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CANADIAN Cycling MAGAZINE

TOUR DE FRANCE 2018 PREVIEW

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FEATURES

38 Canada's Greatest Tour
30 years ago, Steve Bauer made cycling history. No other Canadian has surpassed the accomplishments of the St. Catharines, Ont., native
by Matthew Pioro

44 The Canadian Cycling Magazine guide to the Tour de France
When the riders line up on July 7, you'll be prepped for the big event, too. The key stages, the riders to watch, a Canadian drought – find out all you need to know about this year's Grande Boucle
by Rob Sturney

50 An Enduro Ride for You
Stories from the trails about the discipline that's continuing to grow in this country and abroad. For some, it's a way to challenge themselves. For others, it's a party. With such a versatile format and open culture, enduro really does have something for everyone
by Tara Nolan

56 Bikepacking just 115 km from Toronto. Seriously.
A fully loaded adventure on the Central Ontario Loop Trail. The network of trails not far from the province's population centres lets you get away easily for days
by Matthew Kadey

4 Editor's Letter

6 Contributors

7 Letters

8 Gallery

10 The Calendar

11 Vintage Velo

12 News

13 What's Hot

63 Gear

88 Q&A

CONTENTS VOL. 9, ISSUE 3

38 Steve Bauer



50 Enduros



56 Ontario Bikepacking



ON THE COVER

Claude Richard rides a No. 22 Reactor. He's wearing an Oakley Aro3 helmet, Oakley Flight Jacket glasses, Oakley Jb Premium jersey and Oakley Jb Premium bib shorts. Shimano RP9 shoes put power to the pedals.

Photo: Matt Stetson

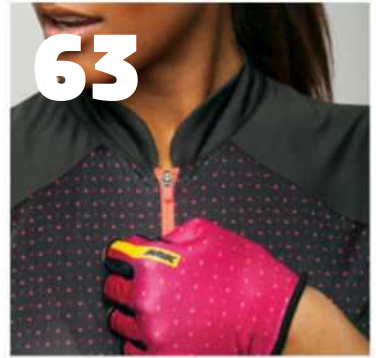
30



14



63



18



76



36



THE SCENE

- 14 William Garneau**
Son of Louis Garneau pulls into the lead
by Melanie Chambers
- 16 Cryotherapy**
Should you hit the deep freeze to recover better?
by Tracey Rempel
- 18 Canadian Club**
Randonneurs Nova Scotia ride for hundreds of kilometres at a time
by Jules Maitland
- 20 Cycling Celebrity**
Novelist Claire Humphrey on writing and mountain bike riding
by Carolyn Pioro
- 22 Crankology**
A cuppa tea scuppers the comeback
by James "Cranky" Ramsay
- 24 Notes from the Gruppetto**
A chat with the family directeur sportif
by Bart Egnal
- 26 48 Hours**
The beautiful and hilly challenges of la Parc National de la Mauricie, Que.
by Christina Palassio

- 28 Nutrition**
The best convenience store fuel options
by Matthew Kadey
- 30 Guest Chef**
Dominique Rollin's Ceviche with Leche de Tigre
by Matthew Pioro

TRAINING

- 32 Training Tips**
Why you should stop worrying about your FTP
by Andrew Randell and Steve Neal of The Cycling Gym
- 34 Technique**
Mastering power climbs
by Steve Thomas
- 36 Maintenance**
How to size a chain correctly
by Nick Di Cristofaro

DESTINATION

- 84 The Great Green North**
In Laos, ride one of the last wild and wonderful frontiers of Southeast Asia
by Steve Thomas

GEAR

ROAD

- 64 Bianchi Aria**
Wind slicing made more accessible

TRAIL

- 66 Rocky Mountain Altitude Powerplay Carbon 90**
A little bit of help makes for fast and fun rides on the trails

RAPID FIRE

- 67 Quiver Cullers**
Five mountain bikes that can almost do it all
- 68 Windshields for Cyclists**
Sunglasses for big rides
- 70 Kit Café**
Jersey and short combinations for summer road riding

