderhorn 24 was established a few years ago after Twin Cities cyclists participated in a similar 24-hour event in Milwaukee WI, The Riverwest 24. In its short life, the Powderhorn has gained a reputation among Twin Cities cyclists as a community building event and a badge of honor.

The ride is sponsored each year by local shop Freewheel Bike, along with numerous community businesses. This year, Freewheel pushed Powderhorn orga-

nizers to focus on safety and meeting all legal standards required for a community ride.

"It's a community ride, but people are racing," said volunteer organizer Ginny Marie Herman. "We just kept preaching about riding smart and safe. If people weren't being safe, we definitely let them know."

Safety is on everyone's minds in the Twin Cities—in the past year, three women died cycling on urban streets, another is still trying to overcome catastrophic injuries. Powderhorn participants were pleased to walk away from the 24-hour ride with only one minor accident and one broken bone.

Organizers hope the event will continue to grow. They also want to push for more community involvement and support from businesses and neighbors alike.

"Our fourth year is coming up," Herman said. "It's only going to get better."

*For more information about the Powderhorn 24 visit [www.powderhorn24.com](http://www.powderhorn24.com)*

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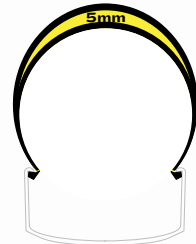
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# The Powderhorn 24

Photos by Mark Brown









## All-City Macho Man Disc

Cyclocross bikes have long made great commuter bikes. Slightly overbuilt frames and parts, lower gears, stronger brakes, and clearance for larger tires and fenders as compared to most road options, cyclocross bikes make a compelling argument as the right tool for the committed commuter. Add in the ability to hit mixed surface roads and sections of single- or double-track trail and it's easy to see why many choose 'cross bikes for the daily grind and the weekend thrills. When I want to cover some ground and have no particular direction in mind more often than not I choose a cyclocross bike, with the All-City Macho Man Disc being my wheels of choice as the summer days turn to autumn.

With 'cross racing booming, many bikes on the market have trended away from durable and versatile frames toward lightweight machines more suited to number plates and training rides than endless exploring. The Macho Man Disc has race-proven geometry

in a full chromoly steel package, sacrificing weight in the name of disc brakes and bike lifestyle compatibility without compromising on the cyclocross heritage. The double butted frame has internal toptube cable routing for easy portage and forged dropouts with a chainstay rear disc mount. Full length housing throughout keeps the shifting and braking in order no matter the conditions. Fender mounts on the frame and lugged crown fork make it commuter friendly, and full ED coating inside and out helps to prevent corrosion when the going gets wet. An English threaded bottom bracket shell is welcome in this age of press-in bearings, and the subtle touches of a front derailleur pulley mount (for traditional bottom pull road derailleurs) and a barrel adjuster are not to be overlooked—it's the details like this that matter and make it clear that the bike is designed by people that ride.

The stock Macho Man Disc build leaves little to

be desired in terms of performance even if it lacks any particular pizzazz. The Shimano 105 shifters are finely tuned shifting machines at this point, leaving little reason besides weight and fashion to go with higher end choices. The rest of the drivetrain is a mix of Shimano with a 10-speed 12-28 cassette and an FSA crankset with 46/36 rings rounding it out. Color me impressed with the Hayes CX-5 mechanical disc brakes—they performed on-par with other mechanical versions with easy setup, plenty of power and very little fade. Wheels are easy targets for criticism with complete bikes and while the Formula hubs and v-section Alex rims perform just fine I'd prefer to see the classic looks and weight savings of shallower box-section rims and even butted spokes. The 58 cm bike as reviewed weighs 26.7 lbs—nothing that was holding me back, but it is worth noting the weight penalty that comes not only with the disc calipers but the frame bits and

wheels to make them work as compared to a similarly spec'd bike with rim brakes.

On the road and on the trail I couldn't ask for much more bike than the Macho Man Disc. It's a predictable, comfortable ride all around but not sluggish in the least. The bike just feels fast, and makes me want to ride more miles more often. Cyclocross geometry isn't far from road bikes these days and the Macho Man Disc is no exception, with the same bottom bracket drop as All-City's Mr. Pink road bike but with a slightly longer wheelbase and slightly slacker head/seat angles. On pavement the bike feels more like a road bike than a slowly plodding touring bike, but those subtle geometry changes make it a capable performer for the unplanned left turn onto secret double-track trail. It's by no means a mountain bike but I didn't let that stop me from picking my way through rocky park trails a time or two—the stopping power of disc brakes makes riding on inappropriate trails far less daunting than underpowered cantilevers as far as I'm concerned. Sugar is sweet and so is honey, the Macho Man is on a roll.

If I had to list wishes, I could see wanting seatstay rack mounts or even a third bottle boss for the epic rides this bike is otherwise suited for. Losing some weight around the middle would be appreciated, but comes at an ever escalating cost. As it stands, a great ride—a race bike you can live with. Give me open trails or a gravel road and I'd be quite happy to rip it all day. The All-City Macho Man Disc is available complete as tested for \$1795 or as a roll-your-own frameset for \$650. [www.allcitycycles.com](http://www.allcitycycles.com)



Weatherproof, comfortable and built to last, these aren't your gradeschool backpacks. Production to fully custom, here we have four USA-made backpacks. Capacity of main compartment measured in 12 oz beverage cans.



