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MAR / APR 2020

ISSUE 222



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HOW CYCLISTS CAN
HELP FIRE VICTIMS

CLASSIC'S SEASON
HOW YOU CAN
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ROUBAIX

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BICYCLING AUSTRALIA

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He is known as 'an honorary Aussie', the Colombian climbing sensation that has been with Mitchelton-Scott since 2014. Bicycling Australia's Steve Thomas caught up with Esteban and discussed his past, present and immediate future.

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Peter Maniaty has produced yet another gem for Bicycling Australia, this time delving into the history of iconic Aussie bike company Malvern Star and particularly focussing on mover, shaker and the very colourful Bruce Small.

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COVER: Matilda Raynolds of Specialized Women's Racing during Stage 3 of the 2020 TDU.

A Tough Start To 2020

SUMMER 2019/20 WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY FOR ALL THE WRONG reasons. First it was the devastating bushfires, the damage and destruction affecting thousands of Australians including some very close to us here at Bicycling Australia. Our Classics series Ride Director David Kemp lost his family home near Noosa to fire and our hearts go out to all those so badly affected. Although it pales into insignificance compared to the heartbreak for those who have lost loved ones or the very homes they live in, the fires have impacted the dreamy summertime plans of many who simply wanted to spend time out on the bike, get quality training time in, and enjoy the wonderful country we are so blessed to live in.

With the disastrous summer behind us, now's the time to do what we can for those still recovering and rebuilding. You can find out how you can help in the 'Publisher's Note' on page 12 - and in doing so get back out on our bikes, support local and regional communities, and spend time cycling again!

It's March / April, the Classics season is upon us, both the famed Euro Classics season and our very own major events with the Clare Classic in April and Mudgee Classic in May.

Inside this edition you'll find plenty of top quality motivational and instructional content on helping get the most out of the sport over the coming months.

There's a Paris-Roubaix feature article (including details of how you can ride the famous pave!), two x Women's Cycling features, and a fascinating interview with Esteban Chaves. You'll also find an Aussie cycling special - details about riding Victoria's famous North East, a special on Cycling & Sciatica, bike reviews, the latest gear and plenty more. We hope you enjoy this edition and we look forward to meeting you out on the road or at one of our very own Classics! 'Til then, safe cycling.





**"On we march
With a midnight song
We will light our way
With our lanterns on"**
Birds Of Tokyo, Lanterns

Eskies Bring Hope To Bushfire Victims



LEFT: Riders of the Tour Down Under pass through an area impacted by fire.

BELOW: James Yaffa, publisher of *Bicycling Australia* and keen cyclist.

BICYCLING AUSTRALIA PUBLISHER JAMES YAFFA REFLECTS UPON THE BUSHFIRE CRISIS AND TELLS US ABOUT A WONDERFUL WAY THE CYCLING COMMUNITY CAN HELP FELLOW AUSTRALIANS IN NEED.



I PLEDGE TO VISIT A FIRE
affected town with my
Empty Esky'

This timely and most relevant media campaign really has struck a chord with Australians and the wider world over the past few harrowing months. The 'Bring an Empty Esky' campaign is aimed at supporting the fire-impacted communities that need our collective help. Cyclists are such steadfast benefactors to Australians in need – as a community we do great things for so many worthy causes, and have done for a very long time.

All in the cycling community have witnessed horrific and tragic devastation to people, homes, animals and businesses over this fire season. Many of us have never seen anything like it,

and certainly never want to see or experience it again. As one of the 'Bring an Esky' founders, Eleanor Ballieu said "We are encouraging everyone to grab an empty esky, plan a road trip, and head to an area impacted by the bushfires when it's safe to do so. Then fill that esky with everything local – wine, food, whatever you want".

Over more than 26 years Bicycling Australia has developed a strong relationship with readers, advertisers and so many communities around the nation. It is difficult to articulate our broad reach and the gratitude we have towards our audience – Australia's core road cycling community. Our friends in The Southern Highlands of NSW, the NSW South Coast, through Gippsland in Victoria, The Snowy Mountains, Noosa Hinterland, Canberra & the ACT, the Adelaide Hills and Blue Mountains need our collective assistance.

This is the time to visit one of these stunning cycling regions which have been so greatly impacted by the 2019/20 bushfire crisis. Your smile and your support and even your pedal strokes are needed now like never before. Every coffee, sandwich, dinner and accommodation night you book will help these communities get back on track.

So get a group of mates together, load the bikes into the cars, grab those empty eskies and make a weekend of it!

In closing, through 2020 and beyond Bicycling Australia's four major Classics events will be supporting some of those areas hit hard by bushfire and we urge you to do the same.

See you out on the bike!

JAMES YAFFA – PUBLISHER

SUNDAY, 3 MAY 2020 REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN



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CLASSIC**

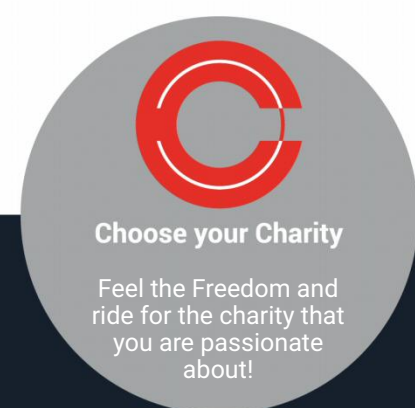


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CYCLING - IT'S DEFINITELY AN ACCESSORY SPORT! HERE WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE TOP PRODUCTS THAT HAVE CROSSED THE BICYCLING AUSTRALIA DESK OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS.



SPECIALIZED DOWN UNDER COLLECTION

Days before the Tour Down Under in Adelaide, Specialized launched an exciting new line up of products along with news of a major donation following the bushfire crisis.

The 'Down Under Collection' has been inspired by the speed and colour of the Australian Budgie – an Allez Sprint Disc, Evade and Prevail helmets, S-Works 7 Shoes, even socks and a cap.

With much of Australia's wildlife suffering from devastating bushfires, Specialized donated \$150,000 to WIRES Australian Wildlife Rescue.

For more on the Down Under Collection visit www.specialized.com

LEZYNE SMART LIGHTING

US-based Lezyne say it's the most advanced front/rear cycling light combo available and we agree this is wonderful technology here.

As the name suggests, the 'Connect Smart Pair' comes equipped 'Smart Connect' wireless technology. Both front and rear lights can be programmed via the Lezyne app. Once paired the front light wirelessly controls the rear light when toggling through its modes.

The front is a powerful light with up to 1000 lumens of output and features a machined aluminum body.

Front light:

Weight: 153g

Max Runtime: 87 hours

Recharge Time: 5:30 hours

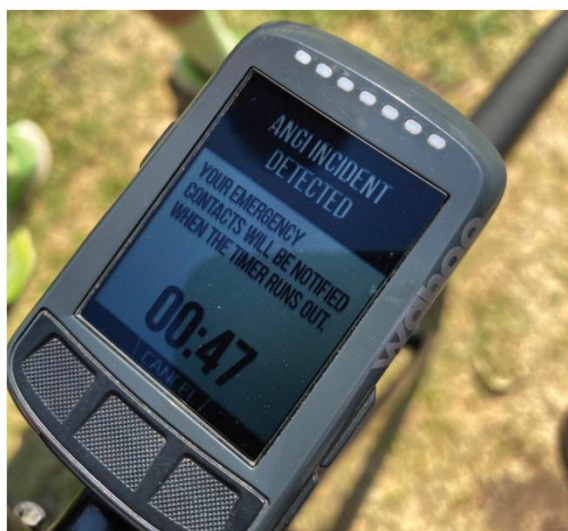
Rear light:

Weight: 45g

Max runtime: 19:30 hours

Recharge Time: 2:15 hours

Pricing: TBA



GPS CONTROLLED SAFETY SYSTEM

Wahoo and Specialized recently announced some interesting news - the full integration of Specialized's ANGI crash notification system with Wahoo ELEMNT GPS cycling computers.

The system requires three components – a Specialized ANGI helmet (or standalone ANGI sensor also available separately), a Wahoo ELEMNT, Bolt or Roam or cycling computer, and both the Wahoo and Specialized Ride Apps (available free).

For further details visit www.specialized.com



SCOTT CONTESSA ADDICT

For 2020 the female-specific Scott Contessa Addict 15 features an ultra-light frame and fork combo (925 & 380grams respectively), along with Shimano Ultegra Disc drivetrain updated colourways. According to Scott it's 'one extremely strong and light bike that's ready for the mountains.'

Whether it's climbing that high country or simply cruising flatter grounds with friends, this is a wonderful looking, super reliable and high-quality offering from the US innovators.

More details at
www.scott-sports.com



MULGA TOURS – A BUCKET-LIST CYCLING ADVENTURE

If you and your bicycle are looking for a way to flee the coming chilly winter, Mulga Tours has an opportunity in July to embrace the warmth of Tropical North Queensland.

Their 11-day tour between Cairns and Karumba is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to accomplish something most people only dream of – the opportunity to cycle across Australia's iconic Cape York.

Leaving Cairns and the beautiful tropical coast, Mulga's cycling route winds through the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area before joining the Savannah Way, one of Australia's best-known outback drives. Here the green tropical rainforest and bush opens up into patterns of red coloured soils, rolling grasslands, sparse gums, ancient hills and abundant wildflowers and birdlife.

You'll spend two nights in beautifully restored, ensuited, turn of the century railway carriages in the centre of Undara Volcanic National Park known for its lava tubes that were formed by the earth's longest lava flow originating from a single volcano.

In Croydon you'll take a different look at the landscape and board the legendary 'Tin Hare' Gulflander train for one of the world's 'must-do' rail trips that goes "from nowhere to nowhere" (Croydon to Normanton).

With endless blue skies, rainbow sunsets and clear night skies with little artificial lighting providing the best stargazing in the country, this is an Australian cycling holiday you'll not want to miss.

Each leg is carefully planned to be achievable by the average cyclist, and with a maximum group size of 15, delicious food, comfy beds and a focus on safety, you'll be in good hands with Mulga Bicycle Tours. Hybrid e-bikes are available to hire.

More: www.mulgabicycletraveltours.com.au





DESIGNER BIKE STANDS

What better way to show off your pride and joy than storing it on one of these designer bike stands.

The Designer Bike Stand from Westwood is constructed from tough and hard-wearing marine ply. It is finished in a stunning Oak veneer with a stainless-steel fixing. Hand crafted and easy to assemble, this stand will display your bike in a unique and stylish way.

- **Constructed in marine ply**
- **Assembled dimensions – 1840mm (L) x 440mm (W) x 545mm (H) – height from floor to top of spine once assembled is 322mm.**
- **Packaged weight is 5.5kg, maximum bike weight 25kg.**
- **Designed to fit road bikes with 700c rims and a tyre profile ranging between 23-28mm**

More info including pricing at www.designerbikestands.com

EVOC ROAD BIKE BAG PRO

The new EVOC Road Bike Bag Pro travel bag has been expertly designed to safely stow individually fitted road and triathlon bikes without the need to adjust the cockpit or saddle.

No more fine adjustments to get your all-important fit spot on at the destination, the EVOC will help ensure a smooth transition to your bike once that dream cycling holiday, getaway or Gran Fondo begins.

Designed to be soft where possible and hard where necessary, this innovative bike travel bag is

easy to handle and manoeuvre while ensuring safety, security and protection for your precious bike.

The new EVOC Road Bike Bag Pro is available now.

- **ROAD BIKE BAG PRO: \$1399**
- **EVOC PRO BIKE BAG: \$999**
- **Standard EVOC BIKE BAG: \$739**
- **Volume: 300 litres**
- **Dimensions: 92 x 130 x 53 cm // collapsible to: 142 x 38 x 32 cm.**
- **Weight: 11kg**
- **Maximum wheel base: 106 cm**
- **More info: evocsports.com**



NEW FROM BZ OPTICS

Gold Coast based eyewear company BZ Optics have widened their range of prescription optical lens adaptable cycling frames.

The company's RX Model was simultaneously released at the Tour Down Under in Adelaide and at the Core Cycle Trade Show in Silverstone UK.

With it's half frame design the RX model doesn't look like a prescription sunglass and the frames are supplied with four colours of insert - Smoke, Hot Pink, Blue and Flouro Yellow.

The prescription lenses will be available in clear, tinted or photochromatic single vision or distance vision with a bi focal reader depending on the cyclist's requirements.

The top of the frame and the outside of the temples are gloss graphite (BZ's most popular frame colour), while the inside of the temples are dual moulded with a grey non slip sanaprene as is the fully adjustable nose piece.

RX lenses can be fitted by your optometrist or BZ can assist.

Frame RRP \$150

RX frame with tinted or clear single vision lenses - \$500.

RX frame with tinted or clear distance and bi focal - \$550.

RX frame with photochromatic (Cat0) to (Cat3) lenses - \$630.

RX frame with photochromatic distance and bi focal lenses - \$680.

For further details visit www.bzoptics.com



ZWIFT ADD GRAVEL & CRIT COURSES

Online training platform Zwift have introduced two new additions - a Gravel option plus Crit City, an event-only criterium course.

The crit course is 1.9km in length, with 26ft in elevation gain. Similar to real-life criterium circuits, the circuit weaves its way around the tightly packed buildings of Crit City over cobbles and sweeping roundabouts.

Events taking place in Crit City can be found on the Zwift Event calendar online or Zwift Companion App.

The off-road-focused training plans include 'pebble Pounder' and 'Gravel Grinder'.

"When the next off-road adventure comes calling, you'll be primed and ready to rip," say Zwift.

More on the Zwift platform.
www.zwift.com



PLANT BASED CYCLIST

Whether you're just starting out on your cycling journey or are already an accomplished Gran Fondo or road racer, if you want to ride simply powered by the goodness of plants, *The Plant-Based Cyclist* will help inspire, equip and empower you to do just that.

Bicycling Australia have been reading and reviewing a copy of this title and can attest to the fascinating and informative content. Beautifully presented, the book has been generating a lot of interest online.

Written by Nigel Mitchell – the nutrition brains behind historic Olympic gold medals and multiple Grand Tour wins – this high quality, coffee table-style book covers everything from diet, health, bio-chemistry, ride and rest day nutrition, travelling, and essential advice on creating a plant-based kitchen.

"Nigel's approach takes the guesswork out of riding on a plant-based diet"

– Si Richardson, GCN Presenter

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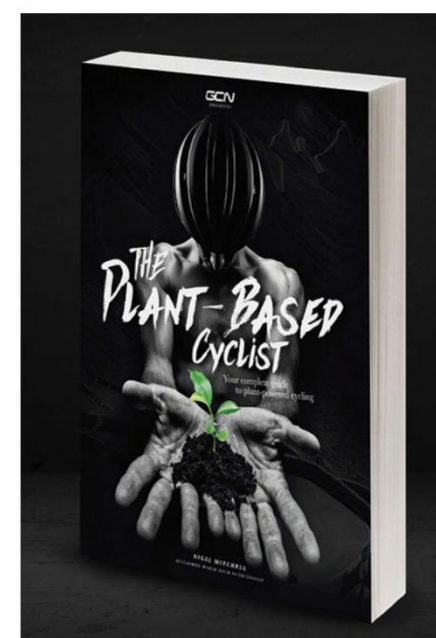
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THE PEDLA CYCLING KIT

Originating in Melbourne, Australian cycling's cultural epicentre, The Pedla take a refreshing look at cycling kit or 'modern roadwear' as they like to call it. The designs are super stylish, on trend and created to encourage and motivate the wearer. Pedla use some of the world's leading fabrics, grippers and chamois with components sourced from Mitispa, Schoeller Textiles and Elastic Interface.

Further details
www.thepedla.com



ESTEBAN CHAVES: The Return?

COLOMBIAN CLIMBING SENSATION ESTEBAN CHAVES HAS HAD SOMETHING OF A TOUGH COUPLE OF YEARS TO SAY THE LEAST. STEVE THOMAS CAUGHT UP WITH HIM TO CHAT ABOUT ALL THINGS COLOMBIAN, AND HIS FIGHT TO RETURN TO HIS BEST FORM ...





He has enjoyed victory several times before and is hoping to find that top form again, Esteban Chaves crosses the line for a stage win.

RIGHT: A smiling assassin ... Esteban Chaves is known for his beaming grin but also a tough man when the going gets verticle.



ESTEBAN CHAVES CLIMBED INTO THE INTERNATIONAL cycling limelight when he won the Tour de L'Avenir – widely considered 'the Junior Tour de France' – in 2011. He turned pro the following year with the Italian based Colombia-Coldeportes team, and embarked on what would prove to be a roller-coaster career.

In 2013 he suffered a horrific crash, a potentially career ending 'chute'. But in good faith was still signed to the Orica Green Edge (now Mitchelton Scott) team, who he has raced for ever since.

His career has glittered with sheer brilliance, humility – and of course his seemingly ever-present positive good nature and smiles have made him a firm favourite with cycling fans the world over.

In 2016 he came 2nd in the Giro d'Italia and 3rd in the Vuelta a España, as well as taking victory in the Tour of Lombardy – firmly stating his arrival as a grand tour contender. Unfortunately things went pear-shaped after that, as he contracted Mononucleosis virus, which is often caused by Epstein-Barr virus, which has floored several leading pros in recent times.

Despite the often debilitating effects of this and coming close to leaving the sport behind, he has gradually returned to form and is once again looking towards grand tour greatness.

ST: COLOMBIA HAS ALWAYS HAD A PASSION FOR CYCLING. IN THE 1980S WAS WHEN THE CAFÉ DE COLOMBIA TEAM FIRST HIT THE HEADLINES. ALTHOUGH HERE WAS A LULL IN COLOMBIAN RIDERS MAKING IT BIG IN EUROPE AFTER THAT. HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED SINCE THE NEW GENERATION TOOK THINGS TO SUCH A HIGH LEVEL, AND HAS THAT CHANGED THE PROFILE OF CYCLING IN THE COUNTRY?

EC: Cycle racing was always important in Colombia, and it still is. This is why I like cycling, because my dad lived through the 80s-90s generation with all of the guys going to Europe; like with Lucho Herrera winning the Vuelta a España, Fabio Parra in the Tour de France yellow for 13 days, my dad was always involved in cycling.

When I was growing up it was not really a great moment in cycling for Colombia, but my dad was (and still is) crazy about the sport. In the house we always had bikes, wheels and yellow jerseys, and I always remember myself in front of the television watching the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia, even if there was not one Colombian rider there.

I have really good memories of when Santiago Botero won the time trial in the World's, and also always in my mind were the stages Ivan Parra won in the Giro d'Italia, and when Victor Hugo Pena took the yellow jersey in the Tour de France.

THE LOWDOWN

30 years old – born in January 1990 in Bogota, Colombia

55 kilograms and 1m64cm tall.

GRAND TOURS:

2nd overall 2016 Giro

3X Giro Stage wins

2X Vuelta Stage Wins

10 Grand Tour Starts



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“...I WANT TO DO (THE OLYMPICS). I DID IT IN 2016 AND IT’S A BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE, with the atmosphere in the village and racing with the national team...”

This was a big impression for me. It was big for my dad, and me but not in the country. At that time they had turned more towards soccer.

I can feel the difference now compared to that time. The country has turned a lot towards cycling; everybody rides a bike and everyone knows all of the races. You can watch all of the big races on international TV, especially with what happened this year with Egan [Bernal].

It’s even bigger now; it’s crazy. For example, I can’t train on Sunday because there are many, too many, bike riders and you cannot move. There are not many roads here; it’s not like Europe. So, I prefer to take rest days on Sundays, it’s unbelievable.

ST: COLOMBIA IS A LONG WAY FROM EUROPE AND ITS BIKE RACING CULTURE. WHY DO YOU THINK IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A STRONG CYCLING NATION?

EC: I think there are 2 important things; first, we have the genetics – because we’re born

at altitude, and being born and growing up at altitude makes a difference. Also, the bicycle is always the mode of transport for kids going to school. There is always one bike in a household; it’s the cheapest way to get around.

After, when you go for a critirium and you’re born at altitude, [you know] it’s your sport. I think this is the reason, and also the mountains.

One example is Nairo Quintana, he grew up at 3,000 metres of altitude, and he went by bike to school since he was 8 years old. He had to ride 12 kilometres down to school, and then ride back up again – every single day. When you give a carbon bike to a guy like that, it’s perfect.

ST: TIMES HAVE CHANGED, BUT CYCLING WAS TRADITIONALLY A WORKING CLASS SPORT IN MOST OF EUROPE. ALTHOUGH NOT IN MANY OTHER REGIONS, WHERE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE MIDDLE TO UPPER CLASS. WHAT DEMOGRAPHIC DOES IT HAVE IN COLOMBIA?



EC: Before I thought it was a middle and working class sport – for sure. But now, it's for everyone, it's the new golf. The current riders do get seen a lot more now, and that has helped change this.

ST: THE COLOMBIANS OF THE PARRA AND HERRERA 80S-90S ERA WERE BIG INTERNATIONAL STARS, ALTHOUGH BACK THEN THE FINANCIAL REWARDS FOR PRO BIKE RACERS WERE MUCH LOWER THAN NOW. DO THESE GUYS LEAD GOOD AND HIGH PROFILE LIVES NOW?

EC: It's like everything everywhere; some guys invested their money well. They were paid really well, and because of this they have a really high profile life. People still love them and they are recognised.

Although you also see the opposite – where guys have not invested their money wisely or have not done really good business and they're still working. You can see the faces on both sides; I think it's like this in every country and every sport.

ST: YOU'RE BASED IN ANDORRA DURING THE SEASON. AS ARE MANY PRO RIDERS. HOW OFTEN DO YOU RETURN TO COLOMBIA?

EC: I live by myself, and there are many different nationalities of riders there, and many team mates too now. They also speak Spanish too. When I went to Europe I was just 20 years old and couldn't drive a car or cook. It's funny, but it's a good way to learn.

Normally I spend 9 months in Europe and 3 in Colombia, although depending of the race schedule and situation it can be 10 months in Europe. Probably 70-80% of that time I'm away from home and travelling.