IN DEPTH

- 76 Campagnolo's New 12-speed Cassette**
First impressions of the company's new mechanical groupsets
- 80 Power Meter Comparison**
A head-to-head look at the Shimano Dura-Ace Rg100-P and Garmin Vector 3

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My Stumble with Steve Bauer

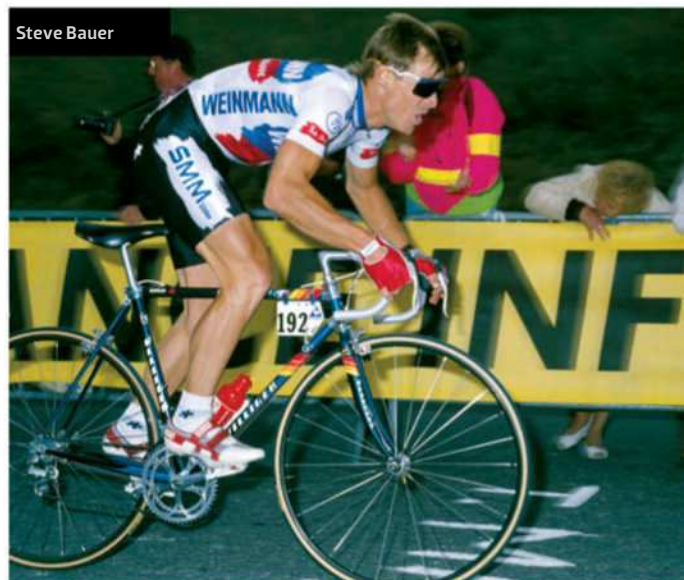
Learning to look back

There are, in fact, stupid questions. I know because I've asked them.

OK, let me walk that back a bit. I ask a lot of questions. It's my job. Sometimes it's a simple question that sends me on to other questions and more research. For example, the power meter review on p.80 started simply with "I wonder what the significant differences are between the Shimano Dura-Ace R9100-P and the Garmin Vector 3." For some questions I might have, I get others to answer them. I asked Andrew Randell and Steve Neal of The Cycling Gym if the current focus on functional threshold power (FTP) for training can have drawbacks. Out of that came their story on p.32. I had questions for Adam de Vos after he did well at the Tour de Langkawi (p.12) and for Haley Smith after she won bronze at the Commonwealth Games (p.12). I wanted to know what these rides were like.

But sometimes, I come up with a question that is, well, kinda dumb. The particular one I'm thinking of came out of my mouth when I was speaking with Steve Bauer. We met to discuss the 1988 Tour de France (p.38). At this event, 30 years ago, Bauer won the first stage becoming the first Canadian to do so at the TdF. He also took the yellow jersey: the second Canadian with that honour

Steve Bauer



after Alex Stieda donned the maillot jaune in 1986. Bauer finished the 1988 Tour in fourth overall, which remains the best result for a Canadian. The Tour that year didn't have some of the top riders of the time at the start line. The previous year's winner, Stephen Roche, wasn't there. Neither was Greg LeMond. So, the question that came out of my month was, "How would the race been different had they been there?" I regretted it almost right away.

Speculation of that sort, at its best, is silly. It's almost as if I'd asked, "How would the race have been different had it been different?" Well, it would have been different. Next question, please. At its worst, the question was disrespectful. In that case, it's as if I'd asked, "If more of the top guys were there, you would have done worse than fourth, eh?" I took the question back, saying I didn't like it. Bauer make a good-natured joke about it. We moved on. Bauer is ever the professional.

The other sort of speculation we didn't get into was how things might have been different had that year's first-place finisher, Pedro Delgado, been penalized for having probenecid in his system. What would have happened if second-place finisher Steven Rooks had been caught for the drugs he later admitted he was taking at the time? It would have been an unfulfilling game of what-if. We can never know.

What I don't wonder about is the significance of Bauer's fourth-place finish at the 1988 Tour. It's a milestone worth noting 30 years on. No question.