## **Green Guru Commuter Backpack**

Price: \$70

Capacity: 40 cans

Features: Upcycled bicycle innertube construction with 100% recycled PETE fabric. Rolltop main compartment with small outer pocket.

The Green Guru Commuter is the simplest backpack in our lineup—essentially a large rectangular compartment with a small outer velcro pocket. The rolltop closure is more fold over and close with the single strap, with no secondary velcro closure. The outside pocket is large enough for a few small items but does not expand beyond its essentially flat profile, though it does hide a small secondary open top pocket behind it for easy lock stowage. The shoulder straps are padded mesh and the back features a thin, full length foam pad. I wish the strap closure was longer for overloading the bag. An economical, ecological choice in a simple, weatherproof backpack.

[www.greengurugear.com](http://www.greengurugear.com)



## **Mission Workshop Sanction**

Price: \$189

Capacity: 20 cans

Features: Waterproof and lightweight materials. Multiple interior and exterior organizer pockets. Military spec construction.

The Sanction is the smallest of these four bags yet has the most pockets; five, aside from the full-length main compartment. Subtly angled and curved backpack straps with dense padding throughout makes this the most comfortable bag I've ever worn—it just sits right, and doesn't interfere with checking for traffic over my shoulder. Laptop, camera, a change of clothes and a small toolkit is about all I need most days, and that's about what the Sanction holds. Perfect for the daily essentials or traveling light, a similarly constructed but more than twice as large Vandal is also available. Mission Workshop makes some of the finest bags and clothing I've used, two years on and the Sanction still looks new. [www.missionworkshop.com](http://www.missionworkshop.com)



**R.E. Load Small Flight Pack**

Price: \$205

Capacity: 45 cans

Features: Custom colors available. Lightweight rolltop bag. Side bottle pockets, single outside pocket. Internal pen/change organizer.

R.E. Load has over a decade of experience with cycling backpacks, and the Flight Pack fits it all into a commuter bag. Daily needs fit just fine, along with that after-work grocery run and a waterbottle or two in outside pockets designed to drain rather than soak your gear. Rolltops are great for overstuffing and two long closure straps make it possible to still secure, though I wish there was a secondary hook-and-loop closure for normal sized loads. Pen holders are all too rare these days, but I regard them as almost necessary and found the interior organizer a welcome sight. If I had to live with a single bag, it would not be far from the Flight Pack. [www.reloadbags.com](http://www.reloadbags.com)



**Trash Bags Garbage Burner**

Price: \$295

Capacity: 75 cans

Features: Made to order, with many custom options and colors. Padded straps and back. Heavy duty materials and construction.

The Trash Bags Garbage Burner is born from daily courier use with heavy duty construction, expansive capacity and a myriad of custom options. Compression straps all around allow you to cinch down the empty bag to a fraction of its full size. Fill it beyond capacity thanks to extendable dog ears and strapping that allows it to swallow boxes. I've carried a week's worth of groceries, photo gear all over town in the rain and lived out of the the bag for a 10-day road trip. The heavily padded straps proved comfortable for the overloaded long haul, the overall construction meant for years of abuse. Built to order with endless customization available. [www.trashmessengerbags.com](http://www.trashmessengerbags.com)



## Dahon Formula S18

At \$1399, the Dahon Formula S18 is designed for folding bike riders who want more than just convenience—they want performance. This is most clearly illustrated by the inclusion of Avid BB5 disc brakes. Along with its color matched Schwalbe tires the bike simply looks more serious than some of the other folding bikes out there.

The one size fits all frame is made from 7005 aluminum alloy, which is stiffer and lighter than 6000-series alloy, and of course more expensive. Though it's hard to imagine that the same frame can suit such a wide range, Dahon claims that the Formula S18 is designed for riders between 4'8" and 6'4" (though not over 230 lbs).

There is a massive amount of adjustability afforded by the 580 mm seatpost. Really short riders may actually need to cut the stock seatpost down in order to

get the seat low enough. The bike features a telescoping "handlepost" that allows you to tailor the handlebar height via quick release. This is a good place to mention that the lack of a traditional stem makes the steering feel quite unique. The bike's geometry is tuned so that the bike is stable, even at speed, but to me it just feels a little twitchy, especially when I need to stand up and climb.

It's interesting to think about how 20" wheels effect the performance of a bike. With a 56/46 crankset and an 11-25 9-speed cassette, you've certainly got the gearing to get up to speed (26-95 gear inches, to be exact). But what I seem to notice is that the small wheels are pretty ineffective at smoothing out road vibrations. Pebbles, broken concrete, manholes and the like all seem like significantly larger obstacles than on a 700c equipped bike. More than anything, the "feel" of 20" wheels limits my willingness to go really fast. I should note that some popular folding bikes use 16" wheels, so maybe I should count my blessings.

All in all, the bike is rather fun to ride. It accelerates quickly and the disc brakes make it stop on a dime. The frame feels solid enough to forget that your entire bike is designed to quickly fold in half. The aforementioned handlepost assembly does occasionally creak, but not so much in a disconcerting way, just enough to remind you that it's probably not a good idea to wheelie drop any tall curbs.

The Formula S18 weighs in at roughly 26 lbs, which isn't exactly light, even for a fully geared city bike. But when it's folded it feels lighter than it actually is. Folding the bike is an absolute breeze, and the folding pedals and magnetic tabs that hold it closed are just plain cool, in my humble opinion. When folded the bike measures 11.3" x 31.2" x 25.7". While not the most compact folding bike on the market, it's still plenty versatile.

