



NEW DEORE XT. THE TOTAL

Shimano, the technological leader in bicycle component design, introduces one of the most significant performance breakthroughs in the off-road category.

New Deore XT.

It's based on input we gathered from some of the world's best off-road riders. Offering more of what has been missing from most off-road components.

A higher degree of control.

SHIFT YOUR ATTENTION THIS WAY.

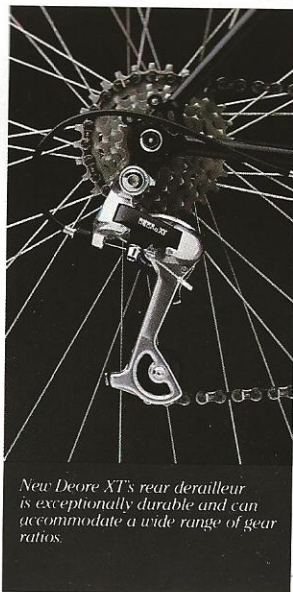
New Deore XT precision starts with the most important innovation to bicycling in the last fifty years.

The Shimano Index System (SIS).

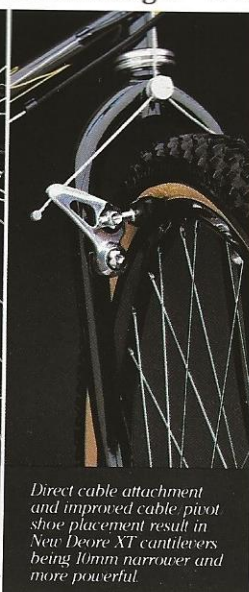
A quick touch of the SIS thumb shifter, and you're in a new gear. That's because New Deore XT SIS offers the same level of performance as found on our road racing systems. All you do is shift it and forget it, keeping your attention where it should be. On the terrain ahead.

Should you want to shift out of the SIS mode, you can—without missing a

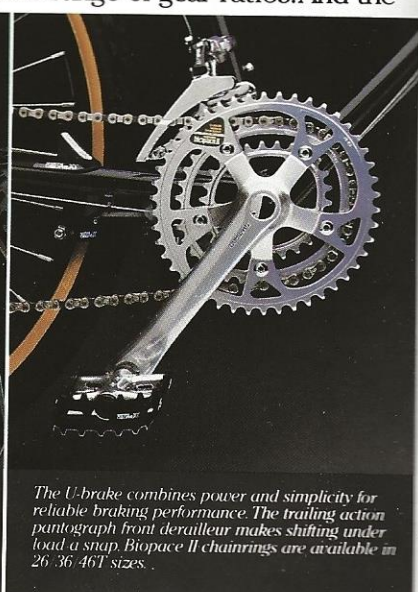
works smoothly and accommodates a wide range of gear ratios. And the



New Deore XT's rear derailleur is exceptionally durable and can accommodate a wide range of gear ratios.



Direct cable attachment and improved cable pivot shoe placement result in New Deore XT cantilevers being 10mm narrower and more powerful.



The U-brake combines power and simplicity for reliable braking performance. The trailing action pantograph front derailleur makes shifting under load a snap. Biopace II chainrings are available in 26, 36, 46T sizes.

revolution. The mode can be changed while you ride.

New Deore XT SIS is designed to meet the rigors of off-road riding. It

rear derailleur is built with even more of what you expect in off-road components. Rugged durability.

Just as reliable is the New Deore



CONTROL SYSTEM.

XT freehub with its easy-to-change gear combinations. The outward placement of the freehub's axle bearings means the axle is almost impossible to bend. Which is why the pros who win most often win on a Shimano freehub.

AND NOW FOR A CHANGE OF PACE.

New Deore XT features Bio-

pace II chain-rings with improvements specifically made to greatly improve shifting performance on triple cranksets.

Biopace II is the optimum chain-wheel for off-road use because it lets you use your leg power more efficiently. Especially on steep grades and in the lower cadences at which off-road riding is done.

To complement your pedaling, New Deore XT pedals have a special parallelogram cage design. This design gives you a stable non-slip pedaling platform and allows toe clips and

straps to be mounted easily.

THESE ARE THE BRAKES.

New Deore XT includes Shimano's special U-brake. It mounts under the bottom bracket on the same bosses as other cam-type brakes. And it delivers tremendous stopping ability from its simple yet high-power center-

pull design. But its real beauty is its reliable performance under all conditions without needing constant maintenance or adjustment.

Up front, our cantilever brakes provide more power than any other manufacturer's ATB brakes (including cam-types). The brake springs are enclosed to protect them from mud and grit. And there's a spring tension adjusting screw (also standard on our U-brake) that allows easy pad centering. The cantilever brake also comes with a non-pinch cable carrier that

reduces the spongy feeling at the brake lever while ensuring a more direct application of power.

SOME DIRTY DETAILS.

New Deore XT has brake levers with a special adjustment that lets you set lever reach to your hand size. The thumb shifter is also adjustable.

Crucial bearings are contact sealed for increased durability and reduced maintenance. And the unified high-tech appearance of the components enhances any off-road bicycle.

On your next ATB, ask for New Deore XT with SIS. Or upgrade your present bike. You'll find New Deore XT at better bicycle shops everywhere.

Then all you have to do is take control.



Shimano American Corporation, Irvine, California. For a free New Deore XT brochure, call 1-800-833-5540. In California call 1-800-435-7465.

Fat Tire Flyer

THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAIN BIKE MAGAZINE T.M. **MAGAZINE**

Fall Quarter 1987 • Volume 7 Number 2

EDITOR

Charles Kelly

PUBLISHER

Don Mertle

CONTRIBUTORS

Denise Caramagno
Jungle John Poshman
Victor Vincente of America
Earle Young

PHOTOGRAPHY

Gordon Bainbridge
Charles Kelly
Don Mertle
Mary Plumb
Jerry Riboli
Ray Wheeler
John Woodward

CONTRIBUTING

ARTISTS

Alan Armstrong
Pete Blast
Dan Cain
Curt Evans
Kent Essex
Art Read
David Ross

PRODUCTION

Charles Kelly
Don Mertle
Lew Tremaine

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

Joe Breeze

TYPESETTING

Van Norman Associates

PRINTING

The Ovid Bell Press, Inc.
Fulton, MO 65251

COVER PHOTO BY

Ray Wheeler

CO-FOUNDER

Denise Caramagno

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CITY STYLE



Plumline was the first company to establish a market for an identifiable off-road clothing design. Their polypropylene-lycra knickers are highly recognizable as offering protection from brush, abrasion, and sunburn. How much protection they offered in a critical crash was a subject of interest that came up right away. The kneepads beat shorts in the forward four-point landing position, but as far as laying it down on the leg these pants shred more easily than others made of heavier duty fabrics. The corollary to the lighter fabric is that it is less restrictive than heavier fabrics and these knickers feel as light as shorts; this is not to say that other knee

lengths are a burden. These trousers are the most available and seem pretty well entrenched.

Now Plumline has a new long sleeved jersey with colorful **shoulder and elbow pads**. The knit is polypropylene and the collar and zipper represent an improvement over the traditional crewneck for adjustability and warmth on the neck during descents.