ST: YOU'VE HAD A FEW SERIOUS ACCIDENTS DURING YOUR CAREER – AND ARE ONLY JUST RETURNING TO TOP FORM FOLLOWING A PROLONGED ILLNESS (MONONUCLEOSIS – USUALLY CAUSED BY EPSTEIN-BARR VIRUS). IT WAS A TOUGH TIME, HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT (AND THE CRASH INJURIES) AND RETURN TO THE TOP?

EC: Well, I think that the way I grew up; and as a family – it showed me that you can never give up. You have to keep going. This was the example I had from my dad and mom.

I can't say that I grew up like a poor guy or in a poor family; I always had a plate of meat on the table. But, we had rough moments, and we had to continue. There is no other way to deal with it, and I did the same after the accidents and the other rough moments I've had.

I just keep going like we did as a family – like my mom and dad did. Also, cycling is something I love, and I'm proud of this and want to do a lot of things. The way to do it is to keep trying in all different situations.

ST: HOW DID YOU MENTALLY HANDLE GOING FROM BEING ONE OF THE BEST TO NOT BEING ABLE TO PERFORM, WHILE ALSO KNOWING THAT YOU STILL HAD THE ABILITY AND WILL TO WIN?

EC: This is a tricky one, especially during the last season. The mind has control of the body, and this always happens with a virus.

You feel something weird in the body, and the first thing you feel (on bad days) is "this shit's back". We do a lot of blood tests all of the time, and luckily it's okay. Step by step it's disappearing (also from my mind); it disappeared when I won the stage in the Giro, and started to disappear when I finished the Vuelta.

Slowly and slowly things start to disappear from my mind and you start to get the confidence back again. It's the same thing when you lose confidence; you don't lose it in one day or one week, it happens over time – it's one process. When you start to get good feelings it comes back step by step, a similar process. In that moment you just need to be hard, and to get support from the people you love and love you. I understand this now, you can't do everything yourself, you need the support from the people who are really close to you.

Keep trying, and keep trying until the end – and belief, self-belief is also an important one. These things are in your mind, you know that and you need to make a front and fight against them, it's just not so easy.

ST: HOW DID GOING BACK TO COLOMBIA TO "RESET" DURING THIS LOW PERIOD HELP WITH THIS PROCESS, AND HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO KEEP MOTIVATED TO TRAIN AT SUCH TIMES?

EC: I arrived at one point when I didn't want to ride the bike any more – I wanted to give up. We are humans, and this is part of life. But coming back to Colombia, being with my friends and family, and taking care of myself was really important.

To start from zero is unbelievable; I run a foundation here for young kids, and all the kids showed me that love, and it reminded me of when I was that age. They were dreamers, and you can see in their eyes that anything is possible, and I took strength from that.

At one moment, especially in cycling, you think that you can do everything for yourself – because you ride by yourself and win races by yourself – or more or less. You also think that you can do that in life, but you can't – you need that support from the people who love you. That is what helped a lot with going back home. They helped me start from zero again, it's like a process, and nothing comes in one day or a week; it takes months, and I'm still in that process.

ST: HOW DO YOU FEEL IN A RACE WHEN IT'S JUST NOT THERE BECAUSE OF THIS, AND ARE YOU SCARED THAT THE ILLNESS WILL RETURN?

EC: Yeah, for sure. The virus, especially when you've had really good (past) success, and you know that you can do it, but for whatever reason you can't at that moment, you try to prove to yourself that you can. And that's scary when you can't.

You need to keep going and also enjoy life. Sometimes we're chasing one dream, and we forget that we're already living that dream – and that also gives you strength.

ABOVE: Chaves finished 2nd overall at the 2016 Giro d'Italia, and has won three Grand Tour stages. He is still seeking that top step win.



“...Also, MY DREAM IS ONE DAY TO WIN THE TOUR DE FRANCE...but I want to feel ready for that”

It's hard at the time (during and after a race), but when you put all of the pieces together and you see the general bigger picture you understand that it's a process, and that you are in that process.

If you just see the picture of the day and nothing else, you will feel like shit. If you look at all of the pieces and put it together you can understand that it is just one day, and tomorrow will be another race and you will keep fighting – then next week will be another, and next month another – you keep racing and trying. You will come back, you just need time, belief and passion – I don't like that word (passion) because I heard it a lot in the last couple of years, but you need to do it.

You need to have that in yourself and understand that it's a process, and it was a process for me towards the year I had in 2016, but that's over. Now it's a new chapter and a new process.

ST: WHEN YOU FIRST SIGNED WITH OGE THEY HAD NO REAL GC RIDERS. NOW WITH THE YATES TWINS THERE ARE 3 OF YOU. MANY TEAMS ALSO NOW HAVE SEVERAL GC LEADERS; HOW HAS THIS CHANGED HOW YOU APPROACH THINGS?

EC: I think with this team it's pretty easy. When I started with them in 2014 it was completely different, and I learned a lot of things; how to do things for a leader, for a sprinter for a sprint jersey, for whatever the situation. This was also where I had the chance to be a GC leader. In some races I was not the strongest rider – and so I helped the Yates brothers for the GC, which is perfect.

When I need to ride for another leader it's good, I can do it – it doesn't matter on their nationality or age, if they are stronger we work for them. I'm sure that when I am stronger again they will also do it for me. This is the thing with this team, the culture, it's like a family and we support each other. I like this way.

ST: 2018 WAS AN AMAZING YEAR FOR MITCHELTON SCOTT AT THE GIRO, WITH THINGS CHANGING BY THE DAY. HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH CHANGING STRATEGIES AND ROLES DURING A RACE?

EC: We plan day by day, and we can change the rules really easily. You could in 2018; firstly with myself and then with Simon, and we won stages also.

I think this comes with the Australian culture, and also the sponsors have that mentality, which they pass on to the directors who pass this on to us.

ST: YOU'VE BECOME SOMETHING OF AN ADOPTED AUSSIE, AND HAVE HAD GREAT SUCCESS THERE IN RACES TOO. HOW DOES IT FEEL BEING SO WELCOMED AS A FOREIGNER?

EC: It's great; pretty nice. The team is one of the reasons I'm still racing, because I had such a big accident in 2013 and they still signed me. I always say to them that they are the light at the end of the tunnel. When I was facing all that darkness (2013-4) they saved me; they saved my family and changed my life.

The support from the team and the Australians – that is beautiful. I think you make your own luck, and I was lucky (with the team) that my culture, the team culture and Australian culture really fits with me.

I started speaking English with them, and the fans – also the Colombian fans, it's really nice and I have a sense of responsibility towards them.

ST: YOUR SCHEDULE SEEMS TO BE FOCUSED ON THE GIRO AND VUELTA – HOW IS THIS DECIDED?

EC: Normally the Giro is better for the Colombians, as they have longer climbs. I have a special relationship with Italy; I grew up as professional here, I have a lot of friends here, I know the climbs, I love the people and speak Italian, so it's a place I love to be.

Also, my dream is one day to win the Tour de France, I hope one day; but I want to feel ready for that, especially as in the last one I had a really hard moment, so it's a little bit scary for me.

I want to fight for that place again, especially with the roads they do now. Hopefully I can do it as soon as possible, I don't know when, but I want to try one year.

ST: ARE THE OLYMPICS A TARGET FOR YOU?

EC: I want to do it. I did it in 2016 and it's a beautiful experience, with the atmosphere in the village and racing with the national team. We will see, because it's hard to get in the team, as we have many good riders; but I'm on the long list. **BA**

ABOVE: One of the more personable and lovable riders of the pro peloton, Chaves is known as 'an honorary Aussie'.

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'Star Power: Sir Bruce Small & Malvern Star

IT'S ALMOST EXACTLY 100 YEARS SINCE A FLAMBOYANT SYDNEY-BORN BUSINESSMAN PURCHASED ICONIC AUSTRALIAN BICYCLE BRAND, MALVERN STAR, IN 1920. PETER MANIATY TRACES THE FASCINATING LIFE OF SIR BRUCE SMALL.



HE MAY HAVE BEEN 'SMALL' BY NAME. BUT THERE was nothing small about the influence of Sir Andrew Bruce Small over Australian cycling in the early to mid-1900s. Confident, charismatic and unashamedly commercial, Small was a pivotal figure during a golden age of Australian cycling. As the driving force behind Malvern Star, he will be forever remembered as one of the sport's great entrepreneurs.

Somewhat ironically considering the brand that drove so much of his early fame is linked, by name, with the inner suburbs of Melbourne, Bruce Small was actually born in the working class Sydney suburb of Ryde. Entering this world on 11 December 1895, the second of six children, he spent much of his childhood on the move. In a biography of Small's life, author Robert Longhurst explained, "he attended fourteen

schools before he finished his formal education at the age of 13. He found work in Melbourne as a printer's devil (apprentice) earning six shillings a week. He then operated a milk run before becoming a commercial traveller."

Along the way Small also developed a keen interest in motorcycles and ended up in the role of foreman for one of the largest motorcycle factories in Melbourne towards the end of the First World War. In 1920 he took the first step towards what would ultimately bring him both fortune and fame, when he invested his life savings, around £200, as the deposit to purchase the circa 1903 'Malvern Star Cycle Works' on Glenferrie Road in Malvern from the company's retiring founder, Tom Finnigan (1898 Austral Wheel Race winner). The total asking price was £1,125 and, while history now tells us otherwise, at the time many thought Small was mad. As the Newcastle Sun reflected 15 years later in October 1935, Small "bought keenly, advertised judiciously, and grasped every opportunity of contacting with the avenues of cycling propaganda."

One such opportunity in 1921 proved to be the most important of Small's professional life. It saw him take a leap of faith in hiring a 17-year-old telegraph messenger, whom he'd just watched finish third behind the scratch men in a club race that Small's business had sponsored. The young man's name? Hubert Opperman. It was a relationship that would go on to serve both men very well indeed. By the mid-1930s Opperman was a Director of Small's burgeoning company, not to mention the finest cyclist Australia had ever produced.

Small had other riders in his publicity stable, of course. He was far too shrewd to put all his eggs in one bike basket. A young prodigy by the name of Ernie Lindsay. Jack Watson. Roy Johnstone. Richard 'Fatty' Lamb. As Small set about building an unrivalled cohort of riders to advertise his brand, the manufacturing side of the Malvern Star business was left in the hugely capable hands of Joe Pascoe, arguably Australia's finest bike



Hubert Opperman with Bruce Small – Oppy, right, and Bruce Small left in Melbourne in 1974.

“... the deal placed Small at the head of what will probably be regarded as **THE GREATEST RETAIL CYCLE BUSINESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH...**”

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Malvern Star has established 100 Branches and 7,000 Agencies throughout Australia to provide for all your cycling requirements.

builder of the time. Such was Small's confidence in Pascoe's craftsmanship and skill, it led him to offer an unprecedented 10-year guarantee covering Malvern Star frames and forks. At the same time he also introduced the highly entrepreneurial idea of 'pay as you earn' terms, allowing riders to own a gleaming new bicycle with just a £2 deposit and then 5p a week. He even threw in free insurance.

A MAJOR MERGER

After several years, it was time to expand. Two of Small's brothers, Frank and Benjamin, became involved and in 1925 a new factory was opened in nearby Prahran. The output was doubled, virtually overnight. Small's ambitions stretched far beyond Melbourne, mind you. In 1926 a minor sensation was caused when news broke of Small's latest commercial move, a merger between Malvern Star and the well-known Carbine Cycles business in Sydney, run by former six-day rider, Fred Walcott. The deal was rumoured to be worth five figures, a massive sum for the time, and one of the largest business deals ever seen in Australian cycling. The Daily Telegraph proclaimed, "[the deal] placed Small at the head of what will probably be regarded as the greatest retail cycle business in the Commonwealth."

1928 saw Small and Malvern Star back an Australasian Team to ride in the Tour de France, headed by Opperman. Small headed to Europe to personally manage the team and, ever the businessman, took the opportunity to establish links for an overseas buying business, General Accessories Pty Ltd, that would be overseen by another of his brothers, Ralph. By 1934 Small's business empire had grown to include some 450 agencies in Australia, India and New Zealand, distributing more than 19,000 Malvern Star bicycles every year with turnover of £180,000. Yes, you might say he'd proved the doubters wrong.

Despite the Great Depression, Malvern Star's growth continued as did Small's insatiable appetite for publicity. In 1934 he accompanied Opperman back to Europe – England was the primary destination this time – on a trip that saw Oppy set no less than five world records. On his return to Australia, Small promptly announce grand plans for an encore trip in 1935 "with the champion [Opperman] and other leading Australian road aces... for a further series of world's record breaking attempts, and with a view to figuring in a big contest against English and Continental teams."

BIKES FOR ARMED FORCES

Towards the end of 1936 the decision was made to go public. As reported in the Daily Telegraph on 14 December 1936, "With a nominal capital of £250,000, Allied Bruce Small Associates Ltd, is being formed to convert the Bruce Small cycle businesses and affiliated concerns into a public company. The accounts show a profit averaging £14,880 a year."

The onset of the Second World War in 1939, whilst grim news for much of the globe, brought



LEFT: Bruce Small attending an Australian Juvenile / schoolboy championship sponsored by Malvern Star, at the Isle of Capri on the Gold Coast in 1963.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Historic Malvern Star magazine and newspaper advertisements as supplied by Ray Bowles / Australian Cycling Scrapbook.

PHOTO CREDIT RICK CHRISTENSEN, COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER, SURFERS PARADISE. WITH THANKS TO MARCUS ARNOLD.

a silver lining for Small's now-public company. By the early 1940s Malvern Star was building thousands of additional bicycles for the armed forces, on top of its established civilian market. As part of the wider war effort, Malvern Star factories were also manufacturing radio sets, radio masts and tent frames for the military. This diversification continued long after the War and, by the 1950s, Small's business interests were producing such disparate products as bicycles, motorcycles, washing machines, radios, vacuum cleaners and even refrigerators.

A MOVE TO PARADISE

Small, unsurprisingly, had become a very wealthy man and in 1958, aged 63, big changes loomed.

After almost four decades in business, he sold his holdings in Allied Bruce Small Ltd – including his beloved Malvern Star – and moved to the Gold Coast. While he'd originally intended to retire by the beach, the entrepreneurial pull proved too great and before long he'd used some of his fortune to buy and reclaim more than 200 hectares of land near Surfers Paradise. His intention was to transform the area into luxurious residential housing estates based on the canal developments of Florida. Ongoing planning disputes with the local council then saw Small turn his hand to politics and, at the age of 71, he was elected as a hugely popular Mayor of the Gold Coast, a position he held between 1967 and 1973. In a remarkable feat of multi-tasking and endurance, he also served as an Alderman between 1973 and 1976

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"...Flamboyant and unconventional, SMALL'S STYLE WASN'T TO EVERYONE'S LIKING..."

whilst simultaneously being elected as the State Member for Surfers Paradise between 1974 and 1977. He was even re-elected as Mayor between 1976 and 1978. Alas, a deteriorating relationship with fellow councillors saw his political career end in controversy when his council was sacked by the Bjelke-Peterson Government in 1978.

Just as he did with his cycling endeavours, Small threw himself into his political roles with great gusto, and proved himself to be an avid – albeit often polarising – promoter of the Gold Coast both nationally and internationally. He was knighted in 1974 for services to the Gold Coast and Queensland.

Flamboyant and unconventional, Small's style wasn't to everyone's liking. (Just Google 'Meter Maids' for evidence of that.) In an interview with ABC Gold Coast, Small's granddaughter Dr Anne Small described him as a divisive figure. "You either loved him or hated him," she said. "He was a man with a mission; he just kept on thinking of new ideas, thinking of different creative ways to sell things. He didn't tolerate fools because he just knew that he had to get things done."

Small died from cancer in May 1980. A statue was erected in his honour on Elkhorn Avenue in Surfers Paradise in 1986, where it still stands to this day. Not a bicycle in sight, sadly. **BA**

RIGHT: One of several vintage Malvern Star advertisements sourced from the friendly folk at 'Australian Cycling Scrapbook', with thanks to Ray Bowles.



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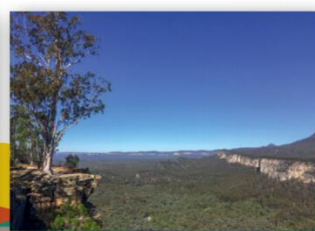
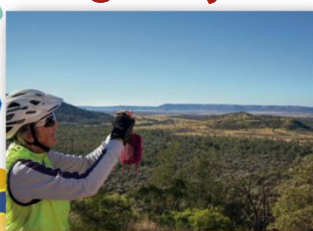
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Decade's Best: Part 1, The Aussies

IN EACH EDITION OF BICYCLING AUSTRALIA FROM NOW THROUGH TO NOVEMBER / DECEMBER WE'LL BE TAKING A LOOK BACK AT THE PIVOTAL MOMENTS OF THE SPORT OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS. 2020 IS A SIGNIFICANT YEAR, A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN THE SPORT, AND THE PERFECT TIME TO CELEBRATE THE PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN CYCLING OVER THE PAST DECADE.

AUSTRALIAN MALE RIDER OF THE DECADE (2010–2019): CADEL EVANS

Cadel Evans began the decade in rainbow stripes, courtesy of his 2009 World Championship victory at Mendrisio, Switzerland. He ends it as Australia's first, and only, Tour de France winner, happily retired, although still very much involved in the sport he loves as a passionate advocate for active lifestyles and rider safety.

Having come agonisingly close on multiple occasions, Evans finally succeeded in securing the maillot jaune on the Champs-Élysées in 2011. Not unlike the America's Cup victory of 1983, his historic achievement captured the imagination of the entire nation with tens of thousands attending his homecoming parade in Melbourne. Almost nine years on, he continues to command attention everywhere he goes, from cyclists and non-cyclists alike.

While nothing can compare to his Tour de France heroics, Evans's palmares for the decade

boasted many more victories. Notable wins included La Fleche Wallonne (2010), Giro d'Italia (Points Classification, 2010), Tour of Romandie (GC, 2011), Tirreno Adriatico (GC, 2011), Criterium du Dauphine (Points Classification, 2012) and the Giro del Trentino (GC, 2014). Evans also received the prestigious Sport Australia Hall of Fame 'Don Award' in 2011 and became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2013.

Evans retired in February 2015, after finishing fifth in the inaugural edition of his own race, the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race. He assumed a Global Ambassador role for BMC Racing Team, and also briefly came out of retirement in 2017, linking with former team-mate George Hincapie in the masters category of the Cape Epic MTB race in South Africa. They won.

Now 43, Evans remains acutely aware of the power his unique legacy holds to positively influence lives. Speaking proudly of the race that bears his name, in December 2018 he told GQ magazine: "I'd love to think that there's maybe a



RIGHT: Cadel Evans in TT mode at the TDF.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Queen of the track Anna Meares.



“... Not unlike the America’s Cup victory of 1983, HIS HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF THE ENTIRE NATION ...”

little girl or a little boy who’s been standing on the side of the road watching the women’s or the men’s race, and it’s planted a seed in their head – like I had a seed planted in my head watching Induráin win the Tour de France – and they’d like to be a bike rider; they’d like to come back and win this race.”

Rounding out the decade nicely, Evans welcomed his second son, Aidan, into the world in January 2019.

AUSTRALIAN FEMALE RIDER OF THE DECADE: ANNA MEARES

Anna Meares burst onto the cycling scene as an 11-year-old kid in rural Queensland in 1994 and immediately started making her name known. By the time she retired in October 2016, she had been 500 metre track time trial world champion four times, a gold medallist at the Commonwealth and Olympic Games, an 11 times world champion (which made her the most decorated female track cyclist ever) and the first Australian to win individual medals in four consecutive Olympics.

Despite the highly publicised horrific crash at a World Cup in January 2008 when she broke her neck, Anna’s tenacity shone through and she was able to compete at the Olympics seven months later and continued racing (and very successfully) into the decade that was 2010-2020.

Now 36, working as a speaker, mentor and media commentator and as Bicycling Australia went to press, expecting her first child with partner, national sprint coach Nick Flyger in February, Anna’s involvement in cycling is still very much there, but has taken a new turn. While she is still involved in the sport, she says becoming a mum in 2020 bests even her happiest moments on the bike.

As the decade began in 2010, Anna stamped her authority all over the track world with gold medals in the time trial and team sprint at the Track World Cup and the Commonwealth Games, also taking the win in the individual sprint at the Games.

The following year saw gold medals in the time trial and keirin at the Track World Cup then in 2012 she was favourite for three gold medals at the world championships in Melbourne and did not disappoint her home crowd.

She won silver in the team sprint, broke the world record for the flying 200 metres in 10.782 seconds then finished with bronze in the match sprints. In the keirin, she won both her qualifying races then the gold medal. She took her second world record of the event with a 33.010 in the time trial.

At the 2012 London Olympics, won gold in the sprint and bronze with Kaarle McCulloch in the team sprint. Back home, she was honoured with naming rights over the Anna Meares Bike Path close to Adelaide Airport.

After a six-month rest in 2013, Anna bounced back to form and set a new world record of 32.836 seconds in the women’s 500m time trial at the UCI Mexico Track World Cup, making her the first woman record under 33 seconds. Training for the 2016 Rio Olympics – said to be Anna’s last – began in earnest.

In 2015, she won three more World Championship medals but it was a tough year for her personally, as nine-year marriage to Mark Chadwick ended.

Despite her heavy heart, Anna headed to Rio determined to finish her career on top and she was rewarded with a bronze medal in the keirin to 10th in the individual sprint and fourth in the team sprint.

Home again, Anna was presented with the Key to the City of Rockhampton later that year, while the new Commonwealth Games velodrome in Brisbane was named for her in November 2016.

In 2017 Anna was devastated when the coach who took her to Olympic gold in 2012, Gary West, died at the age of 57 following a battle with motor neurone disease (MND). She has continued to ride a bike (even at seven months pregnant on an e-bike for a charity event) and in had her first experience at live commenting for the Track World Cup and again, heavily pregnant, for the Tour Down Under. **BA**

A TRIP TO ROUBAIX

WHEN KEEN *BICYCLING AUSTRALIA* READER SIMON BLOOMFIELD'S FAMILY DECIDED TO TRAVEL TO EUROPE IN THE SPRING OF 2019, THERE WAS LITTLE DOUBT WHERE THEIR ITINERARY WOULD TAKE THEM ... THE HELL OF THE NORTH, AKA THE ROADS OF ROUBAIX.