Looking around the bike there are an equal number of house brand and name brand parts, all of which seem to be on par with what you should expect from a bike at this price point. I know from years of personal experience that WTB makes quality rims, and Shimano's Tiagra drivetrain components are built to last. Dahon's house-brand cockpit components are comfortable and durable enough to get you get from point A to point B quickly and safely. [www.dahon.com](http://www.dahon.com)



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## Avid BB7S

Avid first released the Ball Bearing mechanical disc brake back in 1999. Because of their power, reliability and serviceability, they were pretty much instantly deemed the industry standard for disc brakes. SRAM acquired Avid five years later and wisely continued to produce the brakes under the Avid moniker without significant changes, other than separating the line to include an entry level product, the BB5, and the flagship BB7. Once there was a demand, along came road versions of the BB5 and BB7, which were optimized for road brake levers (which pull less cable than mountain levers).

Avid recently unveiled the BB7S, a sleek, black version of the venerable BB7 with stainless steel hardware. Like its predecessor, the BB7S features tool-free inboard and outboard pad adjustment, organic compound brake pads and Avid's "tri caliper positioning system." This system primarily consists of a series of concave and convex washers that allow for precise alignment of the caliper. I'm sure there may be a few

people who disagree, but in my opinion the BB7 makes for the easiest brake setup on the market.

The new BB7S brakes ship with the HSI rotor, which is said to be an improvement over the classic G2 Cleansweep rotor in that it displaces heat a little better and works better in wet weather. It certainly looks the part, and likely weighs a hair less. Speaking of weight, the BB7S caliper weighs just 197 g as opposed to the classic BB7's which eclipsed 212 g.

I have to confess, I'm totally spoiled because I have the luxury of using Avid's Speed Dial Ultimate levers (\$263 per pair) to actuate these brakes. It could be argued that such high end levers would make any brake seem better, but I prefer to think that they just don't interfere with the inherent power and modulation of the BB7S.

The Avid BB7S brakes retail for \$120 per wheel. Choose between road and mountain versions, and 140 or 160 mm rotors. [www.sram.com/avid](http://www.sram.com/avid)



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## Light & Motion Taz 1000

Light & Motion has always been at the forefront of the high-powered commuter light market. The market has seen tremendous advances in technology, and now the 1000 lumen Taz isn't even the brightest light on the market. As you might surmise, it's way more light than most people need, but there are folks out there who want or genuinely need such a light. There are definitely roads in my city that are pitch black at night, but you could still coast at more than 20 mph. Head out into the suburbs and the number of similar situations is multiplied.

And let's not forget the potential for using the Taz offroad, as I have been doing extensively. I used to own a top of the line 600 lumen mountain bike light that was twice as expensive as the Taz. It had a heavy battery and cables that never ceased to get in the way. Imagine how happy I was the first time I hit the trail with an unencumbered 1000 lumens beaming from my handlebar.

Sheer brightness is only part of the story here, as the Taz has some of the best light distribution I've ever experienced. The lens is designed to spread a softer beam directly in front of you, while the road ahead is

clearly illuminated for a long, long way.

The controls are simple, but rather sophisticated at the same time. The main button handles on/off duty, and lets you cycle through the modes. The secondary button allows you to "lock" the light while not in use (helpful if you carry it in your bag during the day) and also controls the optional side lights (which help provide 180° visibility).

The mode selections include 1000, 500, 200, flash and pulse. The light also has "race mode" which limits you to just two settings, 800 and 350. This is especially handy for off-road riding, where you need to switch between high and low more often, but don't want to spend time cycling through as many modes. Expect to get about 1:40 burn time on high, and up to 6:00 on low.

Like most lights these days, the lithium ion battery is USB rechargeable. Depending on your device it can be fully recharged in as little as four hours. The mount is tool-free and unlike some of the rubber strap-style mounts I've used in the past, this one holds tight, even on the bumpiest of rides. Color me impressed. The Taz 1000 retails for \$249. [www.lightandmotion.com](http://www.lightandmotion.com)



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8

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## NiteRider Stinger USB

The NiteRider Stinger USB taillight uses a single high power half-Watt LED to keep you visible from up to a half-mile away. Designed to be mounted on a seatpost, the tool-free mounting system works on both traditional and aero posts.

The Stinger USB features a 25 lumen output and four modes that should cover you in most situations: High steady (4 hour run time), low steady (16 hours), flash (16 hours) and flash 2 (10.5 hours). NiteRider is a believer in using lights during the day, as well as at night, and so they refer to the 16 hour flashing mode as “daylight safety flash mode”. They also refer to low steady as “group ride mode” for obvious reasons.

The unit is USB rechargeable, and a full charge takes less than two hours. This means you can easily recharge your light during the workday, even if you forget about it until well after lunch.

Aesthetically, I think the Stinger USB looks pretty cool. More importantly, it’s easy to use. You actually press on the light itself, and single clicks cycle through the four modes as well as on and off. You know when you’ve reached the “off” mode because the bulb flashes blue momentarily before the unit powers down completely. If the battery charge is greater than 20% when the Stinger USB is turned off, it will flash blue 10 times. If the battery charge is 20% or less when turned off, it will flash red. It’s simple enough to operate with gloves or even mittens. The Stinger USB retails for \$35.