Matthew Pioro
Editor

The King Series

#getthegrip



Race King

26/27.5/29 2.0/2.2

Cross King

26/27.5/29 2.2/2.3/2.6

Mountain King

26/27.5/29 2.3/2.6

Trail King

26/27.5/29 2.2/2.4/2.6



Rob Sturney

The Canadian Cycling Magazine Guide to the Tour de France, p.44

Rob Sturney has lived in B.C.'s north-west for most of his life and has used the area as a starting and end point for a few month-long tours around the province and into Alberta. A year-round cyclist, he credits his studded tires and poggies for getting him through the winters. He has written for *Canadian Cycling Magazine* for seven years.



Christina Palassio

La Mauricie: The Cyclist's Park, p.26

Christina Palassio is a writer, editor and translator based in Toronto. She learned to bike in a suburban Montreal backyard at age seven and has since cycled a couple thousand kilometres of Quebec's Route Verte, from Gatineau to Gaspé and parts in-between. Her favourite post-ride snack is a hot dog *steamé* with lots of mustard and sauerkraut.



Terry McCall

News, p.13

Based on Vancouver Island, Terry McCall is *Canadian Cycling Magazine's* web editor who focuses on mountain biking. Twenty years of chasing adventure on two wheels have taken him bikepacking, commuting through Prairie winters and racing everything from cyclo-cross to enduro.

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Quite a pairing

My wife, Janice, and I enjoy bike touring and are always on the lookout for places to cycle. When I saw the "10 Dream Rides" on the cover of your February/March

issue, I quickly flipped to the article. I must compliment you on matching Sam Whittingham's Naked Bicycles with the Barossa region tour. When we retired from teaching in June 2009, we had Sam, who had been a

former student of ours, build us a couple of steel-frame road/touring bikes. In October 2012, we flew with our Naked bikes to Adelaide and, along with another couple, embarked on a three-week adventure. The goal was to seek out fine wines by cycling to as many wineries as possible. We planned a loop from Adelaide that saw us cycling through the McLaren Vale, Langhorne Creek, Mount Benson, Coonawarra, Wrattenbully, Eden Valley and Barossa Valley wine regions.

Manfred Hensel
Campbell River, B.C.



Letter of the Issue



Manfred Hensel's letter is our letter of the issue, which wins him a pair of Continental 28c Gatorskin tires (valued at \$75 each).

Send us your letters for a chance to win a pair of Continental tires for your bike. Email your comments to info@cyclismagazine.ca

Boost for a beginner

At the age of 44, I took up cycling with my husband as a way to join him in his hobby. I could barely ride 5 km that year. At 46, I entered the 20-km Paris to Ancaster ride. At 47, I entered the 22-km Hardwood SingleTrack Classic. I was overwhelmed and inspired by the support from the other cyclists in the race. As a beginner, I was clearly out of my league and struggled to complete the event. The other cyclists shouted encouragement that kept me going. I finished. My next goal is to enter a road race. I am not an athlete, but I am now a cyclist. Cycling has given me confidence and taught me about perseverance and being part of a great community where you are accepted no matter your skill level. Cycling is a great way to stay healthy both in body and mind. I love cycling. I tell others that they should try it because if I can do it, they can, too.

Priscilla Cochrane
Mount Forest, Ont.

A great escape from the city

In summer 2017, I did a ride that changed my perception of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. I've lived here for years, making the move to do my PhD at the University of Waterloo. Before coming here, I sold my car, thinking I wouldn't need one. I figured I'd rely mostly on my bike and transit when weather was not good. But, when I got here I realized quickly that owning a car would be crucial to my well-being, particularly in order to access nature. Kitchener has some natural areas, but they are quite difficult to access by bike (due to safety on busy highways) and the transit system is spotty. So, I resigned myself to either not getting a dose of nature on a regular basis or to purchasing a vehicle so that I could get out of the city. I was feeling pretty isolated, which is compounded by the fact that cycling isn't particularly safe in my city.