Historic cobbled sectors, stunning vistas and many other like-minded riders ... the roads of the Roubaix region.





WHEN YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO participate in a sport that's one of your own passions, you naturally have high hopes of where it might take you both one day. Since my youngest daughter picked up a road bike, we'd made an annual tradition of watching the Paris-Roubaix together, starting – fortuitously – with Mathew Hayman's memorable 2016 win.

While fairweather cycling fans get caught up once a year in the Tour de France, diehard fans get divided over the Spring Classics, and in particular the debate over whether Roubaix or Flanders is the greatest of the Cobbled Classics. But Australia's relative success at Roubaix (with Stuart O'Grady also adding a cobble to his mantelpiece in 2007), has given this race added prominence for antipodean fans.

Run by the same team who operates L'Etape du Tour, the Paris-Roubaix Challenge happens the day prior to the real thing, across the same roads and all 29 of the cobbled sectors, including the Trouée d'Arenberg, Carrefour de l'Arbre and Mons-en-Pévèle.

The first thing you need to know if you're considering riding Roubaix is there are three distances to choose from – the longest parcours coming in at 172km; the middle distance at 145km and a 70km “sprint”. Regardless of my trepidation at taking on either of the longer distances with my daughter, her insistence that

we ride Arenberg meant we had to choose at least the middle distance and its 19 sectors, beginning with the mythical Arenberg forest and its 5-star cobble rating.

With that in mind, my advice for newcomers is that the middle distance is perfect. You don't need to deal with the early morning departure to get to Busigny for the start of the full distance, and the 145km Roubaix loop includes all the race highlights.

Despite the influx of visitors for the weekend, Roubaix's (absence of) nightlife doesn't suggest a town gearing up for its biggest weekend of the year. As a result, the search for a pre-sportive carbo load was in vain. So after collecting our rego packs from the new(er) indoor Stab Velodrome, we settled for dumplings from the local Chinese to get ourselves prepared.

A fire alarm in our hotel ensured we were ready for an early breakfast and an easy roll from the town centre to the start line at the Roubaix Velodrome (around 5km away), for the grand depart at 7am. Unlike similar Australian events, the departure window here is done in a suitably French *laissez-faire* fashion – you can basically roll out whenever you want between 7am and 10am. The only real guideline being to return by 6pm if you want to finish with a lap of the velodrome.

With little real idea of what the start would be like (or how long the ride would take), we arrived

ABOVE & RIGHT: It's region revered, respected and universally regarded as one of the ultimate 'must ride' destinations ... the roads of Roubaix.



“... If you’re going to ride Arenberg, **YOU HAVE TO RIDE THE COBBLES, RIGHT?...**”

for the 7am departure and in all honesty were quite surprised by the small crowd of riders. They clearly like their pro hours here.

One important thing to remember about Paris-Roubaix is that it’s essentially pancake flat; over the entire 145km course we totalled no more than 500m elevation. This means the first 40-odd kilometres can be taken at a fair pace. And while you could only occasionally describe the passing countryside and towns as ‘picturesque’, you do get a feeling of the region’s history as you pedal.

But of course most of our thoughts were on Arenberg, which was looming large on everyone’s minds as we rolled along.

There’s plenty of advice online about riding cobbles. Most suggest maintaining your speed, keeping a consistent cadence, and riding on the crown – the mid-point of the cobbles that have been pushed together by centuries of tractor traffic to (arguably) provide a smoother path.

So as we hit the first cobbles we stuck to that game plan, and found the sector that many pro riders fear ... well, not that bad. We even looked down our



FACT FILE

GETTING THERE

Roubaix is about 2.5hr north from Paris, and around 1.5hr from Brussels. If you're bringing bikes, taking them on the French train system is not as easy as it should be with different train companies having different rules, and online booking systems not being particularly user-friendly. In the end I decided to hire a car, and despite a few hairy moments getting out of Paris, it was a relatively straightforward drive. Many of the tour companies bring their guests in from Brussels by bus.

EVENT INFO

The 11th edition of the Paris-Roubaix Challenge is set for Saturday, April 11 2020, with discounted registration available from now until late March. Registration for the 70km event will set you back EU28, the 145km event is EU45, and the 172km ride tops out at EU56. Prices rise marginally for the final two weeks before the event.

Not surprisingly, there's also plenty of additional merchandise to add to your registration, including your own personalised cobble – before you worry about excess luggage, it's not as big as the real thing. I also recommend getting the photo package, partly because it's not worth the risk to take your phone out, but mainly as they have cameras set up in plenty of great locations – I received over 60 snaps.

EAT, SLEEP AND DRINK

You don't go to Roubaix for the food. In fact, some of the better food we had was on the course in the feed zones, with Belgian waffles about the size of your hands. There's also plenty of good beer to be had, along with chips (with mayo) and sausages, at the food stands at the finish. And it's definitely worth trying the local version of pizza, flammkeuche. Large, thin and crispy, with a variety of topping options, you get your own cutter, and those in the know cut long thin slices which you then roll up to eat.

There are a few places to stay in town, but if you're planning on going to the race the next day, it's worth looking at tour company packages that include your accommodation – they seem to book out most of the town's hotels.

BIKE HIRE & PREPARATION

Preparation is definitely key if you're doing Roubaix. We even searched for cobbles

on training rides around Sydney, but there are only so many times you can ride around a laneway in The Rocks before people start to look funny at you. Read up online and you'll find plenty of tips around things like double handlebar tape; ideal tyre size (28mm seems the consensus) and optimum pressure; even the right type of bottle cages to ensure you don't lose your bidons.

Obviously the ideal set up is to take your own bike, but if that's not an option there are numerous bike hire companies in Roubaix. In talking to some other riders though, it was clear the quality of bikes provided didn't always match the Euros charged for the privilege.

I was fortunate enough to find Sam at the Paris Bike Company (<http://parisbikeco.com/>), an American expat who's been living in Paris for some years. Because I also needed a bike set up for my daughter, I was very particular about providing detailed bike fit measurements (courtesy of Tom at Pave the Way). Not only did Sam do an incredible job matching them, he also set the bikes up brilliantly for the cobbles.

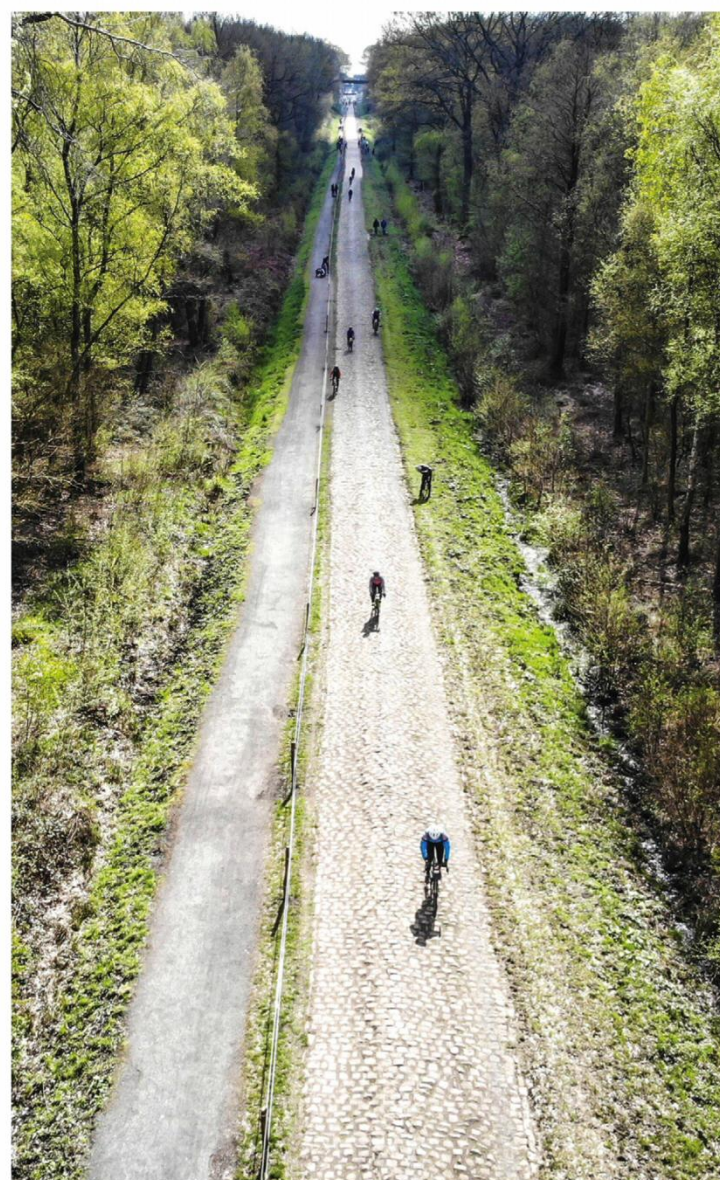
You can also be certain that Roubaix will either be cold or wet, so be prepared for both.

THE MAIN EVENT

Unless you know the area well, or have a local guide, I wouldn't suggest trying to self navigate on race day. Fortunately, many sporting tour companies offer packages combining both the sportive and following the race the next day. Most tours will take you to the start in Compiègne, one or two locations on the course – our main stop was Arenberg – and then onto the Velodrome for the last hour of racing and the finale. It's also worth noting that this is one event that ASO seems to be capitalising on with hospitality and VIP packages, but the most cost-effective way to ensure a spot on the field of the velodrome is the EU10 add-on for all sportive riders.

BRING A TOWEL

One tip I wished I'd been let in on is that not only are the famous showers open for a visit at the end of the sportive, you can even shower there, then get changed in a stall emblazoned with winners' names from Merckx and Coppi to Boonen and Cancellara. I can't think of any other changing rooms with the sort of history ingrained in its concrete floors the way these do.



The infamous Arenberg or 'Trouée d'Arenberg' – this 2300m 'secteur' of cobbles is notoriously difficult to ride due to its make up of unevenly shaped pave.

noses at the people on mountain bikes and the gutter riders taking the easy option. If you're going to ride Arenberg, you have to ride the cobbles, right?

The reality though, is we were experiencing a false dawn. What you eventually realise about riding Roubaix is that it's the cumulative effect that wears you down. It's the two 3-star sectors of Cysoing à Bourghelles and Bourghelles à Wannehain that come along with little respite in between. Or the 2-star Templeuve-Moulin-de-Vertain, measuring a mere 500m, that you think will be a breeze. But the brevity of length and rating masked some of the worst cobbles we encountered. It's not the legs that start to fail; it's your arms and shoulders that feel every bump as they struggle to hold you up on your handlebars. A fact that perhaps explains why it often is the bigger, more physical riders who prevail on the pavé.

One slight disappointment is that the last sector the pros ride – down the middle of Avenue Roger Salengro, before the turn into Roubaix Velodrome – isn't included in the sportive's parcours. Instead as we roll down the avenue, a glance to our left shows the next generation of Classics riders learning the cobbled craft under paternal eyes. Which reminds me of the girl to my right and the incredible stamina she's shown across the course of the day. So as we roll into Roubaix Velodrome, I let her take the lead across the finish line, a smile spreading from ear to ear. The next day it would be Philippe Gilbert's turn. **BA**

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Cycling After Childbirth

CHILDBIRTH, TODDLERS & CYCLING ... CAN THE THREE BE BALANCED? WE SPOKE WITH NEW MUM OF TWINS JULIAN VAN DER VEER AND FIRST-TIME DAD ANTHONY TAN TO GET THE LOWDOWN.

JULIA VAN DER VEER

As a keen road cyclist Julia Van Der Veer was excited to be pregnant but sad to know the four bunch rides she was riding each week would soon be curtailed - especially with twins on board.

But after speaking with her obstetrician along with reading up on the subject, Julia kept pedaling right up to 3 days before the birth of her twins, Vincent and Ariya, in 2017.

"My husband and I took up cycling at the end of 2014 and from then on, we became hooked and so did the need for bike upgrades," Julia told *Bicycling Australia*.

"We found a local group called MC cyclery and through their support, went from riding as a duo to joining their weekly Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday longer rides."

On finding out she was pregnant Julia said she wanted to continue cycling despite knowing that it would eventually come to an end. Despite being 5-weeks pregnant she completed the 110km Blayney to Bathurst ride and continued riding throughout a nauseous first semester.



"The advice from the obstetrician was to continue doing what I was doing until the body said otherwise," she said.

"I am not sure how literally he thinks I took that!" she added.

Eventually the hills got too hard and laps of Sydney's Centennial Park replaced Julia's Thursday morning eastern beaches ride.

Julia continued to train, typically covering 30km per day, 4 days a week, right through her pregnancy.

"...To be honest, WE ARE PROBABLY RIDING A LOT MORE NOW THAN BEFORE..."

But she gradually became more aware of potential dangers outside and started to consider her options.

The solution - move the bike onto a smart trainer and continue riding via the competitive virtual training platform Zwift.

"It was great to continue cycling on my bike without the fear of being knocked over or having a baby brain moment," said Julia.

"My husband still continued with bunch riding and I got up with him - but instead walked into the other room to cycle ... and kept up 30km rides, 4 days each week."

The twins were born and six weeks later Julia received the all clear from the doctor to slowly resume exercise.

"My husband set up the trainer the following morning next to the twins cot," she said.

"After their morning feed I hopped on the trainer and returned to the world of Zwift, only this time with the twins outside of my belly and sound asleep."

"Of course after 6 weeks off the bike and being pregnant, things were definitely going to be slower and different. After a few Zwift rides, I was ready for the outdoors. But who was going to look after the kids if Paul and I wanted to ride together?"

"Fortunately we had wonderful family and friends support to make riding again possible.

"Riding is our happy place. It gives us a few hours reprieve from mummy and daddy life."





Julia said finding the perfect balance was tough at the start, and still is.

"I recall feeding them before a ride, changing them and trying to get them back to sleep. I recall nights where we hardly slept yet we were still determined to ride just for that peace of mind. We had a great routine which was working until they became more mobile, started talking and developed emotions. It became tough to get out the door without tantrums or not wanting mummy or daddy to leave. My family are heroes for putting up with the emotions."

Julia said that cycling events have now become a family affair.

"We no longer get a motel room with our group," she said. "Instead we rent out an AirBnB and invite family. We get to ride, and they get a wonderful weekend away with their grandchildren."

"Our kids know cycling is part life. Just before

their 2nd birthday we got them Cruzee balance bikes, and they love them.

"Vinnie is a different child with his bike. From being cautious of most things, he is a dare devil on the bike. Also from seeing us ride, they know that helmets are required to ride. They love putting the gloves on their hands, sunnies on their face and pretend to drink out of our water bottles.

"On their third birthday this year, they requested a bike with pedals. Ariya was off riding lap after lap at the kids bike track."

Julia says cycling does not need to stop once you have kids.

"We have been most fortunate to have such supportive friends, family and a great bunch to ride with," she said. "Our local group would even change the course to include centennial park if we wanted to meet dad with the kids before a ride."

"To be honest, we are probably riding a lot more now than before."

ABOVE: Mum of twins Julia Van Der Veer was concerned childbirth could curtail her cycling but says the family are in fact now cycling more often.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The family of four now regularly ride and attend numerous cycling events together.



LEFT: Long-time *Bicycling Australia* contributor Anthony Tan recently became a first-time dad at age 46.

“Exercise is essential because IF YOU’RE NOT HEALTHY, CHANCES ARE NEITHER WILL YOUR BABY and indeed, your partner too...”

ANTHONY TAN

Long time *Bicycling Australia* journalist Anthony Tan became a first-time dad in late 2019. We asked the 46yo his lessons learned and advice for others.

From the very first moment, being a parent to a newborn completely upends your life. First you are thrilled that something so precious and beautiful and inspiring enters your world, and can’t stop admiring your bundle of joy; then you listen intently to the hospital midwives for the next few days, absorbing as much information as you can to combat fear of failure; and then when you get home, within the first 15 minutes of stepping through the front door, you simultaneously stare at baby and ask your partner: ‘Okay, so what do we do now?’

Your social life will be somewhere on the spectrum of sporadic to non-existent. As will your exercise regime, where your previously hedonistic routine of eat-sleep-ride-repeat gets jettisoned out the back door. That, of course, is slightly different if you are lucky enough to have family and/or some very good friends who are willing to help you out. And when they do offer to help, TAKE IT WITH BOTH HANDS AND SAY THANK YOU VERY MUCH! (It is vital to sound and look exceptionally fatigued to extract maximum sympathy and thus open yourself up to being asked whether you’d like the same help next Saturday, preferably with a pizza and six-pack of Coopers Pale Ale.)

Quite seriously though, exercise is essential because if you’re not healthy, chances are neither

will your baby and indeed, your partner, too. It’s as important for the head as it is for the body.

Effective time management plays a starring role because the day can so easily slip through without having done anything for yourself, which can have deleterious consequences if this becomes the norm rather than the exception.

What has really helped us is setting up a schedule to ensure each parent has enough time to exercise (or sleep!) unimpeded without feeling guilty. It’s not so rigid that we do nothing during our time off or remain inflexible if one wants to exercise longer or socialise when they’re normally down to look after baby, but it’s steadfast enough to create some virtual boundaries and ensure that when one is ‘on’, the caring becomes a pleasure rather than a chore (or bore).

Cross-training and working out at a higher intensity for shorter periods has also helped to arrest any noticeable physical decline – so far, anyway! It’s relatively easy to do a high-intensity circuit class or lift free weights or hop on the stationary trainer for 45 minutes to an hour. It’s much harder to get dressed in your bike kit and go out for a 45 minute road or mountain bike ride, knowing that the clock’s tick-tocking as soon as you’re out the front door. Leave the long sessions alone until your bub is at least 3-6 months old and both parents are coping well, because the 24/7 nature of a newborn requires all the energy you can muster and then some. **BA**

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Cycle of Change: THE RISE OF



WOMEN'S CYCLING

part II

LAST EDITION WE LOOKED AT THE RISE OF WOMEN'S CYCLING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS. THIS TIME, OUR REPORTER KAREN FORMAN DELVES DEEPER, CHATTING TO SOME OF THE WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN THE WHEELS IN THE CYCLE OF CHANGE.

Adelaide's famous Victoria Park is a wonderful place to watch criterium racing and has helped propel many grade cyclists to a higher level.





Riders of the 2020 Women's Tour Down Under cross the historic Murray Bridge north of Adelaide.

ANYONE REMEMBER TWO OR THREE DECADES AGO, when women who turned up at a cycling club bunch ride were told to come back when they could ride fast enough to stay with the men, or when women who wanted to race often didn't because they felt too intimidated by the often aggressive racing style found in the men's grades? Then there were those who raced (and hard) and wanted to race at the top level, but found there were few elite pathways and certainly not much to be made in prizemoney, which was in no way equal to the men.

Riders like lifetime elite track rider Anna Meares and lifetime club road rider Liz Wilkes sure do – but both agree that things have never looked better for female riders of all levels and ages. Rider-turned-director sportif for women's team Butterfield Racing in Adelaide, Madeleine Steele, believes that is a result of some left field thinking.

The recently retired most successful track rider ever, Anna, was just 11 years old when she decided to follow her big sister Kerrie into cycling, living in country Queensland.

"When I came in at 11 Kerrie and I were the only girls in the club at Mackay so we just raced the boys. That kind of male-dominated environment continued to the AIS (Australian Institute of Sport) when I was 19, when in terms of numbers driven by opportunity and grassroots pathways, things improved. I think the opportunity for involvement

for women in cycling now is greater. Nationals were only to under 17 when we first started."

During her decades in the sport, Anna saw equal prizemoney at the elite level come in. "In 2009 on the velodrome it was equal; prior to that a world championship gold was worth less than a male. There were less than half of the events on the program at Olympics compared to our male counterparts...that came in in 2012. Even though that really in context is quite late, women's involvement on the velodrome has only been around since 1988. That is not that long, but there were a hell of a lot of trailblazers in that time."

Anna – who says she is still getting used to the idea of "riding for a coffee rather than riding for gold medals", recalls a time when Julie Speight came and thanked her for what she had done for women's cycling, but Anna believes it should be she thanking Julie!

Julie began cycling at age 15 in 1976 and seven years later in 1983 at a time when just three national titles were contested for women on the track, she won the first of seven titles. In 1988, she became the first woman to race for Australia at an Olympic Games (Seoul). She may have made her Olympic Games debut in 1984 in Los Angeles; however, the Australian Cycling Federation chose against sending a women's contingent to contest the first ever women's cycling event in the Olympic program.

ANNA MEARES

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4x Olympian

6x Olympic medals

11x World Champion

35x Australian Track Champion



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**“...When I came in at 11yo
KERRIE AND I WERE THE
ONLY GIRLS IN THE CLUB
AT MACKAY so we just
raced the boys...”**

Two years on, she won Australia's first ever women's sprint medal at the Commonwealth Games with a silver in Auckland then collected eight Australian championships between 1983 and 1992.

“I thank THEM... Julie, Felice Bellinger and Michelle Ferris and other girls of that era,” Anna said. “There have been big changes that's for sure.”

While Anna concedes she became well known by any gender on the velodrome in this country, her success did give her an opportunity to showcase women's cycling in this country and around the world.

“I think it's important women to feel comfortable. I do know women even at a recreational level respond better to a women-friendly environment...it is the same in gyms, workplaces, that sort of stuff.

“But it is also important we don't only create further segregation. We have experienced that as women. There is still a way to go for sure, but the best it's been and I hope it continues to improve.”

THREE DECADES IN THE SPORT

For Liz Wilkes, who started out cycling in Grafton 30 years ago and continues as a member of the local cycling club in her 50s, times have definitely changed.

“A girlfriend and I started together and when I began, we weren't even allowed to join the bunch which was entirely men until we could average at least 28kph for 30km,” she said. “We had to know all the bike etiquette rules and basically be able to ride shoulder to shoulder with the person beside you.

“You trained hard and had to ride and race like one of the boys. It was good times and no place for softism. We travelling all around to race country and state championships where there weren't big numbers in the women, while at club level we raced with men in whatever grade we were suited to.