[www.niterider.com](http://www.niterider.com)

## Selle Royal Becoz Sport

The Selle Royal’s Becoz line of saddles are designed to be as environmentally friendly as possible. They claim to have replaced numerous materials that are derived from fossil fuels with ones that are from renewable resources. This includes the use of natural oils in the manufacturing process, as well as Corkgel, a bio-sourced polyurethane gel combined with natural cork.

The Becoz Sport measures 144 mm wide, 266 mm long and weighs 385 g. While the shape is reminiscent of a racing saddle, the weight will discourage serious competitors (as similar Selle Royal offerings are as much as 130 g lighter). Still, the narrow nose of the saddle makes it well suited for an aggressive riding position. And with its reasonable price point and durable, water-resistant construction I could see this being a good choice for a racer’s training bike.

Personally, I find the Becoz Sport to be adequately comfortable, but it’s not exactly my favorite saddle ever. I might be a bit more at home on the Becoz Athletic which is a bit more substantial in all directions.

The entire Becoz series features Selle Royal’s integrated clip system, which allows for easy installation of accessories, but alas I didn’t get to test it out since I didn’t have one of their lights or saddle bags. The Becoz Sport retails for about \$66. [www.selleroyal.com](http://www.selleroyal.com)





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## Fyxation Mesa 61 Alloy Pedal

Platform pedals, with or without straps, are some of my favorites. Nothing says everyday bike utility like being able to ride in most any shoes you just happen to have on. And as countless BMX riders have shown you don't need to be attached to your pedals with a cleat or straps, a platform is enough to fly. Over the years I've grown to prefer low profile platforms on my street bikes for cornering clearance, foot strap compatibility and of course looks. The Fyxation Mesa 61 alloy pedal is the highest end pedal from Fyxation yet, the top of three in the Mesa line following the form of the previously reviewed nylon-bodied Mesa, and the metal-pinned Mesa MP.

The Mesa 61 features a 6061 aluminum pedal body with replaceable steel pins for grip, providing a large 106 x 100 mm platform with the durability that only metal components can give. The pedal spins on a chromoly spindle via a sealed outside bearing and inner bushing. Most striking is of course the 12 mm platform body height—beyond looking cool it maximizes the cornering clearance given the width of the platform, and allows you to set your seat a few millimeters lower for a slightly lower center of gravity. The slim platform also lends itself to the new-school foot retention systems, allowing the flat nylon straps to easily slip

through the cage without folding.

At 380 g per pair the Mesa 61 carries a mere 60 g penalty over the nylon bodied Mesa, making the choice between them more about function than the scale given the design. It's all about the large, nearly square platform and the support it gives across your foot. I have big feet, and the large platform prevents my feet from hurting when wearing flexy street shoes, even after pedaling all day on overnight bike camping trips. The metal body seems durable, though for what it's worth my original nylon Mesa pedals are still limping along a few years after the initial review. I say limping as the end of my Mesa pedals has deformed around the bearing cap, something the Mesa 61 should be more resistant to over the miles. After a solid six months on the bike I've yet to lose a traction pin, and the pedals spin as good as new. All is well with the Mesa 61 going into the fall and winter boot season where the extra large platform is even more appreciated.

The Mesa 61 is a top-end platform pedal with an alloy body and sealed bearings and commands a premium at \$97. If that's too much to swallow, check out the \$30 Gates Slim for a similar form with loose ball bearings and a nylon body. [www.fyxation.com](http://www.fyxation.com)

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## Yakima StickUp

Yakima is arguably the most popular name in automobile bike racks. They've been making roof racks since 1980, and hitch racks like the StickUp since 1996. While many people will forever be fans of roof racks, I'm short and thus I'm not. Plus, I don't like the idea of one of my bikes getting crushed overhead in a low clearance situation.

Almost anyone who's used a hitch rack swears by them. The only real disadvantages are that it can get in the way of accessing your trunk, tailgate hatch, or rear door and exposes the bike to rear-end danger. And it can be a hassle to install and remove it regularly. Meanwhile a hitch rack is easy to load and unload. For those who are conscious of their automobile's appearance, a hitch rack doesn't really come into contact with the vehicle, save for the hitch mount interface, so you're apt to do less damage than with a roof rack or a trunk rack. Granted, most vehicles don't come standard with

a hitch mount, but places like U-Haul can fit one to most vehicles, and prices seem to hover around \$250 installed.

The StickUp is a mid-level hitch rack. It's solidly built and displays the high level of finishing that all Yakima racks exhibit. Personally, I wouldn't mind one of their entry-level racks, but the most affordable hitch mount for my vehicle was the StickUp.

At 42 pounds, the StickUp might not be the best choice for people who plan to take the rack on and off of their vehicle regularly. Thankfully it folds up when not in use, and even when loaded it can drop down for convenient trunk access. Personally, I don't mind taking it on and off, and I'm sure that storing it indoors will keep it working smoothly for years to come.