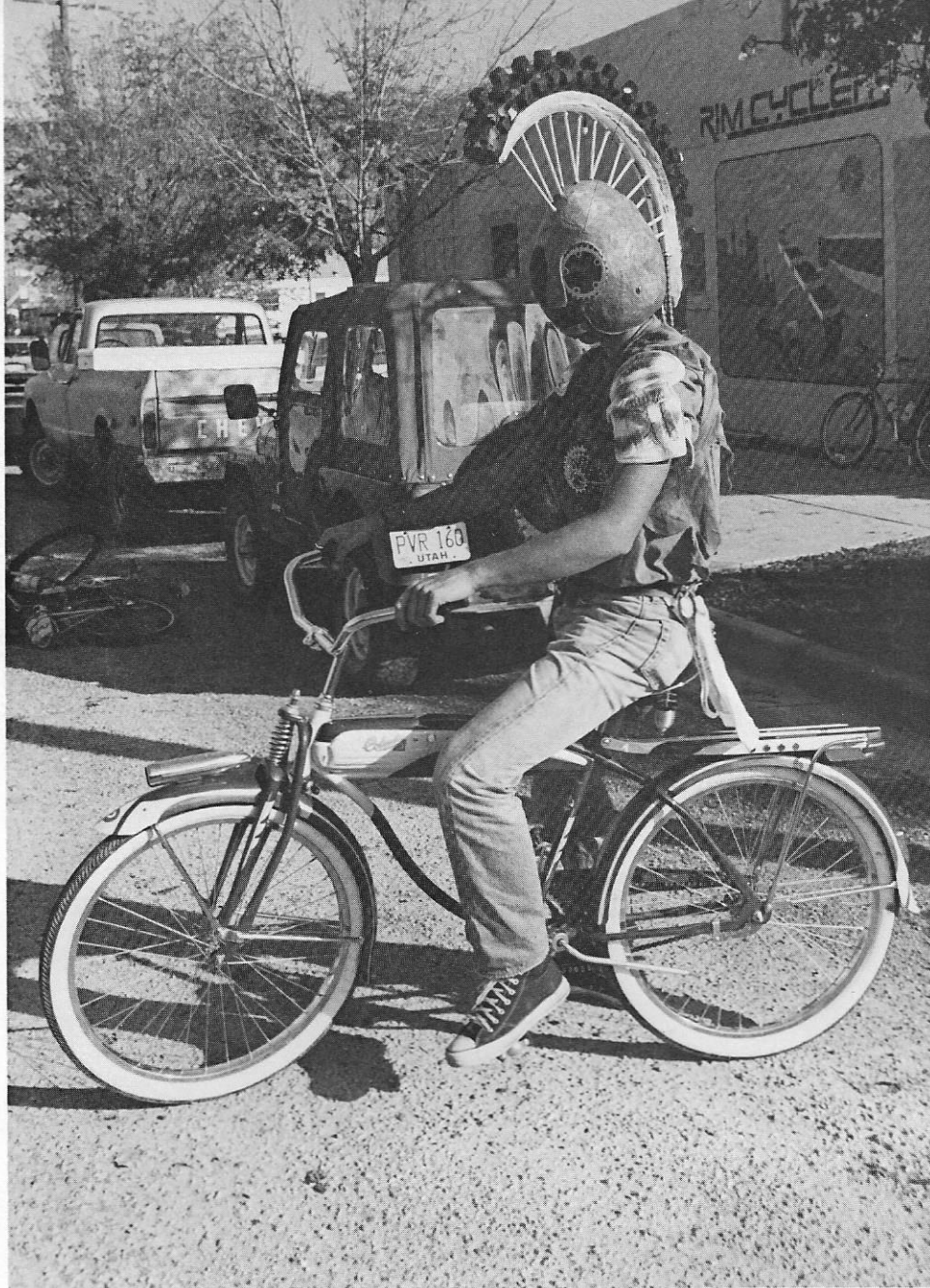
PLUMLINE

Wilderness Group
3891 North Ventura, Building A-2
Ventura, CA 93001
805-993-4621

Jamlane is a Connecticut-based clothier that may be more familiar East than West. The Jamlane knicker is perhaps the lightest fabric knee-length on the market. These have the advantages of sun and wind protection and offer more warmth and protection than shorts of a comparable fabric weight. The mountain bike **one-piece suit** is long-sleeved and has a padded shoulder. The suit retails for about \$80 and the individual knickers and jerseys are about half the price of a whole suit (\$40). Amazing.

JAMLANE

35 Maple Street
Meriden, CT 06450
203-235-2402




Mary Plumb

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The knee-length britches from **j.t. actif** have a drawstring waist, a synthetic chamois, above-average padding in the crotch and some impressive stitching holding it in there. The black-only fabric is a lightweight 100% Polyester with panels of **mesh on the insides** of the legs for cooling. This makes sense and differs from some triathlete-style venting we checked out last year, which had the vent panels on the outsides of the legs—great for endurance cooling but lacking in bushwhacking protection. The long sleeve mountain jersey is 50/50% cotton and polyester and has rear pockets. The front, back and sleeves are either red or blue with black padded shoulders and **mesh panels** on the sides.

j.t. actif
254 Audley Street
South Orange, NJ 07079
800-582-2843

Natural fiber, cargo pockets and a looser fit ting style identify the **Arete** knickers as different from the rest. The cargo pockets have **load adjuster straps** to help control bouncing baggage in the bumps. The 100% cotton is more comfortable for some riders' skin. (Aerodynamics are not everything.) The all-polypropylene long sleeve top has a tall zippered collar and open rear pockets.

ARETE Sportswear
705 Kirkland Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033
206-822-3383



Serac makes a variety of outer wear for active sports. Like all the other firms here they have been getting by on something else besides mountain bike customers, but mountain bikers can appreciate the features that similar sport-wear demands. Serac claims adherents to their system among skiing, running, tennis, bicycling, swimming, and racquetball aficionados.

The Serac cold weather anorak is applicable in any chill, summer or winter. The rear pockets are zipper secured; the synthetic matrix doesn't stretch like knits so there is a side-entry zipper. The high collar and the upholstery stuffing should keep you cozy right up to your chin. The "Fuzzy Legs" pants feature 14 oz. 100% Polypropylene fleece with a drawstring waist, double reinforced but not padded knees which offer good wind and cold protection for the joints but less crash protection than some of the padded types. The legs have zipper gussets and cordlocks at the bottom to adjust the fit around the ankles.

SERAC
 P.O. Box 5727
 Tahoe City, CA 95730
 916-581-1151

Bellwether has an ATB suit which uses a Cordura® Nylon woven cloth on the front and rear of the full length pants with stretch knit strips down both insides and outsides of the legs. This gives a tighter fit with a less flexible material. It is a break from the Lycra look without throwing aerodynamics away as a design consideration. The pants also have pockets, and zippers at the ankles to promote fit using a non-stretch fabric.

The Bellwether jacket is the same weave as the pants but is constructed over a Nylon mesh with open panels on the sides, which help with both the fit and the ventilation. The rear pockets have zipper closures. No special padding on either of these but the relatively heavy duty commodity fabric has interested enough customers to have Bellwether eagerly plotting their next improvements.

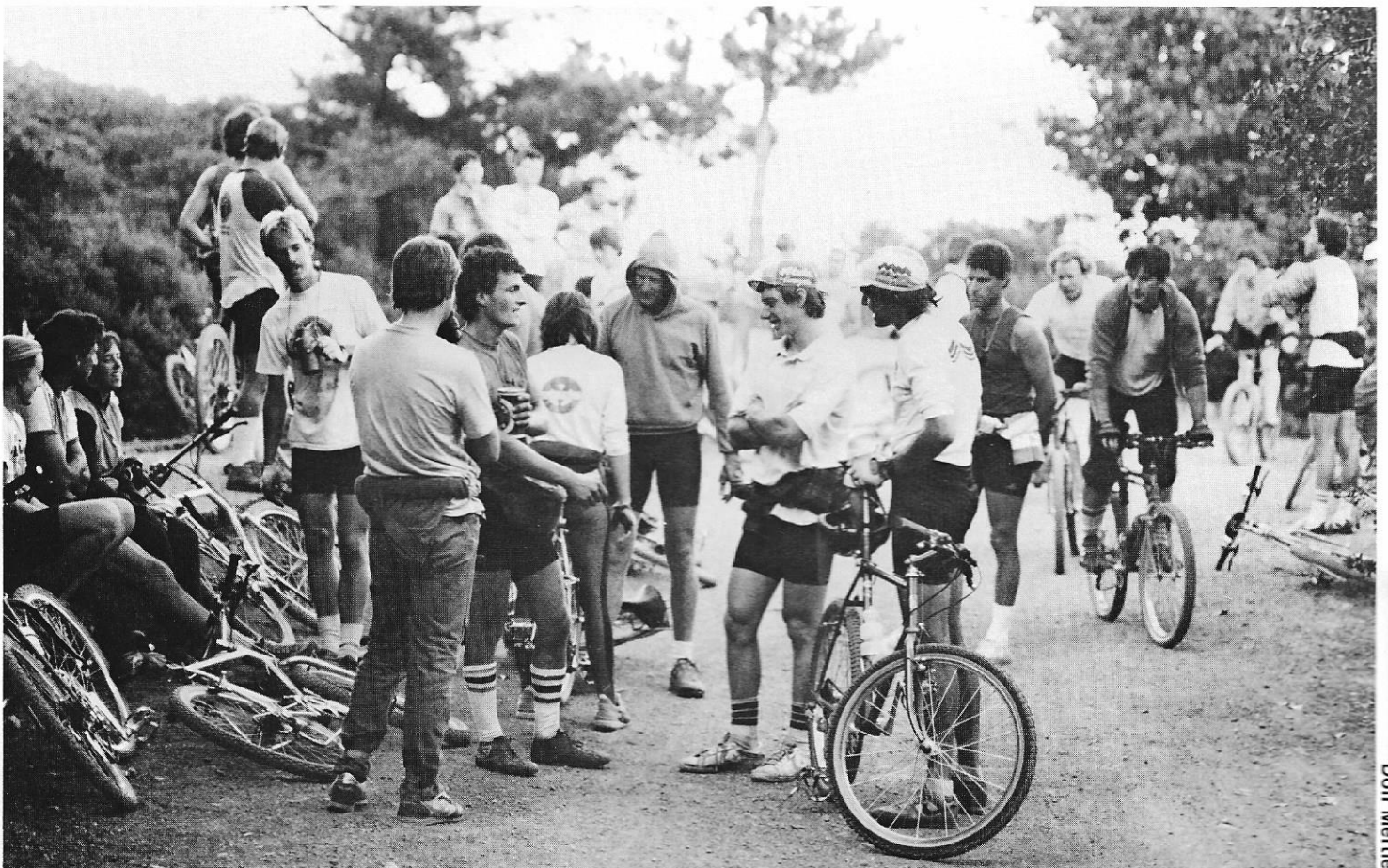
BELLWETHER
 11611 Mission Street
 San Francisco, CA 94103
 415-863-0436





Jerry Ribbott

1977



Don Mertle

1987

Guest Editorial

By
Denise
Caramagno

The directions mountain biking have taken can be charted by the attire of the participants. Off-road cyclists have gone from the confines of denims to the freedom of lycra in much the same way women went from the oppression of corsets to the emancipation of bloomers during the first bike boom of the last century.