“These days it's not so much club based but social, with more women but not young women, lots of mixed abilities and different bunches catering for this. It is definitely not as strict on speed or skills, yet very conscious of riding safely. It is very social and always finishes with a coffee stop...something that never existed in this town back in the day. This is fun also as I'm now a lot older and slower.”

Liz, says the opportunities for women in the country were few and far between. “It was pretty awesome when we got third in the NSW Teams Time Trial against metro and AIS teams. We were scratching for the fourth rider that year as Tracy Carter had pulled out and we had to get a girl in from Coffs Harbour at the last minute. But despite having great volunteer club coaches and mentors, the opportunities weren't there.” The annual Murwillumbah Women's and Veterans Tour was one event that recognized women's cycling but has been discontinued.

Liz believes one of the challenges facing women's cycling (and all road cyclist) is the difficulty in gaining permits to hold road races locally “and not many women race away”.

ABOVE: Whether it's for fun, fitness or racing nationally or on the world stage, female participation is increasing as the sport of cycling continues to expand.



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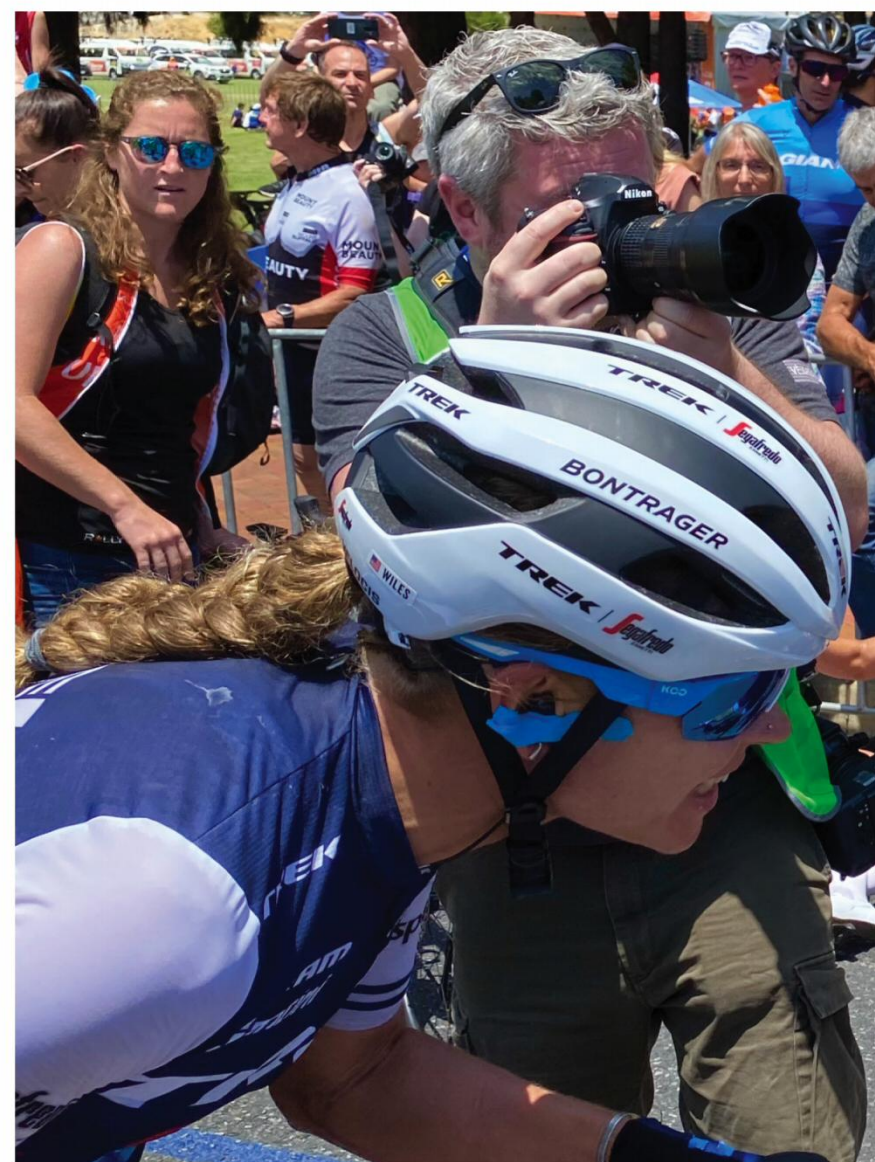


LAZER

USE YOUR HEAD

BELOW: Riders of the popular Butterfields Racing, an Adelaide-based women's cycling team.

RIGHT: Current United States national champion Ruth Winder celebrates after winning Stage 3 of the 2020 Women's Tour Down Under. Ruth went on to win the overall title as the race continued its surge in mainstream popularity.



“...CYCLING ISN'T JUST ABOUT WHO MAKES THE OLYMPICS NEXT YEAR ... there are other pathways to follow...”

SPORTING & SOCIAL FACTORS

Talk to former rider turned director sportif for women's team Butterfield Racing in Adelaide, Madeleine Steele, and her opinion is that things have improved a lot, but mostly because of some left field thinking.

“Cycling isn't just about who makes the Olympics next year,” she said. “there are other pathways to follow.

“The South Australian women's commission had all those discussions about women's only racing – should it be a carbon copy of men or should it be done differently for women – and found that men prove themselves on the ground, while women need to be told they are worthy even before they walk through the door.

“Women are very concerned about whether the race is right for them, when talking about new riders. But my girls, they love the idea of getting in the men's race and getting the result. Less likely to be dropped, but like the challenging of racing with the men. It's a social thing. Lachie Ambrose runs the Butterfield men's team, which is different, but we share resources.”

As a DS, Madeleine is in a prime position to be instrumental in changes in the way women's cycling is run and as a former rider, she has trodden the path many female riders find themselves on today.

“I started cycling competitively after a women's come and try session at the Adelaide Superdome and kind of got into it pretty quickly. I did the track international thing they were doing in Adelaide at the time, then they got me a college cycling scholarship in the United States. I was 22 and in university. I did the whole college thing for a year, which was such a cool alternative pathway and did a bit of interstate cycling in the University Games, another pathway starting to take off here, then was riding for a local Adelaide team Mercedes Benz which was doing NRS and also the women's Tour Down Under in 2016.

“For the past couple of years the women running the team were looking to pull out to focus on vets racing, so I offered to run it, and we got Shaun Butterfield in as a sponsor and became Butterfield Racing. In terms of me running a team the biggest change I have seen is that Shaun got it from the start. He realized that women's cycling deserved

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the opportunities the guys were getting. Some of the sponsors we have now, see that it's good to be seen to be supporting women's sport and if they are supporting men's sport, they should also be supporting women's sport.

"I am still riding on the team, but not in the same capacity. I was graduating university, getting first fulltime job, not training as much really wanted to make the most of my career as an architect so it was better to step back and DS instead."

Madeleine said the team had stayed "quite local" and had been trying to get more opportunities for the younger rides, with a development focus.

Butterfield has 18 riders on the roster and fielded three teams (two elite and one development) for the Cycling South Australia Super Series over eight rounds, a couple of road races, a team time trial and "a lot" of crits.

"We have had two young riders finished their first NRS. I pitched that I wanted to have a development squad as I could see the vacuum in the sport, particularly in SA, a lot of young people are through talent ID program and told this is the only pathway and when they don't make it they feel there is nothing else for them. So, I make contact with riders before have heard about their scholarship and assure them that Butterfield is interested in them regardless." **BA**

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IS THE WOMEN'S SPECIFIC ROAD BIKE DEAD?

FROM WOMEN WHO TOOK UP ROAD CYCLING 15 OR MORE YEARS AGO, YOU'LL HEAR STORIES ABOUT THE COMPLETE LACK OF PRODUCTS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN AT THAT TIME. THIS INCLUDED NOT ONLY BIKES, BUT SADDLES, KIT, HELMETS, SHOES AND MORE. WIND FORWARD THOSE 15 YEARS AND THERE'S PLENTY OF CHOICES FOR WOMEN IN ALL THESE PRODUCT AREAS INCLUDING ROAD BIKES, AS NICOLA RUTZOU REPORTS.

RIGHT: As women's cycling becomes more and more popular as a mainstream sport, there's an ever-increasing range of specific products and accessories available.







UNSURPRISINGLY, JUST AS EACH BRAND HAS ITS own approach to designing bikes in general, they also have their own approach to designing bikes for their female customers, of which there are ever growing numbers.

However, there has been a retreat of sorts from some brands like Specialized and Trek about the need for women's specific geometry. They say they are still fully invested in providing women's specific products but they've changed their views on the need for different geometry.

Historically bikes with women's specific geometry typically had shorter top tubes and taller head tubes. They were designed to cater for a perceived difference in average anatomical measurements – with women reportedly having longer legs, proportionally, compared to men, a fact that most bike companies now dispute.

What they do all agree on is that touch points like handlebars and saddles are an area where the vast majority of women will need something different from their male counterparts.

Matilda Raynolds, Strategic Marketing Manager for Specialized in Australia and also a member of the Specialized Women's Racing team competing in the NRS says that Specialized is still fully invested in its female customers but has changed its focus to "providing the best riding experience for all

riders. It is this ultimate rider experience that is at the centre of our product research and development, but for many years, due to the lack of scientific data from riding positions we had to work with what historical evidence we had available and fill in the gaps with assumptions."

She reveals that it all changed for her company with the acquisition of Retül technology in 2012, a fitting system that has enabled Specialized to amass a huge dataset taken from a massive number of bike fits globally. "We now have access to over 7,700 controlled Retül Fit sessions, complete with riders' motion-capture data and digital documentation of the final bike positions, conducted globally. Additionally, we have over 42,000 sit-bone measurement sessions, which has given us unparalleled anthropometric measurements of cyclists.

"When we analysed this data by sex, we discovered that there wasn't as much of a difference between how men and women fit on a bike. Women, on average, are shorter than men or a common misconception that women have longer legs and short torsos, but our analysis shows that the body proportions are quite similar. Essentially, the variability within a gender is greater than the variability between men and women.

"Our core principle is that we now focus on the rider's need for a technically advanced product

"...Historically bikes with women's specific geometry typically HAD SHORTER TOP TUBES AND TALLER HEAD TUBES..."

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
Many clubs have women's ride groups.

Riders of the Sydney Uni Staminade Cycling team showing that even when racing it's all about enjoyment.

Buyers are now spoiled for choice with numerous women's specific models on offer.

that provides a performance benefit. We won't make a difference where there is no difference, and where there is, we'll invest heavily in R&D, like the development of the Women's Power saddle with MIMIC technology, likewise with men's and women's apparel. It's performance for every rider, we treat every rider equally that goes beyond gender," added Matilda.

And it's not just bike manufacturers that agree with this new thinking. Tina McCarthy of Wheel Women said she was a bit surprised when she heard that Specialized was phasing out the Ruby. "I must admit I was disappointed and a little alarmed. I had recommended the Ruby to so many of our members and as a consequence, the majority of Wheel Women were devoted to the Ruby," said Tina.

Tina's Melbourne-based women's coaching and cycling enterprise focuses on female riders who enjoy riding rather than racing, and she's also a Specialized Ambassador so is firmly invested in the brand.

"I was an immediate convert once I rode the new Roubaix. I was won over immediately. It rides like a rocket. Like Specialized, my experience has shown me that there are more variations within genders, rather than differences between the genders.

"And while many of my members feel that their 'special' bike in the Ruby has been taken



away from them, I'm sure they'll come around in time. Hopefully, bike companies like Specialized will still factor in the desire for different colours for women's bike and of course the specifications," added Tina.

Meanwhile, Liv (the women's arm of Giant) is dedicated to separate geometry for female riders. Liv feels strongly that the physical differences between men and women are significant enough to warrant a frame geometry that's specifically designed to suit them.

Caitlyn Hargreaves, Australian Liv Brand Manager says "Our mission is to make cycling more approaching and appealing, and for that to occur, riders need to have options to suit their riding and lifestyles. Our research tells us there are significant enough differences between how women both fit and ride a bike compared to men, so we'll keep creating products that meet these riders' needs and exceed their expectations. In the five years since launching as a standalone brand, we've created a substantial range, but we're only just getting started.

"The belief that women need different bikes to men began with our own experiences as riders and was solidified by years of research and development before launching as a standalone brand. Our founder, Bonnie Tu, really got things moving after

 A man and a woman are riding their bikes on a gravel path. The man is wearing a black jacket and a black helmet, while the woman is wearing a red jacket and a white helmet. Both bikes are equipped with Ortlieb panniers. The background shows a rocky, hilly landscape.

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BELOW: Specialized Women's Racing rider Matilda Raynolds.

RIGHT: The finishing touches being put on a women's specific LIV frame.



“...Our mission is to inspire riders to ride, that means OUR FOCUS IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE ON GETTING MORE WOMEN ON BIKES...”

completing the Tour of Taiwan just over a decade ago. She was left questioning why her only options were ill-fitting men's kit and bikes that didn't suit her needs. As CFO of Giant at the time, Bonnie decided to be the change the industry needed, and so Liv was born.

“Our extensive collection of data supports the need for women's specific products. Our design process is guided by data from 15 reputable sources, including NASA research and the Global Body Dimension Database, ensuring both depth and variety of expertise,” she added.

Liv uses a design philosophy based on fit, form, and function. “Fit relies on three layers of data where we factor in body dimensions, muscular activity, and strength patterns. Form refers to how Liv designs the overall look of the bikes to inspire riders including colours, graphics, spacers, cable routing – every little detail. Function is about selecting the best components to perfectly compliment the ride. It goes beyond fitting a women's specific saddle or narrower handlebars, it's considering options like gear shifters and brake levers available in smaller sizes to give smaller riders better control and comfort.

“By the end of the process, Liv offers bikes that provide the rider with the best possible riding experience right off the shop floor. It means they're out on the road or trails quicker, instead of swapping out parts on a men's bike and spending extra to ‘make it work,’” added Caitlyn.

Germany's Canyon also has a large range of dedicated women's road bikes. Bonnie Mavis, Category Manager Women says her company focuses on developing female models to address the need to cover smaller, lighter riders to enhance what we offer across our unisex range. “We are very interested in getting women on bikes and that means having the right product for an audience typically underserved by the cycling industry.

“The main difference between our women's and men's ranges is sizing. Our WMN frames range from 3XS to Medium, designed with a smaller, lighter rider in mind. Our Unisex range covers 2XS to 2XL. This overlap offers more choice for riders based on individual needs and personal preference. Additionally, female touch-points are considered throughout our range giving women more options.

“Our mission is to inspire riders to ride, that means our focus is and always will be on getting more women on bikes, the key to that will always be choice,” Bonnie concluded.

As well as Specialized, Liv Giant and Canyon there are plenty of bike companies who are really serious about offering road bikes for female riders. The concept of the women's specific road bike is definitely not dead, but there are fewer bike manufacturers who subscribe to the need for women's specific geometry. Ultimately the riders are the ones who will be the judge. Test riding is the best way for any rider to find the best bike for them. **BA**

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Big Data & Your Safety

How big data is starting to make cycling safer

BIG DATA CONTINUES TO IMPACT MORE AND MORE OF OUR LIVES. SO IT COMES AS NO GREAT SURPRISE CYCLING IS BEGINNING TO SEE ITS INFLUENCE, WITH THE LAUNCH OF A NEW DATA ANALYSIS TOOL CALLED 'PROTECTEUR'.

Protecteur

Please complete the form to lodge an incident with Protecteur

What date did the incident occur? *

31/12/2019

Approximately What time did the incident occur

08:15am

What was the type of incident? *

Close Pass

Where did the incident occur? *

Drop pin on map below

Map Satellite

Gladesville, Artarmon, St Leonards, North Sydney, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Mosman, Taronza Zoo Sydney, Vaucluse

BIG DATA CONTINUES TO IMPACT MORE AND MORE OF our lives. So it comes as no great surprise cycling is beginning to see its influence, with the launch of a new data analysis tool called 'Protecteur'. It's still early days, but Protecteur – along with its accompanying ride management software, Buncheur – is being trialled as the official ride and advocacy management system for one of the country's largest advocacy groups, Bicycle NSW, and is also being supported by a growing number of cycling clubs.

Protecteur's creator is Oliver Rainbow, owner of cycling apparel brand Prism. "Our core belief is that Prism must give back to the cycling community," he says. "That's why Buncheur and Protecteur exist. It's also why they're free to use."

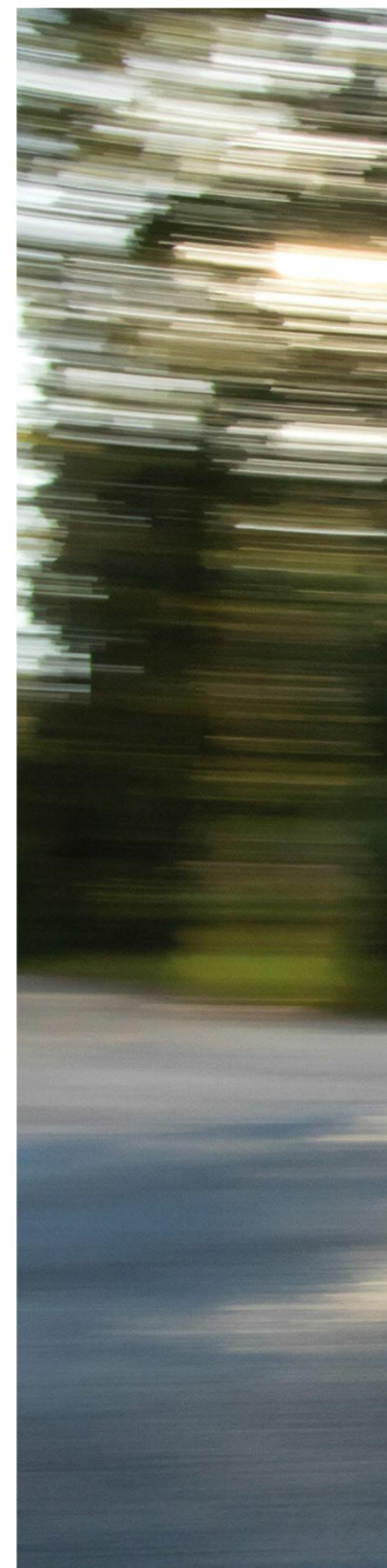
So what exactly does Protecteur do? In short, quite a bit. The tool is designed to aggregate publicly-available incident and infringement data from state police and transport

departments, simultaneously overlaying it with additional GPS-tracked data uploaded directly by riders themselves via the Buncheur/Protecteur website.

"If you're using the Protecteur system and you get close passed, you can simply drop a pin and fill out a form in under 30 seconds," says Rainbow. "The data is then captured and available for future analysis in an easy-to-access format. We can even help police know where the close passing hot spots are so they can target their limited resources to maximise safety outcomes." The result is a constantly growing resource of cycling safety data that's easier to understand and analyse – and harder to ignore by police, policymakers and the mainstream media.

"Too often we speak in opinions when it comes to safety," Rainbow says. "There's a big difference between saying 'this corner is unsafe' and 'this corner has the most near misses between

ABOVE: Riders can report incidents quickly and accurately at www.buncheur.com/protecteur





“...FORGET YELLING AT CARS. Drop a pin, carry a camera and put the details on the system...”

vulnerable road users and cars anywhere in the state’. One is an opinion. The other is data.”

By way of example, one recent analysis posted to the Protecteur Facebook page exposed the alarming discrepancies between the number of helmet infringement notices handed out to cyclists across different Queensland police districts, versus the number of passing distance infringement notices given to motorists during the exact same period. It was as powerful as it was simple, although no doubt made for uncomfortable reading by some of the Sunshine State’s senior police.

“Even with all the government data in the world, there are still huge gaps for advocacy,” cautions Rainbow. “To create Protecteur we’ve also listened to a lot of different groups – Bicycle NSW, academics, epidemiologists, city councils, even Emergency Department specialists – to better understand what they need to continue, and improve, their thought leadership on advocacy.”

“The opportunity is to collect and present data in the most meaningful way possible, and then democratise it for use by organised advocacy groups, but also by individuals. That way we can have a single public advocacy voice, together with thousands of data-informed voices at every dinner table and water cooler around the country.”

Rainbow is passionately aware the bigger the Protecteur data pool becomes, the greater the potential safety outcomes will be. “As cyclists, we need to channel our energy into capturing data,” he says. “Forget yelling at cars. Drop a pin, carry a camera and put the details on the system. The data you contribute will enable advocacy and save lives. When you drop a pin, you aren’t just empowering one voice. You are empowering 100,000, a legion of data-informed advocates!” **BA**

www.protecteur.cc

EXPLORING THE UPPER MURRAY

IT'S A SMALL, HIDDEN AWAY REGION THAT OFFERS SOME OF THE MOST EXCITING ROAD AND GRAVEL RIDING IN VICTORIA. IT'S THE UPPER MURRAY, ONE OF COCO HENRY'S FAVOURITE PLACES TO RIDE AS SHE EXPLAINS HERE.





Ride roads like this and you'll want to return again and again ... the Upper Murray region features a mix of sealed and gravel options.