The StickUp retails for \$259 and carries a lifetime warranty. Oh, and it features an integrated bottle opener. [www.yakima.com](http://www.yakima.com)



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# RIDING INTO THE FUTURE

## LATVIA'S CYCLING RENAISSANCE

By Sam Tracy

Latvia's capitol Riga enjoys all the charm and dignity of its other, more renowned European counterparts, yet the local architects' uniquely animated take on the art nouveau architectural style really sets the place apart. All across the city's center, stone buildings bearing expressive faces, whimsical figurines and frolicking nature scenes populate streets large and small, each capturing a distinct mood or personality. These enduring attributes will draw even more visitors in 2014, when the city represents Europe as its Capital of Culture for the year. The distinction is well-earned, and there will be no shortage of guidebooks for newcomers, but most of these will probably miss one key detail: if you are able to make the trip, see if you can't bring your bike. Alternately, make plans to rent one. Cycling is back on the rise in Latvia, resuming a trajectory long subdued by war and occupation, and in so many ways the local bike culture is again flourishing.

Cycling goes way back, in Latvia—Aleksander Leutner established Riga's first bicycle factory in 1886. Kārlis Platais followed his lead six years later, and then Pēteris Ozolnieks opened a third one two years after that. On the eve of World War I, domestic firms were already producing 12,000 bicycles annually. Leutner's original factory, still the largest, accounted for two-thirds of this total.

Latvian bicycle manufacturers earned a reputation for quality engineering, exporting to markets across Europe, and as far away as the United States. The sec-

tor's output peaked in 1938, with more than 54,000 bikes produced, alas bigger changes were brewing as well. World War II began the following year, with Hitler's invasion of Poland launched days after the Nazis and the Soviets had signed a non-aggression agreement. Latvia fell within the Soviet sphere of influence, under the terms of a secret amendment attached to this Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, and amidst mounting pressure a fraudulently-installed "People's Assembly" was able to declare the country a Socialist Soviet Republic in 1940, paving the way for Soviet military occupation.

The Nazis in turn invaded Latvia in 1941, holding Riga until 1944, when the Soviets were able to push them back out. Latvians were persecuted and conscripted by both sides during the conflict, and feelings can run strong around events that for some are still within living memory.

It is heartening to see how much of Riga survived the destruction, given this history, yet a great deal was lost as well. Only one Latvian bicycle factory remained operational at the close of WWII: the Erenpreiss plant, in Riga. The Soviets nationalized the facility, rebranding its products under the Sarkanā Zvaigzne (Red Star) badge and ramping up production. Red Star bikes came to enjoy a stellar reputation of their own across the Soviet Union, and in 1960 the factory was able to churn out 183,000 bicycles. Unfortunately for the masses of Soviet cyclists, it was then decided that the Red Star

plant could better serve them by producing mopeds, instead. Bicycles were no longer produced in Latvia, beginning 1961.

Set against the more linear development of the U.S. cycling industry, the story of its Latvian equivalent is no simple tale of boom and bust, or even merger and acquisition, but one of perseverance and resourcefulness. The full historical details are captured in the excellent “From Leutner to Erenpreiss,” a bilingual volume which carefully chases down the succession of loose threads and new beginnings thrown up by decades of upheaval. The book is available through the Saulkrasti Bicycle Museum, a must-see destination for any visiting cyclist, located up the coast a short train ride from Riga. (The museum offers rental bikes and repair services as well.)

Varis Auszins, a lifelong cyclist and a co-founder of Open Bikes, Riga’s first community bike shop, was 13 years old when Latvia finally exited the Soviet Union in 1991. He describes a bleak picture of life, towards the end of the occupation. What we know as bike shops were simply not around, he says; there were only a few garages, serving motorists. Connections were needed, in order to obtain new parts. Bicycles were generally fixed at home, within the family.

Growing up in Sigulda in central Latvia, and impressed by images of BMX bikes originating in the West, the young Varis and his friends sought to create facsimiles of their own the only way they could: by tearing apart old Soviet bikes and welding the tubes back together, using more BMX-like angles. They had no blueprints to work from; only pictures clipped from Western magazines. He and his friends cut their own dropouts from steel plate, enlisting sections of tubular bed frames to make the fork legs.

Uldis Austrins, another Riga cyclist originally from Bauska, a small town in the South of the country, recalls a similar setting. “It was nearly impossible to buy a bike,” he says. Where he lived, “there was a shop where you could sometimes buy a bike,” but only if you were lucky.

Toms Kohs, a road racer who also builds freak bikes with Riga’s Apokalipses Jātnieki (Riders of the Apocalypse) club, describes a broadly similar experience. Road bikes were not available in sizes to fit ten-year-old racing enthusiasts, so his coach and parents worked together to reduce the dimensions of adult

bikes to better accommodate them. Fast kids’ bikes simply were not available, Toms says—his coach, unable to get by on his salary alone, maintained a side line repairing and modifying bikes.

Kohs also notes how bicycles effectively skipped a generation: while both he and his grandparents had them, his parents did not. “The Soviets decided there was no future for bicycles,” he says. “The number of cyclists decreased radically.”

Latvia is a very different place, 22 years after regaining its independence. The changes are not always immediately evident to visitors from the west, but conversations with those living there serve to underline their depth and scope. Five years after establishing their original workshop in a decrepit and unheated industrial building in Riga’s riverside Andrejsala district, the Apokalipses Jātnieki riders faced an unanticipated new challenge: the neighborhood around them was going upscale, and as summer began in 2013 they found themselves evicted. Yet their creative and expressive presence, like the course of the city’s development itself, still represents a significant departure from Soviet times. (New quarters with other, more pedestrian problems have since been located across town. Kohs is optimistic that the club, lately focusing more on building cargo bikes, will continue to flourish.)