Mountain bike photographs can often be dated by the fashions depicted. The number of styles available to today's mountain cyclist would have been unimaginable six or seven years ago when cut-offs and t-shirts were haute couture and zebra stripes were for zoo animals, not skinsuits. Some folks still wear jeans, just as there are people who still ride one-speeds.

Mountain bikers have always been an eclectic lot, and today's mountain bike fashion affords even more opportunity for flaunting diversities. Off-roaders dress like roadies, tourists, triathletes, punks, or even in clothing designed specifically for the sport.

Cycling clothing has evolved through innovations in materials and designs, fueled by the constant demand for the latest and the greatest—the stuff magazines are full of.

The current variety of fabrics and the burgeoning bicycle market has given sports clothing manufacturers the inspiration to indulge themselves, and now they are giving riders the same opportunity. Take a glimpse at this season's fashion rages and the bikes to accessorize them with.



Charles Kelly

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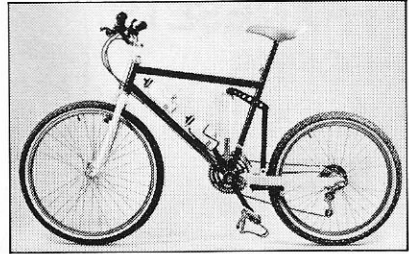
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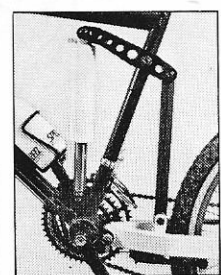
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THREADS OF THOUGHT

Most of us continue to rely on garments made of woven or knitted fiber. Felt, fur and spun silks lie at the fringe of credibility. Lederhosen offer protection and style, but cloth remains the pedaling public's choice.

All-cotton denims such as Levi 501's are classic clothés for hiking, riding horses, Harleys or mountain bikes; there are newer styles, but jeans are always accepted.

Wool riding shorts are a road cycling tradition that has found favor in the dirt. The proven insulation value of wet and sweaty wool and its natural fiber status assures its place as a focus of fabric fanaticism. Victor Vincente (of America) knows no other cloth for his britches, although some people find wool irritating until it is well broken in and softened by use. Black wool cycling shorts have been standard for years, largely because one can wipe a greasy, chain-grimed hand on them without leaving a visible trace. Now that button-fly jeans are available in black, fans of this style can also enjoy the "invisible rag" feature. These new fancy color jeans are not shrink to fit, so if you are unfamiliar with pre-shrunk sizing, try them on first.



When cycle clothing manufacturers first made garments for use in the dirt they chose synthetics fabrics. Cotton fields, sheep flocks and silkworms can't increase their production to match the pace of people buying clothes and mountain bikes. **Nylon**, or generically **polyamide**, is one of the obvious choices of the commodity fibers, either as a weave such as a pack-cloth or as a stretchy knit. The slinkiest skin suits are usually Nylon-Spandex blends.

Polypropylene (a mystery code word) is usually knit rather than woven. It is the most common alternative to chamois padding in crotches. Polypro knits are frequently blended with 10-20% **Lycra® Spandex** to give them some elasticity. (Think about a taut Polypropylene water ski rope versus a resilient, rebounding, impact-cushioning Nylon climbing rope.) 100% Polypropylene is tops for warmth, (especially when wet) and lightness, but not for sleek and everlasting fit. **Polyesters** and Nylons are more polished and pretty and may be tougher depending on the construction.

Off Road
Racing
FRAMESETS
FORKS
&
STEMS



Aaron Cox
Greg Dres
Russell Worley

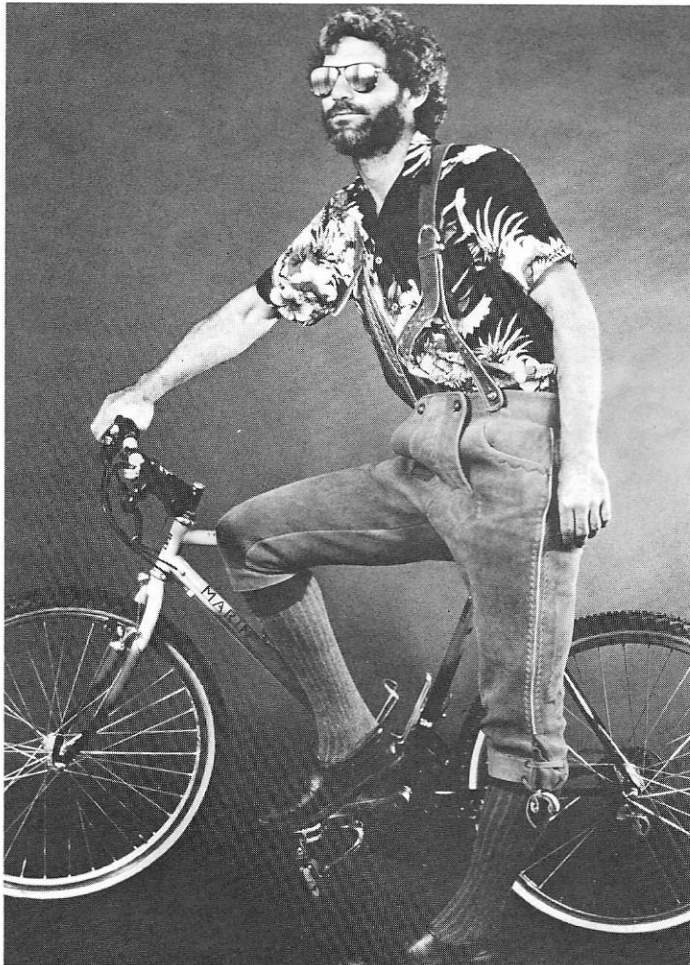
Dealer inquiries

P.O. BOX 2252 MALIBU, CA. 90265

Other materials such as cellosic (wood based) **Rayon Hawaiian shirts**, cotton and silk t-shirts and special garments for running, road biking, skiing or sailing may have the ventilating or wind breaking features that are comfortable for mountain biking. The mountain bike fashion convention is to go with whatever works. The fun part is that recently there are a lot more choices.

The market for clothing designed for off-road cycling has attracted sportswear and cycle garment manufacturers. Since our industry-leading expose of "**Thrashin' Fashion**," the **knee-length pants** and **padding** on hips and shoulders have become sufficiently synonymous with Fat Tire Fashion that anyone with a sweatshop is able to turn out garments recognizable as intended for the dirt. The range of fabrics and detail is great enough to give the consumer grounds for selection beyond brand name or color. Just like the text book says, the market responds to people buying things.

There is a dividing line as to whether looks are an important criterion or whether function alone makes all the difference. If either skintight synthetic streamlining or ponderously padded protection is not the look that fits your self-image there are other options. For example, most cycle clothing lines include some version of "**touring shorts**"; these are incognito (you could pass for a suburban tennis player). Touring shorts are only slightly yuppie looking than denims but the **padded crotch** is a valuable, invisible ally against posterior pounding.



The most spectacular mountain bike riding right outside your door!

In Crested Butte, Colorado, home of the TWELFTH ANNUAL FAT TIRE BIKE WEEK, September 14-20, 1987. You can participate in a week packed full of the greatest fun and competitive events available anywhere. Tours, bike rodeos, races, observed trials, hillclimb, bike polo, seminars, barbeque, videos, receptions, banquet, the infamous PEARL PASS TOUR to ASPEN, and more, all on mountain bikes!

This is the place to see who is doing what with mountain bikes, and to show and test what you are working on. This event brings together enthusiasts from around the nation. See you in September.