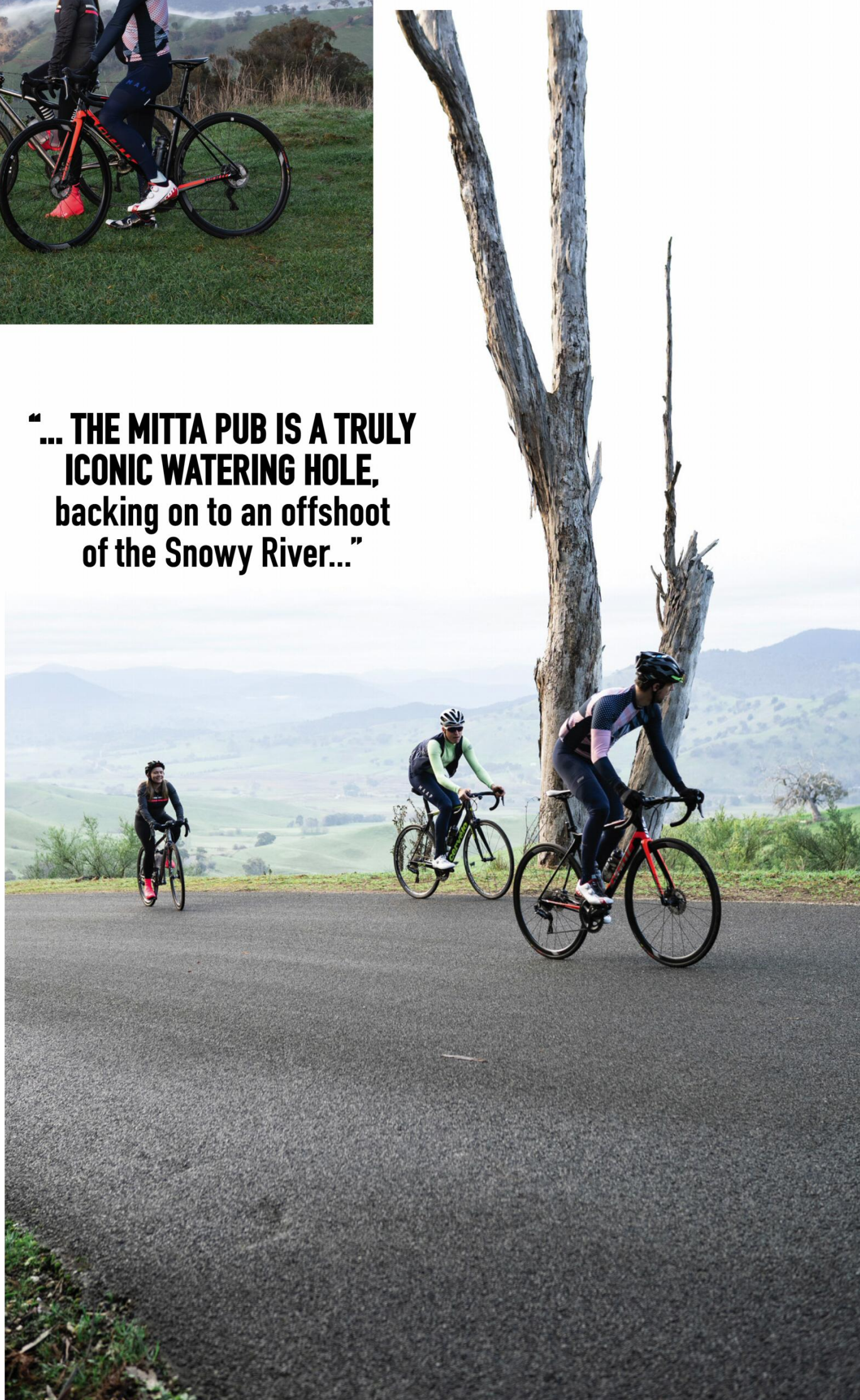
Endless and stunning vistas plus some of Victoria's best cycling ... the biways of the Upper Murray and Tallangatta region.

THE PELICAN'S WINGSPAN WAS LARGE enough to block the entire road had it deigned to do so, but road bikes didn't register on its radar. Accustomed to giant herds of cattle and the rumbling of John Deere tractors, cyclists are a rare sight in these parts for both wildlife and the locals. This is Tallangatta and surrounds, the far northern reaches of the Victorian High Country and an undiscovered land of little to no cyclists.

Despite their deceptively named locale these are the lowlands; while some roads venture upwards the mountains of nearby Bright have already shrunk to hill specification by the time they reach this area. Here we play within the very edges of the national park on roads built to service the tiny and distantly located farming communities that lie nestled in the valleys.

These roads are stark in contrast to their steeply rising alpine neighbours, both in their lack of vertical height and the vast kilometres of constant riding they offer. This is a land for building power on roads that undulate, sprinting on long straights, and bulk loading kilometres into the legs. Far from being the poor cousin to the famous summits an hour south, Tallangatta is a veritable playground for rounding out the legs and honing break away power moves.

"... THE MITTA PUB IS A TRULY ICONIC WATERING HOLE, backing on to an offshoot of the Snowy River..."



WARNING: Bicycling is a dangerous sport which may result in serious injury or even death. For proper use of your helmet, please refer to the owner's manual.



Photo: Skylar Bishop



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“...There are **HUNDREDS OF KILOMETRES OF WIDE OPEN ROADS** to explore...”



Part of the appeal of the area can be attributed to the unique roads, part to uncovering a new destination, and part to the rustic beauty of the high country. With waterways and lakes in every direction you're never far from a scenic route, and while the hills are few and far between they unveil views worth stopping your Garmin for. Peppered throughout are relics of a bygone era, from crumbling shepherds huts to abandoned towns and dinosaur warnings. Just don't expect to see any other cyclists.

With the introduction of highways to the area the original country roads became obsolete, conveniently leaving them to cyclists in search of fresh riding and new sights. Reminiscent of rural European lanes, they often don't bother with lines and occasionally give way in places



CLOCKWISE FROM
BOTTOM OPPOSITE PAGE :

Reaching and riding over the weir is a mission in itself ... make sure you save some energy for the final sharp climb!

Not many would hit the 40kp/h speed limit on the dam wall ... the scenery from here is spectacular in all directions.

This is iconic Aussie country, if you enjoy photography you'll no doubt be stopping to snap the scenery often!

History in this region abounds ... riders stop at an old block hut.

GETTING THERE

LOW IMPACT – Tallangatta and surrounds provide the unique opportunity to travel by train from three major Australian cities, Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra. From Albury train station it's a peaceful 40km ride to Tallangatta, mostly along the Ride High Country rail trail.

Long distance trains can (and should) be booked in advance in Australia, especially with bicycles.

From Sydney the trip is 7 ½ hours and one way tickets are from \$73 per person, or overnight sleeper trains from \$201. You'll need to book over the phone with a bike and check your bike as luggage 30 minutes before departure; there's also a maximum of three bikes on any train, so keep that in mind when planning the size of your bike party.

From Melbourne you can book online at vline.com.au from \$40 one way. The trip only

to the gentlest of gravel roads. This is perhaps the only truly road bike friendly gravel in Victoria, and the ideal introduction to gravel road, or groad, as it's affectionately known by its enthusiasts.

Loops abound, and can be chopped and changed according to whatever you feel like on the day. Pelicans and a sprint to the old milk tin mailbox? Head south. Sunrise from the lake edge followed by a lumpier route with views? Take on the north. Whether it is jaw dropping (and leg straining) 160km routes that follow gently rolling roads that you're after, or 35km jaunts along the waterfront, a trip to Tallangatta is what you want to make of it. Just make sure to take everything you need with you; as friendly as the locals are, they don't carry spare tubes in their tractors.





FACT FILE

WHEN TO GO

A seasonal all rounder, Tallangatta has plenty to offer throughout the year but perhaps it's the lack of riding options in the mountains throughout winter that allow it to truly shine. While still bone chillingly cold, winter riding offers plenty of low roads that avoid the snow and black ice. Valleys and lakes collect frost and fog making riding particularly scenic in the cold months. Summer provides an excellent opportunity to make the most of the many waterways to cool down after a ride, or just enjoy the breeze coming off the water.

EAT, SLEEP AND DRINK

As a largely farming community this isn't foodie central, but there are some gems in the vicinity that cannot be missed.

EAT – The Mitta Pub is a truly iconic watering hole backing onto the Snowy Creek, an offshoot of the Snowy River of Banjo Patterson fame. In case you needed reminding that you're in the high country the huge stone fireplaces will jog your memory, and the menu offers a range of options for everyone from vegan to pizza lover.

DRINK – The Mitta Mitta Brewing Company is conveniently situated on one of the recommended south routes and at writing their creations can only be bought locally in the region.

Aroamer Coffee makes an incredible brew from their quaint yellow caravan in Eskdale. The enthusiastic owners love cyclists and are happy to chat local rides and future cycling infrastructure plans.

SLEEP – Pickings are slim when it comes to large chain accommodation, but Airbnb or local pubs offer up some rustic and interesting options.

BIKES AND SHOPS

This is the place to get in solid training kilometres on the relative flat across multiple surfaces, so leave the dedicated TT bike at home. The gravel roads are incredibly forgiving and 23mm tyres will have no trouble here, just make sure to take spares along with you. In a similar vein it's perfectly acceptable to bring a gravel

bike; there isn't enough climbing for wider tyres to make a marked difference.

This is a new frontier in cycling, as as such the nearest bike shops are in Albury so stock up on what you need before you visit.

WHERE TO RIDE

There are two main options from Tallangatta; North of Tallangatta across Lake Hume, and South of Tallangatta towards Dartmouth Dam.

North: Lake Hume forms three sides of this area, and it's hemmed in on the fourth by Granya Rd and the Mt Granya State Park wilderness zone. This inland island is a mix of sealed and unsealed roads that offer at least 3-4 loops from 35-80 kilometres that are well worth a spin. Roads often transition between gravel and sealed multiple times, and this is the area that you'll find the smoothest gravel riding experience known to road tyres. Take in Lake Hume waterfront before heading inland for some pinchy climbs up to views that will take your breath away. Make sure to ride Jarvis Creek Rd out of Old Tallangatta if you want to clear out any cobwebs.

South: Heading towards Dartmouth Dam opens up a world of kilometre-banking opportunities on under used roads. Start by taking the Ride High Country Rail Trail towards Old Tallangatta, before heading right onto Yabba Rd, one of the old country roads that has been replaced by a main road. From the 160km return trip that follows the Mitta River from Lake Hume to Dartmouth Dam and back, to the 60km round trip to Tallandale, there are hundreds of kilometres of wide open roads to explore. A ride to Mitta Mitta should also be on the agenda if only to take a photo with the dinosaur sign.

OFF THE BIKE

Tallangatta is perhaps best known for being the 'town that moved'. Old Tallangatta was abandoned in the 1950s when the whole town moved 8km to where it is today. It's worth a visit to see what's left of it, and the original town streets can be seen when the lake is at its lowest levels. **BA**

ABOVE: The Tallangatta region is relatively easy to get to from both Melbourne & Sydney, plus offers all the services the travelling cyclist will ever need.



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LIVES: Melbourne
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OCCUPATION: Health and Safety Operations Manager

RIDER: Adam Lana
LIVES: Melbourne
RIDES: Curve GXR Kevin
OCCUPATION: Creative Director, Curve Cycling

RIDER: Tim Van Rees
LIVES: Melbourne
RIDES: Curve GXR Kevin
OCCUPATION: Infrastructure Security



RIDER: Adrian Jackson

LIVES: Melbourne

RIDES: Orbea Oiz

OCCUPATION: Aerospace Engineer

RIDER: Paddy Oliver

LIVES: Melbourne

RIDES: Flanders Forte

OCCUPATION: Lawyer
and Consultant



A bunch of 5s

**FIVE RIDERS.
FIVE QUESTIONS.
ONE BUNCH.**

WHAT?

BELGIE / DUTCHIE

WHERE?

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

WHEN?

WEDNESDAYS, 6.30AM

POST-RIDE?

COFFEE PEDDLR

DISTANCE OF THE LOOP

41KM

AVERAGE SPEED

28.4KPH

THE BELGIE AND ITS SOMEWHAT LESS WILD SIBLING THE DUTCHIE HAVE BEEN SPOKEN OF IN REVERENT TONES IN THE INNER CIRCLES OF MELBOURNE CYCLING FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS, AS COCO HENRY EXPLAINS.

LEFT & BELOW: Both rides feature elements most cyclists find mandatory in any bunchie – sensational scenery and some of the best coffee available.



NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART legs or lungs, this duo of iconic rides serve up the quintessential Melbourne dish of back alley laneways, single track, bike paths and scenic road every Wednesday morning. The Belgie is a hang-on-as-long-as-you-can kind of ride where the pace is dictated by who shows up on the day, and being dropped is a right of passage, even for the likes of Mitch Docker. The Dutchie with its more inclusive vibe comes out of the box strong and holds onto the bunch for as long as possible, before beginning an intricate pattern of regroupings and shortcuts. In the case of this dynamic duo the saying rain hail or shine rings true; not even sideways torrential rain will call them off.

Starting at 6.30am and typically embraced as a punchy training ride, the Belgie and Dutchie are more lighthearted than the majority of road bunches. The unusually scenic route wends its way north-east along the Yarra through leafy suburbs, wide open paddocks and through bushland. They welcome newcomers and over the years the route has morphed as riders have spotted a new alleyway or grassy knoll and subsequently made them part of the route. It might seem like an unnecessarily wild midweek ride yet smiles abound even in winter when it looks more like a cyclocross national championship than a school day bunchie. The peloton's steeds range from road bikes (the brave) to cyclocross bikes, all road bikes, and even mountain bikes.

A ride of this renown demands an equally noteworthy coffee shop and the Coffee PEDDLR doesn't disappoint. Tucked down an Abbotsford sidestreet in an old warehouse sits the consummate French obscurity, a pig nose Citroen H Van. Imported from France and manned by Amir Shayan, keen cyclist and founder, Coffee PEDDLR was created specifically with the culture of cycling in mind. Amir recognised the need for a café that welcomed groups of cyclists and consistently delivered quality coffee that would please even the most demanding Melbournians. He has successfully built a cycling café that would be at home in Girona, and for that the Melbourne cycling scene thanks him wholeheartedly.



The Belgie and Dutchie are more than just scenic bunch rides with outstanding coffee. To those in the know the Wednesday morning tradition is keeping adventure alive and well in the city, and preparing its advocates for exploration further afield come the weekend. This is one ride not to miss.

DIANE 'LILY' NELSON

WHAT GOT YOU INTO CYCLING?

I moved to Australia (from Ireland) and it seemed like everyone else was cycling. It was a convenient way to get to work as well and it just escalated from there.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT RIDING IN MELBOURNE?

Oh the variety. There are plenty of different types of road and off

road riding options, there are hills and there are flats. Plus all the different coffee houses to choose from. And lots of lumps!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE RIDE IN MELBOURNE?

The Belgie.

WHAT'S YOUR GO TO COFFEE?

An extra hot flat white.

BIKE

Flanders Forte

OCCUPATION

Health and Safety Operations Manager

ADAM LANA

WHAT GOT YOU INTO CYCLING?

It was the freedom and adventure of cycling. I was riding around as a young kid

**"...There are a
LOT OF ONE TIME
RIDERS THAT DON'T
COME BACK..."**
— *Lily*

and crossing the river, I thought maybe I can take it even further than that. And I could, so I do.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT RIDING IN MELBOURNE?

The Belgie. But also the way you can link up different rides. The infrastructure is good, it's not that pretty but we utilise our creeks and rivers pretty well by building bike paths along them. You can just explore different areas of Melbourne easily off the roads.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE RIDE IN MELBOURNE?

The Belgie!

WHAT'S YOUR GO TO COFFEE?

Magic

BIKE

Curve GXR Kevin

OCCUPATION

Creative Director, Curve Cycling

TIM VAN REES

WHAT GOT YOU INTO CYCLING?

I've been riding most of my life, but I started cycling about 5 years ago and took up mountain biking. I thought it was fun.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT RIDING IN MELBOURNE?

There are so many places you can ride around the city but outside of it too. You can catch a train easily to Bright and explore the high country. Well, you can catch the train to Wangaratta and then you have to ride to Bright. It's about 85km on the rail trail.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE RIDE IN MELBOURNE?

Definitely the Belgie. It's fun, in a weird way. Where you just hurt yourself going as hard as you can.

WHAT'S YOUR GO TO COFFEE?

A strong latte

BIKE

Curve GXR Kevin

OCCUPATION

Infrastructure Security Engineer.



RX MODEL
(prescription
sunglasses)



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RIGHT: A unique and well-known destination, the cafe is equally known for a quick pre-ride coffee or post-ride linger.

BELOW: A rider enjoys the Belgie / Dutchie on a 2019 Specialized Roubaix. Read out review of this bike in the Nov / Dec edition of *Bicycling Australia* or on our website.



The ritual of the bunch ride is GETTING BACK AND ENJOYING A REALLY GOOD COFFEE. If you have an average coffee it ruins the whole ride experience.
— Amir



ADRIAN JACKSON

WHAT GOT YOU INTO CYCLING?

I grew up in the hills and my parents were always into a lot of sports so it was always going to happen. I've ridden a bike since I was young and it came fairly easy to me so at some point I got into it more competitively.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT RIDING IN MELBOURNE?

There are lots of different options to choose from. You can ride road bikes or mountain bikes from the city, and choose to go in a group or solo.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE RIDE IN MELBOURNE?

Probably the mountain biking in Plenty Gorge, it's my local mountain bike trails. It was hit by the bushfires recently though so it's closed.

WHAT'S YOUR GO TO COFFEE?

A strong latte

BIKE

Orbea Oiz

OCCUPATION

Aerospace Engineer

PADDY OLIVER

WHAT GOT YOU INTO CYCLING?

I used to sail and when I finished I needed some kind of recreational sport to keep me busy. So I took up cycling.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT RIDING IN MELBOURNE?

There are so many options. There are a myriad of trails near the city to ride, or you can go down beach road for a classic road ride. The inner city trails around the Yarra River are full of loops and 15 minutes from the CBD, you can head north on the bike paths to the hills or there are lots of road rides routes as well. It's not all for one kind of riding.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE RIDE IN MELBOURNE?

Mordialloc return on a Saturday morning. I'm joking. It's the Belgie.

WHAT'S YOUR GO TO COFFEE?

I'm normally a tea drinker! But if it's a coffee it's your average flat white.

BIKE

Flanders Forte

OCCUPATION

Lawyer and Consultant **BA**

Masterclass | Saddle Height 101

BY MICHAEL HANSLIP





Setting The Saddle Height Right

“THE PERFECT SADDLE HEIGHT IS A BIT OF A UNICORN – I’M SURE IT’S OUT THERE, SOMEWHERE, BUT I’VE NEVER SEEN IT AND I DON’T EXPECT TO.” THAT’S DR MICHAEL HANSLIP’S SHORT ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF WHY IS THE PERFECT SADDLE HEIGHT CAN BE SO ELUSIVE.

THE HUMAN BODY IS A DYNAMIC system that changes from day to day. The more a person rides a bike, the better adapted their legs are to pedalling. The knee and ankle joints can be called on to work a little bit harder, to reach a little bit further. In my fitting experience, there are two break-points I’ve identified although I’d be happy to admit they are probably slightly arbitrary points on a continuous range. The first comes when a cyclist exceeds 250-300 km per week for an extended period of time. The second comes at almost double that, around 450-500 km per week.

That means there are three proper seat heights possible for any rider: high, higher and highest (or just 1, 2 and 3 if you prefer) which correspond to low miles, medium miles and high miles. Many cyclists I’ve known have spent their lives chasing the optimal seat height. I believe this chase stems from riders who typically ride more in summer and less in winter (or if you are a die-hard racing roadie, the other way around). As weeks at a higher mileage pass, the optimal seat height increases leaving the old seat height feeling more and more like it is too low. At the other end of the season, weeks pass with lower mileage and the once-perfect higher position feels increasingly too high.

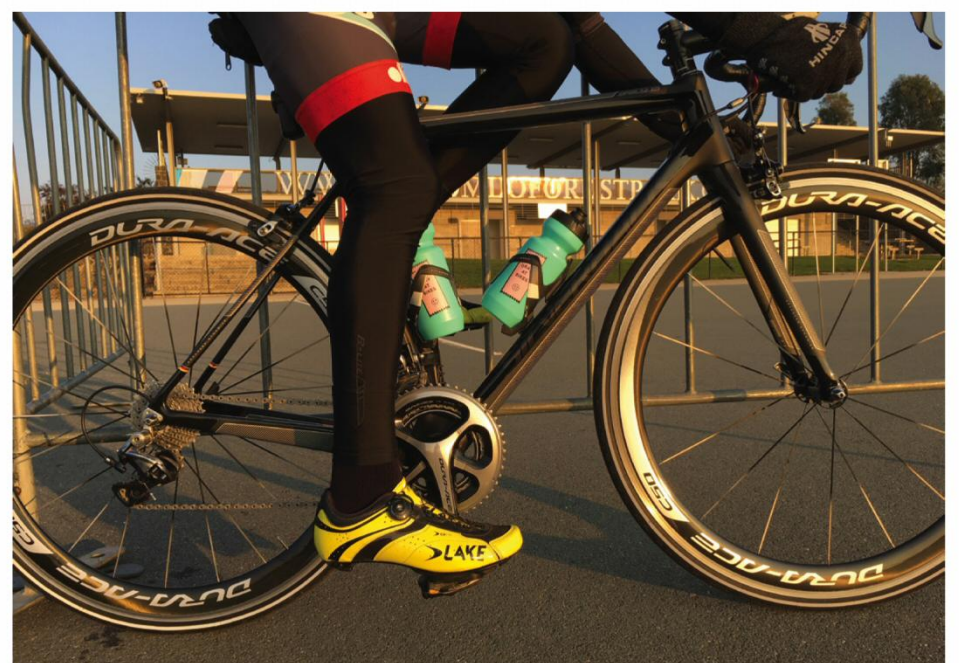
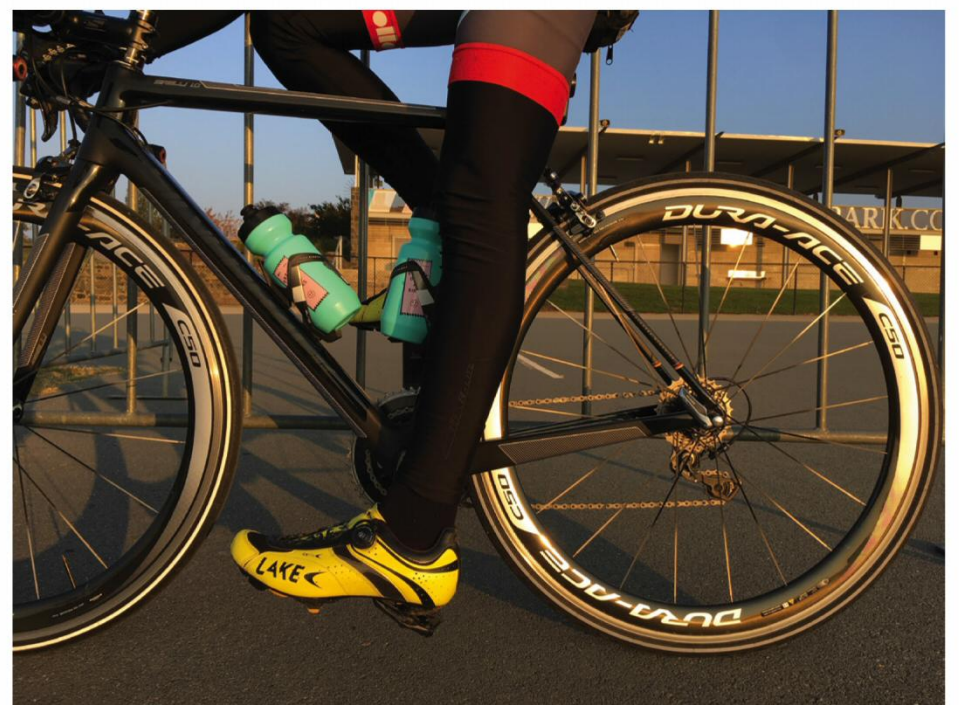
LEFT: Pro rider Simon Clarke at the 2019 Tour de France. Many riders have different preferences on the bike as Simon demonstrates here.