Bike culture in Latvia is lately going from strength to strength. BMX is much more of a phenomenon, now—it was of course Māris Štrombergs, a Latvian from Valmiera, who first won the gold medal in BMX at the 2008 Olympics, and then retained the title at the London Olympic Games 4 years later. Toms Erenpreiss, the great grandson of founder Gustav Erenpreiss’ brother, has succeeded in bringing the family business into the modern era, first through reconditioning the prized original examples, and more recently by offering classically-styled new bicycles under the same illustrious name. The Riga Hardcourt Bike Polo group regularly coordinates events through Facebook, with local teams traveling to compete in tournaments around the region. Riga’s annual Bike Week has grown to reflect this burgeoning scene, and in 2013 included a tweed ride, a freak bike parade and the biggest Critical Mass ride in the country’s history, among many other unique events.

Piens Velo, tucked handily beneath the popular Piens Bars in central Riga, has emerged as a real hub for



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local bike culture. This owes much to technical acumen and general credibility, as it might at any other worthy shop, but Piens also hosts an outdoor minidrome, the first of its kind in Latvia. The track rises in an old industrial side yard adjacent to the shop, and it is open to all those curious enough to try it.

The Piens team regularly hosts cycling events at their track, with competitions operating under the rules used with the broadly similar Red Bull minidrome events. Riding the Piens track is a singular experience—it may be the ultimate use for a fixed gear. Experienced local riders further identify one outstanding quality in particular about it: where other minidromes are typically disassembled and reassembled at their destinations, the Piens track simply stays put. This fact allows for more solid construction techniques, which in turn favor greater speeds.

Local rider Toms Alsbergs, who bested 31 other riders in Edinburgh last year to take his fourth gold at the Red Bull Mini Drome, holds the record in Riga as well. Alsbergs himself has now competed on similar tracks in several cities, picking up various wins along the way, a vantage which has allowed him to appreciate subtle differences across the narrow field of minidromes currently in use. The one he rode in New York, Toms says, was “a little bit smaller, but steeper.” The Piens minidrome, he says, is “the best I have ever ridden.” Riders from the neighboring Baltic countries of Lithuania and Estonia have made occasional visits, but to date this has been the depth of its international exposure.

Alsbergs rides a track bike on his own time as well, working with his friends in Riga’s TRU FIX KRU to coordinate events around town. Fixed gear bikes make a natural fit for Latvia’s capitol city, given its lack of hills and the powerful local winters, and Alsbergs maintains that he sees more in use around Riga than in other European cities he has visited.

Bike culture in Latvia already embraces a broad range of pursuits—mountain bikers, road racers, and everyday cyclists find no end of diversions, in the warmer months at least—and within the context of bicycle-friendly Western Europe, the level of cycling advocacy has been picking up as well.

Among its other results, the economic crisis which gripped Latvia a few years ago also served to generate greater interest in cycling as a less expensive trans-

portation option, an opening which likely can only continue to grow. And it is here that Open Bikes, the Baltics’ first community bike shop, ably picks up the thread.

The shop, centrally located in Riga’s quiet district, began regular hours in April. Open Bikes is striving to adapt the increasingly ubiquitous community bike shop model to the needs of Latvian cyclists, and their efforts have already garnered much community involvement, as well as the support of local businesses and the U.S. Embassy.

The project’s principal organizers—Auzins, students Emilija Mikalauska and Hristina Satalova, and bike courier Janis Belecks—continue to meet regularly to shape and refine Open Bikes’ mission. One early priority for them has simply been the creation of a space where bikes can be fixed, free of charge. It is not common for Latvians to carry individual tool sets while riding, Satalova explains. “Bike messengers do,” she says, “but not people who commute.” More, many shops charge in Riga to use an air pump, and the air compressors found at gas stations are not always compatible with bicycle valves. Open Bikes’ initial focus thus responds directly to this situation. Ultimately the group hopes to establish open-air bike stations, at strategic locations across town, utilities where riders might stop to fill their tires and accomplish basic repairs.

Satalova and Mikalauska also ride with SHE FIX, collectively among the regulars at the Piens velodrome. The two won first and third place, respectively, in the ladies’ event at Red Bull Tru Fix 2013 race, staged in June on a creative course set up at the Latvian Railway History Museum.

Latvia is not a big country, and there is considerable overlap across the various cycling subcultures newly native to Riga. Taken together, it makes for a notably open and comfortable environment, where the enthusiasm and excitement are both refreshingly sincere. In practice, this dynamic combination proves more than enough to make it a wonderful place to ride a bike.



*Sam Tracy is author, most recently, of the second edition of *Bicycle! A Repair & Maintenance Manifesto*, available through PM Press. He lives and travels with his wife Kerri Spindler-Ranta, a U.S. diplomat.*

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# THE CPSC AND ME

BY LUKE ELRATH

In my role as a bicycle forensic investigator, I often look into the details of an injury to a cyclist due to a defective bicycle or bike accessory. In some of these cases the part that failed and contributed to the crash was known to be unsafe and a recall notice issued to consumers and dealers. The CPSC is a government agency that is responsible for issuing those recalls. It also ensures that the products we buy are safe when used as intended. In this article I'll provide some information about what the CPSC is, how they create safe design criteria to the bicycle industry, how they address unsafe products that make it into the market and what you as a bicycle rider can do to verify that the bike you're riding is free of defects.