Information:
300/44 5-1036
349-6761 (in Colo.)
FTBW, Box 782
Crested Butte, CO 81224

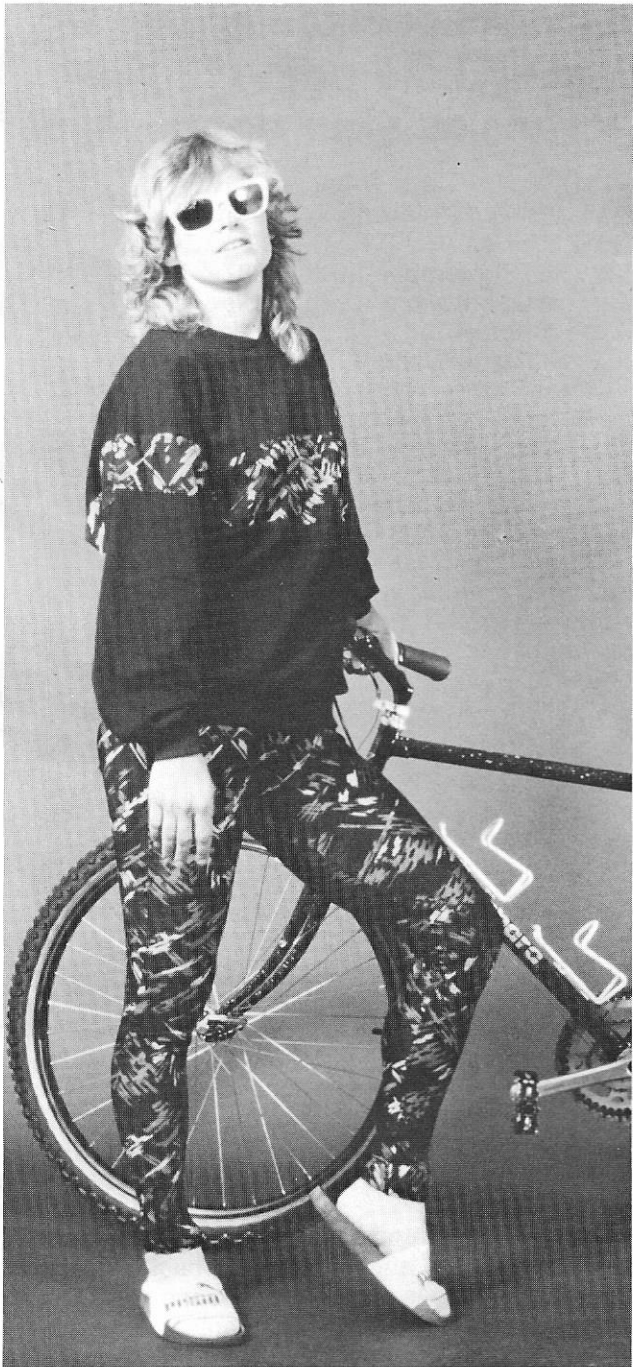
CRESTED
BUTTE
COLORADO

FAT TIRE BIKE WEEK

If you can **let go of lycraphobia** or if you never had it, the newest designs will be worth considering. These garments include traditional cycle features such as padded crotches and aerodynamic tightness, but the fabrics are generally tougher than the road versions and most also have extra protection on the hips or knees.

Subtle features such as thickness of padding, quality of stitching and exact fit are best seen on the clothing themselves. For those reasons and because sizing among the different companies is all over the map, it is important for the customer to check out clothing first hand. Unless you are absolutely certain as to what you are getting, mail ordering bicycle clothing seems more like hassle than help.

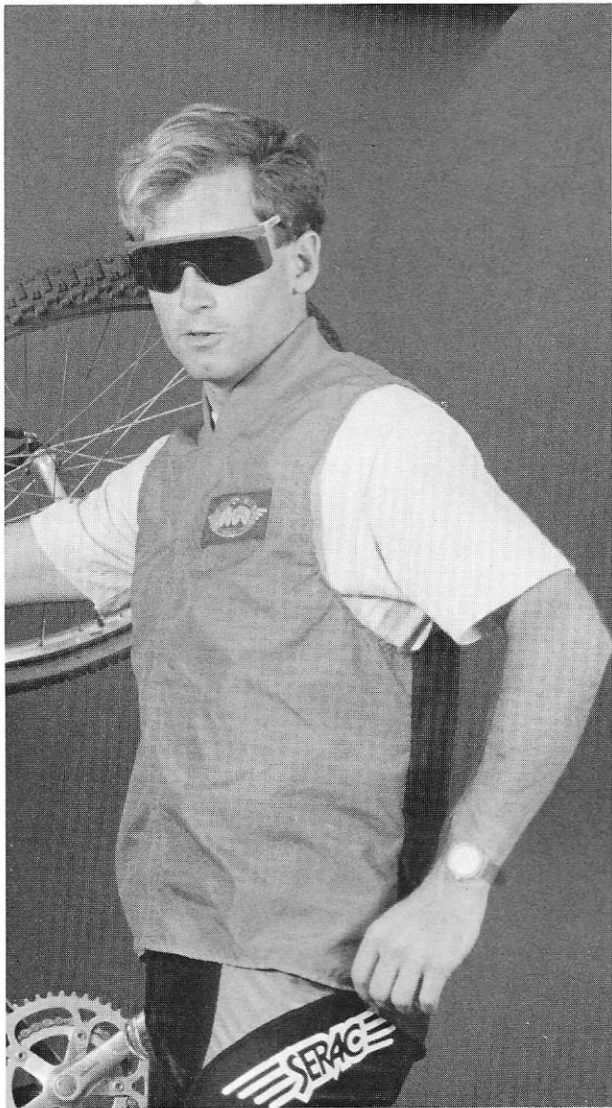
One option for a few of the best riders is **sponsor-supplied clothing**. Whether or not the clothing is custom, a sponsor's major concern is clear presentation of his name on the hide or side of the rider. While incentives, bonuses and salaries are hard to come by, jerseys and entry fees are available if your riding is convincing.



Several styles of road cycling clothing are especially applicable to mountain riding. As mentioned, touring shorts such as those made by Bellwether are comfortable, durable and less conspicuously cyclic than stretch counterparts. The sweatshirt-type top and patterned tights by **Scott Tinley Performance** are typically stylish and have the wind and weather protection of road gear. The mesh sided top by **Descente** is a good application of sweat select style. The breathing panels provide ventilation for the slower speeds and steeper climbs of unpaved hills.

DESCENTE AMERICA, Inc.
 601 Madison Avenue
 New York, NY 10022
 212-888-7710

SCOTT TINLEY Performancewear
 5111 Santa Fe Street Suite E
 San Diego, CA 92109
 619-581-2800



For wind chill Serac has a vest-type wind-breaker for chest temperature modulation (replacing a newspaper inside the jersey) and a light weight 100% nylon water repellent anorak style windbreaker. They also have typical cycling shorts and an interesting all-cotton sleeveless top with rear pockets.



The double padded crotch of the **Urbanek** shorts is a comfort feature which is as noticeable as the flashy print pattern.

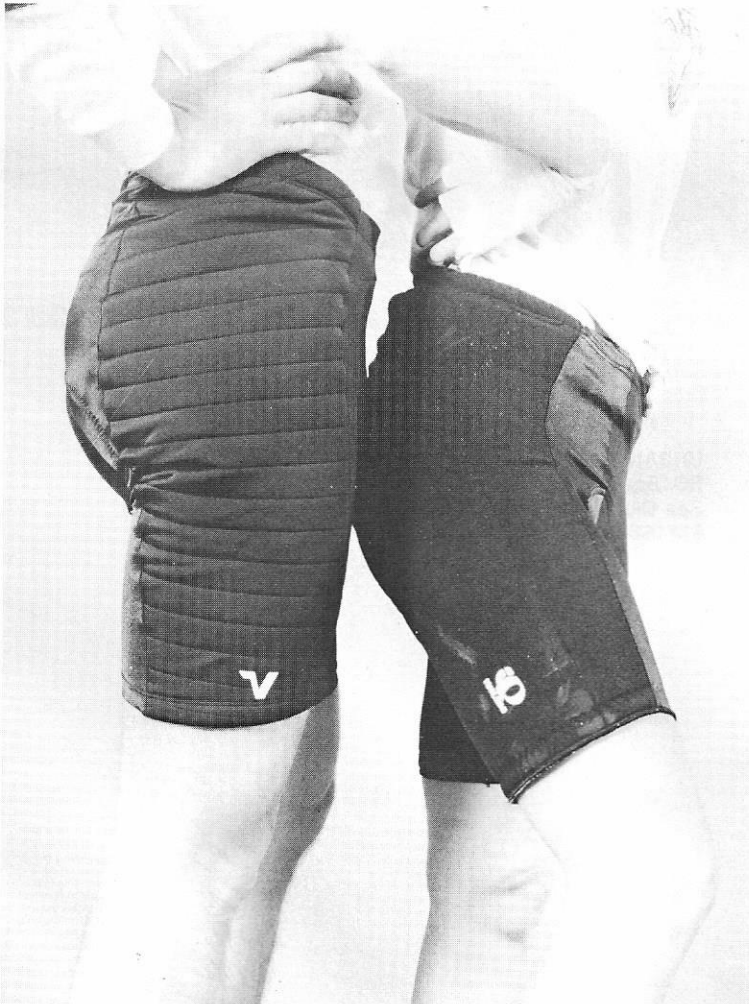
URBANEK
P.O. Box 880826
San Diego, CA 92108-0017
619-295-1811

Emily K was another early entry in the specifically off-road garment game. Her padded Lycra shorts were well received by the cruising public as well as being **team issue** for WTB, Yeti and Mammoth teams. E.K. makes several exotic mesh tops which have turned out to be popular for road riding. According to the company, designs are not yet finalized, but they expect to introduce long sleeve and full length leg models this fall.