BELOW: The close-up of Sam's left foot shows pretty secure contact between heel and pedal. Definitely position 1.

Sam's left heel rests gently on the top of the pedal – in his case he is more position 1 with his left leg and more position 3 with his right heel (but even when clipped in thanks to the shimmed cleat).

Sam is clipped in with his shorter leg towards the camera (Sam uses shims under his right cleat to compensate for a short right leg).



“...there are three proper seat heights possible for any rider: **HIGH, HIGHER AND HIGHEST...**”



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I've done this myself. There was a time when I rode over 400 kilometres every week for most of the year. At this point I got used to a very high saddle (highest, position 3). Then life intervened and my miles decreased – eventually so did my saddle height. But the next summer both miles and height went up again.

For the past several years I have conveniently avoided this by selecting a single position for my seat and leaving it there (higher, position 2). It is low enough that it seldom feels too high, but high enough that it is never going to cause injury (and the difference between my lowest usual position and my highest usual position was only 5-6 mm anyway).

There are many methods to setting saddle height:

- calculated from a measure of inseam length (usually around 109% of inseam)
- measured based on knee angle in a specific position (usually a small specific angle in the knee when the foot is at bottom-dead-centre) eyeball (a favourite of crusty old shop mavens who've seen and done it all 1000 times before) and my favourite way, which I'll explain in detail below that relies on actually sitting on the bike and measuring.

First a bit of an historical aside on seat height. The Tour de France was dominated in the 80s by three multiple winners who had more in common than just winning the Tour. Monsieur Hinault (1981, '82 & '85), Fignon (1983 & '84)

and LeMond (1986, '89 & '90) all rode for a director named Cyrille Guimard. Not only did he have a strong reputation as a director who put good teams together, employed smart race strategies and developed cycling talent well, but he had input into the training and bike fit of his team. He knew that sitting a little bit higher than "normal" resulted in a bit better performance than "normal". All three of these legendary riders suffered from knee issues at some point in their career – likely from sitting that tiny bit higher.

I'm not going to suggest you sit that high. Even my highest, position 3, (more details below) is a little below the Guimard height. If the Guimard height is the upper limit (and I rode using this position for many

ABOVE: Bike fit, saddle height and cleat set up will vary between different geometry bikes.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Team Ineos on a TT start line.

years when I was in my 20s – you can get away with these things more easily when you are young), then what is the lower limit?

That is harder to define. Some people know it instantly when they start pedalling. If you've ever had a slowly slipping seat post it feels a bit wrong and a bit wrong and then it's clearly wrong. It is easier to observe – most cyclists can pick out a too-low saddle just by watching the person pedal. The difference between the top and the bottom is only 20 mm.

A PRAGMATIC SEAT HEIGHT PROCESS

With the rider sitting comfortably on the bike, and the bike supported (volunteer or, better, a trainer – don't use the wall like I did in the photos), have them pedal backwards to ensure that they're sitting on the correct part of the saddle, evenly left to right and fore and aft.

Unclip the shorter leg (if you know one is shorter*) and place the heel of the shoe on the top of the pedal. Pedal backwards.

“...If you've changed your seat height YOU'VE ALSO ADJUSTED THE FORE & AFT POSITION...”

The seat height is correctly set at its lowest possible position when the heel just tries to skitter off of the pedal at the bottom of each pedal stroke. This is the “I don't regularly ride more than 250km per week” height.

The highest possible position is set correctly when a clear gap opens up between the heel and the pedal at the bottom of each pedal stroke, but control of the pedal is not completely lost – if your foot falls off the pedal with each revolution, then you are too high. This is the “I regularly ride at least 500km per week” height.

As I wrote above, the difference between these two positions is less than one centimetre. But 1 millimetre too high on the wrong day can feel like you're riding someone

KNOW YOUR SADDLE HEIGHT



FIVE REASONS YOU SHOULD KNOW YOUR SADDLE HEIGHT:

- 1 It is easy to take the measure off an existing bike** and transfer it over, but what if you didn't have an existing bike? With all the fires around this summer that possibility should seem more real than abstract. Measure it multiple times, write it down, memorise it.
- 2 For setting up a demo/hire/borrowed bike.** In October I got to ride a hire bike in France and to ensure I got the right size frame, they asked me for my normal seat height a few weeks prior. I didn't have to measure (which was good because I was on a mountain bike holiday at the time and my road bike was 12000 km away) and I didn't even have to look it up. As I wrote in the article, I've now used the same seat height for many years. Set-and-forget.
- 3 Even the best seat post can slip.** You go to Adelaide for the Tour Down Under with your mates. Someone distractingly hands you a beer just as you are about to finish building your bike. You forget to check the torque on the seat post binder bolt. Next day it ever-so-slowly slides downwards. If you know what it should be, you can measure and then reset. Don't rely on a mark; tape can fall off, paint can flake off, a scratch can create a stress riser.
- 4 One day you will do a spin class** at the gym and knowing your seat height makes it easy to get the spin bike right, the first time.
- 5 You get offered a great deal** on a bike that sat in the shop window last season, but as it has an integrated seat post the range of adjustment for seat height is limited. You get one chance at this purchase. You don't want to buy the wrong size.



7 VARIABLES TO CONSIDER



Shoes, stack height and even pedals affect actual seat height.

WATCH FOR THESE THINGS THAT WILL INADVERTENTLY ALTER YOUR IDEAL SEAT HEIGHT:

New shoes. Some shoes have very thin soles, others quite thick. There can be quite a lot of difference from brand to brand. This might not even alter your heel-on-pedal measurement, but it will affect your actual seat height.

New pedals. The obvious change between pedal brands is stack height of the cleat on top of the pedal. Look Delta cleats are taller than Look Keo cleats, for example. The more subtle impact of changing pedals is the range of adjustment fore-aft for the cleats. Yes, if you read my cleat adjustment article some time ago, you'll know there is only one ideal cleat position, but that cannot be achieved with certain cleat and shoe combinations. Moving the cleats alters your effective leg length (and again doesn't change your heel-on-pedal measurement which assumes your cleats are optimally positioned).

New saddle. Not even a different brand or model, but simply a new one can be several millimetres different – alternative models can be much more than that.

New cockpit. A change in bars (with different width, reach or drop) or stem (different length or drop) alters how you sit on the bike and impacts on your optimal seat height. Or, if you throw a different

length stem on your bike and adjust your saddle to compensate for the change in reach, because the seat post is not vertical you have also changed your seat height slightly.

Crank length. It goes without saying that a longer crank forces your foot down more at the bottom of the pedal stroke. You have to lower your seat by the extra length of the crank to retain the same saddle height, at the cost of your feet now coming up twice as much (but that is a crank length discussion for another day).

Injury. The usual (temporary) outcome of an injury is to tighten up. From minor strains and sprains to broken bones and dislocated joints, usually the trauma decreases flexibility. When you get back into riding you must lower your seat and return it to your new normal height as you recover. It might never be the same again after a significant trauma.

Core strength. If you finally take my advice and address your core strength with regular workouts off the bike, likely you can put your seat up ever so slightly too. A strong core creates a more stable platform to pedal against so you can go up a millimetre or three.

Flexibility change. The prior two points are related to this really big, important one. If you improve flexibility (say from being able to touch your knees to being able to touch the floor in a forward bend) then your optimal seat height will increase too.

“...My ‘set and forget’ height is HALF WAY BETWEEN THE LOWEST and highest position...”

else's bike. Very awkward and possibly even painful.

My “set and forget” height that I've used continuously for the past 5+ years is 1/2 way between the lowest position and the highest position. This is the higher, position 2, option that suits many riders.

There are some guidelines to go with the seat height adjustment. The most important rule is do not adjust your seat height immediately before a big ride (like your annual trip to France to ride with the Tour, but even a fast 150 km with friends is too much). If you try this measure and your seat height needs to change by much, adjust it in 1 or 2 mm increments per week until you achieve the whole change.

Monitor how you feel when you are riding. It is better to go back where you were for a few more days than to push it and get an overuse injury.

If you changed your seat height much, you've also adjusted the fore-aft position of it (because the seat post is not exactly vertical, the saddle moves aft as it moves up). You might just need to adjust that too when you go up or down.

Allow your body to adapt to the new position before making a judgement. **BA**

** Note: if your leg length discrepancy is big enough that you have to shim your cleats then you should be seeking individualised assistance in getting your seat height set – don't rely on this guide.*



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Sciatica & Cycling

IT'S ONE OF THE MORE COMMON AILMENTS WITH A SURPRISING PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION SUFFERING LOWER BACK PAIN AND THE DREADED EFFECTS OF SCIATICA.

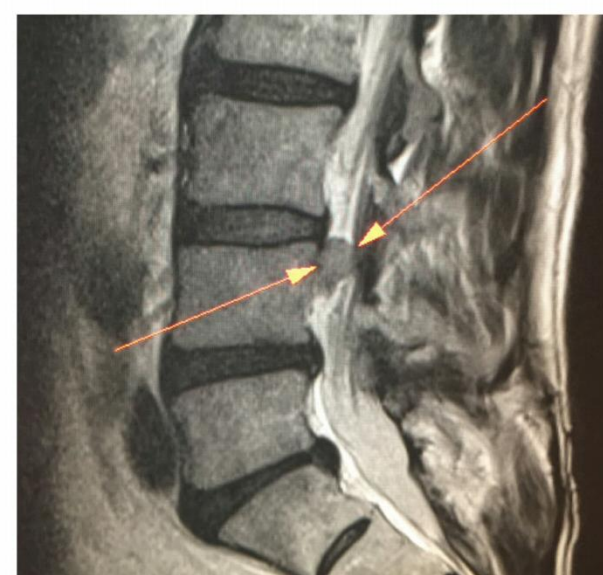
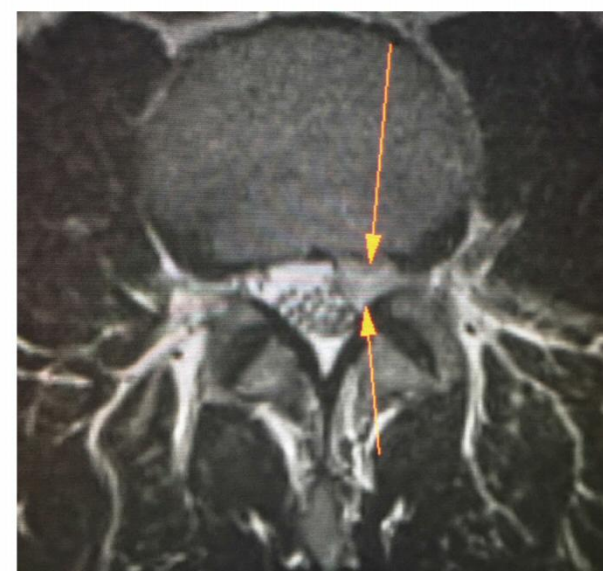
JUST THE MENTION OF THE WORD can make anyone who's previously suffered wince in pain ... yes, it's sciatica, a lower back condition that affects a large percentage of the population – particularly those in their 30s, 40s and beyond.

It often comes on after strenuous physical activity, and it's agonising effects can last two or more weeks. Common symptoms include referred pain from the lower back down one leg. This pain can be felt anywhere along the sciatic nerve – from deep in the thigh way down to tingling under the foot.

For a detailed and professional explanation of sciatica we spoke with Sydney-based Physiotherapist Peter Sharp, a keen cyclist and specialist in the field.

MAIN: A comprehensive bike fit including full alignment check by a trusted professional is an important start for riders suffering from pain.

FAR RIGHT: Lower back scans show a bulging disc.



BICYCLING AUSTRALIA:
SCIATICA – WE KNOW THE TERM
GENERALLY REFERS TO LEG PAIN
STEMMING FROM THE LOWER
BACK, BUT CAN YOU TELL US A
LITTLE MORE?

PETER SHARP: Sciatica is a common but old-fashioned term. It is better known now as 'radicular pain'; there's nerve root involvement from your back. Symptoms include pain in certain distributions of the leg, worse than the back pain, and worse with coughing/sneezing/straining.

BA: AND THE LEVEL OF PAIN?

PS: The whole spectrum – from mild tightness in the leg to being too painful to walk!

BA: SO WHO ARE THE PRIME CANDIDATES?

PS: 58-84% of people have back pain in their lifetime. It's more likely in those with previous episodes of back pain, have other physical or mental health conditions, smokers, physically demanding jobs and obese individuals.

RIGHT: Physiotherapist Peter Sharp explains the causes of lower back and sciatic pain.

BELOW: A specialist bike fit is highly recommended not only for those suffering from occasional or regular pain but all who spend significant amounts of time on the bike.

TIPS FROM THE PROS

BIKE FIT & SADDLE HEIGHT CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Elliot Denver is a physiotherapist and specialist bike fitter at The Body Mechanic in Lavender Bay, Sydney.

We asked his thoughts on the subject and he was quick to point out the critical importance of both a professional bike fit and the use of a high quality saddle such as the revered Selle SMP.

“Sciatica, or any neural symptoms in the buttocks or legs is a very common presentation,” he told us.

“Depending on the severity of the symptoms, it is very often possible to continue riding, at light intensity. This actually helps recovery in preference to refraining from all exercise or movement.”

A bike fit is very important; especially the saddle, Elliot said.

“One with a cut-out and sway-back can really help as it promotes a neutral lumbar spine, or flat lower back. If the rider gets fatigued or lazy, they will tend to flex the lower back i.e. round forward which stresses the lumbar spine joints and can exacerbate sciatica symptoms. A neutral spine can help to alleviate this.”

For further details visit www.thebodymechanic.com.au



© PETER SHARP

“...58-84% OF PEOPLE have back pain in their lifetime...”

BA: WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR SOMEONE STARTING TO SUFFER SCIATICA-LIKE SYMPTOMS?

PS: Consult a health professional. There's no point waiting and sometimes you can be back on the bike quickly. They can also rule out nastier causes of back pain, e.g. fractures, although these are very rare at less than 1%.

BA: CYCLING AND SCIATICA... WE PUT A POST ON OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS AND WERE SURPRISED BY THE WIDESPREAD RESPONSE AND INTEREST. BROADLY SPEAKING, MANY SAY THAT CYCLING HAS INDEED HELPED – IS THIS YOUR FINDING?

PS: Physical activity is great and cycling is relatively low impact. Cycling can be harder if it's particularly painful, so easy walking (even in a pool) can be a good start.

BA: YOU GAVE US AN INTERESTING AND SURPRISING STATISTIC ON LOWER BACK PAIN – CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THIS?

PS: It's the leading cause of disability worldwide and accounted for around 4 million working days lost per year. The cost of this stacks up!

BA: SO WHAT CAN READERS DO TO HELP MINIMISE OR PREVENT LOWER BACK PAIN AND, ULTIMATELY, SCIATICA?

PS: Keep healthy and active! Be smart with your training. Schedule recovery after big events or heavy training loads. Get your bike set up properly if you're getting niggles. Don't neglect strength training too – it will make you a stronger cyclist and you'll be a more physically capable human being.

BA: WE DO APPRECIATE YOUR TIME AND PROFESSIONAL OPINION & ADVICE – FOR READERS WHO'D LIKE TO GET IN TOUCH, HOW CAN THEY CONTACT YOU?

PS: You can get in touch by making an appointment, via our website (www.dorastreetphysiotherapy.com), or by phone (02 95809020). **BA**

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Test Lab | Redshift Stem

BY JAMES WILSON

Ridden & Reviewed: Redshift Stem and Seat Post



JAMES WILSON VENTURED OFF THE SMOOTH BITUMEN AND ONTO THE GRAVEL TO TEST THESE INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS FROM REDSHIFT SPORTS, A SUSPENSION SEATPOST AND SHOCK ABSORBING STEM.

SPECIFICATIONS

COMPONENT: Shockstop Seatpost

TRAVEL: Up to 35mm

PRELOAD: Infinite adjustment

SPRINGS: Various available

SIZE: 27.2mm x 350mm length

DI2: Battery holder available

REAR OFFSET: 7mm

WEIGHT: 497g

MAX WEIGHT: 110kg rider

COMPONENT: Shockstop Stem

SIZES: +/- 6 degree & +/- 30 degree

LENGTHS: 90, 100, 110 & 120mm

STRENGTH: 5 swappable elastometers

TRAVEL: Up to 20mm

BAR SIZE: Fits 31.8mm bars (with shims available.)

FURTHER DETAILS:

www.leadoutsports.com



- 1 & 2. The stem is surprisingly slimline & compact, giving a neat and streamlined finish.
3. The Redshift suspension seatpost offers ample travel and a good level of compliance and comfort.

GRAVEL CYCLING CONTINUES TO be a growing genre in cycling in Australia, following the growth in interest in many countries. Redshift have developed a stem and post that will change the ride feel for gravel cyclists in Australia. Running the combination of stem and seat post will be a game changer in comfort on gravel rides – either short or longer epic days in the saddle.

The 10-20 mm travel in the stem takes out the harsh chatter experienced when riding gravel – being groomed segments to technical sections full of potential harsh bone jarring sections off road; ensuring your wrists don't cop the harsh feel of riding off road. Paired with the travel in the seat post, your ride feel will be transformed to hovering over technical sections of your local gravel route.

Redshift have developed components that do make a significant difference to your ride feel compared to a fully rigid set up. If you are riding gravel backroads most weekends, you will not regret swapping out your current cockpit set up for a Redshift combination. Long term benefits include less fatigue over longer rides, plus as mentioned your wrists will

“...The 10-20 mm travel in the stem takes out THE HARSH CHATTER EXPERIENCED WHEN RIDING GRAVEL ...”

thank you and you will love the plush feel in the saddle.

The test ride included running a 90 mm stem +/- 6 mm; the stem was run at, 6 mm. This felt like a more upright riding position compared to the usual ride that has been run with a stem run at, 10 mm. The seat post added increased comfort to the titanium frame of the Curve Cycling GXR that was used in the test. The ride comfort was enhanced by running a 650b wheelset with 48 mm Panaracer Gravel King SK tubeless tyres, however, comfort gains were also felt running a 700 cc wheelset running 36 mm Panaracer Gravel King + tubeless tyres. **BA**

SUMMING UP

QUALITY

Both the stem and seatpost are sleek, sturdy & well constructed. Overall finish is top quality and the accessories blended in well when fitted to the test bike.

PERFORMANCE

The stem and seatpost performed well, no issues arose during the testing period. Springs and the plastic elastometers seem well-suited and fit for purpose

VALUE FOR MONEY

The stem is listed on the Australian Redshift distributor's website at \$282 - this seems a fair price to pay for the added comfort that comes from using the system.

OVERALL

Impressive design, smart thinking and a brilliant way to add comfort and compliance to gravel, commuter or even road bikes. A number of extra accessories are also available from the company - see the 'further details' box for more.

Cervelo S3 Tested

IT MAY BE THE 'LITTLE BROTHER' OF THE CANADIAN COMPANIES' PREMIUM ROAD OFFERING THE S5, BUT THE CERVELO S3 REALLY IMPRESSES AS WE RECENTLY FOUND OUT.

IN AN AGE WHERE AERO SEEMS TO be everything, Cervelo say the new S3 will give riders "every possible advantage."

"We made the S3 more aerodynamic and with an optimised balance of stiffness and compliance," a company rep told Bicycling Australia. "The result is increased speed, power transfer, and comfort."

Slicker and clearly sleeker, the updated model has been extensively wind-tunnel tested and refined. This translates to

exactly what you'd expect on the road - an impressive all-rounder that, like many recent releases, seems to offer a very surprising amount of bang for the buck.

Though not as boldly redesigned as big brother the S5's innovative front end, the S3 features a new aero stem and handlebar - the bars neatly routing the cables and hoses into the frame for a cleaner and more efficient finish.

There's space for 30mm tyres, perfect for the 'wider is not only more comfortable but also more efficient' trend. Other changes for the 2019/20 model include a new aero seatpost design. On that, the S3's sized 51cm and below feature a 0 degree post while the 54cm and above models feature a setback version.

A new handlebar is available in four widths, from 38 to 44cm, with the slick new stem being manufactured from 80mm to 130mm in length.

1. The 2020 Cervelo S3 is available in only two colourways - red and black and flouro yellow as seen in the main image on this page.
2. Smoothly sculpted and ultra aero - the clean entry lines of the latest S3 from Cervelo.
3. This is certainly an eye-catching bike, it turned heads and generated a lot of interest during testing.