As of August 2013, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has issued recalls related to bicycles and bicycle accessories affecting 19,526 units. This includes frames, forks, brakes and handlebars that were designed or manufactured

in such a way that end-user injury is likely enough to warrant the recall process. What is the CPSC here for, how do they interact with the bicycle industry and what does it mean the safety of you, the rider?

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent agency of the United States government. The CPSC regulates the sale and manufacture of more than 15,000 different consumer products, bicycles included. CPSC fulfills its mission by banning dangerous consumer products, issuing recalls of products already on the market, and researching potential hazards associated with consumer products. CPSC learns about unsafe products in several ways:

The agency maintains a consumer hot line (800.638.2772) and website through which consumers may report concerns about unsafe products or injuries associated with products.

There are hospitals that provide data to the CPSC regarding injuries caused by products.



When bicycle companies get reports from their dealers and customers that a specific product is failing more frequently than others they are required to give notice to the CPSC.

So we've got a government agency that is there to protect you, the buyer of stuff. The manufacturers of bicycles and bike accessories simply want to make cool stuff that people want to buy and enjoy, but sometimes the market pressure to make bikes lighter, faster, cheaper, or more innovative leads to shortcuts in the process of getting these products from a concept to the shop safely. Let's take a look at just how big the bike business is in the US and where it all comes from:

In 2012 in this country there were an estimated 2000 companies involved in the manufacture and distribution of cycling products. Bike consumers have about 150 bicycle brands available in the US to choose from. Those companies are part of a \$6.1 billion dollar per year industry.

How many bikes is that? The tally for all units sold in the US for the calendar year 2012 is 18.7 million bikes. Almost all of them come from one country.

Of all the bikes sold in the US last year, 99% of them were made in Asia. 96% came from mainland China and 3% from Taiwan (an island of 26 million people located 110 miles off the southeast coast of mainland China). The bikes from Taiwan tend to be of a higher quality and price than those built in China. The bottom line is that effectively every bike you're likely to see rolling on the streets, tracks or trails began its life in Asia. The US-based companies that design these bikes have product managers that travel to the factories in China and Taiwan and work with them to get the products made cheaper than is possible elsewhere. The cost of raw materials and labor rates in China allow the bikes to be offered to the US consumer at very low prices when compared to domestic production. The distance, however, makes the process of design and quality assurance a challenge for some bike companies.

The manner in which a bicycle is deemed "safe" varies widely throughout the bike industry. The big players who innovate have the resources to perform computer modeling on an idea before molds are cut. Prototype testing can occur in-house before the final design is handed over to a factory for mass production. The smaller players rely on CoCs: Certificates of Compliance. A visit is made to the factory. A conver-



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sation begins regarding what the bike frame will be: material, tube shape, construction, weight, and price. The research and development department within the factory creates a drawing; the product manager from the US-based bike company reviews it. Once it is approved the factory creates molds, builds the first testing samples and sends them to a third-party testing lab. This lab conducts the CPSC-mandated strength and durability testing. In essence the frame is placed in a jig and repeatedly stressed in certain ways that simulate the lifetime of abuse the frame will experience. If the frame survives these tests without failing the lab issues a certificate stating the frame is strong enough for CPSC-approved sale to the US consumer.

The CPSC also lays out design criteria in the Requirements for Bicycles 16 C.F.R. part 1512. It is a regulation that increases the safety of bicycles by establishing requirements for assembly, braking, protrusions, structural integrity and reflectivity. They are mandatory design constraints that come from the CPSC, industry partners (often from the bike companies) and consumer advocates. Bikes that don't measure up to this standard are banned under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act. If it seems pretty serious, that's because it is. During my time as a product manager I heard tales about containers of bikes languishing in customs limbo at US ports because the lead level in the paint was too high, or the wrong inner tube valve material got used.

When dealing with the enormous output capacities of these Asian factories there are inevitably design flaws, material defects and other oversights that can lead to product failures. As stated above, the CPSC gathers reports of product failures that can and do cause injuries. In the top left corner of the CPSC website you can report an unsafe product. Businesses have their own tab in which they can self-report issues that come up through dealer feedback and warranty claims. When something is identified as a hazard to the user the CPSC issues a recall notice. Bike shops throughout the country are responsible for reading and reviewing these notices. Even if they are not a dealer of the brand of bike involved in the recall they are expected to catch it when a customer brings that model in for service. When you think of all the recall notices over all the years and all the bike brands you can imagine this to be a daunting task for the shop owner. You can

help them out:

Register your bike. If it comes with a mail-in warranty card (or an online registration option), do it! Then, the bike company has a way to reach you directly if something goes wrong.

Check [www.cpsc.gov/en/recalls](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/recalls) periodically. There's a drop down box for "sports and recreation" that will list the recalls in that category chronologically. You can also put "bicycle" and your brand and model name in the search box and see if you get any results.

Talk to your shop! They sold you the bike; they are great partners in helping you keep your bike in safe operating order. Plus while you're there they can tell you about the recommended maintenance and inspection intervals you should be following based on your bike model, riding style and frequency.

Read your owner's manual. Some of the content may seem generic and not particularly useful for your specific model, but knowing as much as possible about your bike can make you informed, street savvy and safe.

Bicycling is not without risk, but neither is crossing the street, using a hair dryer, or sitting in an office chair. As a bicycle owner and rider you have resources to minimize the chance of an injury due to product failures.