EMILY K.
539 State Street
Santa Barbara, 93101
805-966-5748

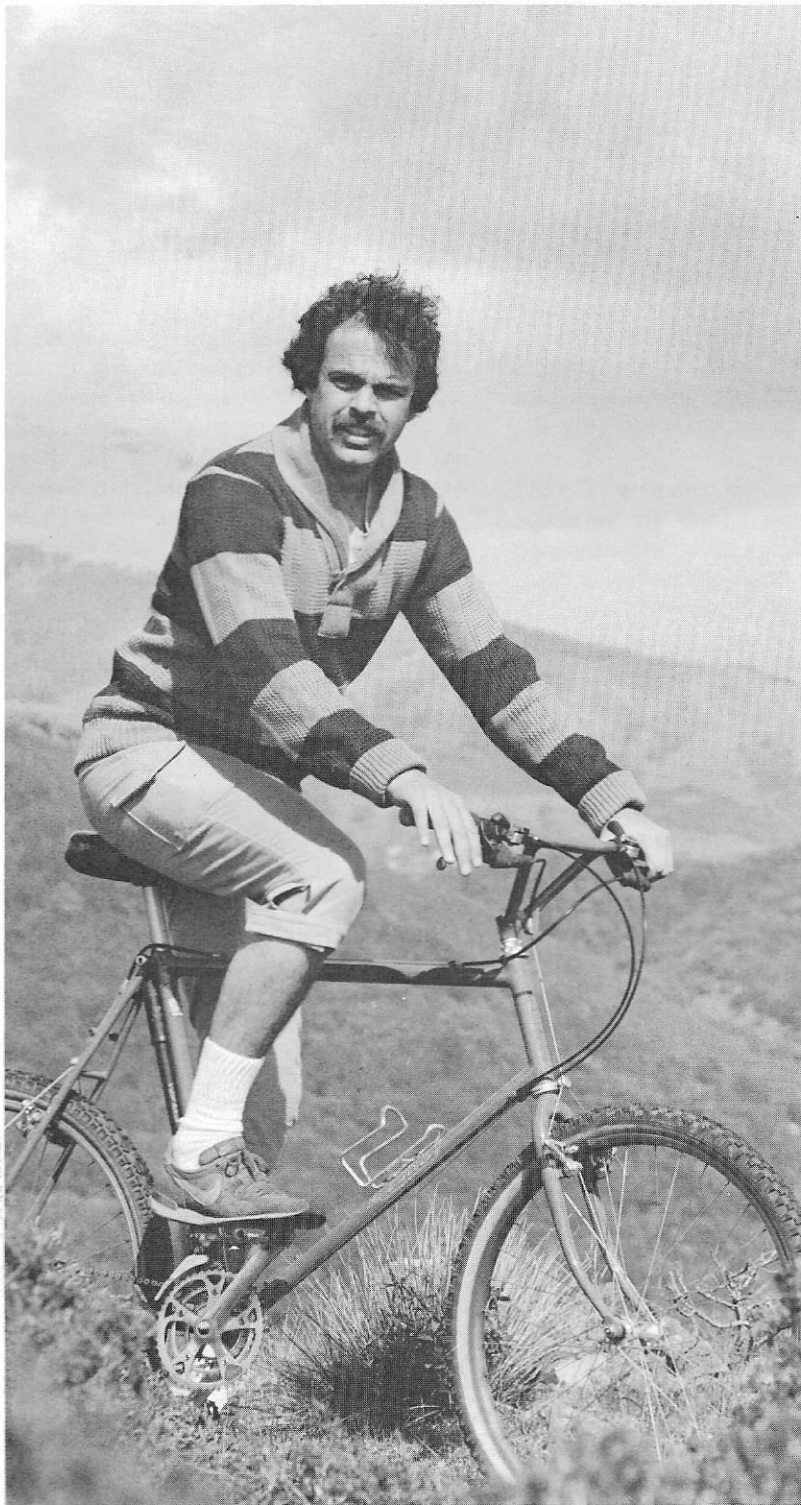
Vigorelli has been involved with several well-known names in the racing end of mountain bikes, sponsoring and providing clothes to Joe Breeze, Fisher MountainBikes, and Ritchey U.S.A. Partners Bob and Diana Muzzy have made dozens of special garments including many one-of-a-kind prototypes, testing their ideas on racers under grueling conditions. While last year Bob spoke of the technical possibility of outrageously expensive supersuits, the Vigorelli designs feature commodity-priced fabrics. The 82/18% nylon-lycra/spandex trousers are short length with hip pads, the jersey short sleeve with shoulder padding for the inevitable portaging. The padding itself is polyester.

Vigorelli
2200 Adeline Street -250
Oakland, CA 94607
415-465-1365



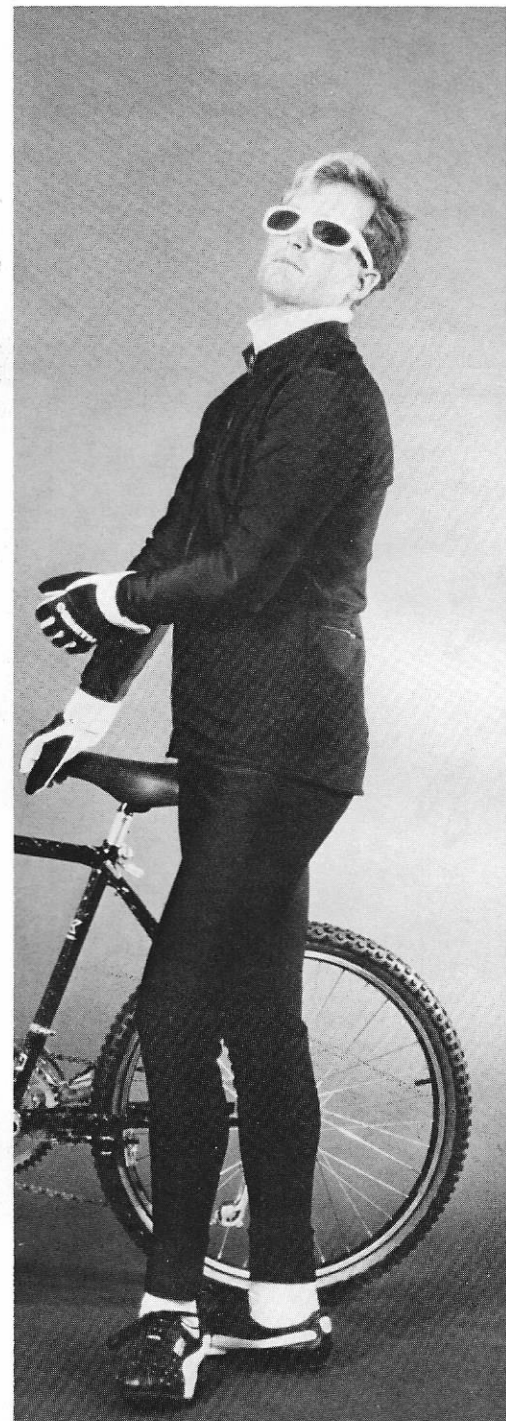
Pearl Izumi has taken high budget exotic fabrics and foams and produced a truly high-tech crash protection. The **Kevlar** fabric on the side pads of their off-road shorts takes severe grinding without apparent effect. The **slow memory** foam keeps rocks or sharp edges from gouging through, at least on the sides.

PEARL IZUMI
3600 Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80301
303-443-2131



International flavor is available for the cruiser with fancy tastes. Some **Italian** designs were introduced at the Cologne Fair last Fall including these wool knickers and sweater from **Sergal**. Inquiries (including dealers) should be to **Proto Cycle Importers**.