SPECIFICATIONS

- FORK:** Cervélo All-Carbon, Tapered S3 Fork For Disc
- HEADSET:** FSA IS2 1-1/4 x 1-3/8"
- WHEELS:** Novatec R5 50mm Carbon Disc
- TYRES:** Continental Grand Prix SL 25mm
- CRANKSET:** Shimano Ultegra 8000 52/36
- BOTTOM BRACKET:** Cervélo BBright Connect 24x90
- CHAIN:** Shimano CN-HG701, 11 speed
- FRONT DERAILLEUR:** Shimano Ultegra 8050, 11 speed
- REAR DERAILLEUR:** Shimano Ultegra 8050, 11speed
- CASSETTE:** Shimano Ultegra CS-R8000, 11-30
- SHIFTERS:** Shimano Ultegra 8070, 11spd
- HANDLEBARS:** Cervélo AB09
- STEM:** Cervélo ST29
- BRAKE CALIPERS:** Shimano Ultegra 8070 Hydraulic Disc
- BRAKE ROTORS:** Shimano SM-RT800, 160mm
- SADDLE:** Prologo Dimension STN
- SEATPOST:** Cervélo SP20 / Cervelo SP20
- AU PRICING:**
S3 Ultegra Di2 Disc - \$8,500, S3 Ultegra - \$6,300, S3 Disc Frameset - \$5,000 - inc seatpost, bars and stem, S3 Rim Frameset - \$5,000 - inc seatpost, bars and stem.



2



3



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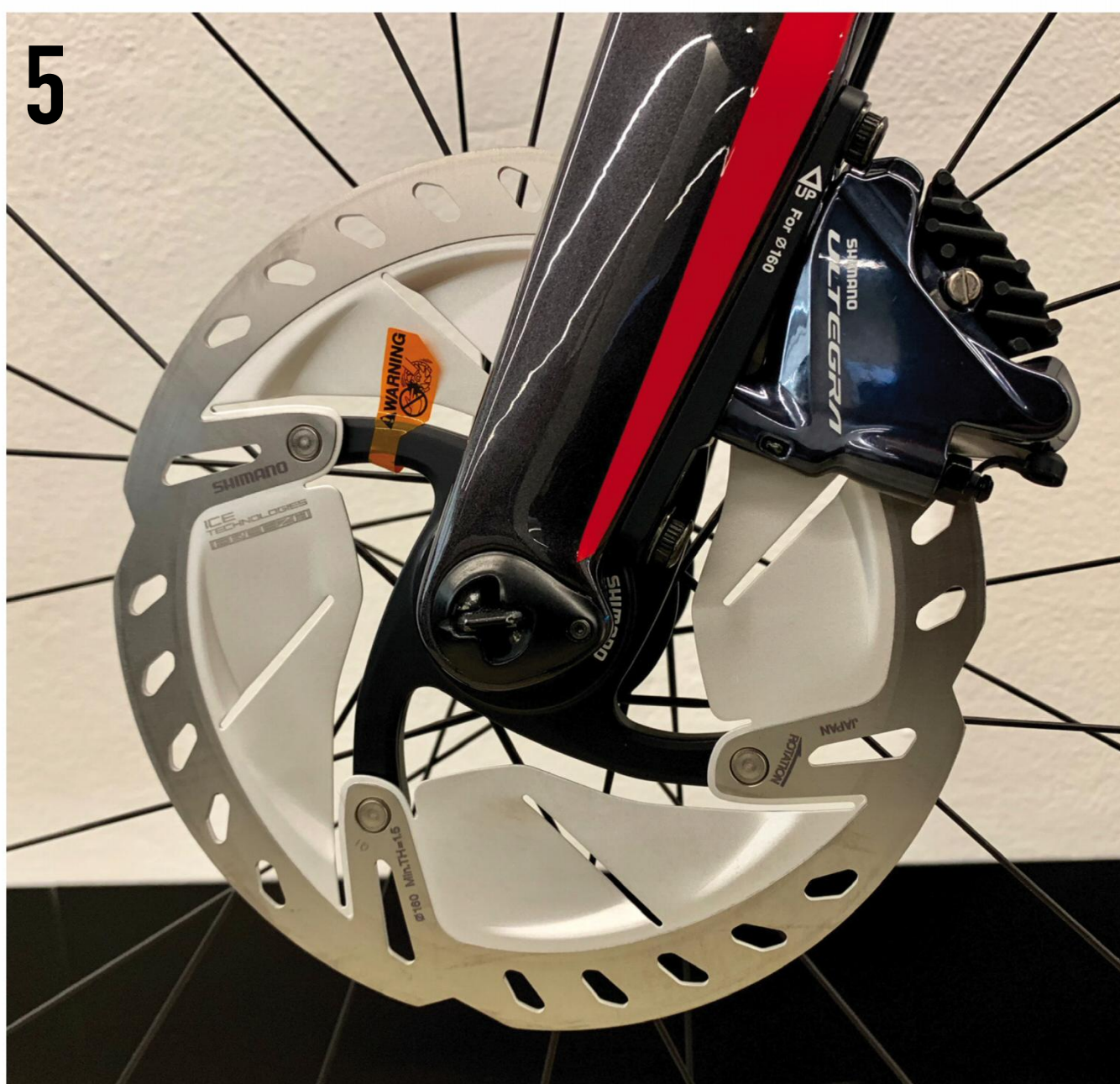


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4. The build features Cervelo's in-house aero stem and super-comfortable AB09 moulded bars.
5. The bike is available in both disc and rim build.

The frame, seat tube and rear triangle have also been tweaked - the latest S3 taking on a more aero, sporting and 'ready for speed' stance.

The bike features Shimano's bulletproof and ergonomic Ultegra groupset, flat mount disc brakes, and 12mm thru-axles front and rear. Weight wise the S3 frame pulls the scales down to 1100g in size 56, slightly heavier than many others but the numerous above mentioned aero additions clearly offer an overall advantage.

To the road and this latest S3 is noticeably more comfortable than it's predecessor - a bike that was known to be particularly punchy but also firm and aggressive.

With a far more refined ride comfort, but a surprising increase in stiffness, what we have here is a super impressive performance platform that balances that short-ride responsiveness with long distance frame forgiveness.

I'd be perfectly happy to ride a 100-160km Grand Fondo on the S3, as thrilled as I was to enjoy shorter 40-50km local loops.

Talking responsiveness, take a look at the beefy bottom bracket and there's no mistaking those cues back to the previous S3 - this bike certainly mean business. While aspects of the bike are clearly designed for brute force and pressure, other areas smooth out the power allowing for a smooth, sweet and overall very rewarding ride.

"...The Cervelo S3 WOULD EASILY HOLD ITS OWN IN ANY CAFÉ LINE UP, even against bikes costing more than twice as much..."

“...The colours have been kept simple, **FLOURO YELLOW WITH BLACK AND BLACK WITH RED HIGHLIGHTS**”

It's an agile handler, predictable and reliable particularly on rougher and more technical descents. Riding the S3 I was reminded of the road feel generated when testing much higher end bikes - one a well known superbike from a major global stable - the S3 coming very close to matching the performance and handling of a steed that retails at twice the price!

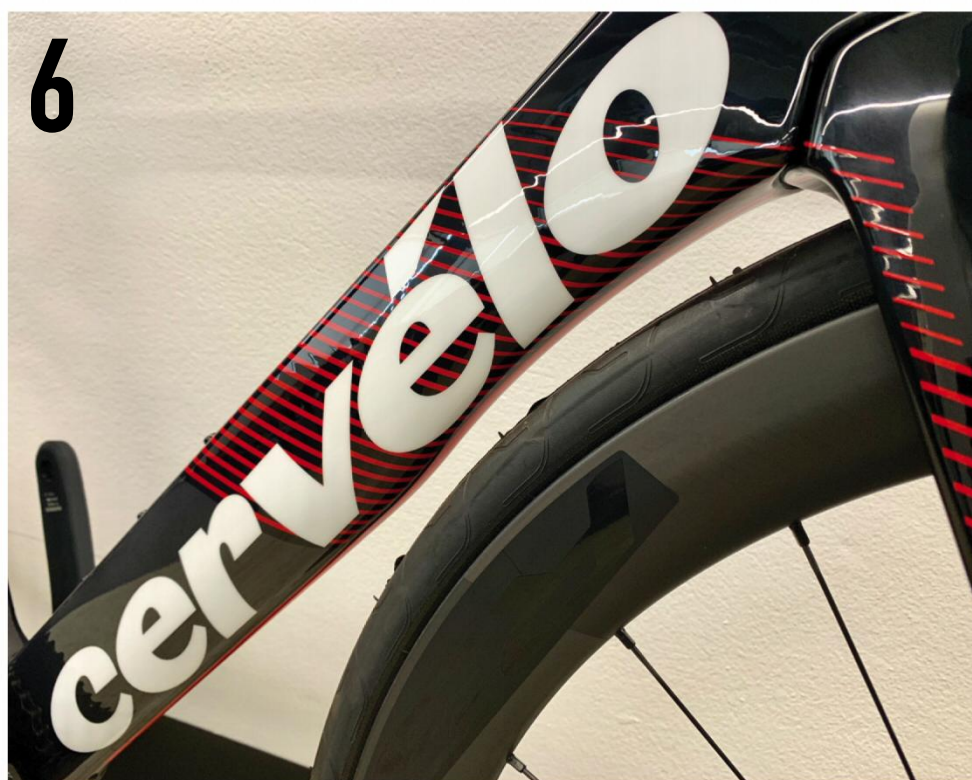
To aesthetics and the minimalism within the S3 design is clearly obvious. Significant work has been done around the stem and almost 'coke bottle' headtube, the previous model's cables are now neatly concealed and this obviously greatly adds to overall aero qualities.

Make no mistakes, this is a slick and very neat looking

setup. For a mid-level offering it sure stands up to the competition - both similar specced bikes from other manufacturers and even it's big brother the S5 itself ... decisions decisions.

Talking decisions, let's add a third to the mix. For those stuck with the difficult choice on what colour to choose Cervelo keep things simple for you - the S3 comes in two colours - black/fluoro and black/red.

Cervelo say 'You'll enjoy a smooth ride on the new S3. Specific frame lay-ups and tube shapes soak up road vibrations, helping to reduce your fatigue during long days. Combined with optimized stiffness and stable geometry, this is a bike that'll make you feel good and go fast.' and we heartily agree! **BA**



6. The S3 turns heads and, in many respects, is a toned down S5 packing close to the same amount of punch.
7. Side on and the clean, minimal lines are obvious. In disc build cabling is kept to an absolute minimum.

SUMMING UP

QUALITY

Though not as boldly redesigned as big brother the S5's innovative 'split bar' front end, the S3 does feature a new aero stem and handlebar - the bars neatly routing the cables and hoses into the frame for a slicker, cleaner and more efficient finish. With not a cable to be seen, this is pure Aero efficiency (with a capital A).

PERFORMANCE

The Cervelo S3 is all class, even right down to the valve caps. Visibly slicker and sleeker, the updated model has been extensively wind-tunnel tested and refined.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The test bike features a Shimano Ultegra groupset, flat mount disc brakes, and 12mm thru-axles front and rear. The S3 is also available in rim brake form - the rim version designed for direct mount brakes and 9mm QR axles.

OVERALL

An impressive build, all the latest features and at a pricepoint that won't break the bank. 9/10.



cervélo

HAUL ASS, NOT CARGO.



Welcome to the era of speed in gravel. It's time to change the paradigm of gravel bike design from hauling gear slowly to empowering athletes quickly. Leveraging vast knowledge from road racing, the Áspero frame is designed with world tour stiffness for greater pedal power transfer.

***ROAD RACING INSPIRED.
GRAVEL RACING REFINED.***

ÁSPERO



Bianchi Sprint

CLEAR LINKS TO THE PAST, FUTURISTIC STYLING, A SURPRISING PRICE POINT AND IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE, WE TEST THE BIANCHI SPRINT.

WITH STRONG LINKS TO THE past and a firm fix on the future, the Bianchi Sprint was a release that both piqued our interest and fuelled enthusiasm.

Choked by weeks of bushfire smoke, it was refreshing to arrive in Adelaide and finally breathe some relatively clean air while also testing out the latest in the line up from Bianchi.

The Sprint moniker, as same will recall, has previously been used by the 135+yo Italian bike manufacturer before. Back in the '80s there was a steel Sprint, complete with classic

aggressive and upright geometry of the day. Picking up the 2020 Sprint, riding it home, making a cup of tea, leaning the bike against a white wall and sitting down to take a long look at it... I could see some similarities. With hints of the past but many features of the present and immediate future, this is a timely and super impressive offering from Bianchi.

One of the first things I noticed was the amount of bike for the buck. This a genuine 'ride away and enjoy' type bike. In Ultegra build the test bike was equipped with disc brakes,

Shimano RS wheels, a firm and comfortable slotted Selle Royale saddle, quality in-house Reporto Corse components and more. At 9kg and priced just under \$5000, this is a bike that can't be ignored.

But before we focus too much on the bottom line, let's take the Sprint outside for a closer look and then a ride.

FINISH AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

From a distance it seems Bianchi have placed a neat looking pattern over sections

1. Attention to detail is one of the strong points of the Sprint, look at all those neat little Bianchi logos!
2. The test bike at the Jumbo Visma service Course at the Tour Down Under.
3. The frame is sleek, sculpted and available in black or celeste.





SPECIFICATIONS	
FRAME:	Bianchi Sprint
PAINT:	Black or Celeste
GROUPSET:	Shimano Ultegra disc mechanical
BRAKES:	Shimano Ultegra disc mechanical
CHAINSET:	Shimano Ultegra mechanical (52-36)
CASSETTE:	Shimano Ultegra mechanical (11-32)
BARS:	Reparto Corse Compact
STEM:	Reparto Corse Alloy
SEATPOST:	Reparto Corse Alloy
SADDLE:	Selle Royal SR
WHEELS:	Shimano RS170
WEIGHT:	8.9kg (55cm)
PRICE:	(as tested) \$4999





“...THIS SPRINT IS A SUPER-IMPRESSIVE BIKE – one we are very excited about...”

of the gloss black frame and sides of the new and improved Euro fork. Look closer and you'll see those dashes are in fact mini Bianchi logos – subtle light grey wording that's both classy and stylish. The pattern is repeated on the top tube, the difference here being a single celeste Bianchi just behind the steerer.

The finish is absolutely first class and this bike is yet another example of just how much of a buyer's market it is out there in N+1 land.

LESS DRAG, MORE PERFORMANCE.

As the name suggests this is a sporty bike that begs to be ridden hard. Cables have been very neatly integrated by Bianchi designers and engineers: there's minimal cabling in front of the alloy Reporto Corse handlebars and overall the bike presents as stealthy, streamlined, modern and minimalist.

But it's not all about flat chat sprinting from start to finish or point to point. While backing off, sitting up and making a point of enjoying one of our test rides, we discovered a surprising level of comfort and a performance bike that was a genuine pleasure to ride.

Factory fitted with 28c tyres, there's actually space for up to 32c (in disc build). Add the frame design and layup, sporty and stylish yet forgiving saddle and combination of the 73 degree head angle & factory stem + bars, and this bike is also a serious endurance machine. So could it be described as a combination race bike + all round Gran Fondo machine? I'd definitely say yes!



4. The Sprint is available in either a gloss black finish or classic Bianchi celeste.

5. The test bike was fitted with the legendary Shimano Ultegra drivetrain. It is also available in Shimano 105 rim or disc versions.

6. Ultegra mechanical was installed on the review bike, but we have heard of electronic Di2 also being custom fitted.

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7. Bianchi's in house 'Reporto Corse' bar and stem performed well and look great!
8. Proudly Italian designed and UCI approved, the Sprint is a thoroughbred Bianchi at an affordable price point.

SAVE HALF A KILO!

To overall weight and our size 55 test bike pulled the scales to just over 9kg, including pedals and a single bottle cage. This was in Shimano Ultegra disc build with the factory Shimano RS wheels which are bulletproof but heavy. The wheelset accounts for 2100grams of the overall weight... yes, there's potential for more than half a kilogram to be saved by simply upgrading the disc wheelset.

That said the RS wheels did perform admirably. Bulletproof is probably an understatement – I'd call them bombproof, the perfect all-round training, commuting and general riding wheels.

AN INSIDER'S THOUGHTS

During our time with the bike we spoke with Adelaide-based Bianchi dealer Claud Altin.

We discussed a number of aspects of the bike including fork design, where the Sprint fits in the product range and more.



**“STRAIGHT FORKS
TYPICALLY LEAD TO
A POOR RIDE . . . if you
look down the steerer
and look to where
the thru axle is you'll
actually see the fork
is 50mm offset.**

First the fork, and with an almost triangulated cross section profile this is all new and notably different to virtual sister bike the ARIA.

“It superficially looks like a straight fork,” Claud told us. “Straight forks typically lead to a poor ride...if you look down the steerer and look to where the thru axle is you'll actually see the fork is 50mm offset. Normally the fork is bent by 50mm, but with this one the bend is in the crown. It's exactly the same ride but it looks like a straight fork...and obviously that 50mm offset gives the compliance and suspension.”

To where the Sprint squeezes into the Bianchi line up, and Claud turned to both an ARIA disc and rim braked classic Sempre on display at the Tour Down Under Village.

“This bike effectively replaces the Sempre,” he told us. “That was a model that was loved by everybody...it had that conventional retro look about it. The Sprint is very similar to the ARIA, in fact they use the same die but there are some minor shaping and finishing differences. This Sprint is a super impressive bike – one we are very excited about. Some have said it seems like ‘too much bike for the buck’. The range actually starts at \$3499 with Shimano 105 rim brake or just under \$5000 in Ultegra disc as you have been riding.” **BA**



SUMMING UP

QUALITY

One of our first reactions was ‘this seems too much bike for the buck!’ The Sprint package – whether in 105 / rim brake build or Ultegra disc, is certainly very sharply priced and sure to attract plenty of interest.

PERFORMANCE

Regardless of the heavyweight wheels this bike felt fast off the mark and was surprisingly responsive when accelerating while underway. Upgrade the wheelset and you'll have yourself a serious sleeper.

FINISH

Seriously impressive...over the past few years we have seen a significant improvement in the overall finish of low to mid level offerings from the bigger brands – the Sprint is a prime example of this.

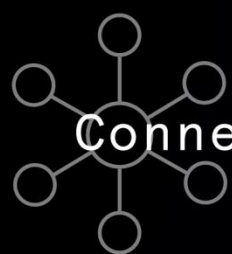
OVERALL

Looking for a genuine allrounder and buying on a budget? I'd strongly recommend arranging a test ride of the Sprint and trying it for yourself. Last words – a bike we'd be very content to have in the stable.

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My Bike: A Timeless Litespeed

TO SAY THAT HIS LITESPEED BLUE RIDGE HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME WOULD BE A MASSIVE UNDERSTATEMENT. NEARLY 20-YEARS ON AND IT'S STILL IN REGULAR USE, AND HOLDS A VERY HONOURED PLACE IN STEVE THOMAS'S BIKE ROOM.

I M ONE OF THOSE CYCLISTS WHO doesn't drool over bikes and kit. I'm not a bike cleaner, or a chaser of the latest and greatest; in fact most of my kit would be considered ancient (or classic) to many – despite the fact that I've worked in the cycling media and bike industry for most of my life.

Well, I may not be a drooler, but I'm also not great when it comes to getting rid of bikes and kit – hence my aging collection of steel, titanium and carbon bikes. To say I was a cycling kleptomaniac may be pushing it, I just never seem to get around to getting rid of things – although a change of continents a dozen years or so ago did force a much needed and appreciated culling of the rusting archives.

When I left for pastures new and yet to be determined I had one solitary case (slipping under the airline 20kg limit) and my most prized and useful bike – a 2001'ish Litespeed Blue Ridge. This is a titanium touring orientated bike, and one which had already seen more of the world than most people do in a lifetime, and it has been faithfully by my side ever since.

It was just after the dawn of the new century when I acquired the frame, along with a Litespeed lookout Mountain MTB frame, both of which have been with me and in use ever since – despite the arrival and departure of many younger siblings.



BELOW: This beloved bike has taken the author to many wonderful destinations both on and off the road.





I'd raced on titanium bikes many years earlier, and had always had it down as my frame material of choice. Despite the dominance of carbon fibre, for me, titanium clearly rules the roost, especially when it comes to strength, comfort and travel ability – my main criteria (not that it's a heavy material either).

An old friend had an earlier version of the bike, complete with bar end shifters and threaded forks, and apart from the ugly (then) signature yellow frame transfers it was real a piece of art, so when out of the blue an offer on this newer version came around I was somewhat over the moon.

I can still remember the day it arrived; I was grinning from ear to ear as I envisaged the adventures that lay ahead. There were a number of riders racing cyclo cross on the frames too, and it seemed to be the perfect tool for me. The bike was potentially something that I could ride sportives on, race if needed, ride offroad, had fixings for racks and accessories, was bullet proof and was silky smooth. It also

**"...Since then
THIS BIKE HAS
TRAVELLED ALL
OVER THE WORLD
WITH ME, even
if I have worn
through many of the
components during
that time..."**



came with neat white transfers too, perfect.

Back then component options (especially for lower gearing) were not what they are now. A friend gave me a Shimano 105 triple crankset and STi shifters. I had an old XT rear mech lying around, added some 105/ Mavic wheels I'd had built for travelling with and Deda bars & stem, and polished off the build with a few finishing kit bits from the shed; bingo, the bike came alive.

It was love at first ride, and that feeling has only become more deep-rooted over the years. One of my first big rides on it was along the South Downs Way in the UK (270-miles offroad). I was with an MTB tour group,

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE: A timeless classic, the headtube of the trusty Litespeed.

Classic attention to detail in the hand welded frame.

The bike has taken Steve Thomas to some unforgettable places such as this temple (top left) and dale country (above).

and was bombarded with questions as to why I was riding a "racer" on such terrain, which became somewhat tiresome. I was running a 28-bottom rear sprocket (which I couldn't do any more) and 28mm semi-slick tyres.

The route is chalk based, and when damp it turns to a skating rink, and so naturally it was wet. I was on tender hooks at first, not just about crashing; I didn't want to prove the doubters right about it being a ridiculous idea.

It was jittery on the rough ground, and the climbs were tough at times, but the bike handled it almost as well as my regular rigid MTB, and thus opened up a whole new world of possibilities to me.

Previously I often travelled with 2 bikes – a road and MTB, which was tough on airline baggage regs and also a real pain in the rear. The Blue Ridge now meant that with 2 sets of tyres and a 32 sprocket at the rear I could cut things down to one bike and still be able to ride all but the steepest and most technical MTB routes too.