But, one day, a friend of mine asked me if I wanted to bike out to Cambridge on the river trails. I'd never really thought about it, but decided to do it with her. Getting out of Kitchener was kind of tricky, and at times, dangerous. But, once we got out to the trails, it was pretty blissful. Given that Kitchener doesn't have good separated cycling infrastructure, I'd forgotten the joy of riding without having to worry about dodging cars. That, in concert with the greenery surrounding me, made for an amazing day out on the trails. On the way to Cambridge, we biked past some pretty old stone buildings and even spent some time near the river. The whole experience was just a wonderful reminder of how a bike ride in the woods can rejuvenate you. Since then, I've decided against purchasing a car and regularly try to get out on the trails. It's changed my perception of my city and access to nature.

Robin Mazumder
Waterloo, Ont.

Now on cyclismagazine.ca

Watch our **video interview with Steve Bauer** as he looks back to the 1988 Tour and his time in yellow (p.38). For more on the new **Campagnolo 12-speed Super Record and Record groupsets** (p.76), check out our extensive first look at the high-end components from the Italian company. Summer means racing. *Canadian Cycling Magazine* will be at the **Grand Prix Cycliste Gatineau** and **road nationals**, so head to our site for our live coverage.

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John Gibson

On April 14, Geoff Kabush celebrates his 41st birthday by riding to a stage win on the first day of Moab Rocks. He would win the race overall two days later.



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JUNE

1-3 Masters go for national glory at the **Canadian road championships** in Victoria.

7-10 The **Grand Prix Cycliste Gatineau** brings top women cyclists to its road race and time trial, held just across the Ottawa River from the nation's capital. Amateur riders can participate in the event's gran fondo.

9 The **Medicine Hat Gran Fondo** celebrates its fifth anniversary. Ride 60, 100 or 146 km, the latter with more than 1,100 m of elevation gain.

16-17 **Sp'akw'us**. It's not just the Squamish Nation word for bald eagle; it's a mountain bike event featuring a 50-km race on Saturday and a 35-km race on Sunday.

21-24 While the Grand Prix Cycliste de Saguenay couldn't run this year because of the G7 summit, the Saguenay region's roads will still see top-level road racing. The elite women and men will vie for maple-leaf jerseys at the **national championships** in time trials, road races and criteriums.



Looking Ahead

June 16, 2018

Ellen's Tour de Sussex

Established to honour the memory of Ellen Watters, Ellen's Tour de Sussex is a celebration of her life and love of cycling. "Ellen was passionate about encouraging people to get on their bikes," friend Katie Scott said, "about promoting the sport and bringing people together to have fun."

The rolling hills of Kings County, N.B., provide breathtaking scenery and challenging terrain for cyclists of all levels. At last year's inaugural event, Watters' mother led out 150 participants who rode one of three routes ranging from 20-100 km. The weather was miserable, but spirits were high. "Some people borrowed bikes from neighbours or pulled old bikes out from the garage," said Watters' friend and co-organizer of the event Molly Monahan. "They joined in just because they cared about Ellen, so they cared about this event."

At the June 16 event, three memorial fund scholarships will be awarded in Watters' name: two for up-and-coming cyclists and one for a graduating female athlete from Watters' high school.

Post-ride hospitality will include farm-to-table dining with craft beer and music from local bands. Riders are encouraged to check out the craft beer festival at nearby Poley Mountain ski resort. They will also have discounted rates for Animaland, the legendary concrete-animal theme park turned campground.

This year's routes have been increased to 25, 70 and 120 km. "We changed the routes up because we want people to see the best bits of beautiful King's County that Ellen loved so much," Scott said. "But we also want to push people, even if it is only by 5 km, just to push the distances for those who are getting warmed up with cycling. It's a good way to show them that they can do a little bit more than they think they can." (ellenstour.ca)—Jules Maitland

Photos: Matt Stetson, Oran Kelly

JULY

1 An enduro for Canada Day? Yes. The fifth instalment of the **MEC Canadian National Enduro Series** runs at Camp Fortune, Que. For enduro tips and tales that will inspire you to ride an event such as this one by CNES, head to p.50.

4 On this day in 1988, **Steve Bauer** broke away from the pack on the first stage of the Tour de France. When he crossed the line, he became the first Canadian to win a Tour stage. He also pulled on the yellow jersey. Read more about Bauer's run in yellow 30 years ago on p.38.