PROTO CYCLE IMPORTERS
 1501 San Anselmo Avenue
 San Anselmo, CA 94930
 415-258-9120

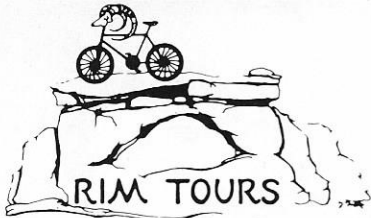


Start/Finish, another East Coast company, showed some interesting winter weight jackets and bib tights at the New York show. They are constructed with **Thermalastic**, a Nylon Spandex **laminated with Polyurethane Foam**, which is said to be suitable for cross country skiing as well. **George wants** some for winter training.

START/FINISH
 475 Fifth Ave. Suite 1604
 New York, NY 10017
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THIN AIR REPAIRS

By Jungle Jon Poschman

I was riding in San Francisco, descending a set of stairs. I went from the stairs onto street level, and the "Bullmoose" handlebars broke away at the stem. I quickly let go and grabbed for a bush or hedge to slow down, and I fell into the hedge.

To reattach my handlebars so I could steer to get home, I took my toe straps out of my pedals and laced them through the holes in my double-plate fork crown. I cinched them down over my handlebars, and by leaning way over I could steer well enough to make it a couple of miles home.

By Earle Young

Sometimes even a shop gets repairs that are beyond the scope of tools and conventional technology. The worst nightmare is the customer who comes in with an expensive freewheel screwed onto an expensive hub, with a nest of freshly cut spokes poking out in every direction. Without the rim for leverage, this makes it impossible to remove the freewheel by conventional methods. When the customer is a well-known bike expert, trying to stifle a laugh adds to the nightmare.

The usual procedure is to lace a rim onto the left side of the hub and use that to twist the hub off the freewheel. While that works most of the time, it can twist the barrel of the hub. In the case of some modern sealed-bearing units, this approach doesn't work at all because the flanges are relatively free to rotate on the barrel. This was the "Case of the Bike Expert's Hub." I puzzled and fretted with it for a day or two, then told him there was nothing I could do. He bought a new hub and I built him a new wheel and sent him on his way, but I couldn't stop thinking about the problem of the freewheel.

I'm not sure whose idea it was, so I'll claim it as my own. A chain whip! This a tool for changing cogs, not a bizarre sex toy. I chose one with a nice long piece of chain. Starting at the end of the chain, I laced some spokes through the chain links



and pulled the links tight against the hub flange. Then I wrapped the rest of the chain as close to the flange as I could get it, overlapping the spokes that were hooked through the chain. With the chain wrapped all the way, I put the freewheel puller in a vise and leaned on the chain whip. It shifted around the hub a little bit, and the spokes that were looped through the chain settled a little, but in the end I won. The freewheel and the hub came apart, and the only damage was minor scarring on the flange. After a couple of passes with the file the hub would look like new with a new set of spokes.

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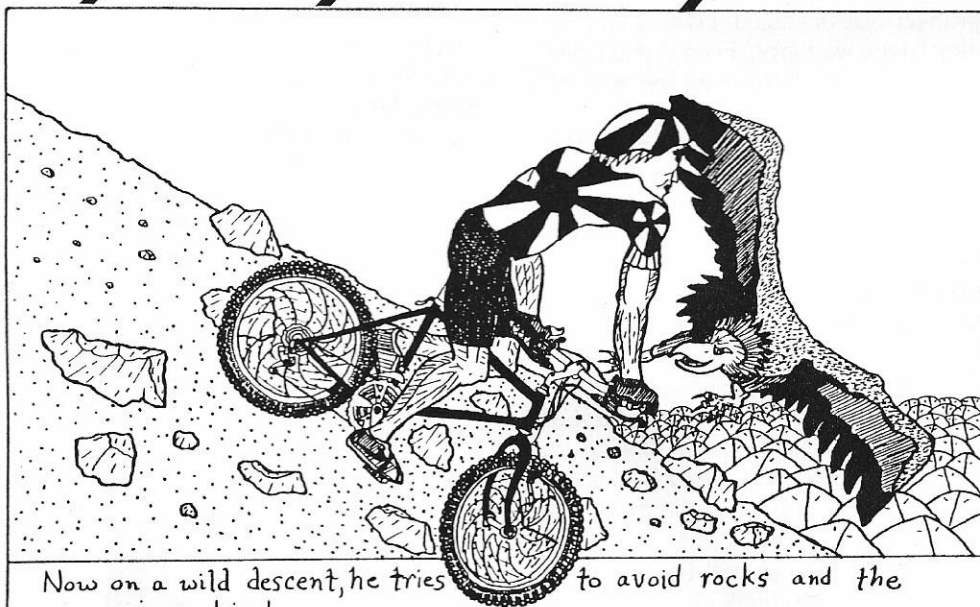
Dealer Inquires Welcome

ULTIMATE KAMIKAZE

Dan Cain



The Common Kamikaze climbs carefully to the mountain summit amidst the scrutiny of the mountain bird and threatening lightning bolts.



Now on a wild descent, he tries to avoid rocks and the aggressive bird.

Continued on page 21



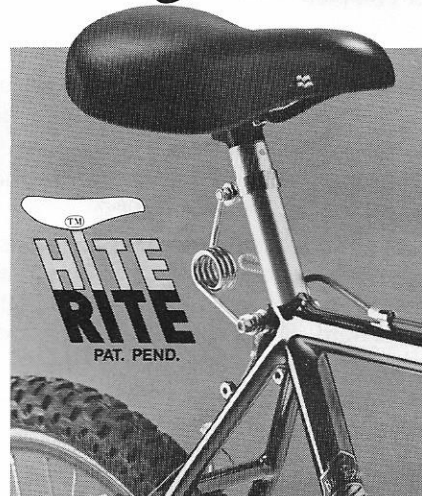
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Tech Tips

By Jungle Jon Poschman

Ears perked and fingertips sandpapered, he begins dialing, click, click, click, counting one, two, three. What is hidden by the clicking mechanism? What will the combination reveal? Stacked bills? Jewellery? Gold?

No, this is not the type of loot to be found here. The only booty to be discovered will be the secrets of the inner workings of a freewheel's hardened steel pawls, ball bearings and springs.

The Winner Pro continues clicking, four, five, six, a total of fifteen clicks for one complete revolution. Aha, this Winner Pro is a fifteen-clicker. The dialing begins on another Winner Pro, and this one has a total of thirty clicks per revolution. A thirty-clicker; something is definitely different here.

What is the significance of the discrepancy, as in, what gives?

In each Winner Pro there are two pawls, the spring-loaded, clicking critters that allow the freewheel to spin backward but not forward. The pawls engage teeth, and each Winner Pro has fifteen teeth.

If each Winner Pro has two pawls and fifteen teeth, then why does one click fifteen times and the other thirty? In the fifteen-clicker the pawls engage the teeth simultaneously, and only one click is heard as both pawls engage. In the thirty-clicker the pawls engage the teeth alternately. Each pawl click can be heard distinctly at 1/30 of a revolution.

The machining tolerances involved in manufacturing can cause the pawls to click slightly out of phase when a fifteen-clicker is turned very slowly. This could cause you to mistake a fifteen for a thirty. True thirty-clickers have almost evenly spaced clicks. They sound like this when rotated: click, silence, click, silence. Fifteen-clickers have either slightly offset clicks or no offset at all depending on how accurately they were machined. They sound like this: click-click, longer silence, click-click, or click, longer silence, click.

What difference does it make whether a Winner Pro is fifteen or thirty clicks? Just this: a thirty-clicker will not stand up to hard mountain biking. One thirty-clicker lasted less than ten minutes on a test ride; first one then the other pawl popped, their tips sheared off. After this happened the freewheel spun easily in both direc-

tions, yielding a no-speed bike, not counting neutral as a speed.

The thirty-click freewheels are no longer manufactured and have been replaced by the fifteen-click type with dual-pawl engagement, a much stronger freewheel, although it is not as strong as the "old" New Winner.

The New Winner had dual pawl engagement and was very reliable, so why did Suntour change to single-pawl engagement freewheels? The reason is that when dual-pawl engagement freewheels wear down, they start making a knocking noise. The noise is caused by the freewheel rocking on the two engaged pawls. The single-pawl engagement system eliminated this problem but created a worse one: snapped pawls.

Suntour has not recalled the thirty-click freewheels, but if one fails they will replace it with the fifteen-click type. If your Suntour dealer won't replace it or has any questions about Suntour's return policy, have the dealer call Suntour.

Suntour has just begun a limited, conditional warranty policy for their products that is highly restrictive and lasts one year. In the past they have backed their products very well. According to the warranty disclaimer, you have to fill out a warranty card, have a dated proof of purchase, and a written explanation as to how the product was damaged. (This is all according to the warranty.) Even if you haven't complied to the letter with the warranty, it's worth a try.

Another difference between the Winner Pro and the New Winner is that the body has four notches for the removing tool instead of two, and the tools for the two types are not interchangeable. As you may have surmised, the Winner Pro tool has four prongs, and the New Winner tool has two.