Our next big mission together was Cuba, where once again we took on an MTB tour with very steep climbs. Sure, I was at a slight disadvantage to some on the real rough stuff, but not too far off. Since then this bike has travelled all over the world with me, even if I have worn through many of the components during that time.



LEFT: The bike has been modified and seen plenty of add ons over the years but remains fundamentally the same.

BELOW: Space for plenty of width tyre wise.

The Mavic rims have proven bulletproof and dependable.

at the crown. They're composite, with an aluminium crown and carbon legs and steerer. The local bike shop mechanic assures me they're safe, but I am a tad concerned on that score.

Replacing them in Asia is impossible, but the more I think about it the more it could be worth the effort of importing (or trying rigid MTB forks) – maybe even a set with disc mounts so that I could at least go half way towards superior stopping power. Add in a new set of shifters and a gear hanger adaptor to be able to run a 40T rear sprocket and the bike would be reborn, damn – lets do it!

This (along with the Litespeed MTB) is one bike I never want to get rid of, even if I don't use it again – we've been through far too much together. **BA**

It's ridden many of the biggest gran fondo's around the world, taken on epic road and offroad challenges, toured, and generally been my workhorse for almost 2 decades now.

Apart from the usual brake pads, chains and moving parts the bike has stood up well to the rigours of time. I've worked through 3 sets of STi shifters, which is a pain as triple is no longer de rigeur, hence new shifters are costly and difficult to get hold of. The rear mech has been replaced three times, the bars and stem replaced a couple of times, saddles and seatposts several times; but I'm still running the original old school road triple crankset.

My stopping system started out with an odd pair of old Shimano MTB calliper brakes, which I changed for TRP cyclo cross brakes 3 years ago. That was a mistake as they are nowhere near as powerful and I have to physically undo the cables to be able to take the wheel out. Perhaps it's time to dig out those old callipers again.

I've used many sets of wheels over the years, but the original hand built 105/Mavic 32/36 setup still runs well, and is far

more practical for travelling in remote areas (as I can find new spokes if needed). Tyres have come and gone – and for many years I ran Conti Top Touring tyres, and didn't suffer a single puncture until they all but wore out, and so will be trying to source a new pair soon (they're also hard to find here in Asia).

The downtube shifter cable stops have always been cumbersome, and the adjusters broke years back. That said; I don't find that things have improved much (if at all) with the newer systems I have on other bikes.

For the past three years I've been riding a hefty aluminium gravel bike, which has taken over as my main workhorse. Compared to the Litespeed it's something of a beast or burden. The Litespeed is far more versatile, comfortable, and stable, especially on rough terrain. It's also lighter – yes, a 20-year old bike is lighter. The major advantage of the newer bike is the disc brakes, which make it hard to go back to cantilevers.

A couple of years back the carbon forks on the Blue Ridge got pretty well chuffed in transit,



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Photo: Josh Sawyer



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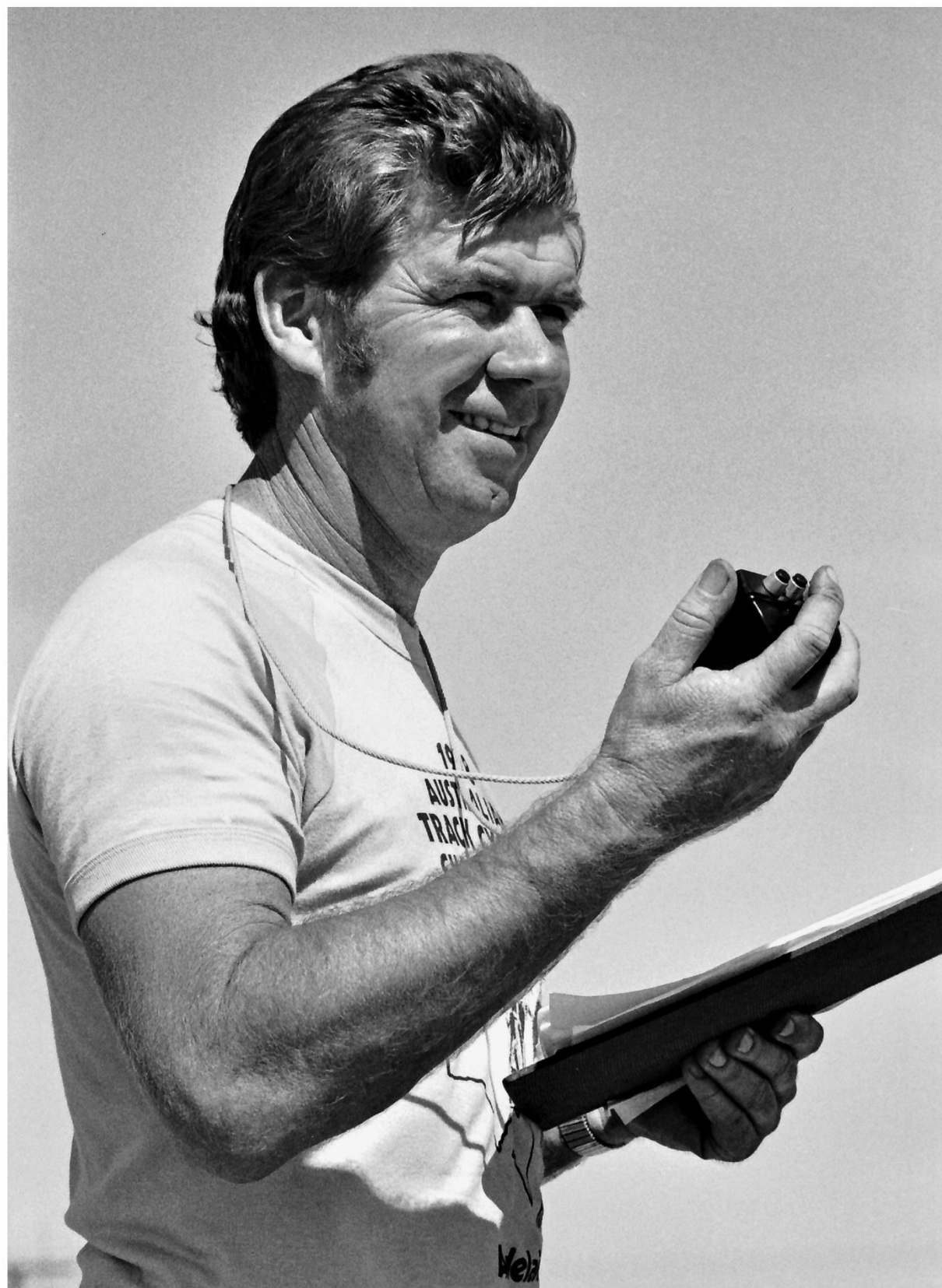
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Remembering Alex Fulcher OAM MBE

THE LATE ALEX FULCHER WAS AN AGGRESSIVE RACER, A DEDICATED AND FORWARD-THINKING COACH, A STRONG AND PROGRESSIVE LEADER, A DEVOTED HUSBAND AND DAD, A FUN AND GENEROUS FRIEND AND A SOLID AND RELIABLE MENTOR TO HUNDREDS.



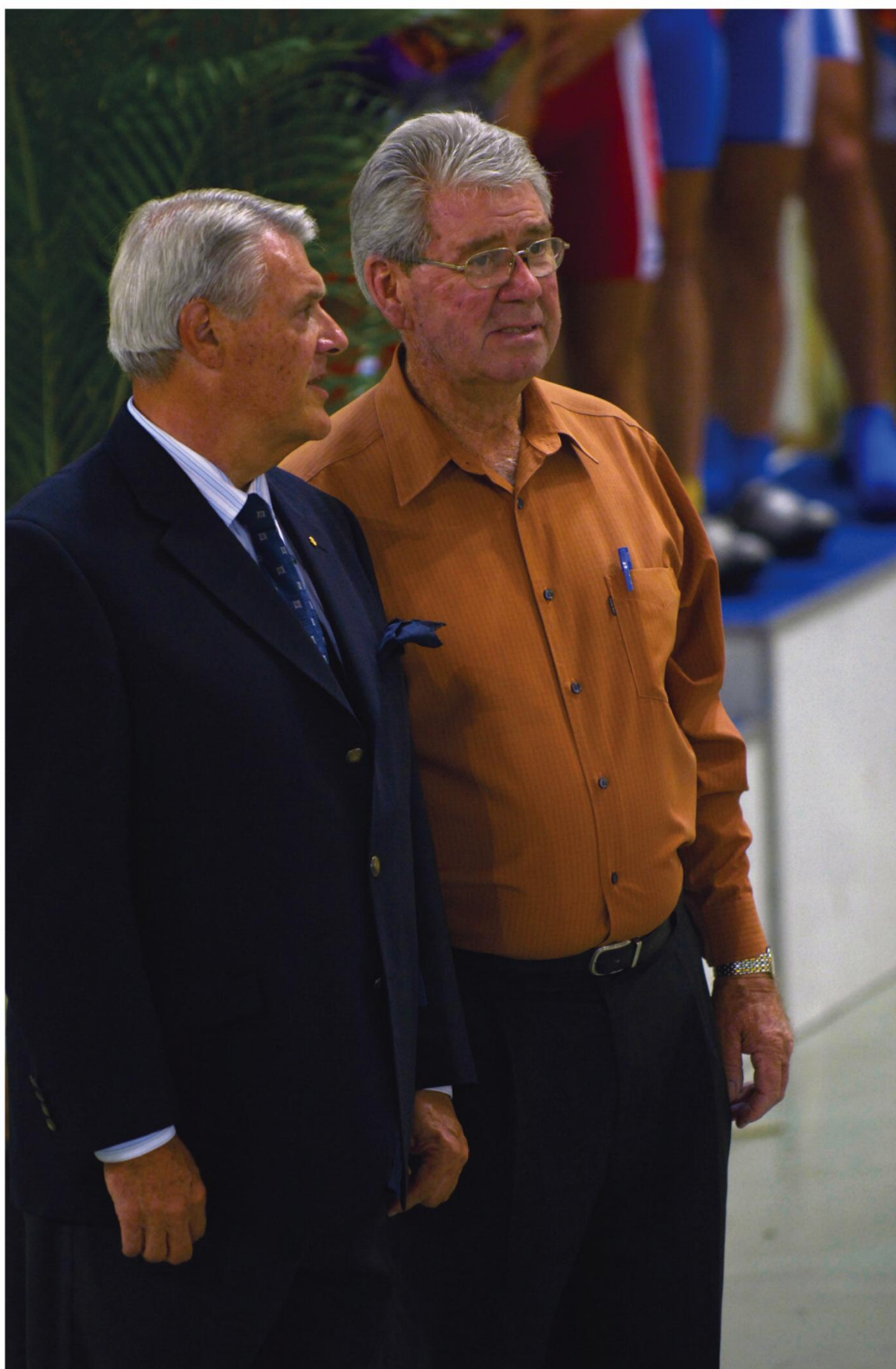
ABOVE: The once familiar sight of Alex Fulcher track side, with his all-important stop watch in hand.

BELOW: A lifetime in cycling ... the passing of Alex Fulcher in January this year was a huge loss for the sport.

BELOW RIGHT: Fulcher dedicated five decades to coaching including at the highest level – Commonwealth & Olympic cycling.

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: Prior to his coaching career Fulcher was an accomplished rider and racer having enjoyed success at many events including the Tour of Tasmania.

The familiar sight of Alex Fulcher coaching, encouraging and motivating at the track.



TRIBUTES FLOWED IN FROM AROUND THE WORLD

When the Sydneysider died at the age of 84 on January 11, leaving behind wife Janet and sons Mark and Rik and Jacqueline. Son Alan predeceased him in 2013.

“A pioneer who switched roles from his own cycling endeavours to amazing coaching and administrative work to inspire countless others in this amazing sport of cycling” – from long time rider Danny Hennessy of Wollongong. (Cycling NSW Facebook)

“A great man who gave so much support when we needed his help” from crony Brian Crawford. (Cycling NSW Facebook) “One of the true gentlemen of the sport that provided so much for all around him” from Kris Koke (Cycling NSW Facebook)

Cycling NSW CEO and Olympian Graham Seers said Alex had had an impact on many people’s lives, both on and off the bike with a passion and resilience for the sport that had left it with many legacies.

“Most people will mention the champions he has coached – there have been many – however his role behind the field of play to assist people and the sport is something I consider needs to be mentioned as we grieve his loss. Cycling in NSW and Alex Fulcher have shared some great moments; they will be discussed by all cycling communities for many generations to come. The legacy Alex has left us is something that we as a community will continue to benefit from for many years. RIP Alex Fulcher and thank you.”

Alex Fulcher was a big personality and high achiever in all aspects of cycling, but also as the renowned founder of Fulcher Caravans dealership in South Camden, originally Cabramatta, from which he retired in 2014 after almost 50 years in the industry. He often used his business to support the sport.

“It was Alex’s dedication to cycling as an administrator, sponsor, coach, selector, manager, mentor and helper for which he will always be



best remembered,” said one of his colleagues and friends, Phil Bates AM, himself one of the sport’s well-known administrators and promoters.

Cycling NSW Junior Development and Para Coach Tom Dawson described Alex as a “great cyclist, coach, promoter, manager, selector, administrator and possibly the most honest and influential man in cycling I have met.

“He coached/managed so many champions, some living in his family home. He encouraged myself and my brother Gus and many others into coaching. His influence in Cycling NSW will continue for many years to come. When I stopped racing he encouraged me to stay in the sport and ultimately coach, giving me jobs and opportunities. The last national junior track championships in Sydney I asked Alex where could I arrange a dinner for riders and family. Two days later he called me with the whole thing organised for 50 people. He had set up the whole thing himself – tables, chairs and a separate room for presentation to the junior riders. When Alex did something, he did it properly. This is why he was successful in life, family business and sport and why he was so respected by his peers.”

As a rider, Alex won three silver and bronze medals in the Australian Professional Pursuit Championship. He was first and fastest in the Goulburn to Liverpool Classic in 1961 and fastest time from scratch in the 1963 edition.

He turned his hand to coaching when his sons started racing and became NSW coach in the late 1970s, taking his protege Gary Sutton to many Australian championship wins (and then delighting in 1991 when “Sutto” took over from him as NSW coach on his way to becoming the top international coach he is today). “A rider’s starting ability did not matter to Alex; he was there to help and develop you and the hours (he) spent pacing riders on the motorbike were legendary,” Phil Bates said.

Alex founded the Cabramatta Cycling Club, was Cycling NSW president for 20 years from 1985, National Chairman of Selectors, on the boards of Cycling NSW and Cycling Australia and president of the Australian Commonwealth Games NSW Division. He was director of Bankstown Sports Club, which manages Dunc Gray Velodrome.

He was awarded the MBE and OAM for services to cycling along with orders of merit and life membership to both state and national cycling bodies and a Volunteer Award from world body UCI. **BA**



“... He coached & managed so many champions, SOME LIVING IN HIS FAMILY HOME...”



PALMARES

ALEX FULCHER

1949

Won NSW U/16 Track Championship in his first year of racing.

1950s

Amateur and professional road and track cyclist.

1960s

Began a 50-year career in cycling coaching + Commonwealth & Olympic involvement.

1982

Awarded a member of the British Empire (MBE) honour.

2000

Sydney Olympics and Paralympic Training Head.

2006

Granted life membership of his beloved Bankstown Sports Club, Sydney.

2013

Awarded Order of Australia Medal (OAM)

2020

Alex Fulcher passes away after battling ill health for a number of months.

Rohan Dennis's Four Year Plan

FOR ROHAN DENNIS, THE FOUR YEAR PLAN HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE OLYMPIC GAMES AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH WINNING THE 2020 TOUR DE FRANCE. SO WHAT HAPPENED TO IT, ASKS ANTHONY TAN?



© SIROTTI

ABOVE: Recharged, a new team and ready to go - 2020 looks to be an exciting year for Rohan Dennis.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Rohan Dennis with cycling journalist and Bicycling Australia contributor Rupert Guinness at the 2020 Santos Tour Down Under.

WHEN MOST ATHLETES TALK about a four year plan, they're generally referring to ambitions to compete at the Olympic Games, which, coincidentally, are held every four years.

Rohan Dennis had a different four year plan that centred around something other than winning a gold medal at the Olympics. The start point, however, was straight after the Games in Rio, where he rode the individual time trial. Leading for more than half the race he was on track for a podium, but in the final 15 kilometres a broken handlebar and subsequent bike change saw him fade to fifth. It's a result he aims to seek redemption on July 29 this year at the Fuji International Speedway in Tokyo, home to the XXXII Olympiad.

You see, as good as he is in the race against the clock, Dennis wanted to be more than the world's fastest at going from A to B. He wanted to be a bona fide Grand Tour contender. In a March 2017 interview on the Cyclingnews website, he confirmed as much: "Yep, four years, starting as of Rio last year. In my head, GC [general classification] is what I want to do. If I can't see the light after four years, then I'll go back to what I know I'm one of the best in the world at doing."

Asked what his biggest obstacle would be in terms of realising such an objective, he was unequivocal. And it was not Chris Froome or Vincenzo Nibali or someone else, but rather a 'thing'.

"My biggest issue is climbing. So I have to try to lose weight to be able to climb better and more efficiently but not lose power, which is a massive balancing game. It's something that guys like Froome and [Bradley] Wiggins have nailed and Geraint Thomas has nailed.

Same goes for [Tom] Dumoulin – he's skinny but can time trial, and Thibaut Pinot, too. A lot of guys used to think you had to be big and strong like Tony Martin or Fabian Cancellara to win a time trial, [but] some guys can get skinny and hold it, and this is a period of finding out if I can do that [as well]. If my power/weight ratio goes up, then it's a win."

So serious was he about improving his uphill ability, Dennis moved house to the climbing mecca that is Andorra, nestled in the Pyrenees between France and Spain. "If you take the challenges on day by day, and manage your effort for what is coming up, managing when

I do go into the red and when I don't – that's where I need to find myself," he said.

That year at BMC Racing, he went in as co-leader with Tejay van Garderen at the Giro d'Italia but a heavy crash on the third stage saw him abandon the next day. He would ride three more stage races in 2017 including the Vuelta a España, though used the latter to prepare for the world time trial championship rather than ride GC, pulling out with a week remaining before a sub-par performance in Bergen saw him finish eighth-best.

Q2 2018: Dennis maintained his four year plan was still very much alive. "This pre-season, I've done more six-hour rides



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than I have done the past few years combined,” he told VeloNews, as preparation for another crack at the Giro. And this time around, he was aiming even higher than before: “If I didn’t have the goal to challenge for GC, there would be no point in making the sacrifices that I have made, both mentally and physically. That is 100 per cent the goal. It’s not all physical. More of it is mental.”

HOW'D HE GO?

Well, he finished. Before Froome flipped the race on its head three days from the end, Dennis was seventh overall. He eventually placed sixteenth, almost an hour down on the Kenyan-born Brit, and in the opening week he spent four days in the maglia rosa, so one could say it was moderately positive but with room for

**“...This has been
A DREAM OF MINE
since turning
professional”**

**(on Joining Team Ineos –
formerly Team Sky)...**

improvement. “It felt as though I made some good steps forward,” he told Cyclingnews, “but there’s still a lot of work to do, though. A lot.” He rode the Vuelta but as per the year previous it was to prepare for the TT worlds, which he nailed, taking a rainbow jersey back home to Adelaide.

January 2019: Another year on and Dennis, now at Bahrain Merida, insisted the four-year plan – now in its third quarter – remained on the table. Yet he also acknowledged that he would be riding the Tour de France in support of Vincenzo Nibali (but would be allowed to concentrate on the Stage 13 ITT in Pau) rather than taking another crack at the Giro. “I might as well go to the Tour and try to help [Nibali] in the mountains and still try to be good in the time trials. In a way that’s still gauging myself and

still ‘semi-GC’, and it takes the pressure off my back, too, as the pressure’s on Vincenzo. I may even ride a little bit better.”

For someone who’d never ridden GC at the biggest race of all and only one Grand Tour in a leadership role, it was pie-in-the-sky thinking.

Aside from occasionally riding his team-mates off his wheel in the second stage team time trial, we didn’t get to see much of him. Neither did his team, because in circumstances that have yet to be properly explained, Dennis walked off the set a day before he was due to give what many predicted would be a stage-winning performance. In doing so, he effectively fired himself from the team, despite management saying at the time, “At the moment we’ve got a contract and a schedule.” He came back to defend his TT world title in



Harrogate (using an unmarked BMC bike, not a Merida machine) so someone would surely want him – but who and what of the four-year plan?

It wasn't till December 9 that we got an answer. "This has been a dream of mine since turning professional," Dennis said of his two-year deal with Team Ineos. "I already feel a connection to this team – a team that really believes in innovation, especially in time trialling, which is obviously something I'm hugely passionate about."

No mention was made of the Four Year Plan, which still had 10 months remaining, nor his Grand Tour ambitions. On a team that boasts the past three TdF champions and has been Tour-centric since their inception in 2010, it's safe to assume he's been hired for his motor this July. In return, he'll get to target what he knows best.

In the aforementioned May 2018 story on VeloNews, his coach since 2012, American Neal Henderson, boldly predicted he would win his first Grand Tour by 2020, and it would be none other than the Big Daddy, a.k.a. Le Tour de France. "If I do not do this, and do not try [to become a Grand Tour rider], I will always have that 'What if?'" said Dennis. "I don't want to have to live with that. I would rather fail trying than not try and always be wondering."

It appears the time for trying and wondering has come to an end. Not every talented pursuer or time triallist can successfully follow the footsteps of Wiggins, Thomas and Dumoulin. Not even if you're a world champion in both, as Dennis is. As the now 29-year-old has discovered, there are many more facets to becoming a Grand Tour contender - let alone a Grand Tour winner - than raw physical talent, and as he admits himself, so much of it is mental.

Post-Tokyo, there may still be time to explore his limits as a stage racer, but for now, they sit on ice. **BA**

Twitter: @anthony_tan



ABOVE: Rohan Dennis is one of the fastest riders in the world, the Aussie holds consecutive World Champion TT titles.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Settled in and at home with his new team - Rohan Dennis at the 2020 Santos Tour Down Under.

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