## About the Author



Luke Elrath has designed, built and repaired bicycles and has extensive experience in the saddle competing, commuting and riding for fun. He has worked as a product manager for Trek and Advanced Sports International and is a voting member of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) committee on bicycles. As a student at the United Bicycle Institute he learned the skills to build a custom lugged steel bicycle frame that he rides daily. Luke currently works as an investigator at Robson Forensic on cases involving bicycle crashes, product failures and related cycling incidents.



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Create your own Path!

# Hub Spacing

By Brad Quartuccio



**H**ub spacing varies front to rear and bike to bike, and is an important consideration in parts and frame compatibility. Spacing is measured from the outside faces of the hub locknuts or axle-ends or the inside faces of the frame dropouts or fork ends, and is commonly referred to as the O.L.D or over lock-nut distance. In general front hub spacing has stayed pretty steady over the years, with rear hub spacing increasing gradually as derailleur systems add gears. What follows is not an exhaustive list of every O.L.D ever spec'ed, but more a guide to common hub spacings on relatively current (and common) adult bikes. Internally geared hubs vary widely, best to measure frame and hubs and plan accordingly. When in doubt consult your caliper.

- 100 mm - Modern quick release and bolt-on front hubs**
- 110 mm - Thru-axle front hubs, coaster brake hubs, some older and NJS rear track hubs, BMX rear hubs**
- 120 mm - Rear track hubs, 5-speed freewheel hubs**
- 126 mm - Rear 6- and 7-speed road hubs**
- 130 mm - Rear 8-, 9-, 10- and 11-speed road hubs, rear 7-speed mountain hubs, some early cyclocross disc brake rear hubs**
- 135 mm - Rear 8-, 9-, 10, and 11-speed mountain hubs, road and cyclocross disc brake rear hubs**
- 140 mm - Rear tandem hubs**
- 142 mm - Some rear mountain thru-axle hubs**
- 150 mm - Some rear mountain thru-axle hubs**



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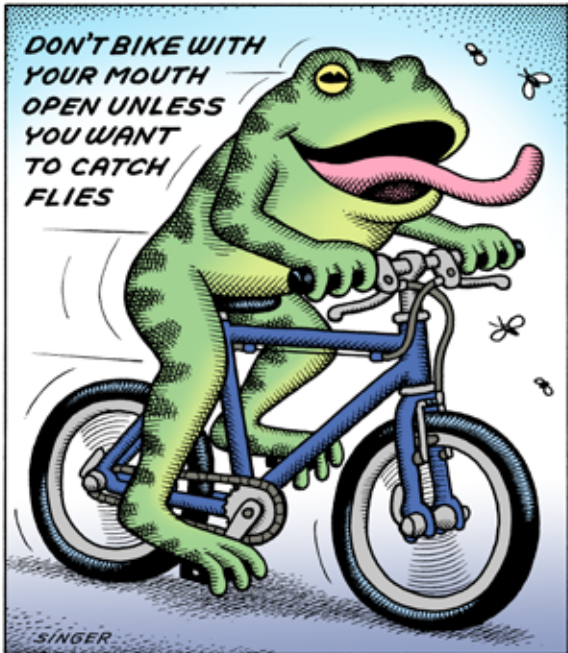


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# OUTRO



Photo by Brad Quartuccio

## Urban Cycling Hall Of Fame Inaugural Class

The nine inaugural inductees to the Urban Cycling Hall of Fame include some names notorious and others that should be: Longtime New York messenger and originator of Cranksgiving, Antonio “Tone” Rodrigues; the godfather of global messenger culture James Moore, who was riding brakeless track bikes on the street before most of today’s fixie youth were even born; Roland Burns, maker of RELoad Bags; artist and messenger Greg Ugalde; Felipe “The King of New York” Robayo; Tokyo messenger Hiroyuki “Sino” Shinozuka, a two-time CMWC champion; San Francisco messenger, owner of Pushbike SF, and multi-time NACCC champion Sarah Murder; Critical Mass (an award recognizing not just the organizers but every participant in the movement); and bike repair guru Sheldon Brown. The People’s Choice award went to Los Angeles fixed gear racer and organizer Sean Martin.

“He’s a fucking legend,” said selection committee member Andy White, expressing a commonly felt sentiment about the legacy Sheldon Brown has left behind.

Kevin “Squid” Bolger made sure Moore was honored in his absence, inquiring of the crowd in atten-

dance, “Who was riding bikes in the ‘80s?” With scarce if any hands raising up, it became apparent that Moore paved the way for much of what we know about urban cycling today, carrying out his runs on a bike equipped with no brakes and drop bars long before it was considered the norm.

Of the nine inductees, Ugalde was honored as the Chrome Ace of the class. His artwork has become an integral part of urban cycling and alleycat culture, most notably his artwork for Monster Track.

“For anyone who loves my artwork I really appreciate it and if inspired anybody or influenced anybody to become a messenger, I’m sorry,” Ugalde said upon accepting his award, adding, “I’m not gonna be a messenger forever, only until I die.”

The UCHOF inaugural collection was also premiered at Interbike on the show floor, and includes several of Ugalde’s illustrations, photos from Andy White, John Watson, Peter DiAntoni and other photographers who have documented urban cycling over the years (including Urban Velo’s own Brad Quartuccio), more than 200 spoke cards from Lucas Brunelle’s collection, and a score of other urban cycling artifacts.

— Krista Carlson

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