The two-prong remover seems to fit into two of the Winner Pro's holes, but only enough to fool you into thinking that that it will work. If the freewheel is at all tight, it won't. Instead, it will destroy the freewheel.

The four notches will be ripped into three notches as a chunk of metal between two of them is peeled off, creating one large notch. Using the tool again on the newly modified body will peel out another chunk and reduce it to two not-

ches, one normal size and the other extending most of the way around, but the body will still be firmly affixed to the hub. Further experiments have established that it is not possible to achieve a one-notch, although it is possible to crack the freewheel lid (adjusting cone).

The only way to remove the newly reamed freewheel is to disassemble the body by taking off the freewheel lid (remember, it's a left handed thread), removing the pawls and sticking the whole thing in a visc, which finishes the job of destruction that you started by using the wrong tool.

When using a four-prong remover always use the right one. In the past Suntour has made four-prong removers that are not compatible with the Winner Pro; they seem to fit but won't work. The Suntour TA 320 remover is the one you want (Kingsbridge also makes a compatible four-prong remover designed for the Winner Pro).

Now that you know the difference between the two types of Winner Pro freewheels, you can check yours out and then pedal confidently away with no worries or reservations, right? Not a chance. The Winner Pro is not as strong as the New Winner, because the Winner Pro uses pawls that are split part way down the middle to accommodate a clip spring. This spring loads the pawls so they engage the teeth, but under severe pedaling loads, such as sprinting uphill in a 24 x 34-tooth gear, the pawls can crush, pinching the spring and jamming the pawls in the open position. First one pawl sticks, then the other, or one sticks and the other pops. Either way you wind up (once again) with a neutral speed bicycle. Happy coasting, though it will now be possible to shift gears while the bike is stationary, a benefit that is outweighed by the inconvenience of pedaling and going nowhere.

If you can find an old New Winner, grab it.





Coming quickly to the end of the ridge, the common Kamikaze is struck top-dead-center by a bolt of lightning.

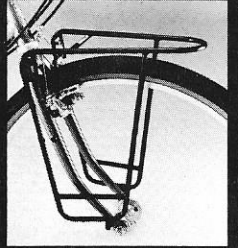


Fully electrified, he leaps from the edge of the ridge, metamorphised into the **ULTIMATE KAMIKAZE.**

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E-TICKET WEEKEND

The airliner Captain's voice came smoothly over the loudspeaker. "Ladies and gentlemen, as some of you may be aware, we've had a little problem, but it's under control now."

I looked out the window to see which wing had fallen off or which engine was on fire. But all it turned out to be was an attempted hijack, the old finger-in-the-pocket, would you believe I have a gun? routine that went out with "Get Smart." Talk about cliches, the guy wanted to go to Cuba, but the plane was going to Alaska. Now he's going to jail, but his baggage probably went to Argentina.

But the hijack attempt and the ensuing SWAT, FBI, and National Guard invasion of the plane when it landed in Anchorage faded into soft focus next to the more clearly etched events that took place over the next few days on the Iditarod Trail. The hijack turned out to be just the icing on the wing.

At the airport I got quite a reception, although the hijacker got a bigger one. Laurel Bull and Janet Niichel picked me up and whisked me to the local REI where I spent a bundle making sure I would stay warm. It turned out that I was a modest celebrity among the Iditabikers. All right, maybe I wasn't so modest, but I was still a minor celebrity. The reason for this was that the only notice outside Alaska of the race had appeared in the Fat Tire Flyer, and those few paragraphs had resulted in riders from five other states showing up, turning the race from local challenge to a nationally covered event.

From REI we went back to Laurel and Dan Bull's house, the unofficial HQ for the Iditabike, where the floor of the spare bedroom was littered with gear belonging to the other Californians, Howard Drew and Janet Niichel.

How cold was it? It was so cold... It was so cold... Well, it wasn't that cold, down to about zero fahrenheit, tee-shirt weather in Alaska. But it must get pretty cold, because the ice on the lakes is a couple of feet thick.

We got moving long before dawn on race day; the first item on the agenda was the pancake breakfast at the VFW hall. As the riders chowed down, they offered all the most pessimistic predictions as to what might happen out on the trail, such as a foot of new snow or temperatures forty below zero. The general consensus was that the tougher it was, the better, and one rider even insisted that the six-hour mandatory rest stop was for wimps only. He had reason to eat these words later, when the course turned out to be tougher than even he was ready for.

Everyone had a secret weapon, ranging from the chemical heaters that permitted riders to travel with lighter camping gear, up to sled systems that allowed the rider to tote a huge pile of supplies sufficient for forty-below nights and sixty-knot winds. Mandatory equipment for riders included a sleeping bag, tent or bivvy sack, stove, and flares. You can't just go out and buy a sled for a bicycle; they aren't made commercially. So each sled-toting rider dreamed up his or her own, attaching at either the chainstay, the seat cluster or to a touring rack. Because the pannier loads were lighter and also because the trail conditions never got extreme, the traditional touring setup turned out to be faster, although it provided less margin for extra equipment. For future races organizers plan to examine each rider's equipment carefully to make sure no one cuts the safety margin by travelling light.

The starting line was on a frozen lake at Knik, a one-saloon town known as one of the hotbeds (coldbeds?) of sled-dog racing; that should give you some idea of the climate. The majority of the people at the starting line were in the race, and the rest were either related to someone in the race, officiating, or exploiting the event journalistically. There was a rumor that a spectator was going to show up, but he must have gotten lost.

Enough preamble. After a couple of aborted countdowns, someone finally said, "go," and with the traditional unison whooping from the riders and the others gathered at the line, the pack shoved off.

The front end of the race immediately turned into a duel between two "lower 48ers," Dave Zink of Minnesota and Mike Kloser of Colorado, while the sled-toters moved to the far back of the rapidly stretching pack. The dynamic duo checked through the 41-mile Big Su Checkpoint together a little over three hours into the race, and Mark Frise of Wisconsin pulled in twenty minutes later followed closely by Alaskans Les Matz and Mark Corson. From here the going got tougher as the riders hit deep snow on the trail churned up by the thousand dogs and sixty-plus dogsleds that had preceded them and kept soft by relatively warm temperatures around the freezing mark. The next thirty miles took them over six hours and the two leaders pulled into Rabbit Lake a minute apart before leaving together.

The trudging on the trail took more of a toll on Frise, who was by himself, having left Big Su about twenty minutes before Matz and Corson, and when he reached Rabbit Lake he trailed the leaders by over two hours.

Meanwhile, back at the starting line, I'm getting all this news over the shortwave, because the plane that was supposed to fly me to Rabbit Lake broke part of its ski landing gear and couldn't land on the frozen lake. Because the dogsled race was going on at the same time, the planes in the area that might have been available for charter were already in use, and the airspace over the Iditarod Trail was so crowded with small planes that most of the pilots not already out there didn't want to go.

Finally the race organizers found a plane for me and two other journalists, a Cessna 180 four-seater, but we could only go to the halfway point at Skwentna because this plane didn't have skis and needed a real runway, if the snow-surfaced strip at Skwentna qualifies anywhere but Alaska as a runway.

In the lower 48, when you get in a small plane, the pilot goes through a checklist of about thirty items to make sure the plane is going to work when he turns the key. In Alaska, where every fourth adult has a pilot's license, he gets in, turns the key, and asks you where you want to go as you taxi down the runway. If you give the pilot a compass heading he says, "Don't give me that crap. Just point." Flight plan? Surely you jest.



Charles Kelly

Mike Kloser, Dave Zink and Roman Dial cross the frozen expanse of Alaska.

We didn't know which way to point, so we just told the guy to fly us over the Iditarod trail to Skwentna. In return, he asked whether any of us had problems with airsickness. I don't, but I was a minority among the three passengers. The other two guys confessed to having a touch of the green face, and the pilot got a big grin.

Even following the trail visually from the start, we had a hard time keeping track of it in the maze of snowmobile trails. Finally we spotted a biker, obviously Nels Johnson of La Crosse, Wisconsin from his distinctive yellow North Face outfit. Having identified the proper trail, each of us kept one eye on the ground and the other on the sky in the immediate vicinity for other planes, which came along every couple of minutes.

At one point we spotted a biker and asked the pilot if he could come around so we could shoot a few photos. "No problem," and the next thing we knew he stood it on one wing and turned it around in the same radius a Volkswagen turns in. The stall warning buzzer went off, which didn't bother me until I asked later what it meant, and the other two guys turned green. They don't have a ride like that at Disneyland.

Skwentna is a town of 150, but on this day it was the most crowded it ever gets with people checking out the Iditarod, since this was the first major stop for the sledders. There were about two dozen planes parked next to the snow runway, and a bunch of ski-equipped planes on the frozen Yentna River close by where several of the dog teams were resting.