6-15 B.C.'s premier road racing event, **BC Superweek**, starts with the **Tour de Delta** and wraps up with the **Tour de White Rock**. It's 10 days of speedy action.

7 The world's biggest cycling event, the **Tour de France**, starts in Noirmoutier-en-l'Île, Pays de la Loire. For a primer on this year's Grande Boucle, head to p.44.

21-22 Will Emily Batty and Peter Disera defend their national titles in Canmore, Alta., at the **cross country national championships**?

LEFT
Peter Disera at the 2017 Mont-Sainte-Anne world cup

29 Tune in to the second-annual **Victoria Bicycle Music Festival**. It's pedal-powered and mobile. **C**



Steve Bauer's Yellow Jersey from the 1988 Tour de France

"I customized the material," Steve Bauer said recently of his yellow jersey from the 1988 Tour de France.

The garment is a heavy cotton, weighing more than most modern jersey-and-bib combinations. The front zipper only goes down about 16 cm. At least, it would, but it's stuck where it is at the top of the collar. It's a legit race jersey from 30 years ago.

"The sponsor goes on the jersey, which is not that breathable," Bauer said. In 1988, he raced with Weinmann – La Suisse, so that team's logo had to be affixed to the yellow jersey when Bauer was in the lead. "The sticker is definitely not breathable. So, I trimmed some 'aerodynamic breathing' into the front for the hot days." While the '88 Tour had some serious rain at the beginning, there were also some steamy stages. In particular, Stage 11 from Besançon to Morzine was a scorcher. Many of the race favourites had a hard day. Yet Bauer, who likes riding in the heat, finished strong and held onto his lead.

For each hole in his jersey, Bauer simply pinched material and clipped it out. "I think it helped," he said.

He even cut out holes in the sticker on the back to keep the air moving out of the garment.

"Classic," he noted. —Matthew Pioro





Haley Smith crosses the finish line taking third place at the Commonwealth Games

Haley Smith's top performance through process

Haley Smith got on a plane 15 hours after winning bronze at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in Australia. It was Friday morning when she took off, and Friday morning when she landed in California. On Saturday, she raced the U.S. Cup cross country event in Bonelli Park, San Dimas, Calif. She finished fifth. On Sunday, she was third at the short track event. Then she rested, sort of. She had a week of easy training before racing the Sea Otter Classic the next weekend.

"I don't really feel like I need a break yet," Smith said the day after Bonelli had wrapped up. "My coach trained us to do hard efforts frequently. The past four or five days weren't as hard as some of the training blocks I've done."

"So, I'm OK," she added with a laugh.

She credited her results, especially her bronze in Australia, to her outlook ahead of the races. "I wasn't focused on a placing," she said of the Gold Coast event. "I was only focused on the effort. One of my primary goals was to drive every climb. As the race went on, working toward that goal meant I started to reel people in." Early in the xco event, Smith was eighth. As the race progressed, she worked her way to the podium.

Smith's season will continue to have blocks of racing and training until September. It's a process that will take her to World Cups, nationals and possibly the world championships once again.

A yellow jersey and more than 100 selfies

A few days after Le Tour de Langkawi wrapped up, Adam de Vos was on a dirt bike in Colorado Springs, Colo. He was staying at fellow teammate Danny Pate's place doing some altitude work ahead of the Tour of the Gila. He also tried dirt biking for the first time, which followed his first time racing in Malaysia.

De Vos got into the breakaway during Stage 3 of Langkawi. His group stayed away. The rider from Victoria attacked about 2 km from the line. He held his gap to the end. When he crossed the line, he was still in bandages from a crash he was involved in on the first stage. But, he was soon able to cover some of the dressings with the yellow jersey he had won. He kept the lead the following day, threading through another crash roughly 5 km from the finish. On Stage 5, he lost the jersey, and switched gears to helping the teammates who had help him so much while he led the race.

