

THE CALIFORNIA CONNECTION

We have a special treat for you this month — an on-location Road Test of new all-terrain bikes in Marin County, California — the home of this cycling creation.

In the words of John Kukoda, *Bicycling's* Road Test Editor, "We hung up our cleats, stocked up on suntan lotion and Band-Aids, and headed for the heartland of all-terrain cycling." When we got there we borrowed riders from a number of well-traveled ATB teams including Specialized, Team Ritchey, Team Fisher, and Ibis Cycles.

As John notes, "With all this gonzo horsepower we were surprised the bikes held up as well as they did. Save for some wobbly wheels, a couple of ruined derailleurs and numerous loose parts, all our test bikes — and this road test editor — survived the ordeal with only a few new scrapes."

Of course, our opinions are our own, though I must admit that we found the opinions of these hard-riding ATB team members very useful. With Kukoda, they put the bikes through their paces. Not that John needs much help. As an ex-Marine who rides 300 to 400 miles a week, he loves to bend bikes. Recently, he told me that he joined the service because he couldn't find the right job within bike commuting distance — about 50 to 60 miles. (John usually rides by himself at lunch time.)

Senior Editor Ed Pavelka is not an ex-Marine, but you'd never know it by his riding. Ed has enough races and centuries under his belt to make his "Ready to Race" very convincing reading. If you're into weekend racing or long rides, I'm sure you'll find his advice useful. And, by the way, be sure to read his piece next month in *Bicycling*. He challenges you to beat his century time. If you do, I'll personally send you a certificate.

As you probably know, the cycling marketplace is awash with products. For that reason,

Bicycling spends a great deal of time testing products. We are fortunate to have the assistance of Rodale Press's Product Testing Department, which is populated with cyclists. Keep in mind that any product mentioned on the editorial pages of this magazine has been thoroughly tested and evaluated by a professional staff of cycling enthusiasts and technicians. That's what you get when you buy *Bicycling*. And our test this month of low-rider racks is an example of our testing methodology and research.

According to Jeff Davis, Associate Editor, master mechanic, and component specialist, "Rodale's Product Testing Department developed a fatigue strength test machine that consists of a bicycle fork mounted at the end of a suspended arm that is sized at the other end. A rotating, unbalanced weight makes the arm vibrate. A steel post extends down from the bottom of the arm and rests against a steel surface. As the whole assembly vibrates, the extended arm strikes the steel surface and imparts impact loads to the rack.

"For each test a rack was mounted according to the manufacturer's instructions. A set of front panniers, carrying a total load of 40 pounds, was securely attached to the rack.

"Fatigue strength was evaluated by subjecting the racks to repeated stresses until failure. The testing fixture was designed to deliver *extreme* vibration loads to the low-mount front racks.

"The fatigue test fixture was shut down every 15 minutes to allow inspection of the rack. The test was continued until some structural part of the rack failed or until eight hours had elapsed."

You'll have to read the full article on page 92 for our findings. I wanted to make sure that you knew that we take product testing here very seriously, because we have a great responsibility to you and to our industry. You'll find no quick, off-the-wall reviews in *Bicycling*.

What you will find is a lot of good advice. Take Michael Shermer's piece on "Psyching Up to Finish a Long-Distance Ride." Michael knows something about the subject, having competed in three Races Across AMericas, three Seattle-to-San Diego rides, and many shorter excursions. He offers some interesting tips to get you home happily and in one piece.

If you live in Boston, Tampa, Minneapolis, or Los Angeles, you're invited to join *Bicycling* staff members on a recreational ride sponsored by Grape Nuts. See this month's travel section.

If you are in the Allentown, Pennsylvania, area — perhaps to visit the velodrome in Trexler-town — drop by our offices. We'll show you our Product Testing facilities. Or you might want to join our Marine Road Tester for a leisurely ride.

And by all means, watch out for *Bicycling's* Century Challenge in the September issue.

James C. McCullagh — Editor & Publisher