As we got out of the plane, a teenager on a snowmobile offered to run us around the area for a few dollars, and since we were far ahead of the bikers at this point, we took a ride to the river and spent the afternoon hanging around the mushers.

Concerning the bikers, there was no news except for a shortwave report of the first three to drop out. After exhausting the possibilities of beer drinking and story-telling, we crashed on the floor of the one-room schoolhouse.

Middle of the night. "Wake up. They're here."

"What the hell time is it?"

"Quarter to four."

We rolled out of the sack, and stumbled into the kitchen, where Kloser and Zink were chowing down on moose stew. "I can't believe I just pushed my bike seventy miles," Kloser was saying. It had taken them nearly fourteen hours to cover the 66 miles from Big Su, and then they had wasted another hour by getting lost within a mile of the checkpoint and wandering around on snowmobile trails in the dark.

There was another guy at the checkpoint with a bicycle, a hard-core named Roman Dial who did a good job of embodying the Alaska spirit. Not having the money to enter the race, he had started with the racers but turned off the trail and by taking an easier route had beaten them to Skwentna by four hours.

Zink and Kloser were hating life. Kloser took off his shoes and inspected a bandaged toe. "I froze this one skiing once, so it's real sensitive. Looks like I'm going to lose the nail. I'll live."

The prospect of returning through the miles of mush was depressing for them, so we held a hasty strategy session between the four journalists, the race official and Roman Dial. Dial offered to lead them back on the Yentna River route he had taken, and both riders embraced the suggestion.

A little more than an hour after Kloser and Zink showed up, three Alaskans cruised in, Les Matz, Carl Tobin and Mark Corson. Mark Frise had wrestled with indecision about continuing, quitting the race for a while, then deciding to go on. In doing so he had dropped hours behind, taking an entire day to cover the 66 miles from Big Su to Skwentna. In addition to the news of trail conditions we were getting from the riders, the radio and phone reports were that half the entrants had already dropped out. The race was rapidly turning into an all-time classic, if that is spelled o-r-d-e-a-l.

A little over five hours behind the leaders, Martha Kennedy pulled into Skwentna after riding alone through the night. Of all the remarkable stories of endurance that came from the event, hers was the most impressive, since she had none of the emotional support of those traveling in groups.

After resting and eating, and with the news that the return route was much faster, a much-refreshed pair of leaders pulled out into the bright morning sun along with guide Roman Dial. From this point on they had smooth sailing, and made excellent time. But now a new problem arose. Kloser and Zink had become

Continued on page 47

The Diet Column

by Earle Young

"I just love the stuff 'diet experts' are polluting the public print with these days," says Fred Turke. "If you follow their advice, you'll spend too much time on the can to be able to train." Turke, an dancer-cise pharmacologist from Batt State University, is renowned for his work in blood-doping and intentional caffiene overdoses. He began his diet studies following some unpleasantness with the regulatory agencies after the 1984 games. He has a handful of articles to demonstrate his point about diet experts.

"Big Nurse's Very Proper Diet for Riding Competitive Metric Half-Centuries," from a high-circulation cycling magazine.



"How to Eat Five Times a Day Like Starving Pig, and Stay Marvelously (and Fashionably) Slender for This Year's Summer Fashions," an article on bulimia from a popular women's magazine.

"Thin Men Don't Eat Quiche," "The Thinking Man's Diet," "The Drinking Man's Diet," "The Kinky Man's Diet," from various men's magazines.

"Look at this crap," Turke says, working himself into a righteous frenzy. "They tell you that if you want to have energy to ride, eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet with lots of fruit and vegetables. Then this article says that if you want to lose weight, you should eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet with lots of fruit and vegetables. Here's a bozo who claims that six baked

potatoes have the same six hundred calories as a cup of nuts, and he would rather fill up on the spuds." Flecks of foam appear at the corners of Turke's mouth, and his language is no longer suitable for even this magazine.

"Those six potatoes might be a good dinner for some desk jockey fighting middle age spread, but what about the poor bokie who burns 5,000 calories even on an off day?" According to Turke, when a rider tries to get enough calories from high-bulk foods, they move half-digested into the large intestine, where they ferment and produce gas. "Given diets like this, I'm not surprised that some bikies are famous for their flatulence."

Turke says he had to begin studying diet as a performance

booster when the Olympic Committee started cracking down on a few of his other coaching methods. Although at that time he portrayed himself as a misunderstood genius, he has recently modified his coaching program and now stresses ingestion rather than injections to improve athletic performance. "Fat is where it's at," he declares with the inspired confidence of a born-again used car salesman. "My research shows that athletes who hit the wall the hardest were the ones who ate the least fat." Turke went on to describe the test diet, heavy in saturated animal fat, refined starches and sugar.

"We've known for a long time that when an athlete runs out of quick energy, his body will begin to convert fat into energy. Our theory was that if we trained the body to start consuming fats early, the rider could avoid the 'bonk'."

"Pizza and good German beer are basic components of our training diet. Pizza has elements of four major food groups: fast, ethnic, greasy and spicy. We start our athletes on a diet consisting mostly of fat, with a little carbo and fiber thrown in, but not enough to clog the system." The menu looks like the "no" list in the Pritkin Diet.

I asked Turke whether he worried about some of the known hazards of a high fat diet, and he reminded of what Vince Lombardi said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."

"High level athletes are only interested in short-term results. Just look at my work with blood-doping. One of those fools figured his girlfriend was close enough to being family that she could be a donor. Besides, the average biker will kill himself in traffic long before this diet gets to him."

The rotund, bespectacled Turke practices what he preaches. At Berkeley's Chez Panisse he demonstrated his theory of "fat loading." A baked goat-cheese salad was followed by calzone loaded with cheese and Italian bacon. Munching bread and butter between

courses, Turke said he wasn't suggesting people do without fresh fruit and vegetables entirely, but they should watch out for empty bulk. Turke's approach is to provide calories in the form of fatty foods, force the body to start burning fat, with plenty of calories available in the form of fat.

Turke also said that his studies found a high correlation between cravings for specific foods and real need for that food. A craving for ice cream after a ride is a sure sign that the rider is overheated and running

low on calories. Chocolate craving is a sign of a caffeine addict out of gas. Banana mania indicates a shortage of potassium. Turke suggests a banana split with chocolate sauce for complete protection from these deficiencies.

When confronted with evidence that his advice flies in the face of all previous studies, Turke sneered and growled, "Diet rules are written by the same people who made it federal law that bicycles are dangerous toys, and don't you forget it."

FURTHER DIET ADVICE

Legendary curmudgeon Victor Vincente of America now and then gives diet advice, although we don't really know that he has any qualifications in this area, since he has been known to ingest some disgusting excuses for food. Would you believe road-kill owl jerky?

The following has been plagiarized by permission from Victor's "Dear Dirt Guru" column in the Topanga Bulletin.

Dear Dirt Guru;

What's all this nonsense I've been hearing about high fat diets? I'm familiar with high protein diets and carbo-loading, but this...?

Signed: Slightly Obese in Summerland

Dear Slightly Obese;

Yes, it's true, this is the latest in high-tech diets. Some highly reputable researchers have been seriously looking into this most obvious of energy consumption plans. We all know that fat contains more calories per gram than carbohydrate or protein. Why didn't we all think of this? Here's a typical day's menu:

Breakfast:

3 grams French triple-cream cheese
5 grams butter

Lunch:

8 grams lard

Dinner:

4 grams pork fat fried in butter
20 cc olive oil

Note: This diet is especially indicated for ultra-marathon events, during which one would increase the quantities of the above menu by a factor of five.

Dear Dirt Guru;

What types of food do you recommend for mountain bike riding?

Signed: Hungry for Info

Dear Hungry for Info;

Depending on mileage, terrain, temperature, moon phase, condition of stomach and blood pressure, I would recommend any or all of the following: dried, smoked or canned meat, hard alcohol, fresh or dried fruit, bread, chocolate, candy, nuts, canned ravioli, anything expensive or imported, fresh goat organs, herbal spice brownies, beer, chips, and of course anything costing less than 59 cents that comes in a tamper-proof package.

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AT LAST!

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THE CARS?

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LIKE!

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YOUR AGGRESSIONS IN H-O SCALE!

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THROUGH 'EM WITH OUR NATURE TRAIL HOLOGRAMS!

GOOSH-IT'S JUST
LIKE BEING HERE!

PACK A LUNCH? FORGET IT! YOUR ONE
PRICE ADMISSION INCLUDES DINNER AND DESERT!

YOW! OUT
OF CONTROL!

THAT'S OK! AIM FOR
THE JELLO MOGOLS!

WOW! SPINICH
GROUND COVER AND A CROUTON
PATH!

AH-
BUTTERMILK

WITH
TOMATO
PEBBLES!

FISHING FOR
CHEESE
CRACKERS

MMMM-MY FAVORITE!
POISON OAK BERRY!