The race leader has extra duties, such as early sign-ins, handshakes with officials before stages, media after and anti-doping. The added work can be taxing, but some of the extra attention was fun. "I think close to 150 people asked to take selfies with me. That was cool," de Vos said. "The fans are really good in Malaysia. They were super enthusiastic about the race and all the riders."

After Langkawi, and the dirt bike, de Vos was looking ahead to the Tour of California and road nationals.—MP

Mountainwasher

\$199, mec.ca

In February, I took my 'cross bike out on a sloppy ride on mucky country roads. Back at my vehicle, I plugged the Mountainwasher into the car's 12-volt outlet. I used about half of the water in the 15-l tank to clear off my bike. The brush attachment helped me remove any stubborn gunk. Not long after, a colleague asked, "How do you keep your 'cross bike so clean?" Thank you, Mountainwasher.



The competition helps one rider avoid DNF at Lo Barnechea Montenbaik Enduro

When Giant Factory Off-Road Team's

McKay Vezina crashed minutes into the second day of racing at Lo Barnechea, the opening round of the Enduro World Series in Chile, it looked like the end of his race. "The bike tumbled through a really rocky area," Vezina said. "My chain and derailleur were extremely bent and broken."

After finishing seventh the previous day, a personal best, Vezina wasn't going to give up. "My coach Evan Guthrie says the only time it's OK to quit a race is if you or your bike is in two separate pieces," Vezina said. "That didn't seem to be the case." Facing 12 km of pushing his bike up high Andean dirt roads and alpine trails to finish the race, Vezina started running. "I absolutely hate quitting, so I had to give it my best shot."

Enduro's biggest stars pulled up to help. "My teammate Josh Carlson realized how much I was struggling," Vezina said of his liaison adventure. "He started pushing my bike so I could just run." Later, Richie Rude – with his portable stereo – Yoann Barelli, and Martin Maes and Robin Wallner – who were in a tight battle for second – carried Vezina's helmet and pushed his bike to help him dodge the DNF.

"Sportsmanship in the EWS is unlike anything I have ever experienced before," Vezina said. "With races being long and super hard on equipment, at some point in the season, everyone has some sort of mechanical, so it's always good to give a helping hand." This sense of community has helped EWS gain a loyal following among fans and racers alike, and has brought more riders to enduro every year.

Vezina made his time cuts so he could race the final two stages, finishing in 36th place in Chile.

—Terry McKall

Shimano Ultegra RX rear derailleur

\$150 (mechanical),
\$380 (electronic),
bike.shimano.com

In the midst of the Cobbled Classics, Shimano released its new rear derailleur, the Ultegra RX. The "RX" is for "road crossover." In this case, it's a familiar migration of late: mountain bike tech heading to the road. Shimano brought its Shadow RD Plus technology to this derailleur, which reduces chain slap and dropped chains. A switch engages a stabilizer increasing spring force in the mech, so your rides down gravel roads should have smooth, consistent shifting.

Clif Bar with Nut Butter

\$2 per bar, clifbar.ca

In early 2017, Clif launched its nut-butter-filled bars. The bit of butter inside added more sweetness to the bars, which, frankly, made them tastier. The sweet stuff isn't gooey, so a bar still holds its shape well when you eat it in stages, stuffing it onto your jersey pocket and pulling it out again. This year, the company added banana chocolate peanut butter and caramel chocolate peanut butter to the lineup. Tasty. Very tasty.—MP



THE SCENE

WILLIAM GARNEAU

Son of Louis Garneau pulls into the lead

by Melanie Chambers

William Garneau, the eldest son of Louis Garneau, has followed in his dad's footsteps for most of his life. He competed in road cycling for eight years. So, it's not entirely surprising that he was recently appointed general manager of the 35-year-old eponymous company his father created. But William hasn't completely followed in his father's draft.

"Much to my father's dismay, I don't ride a road bike as often, my taste having evolved toward mountain biking," Garneau says.

Living in Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que., also the company headquarters, William loves riding his Garneau Gennix D1 Elite D12 road bike along the shore of the St. Lawrence River. With more than 20 parks in town, mountain biking trails are abundant. One of his favourites is Les Sentiers du Moulin – where the company recently donated fat bikes.

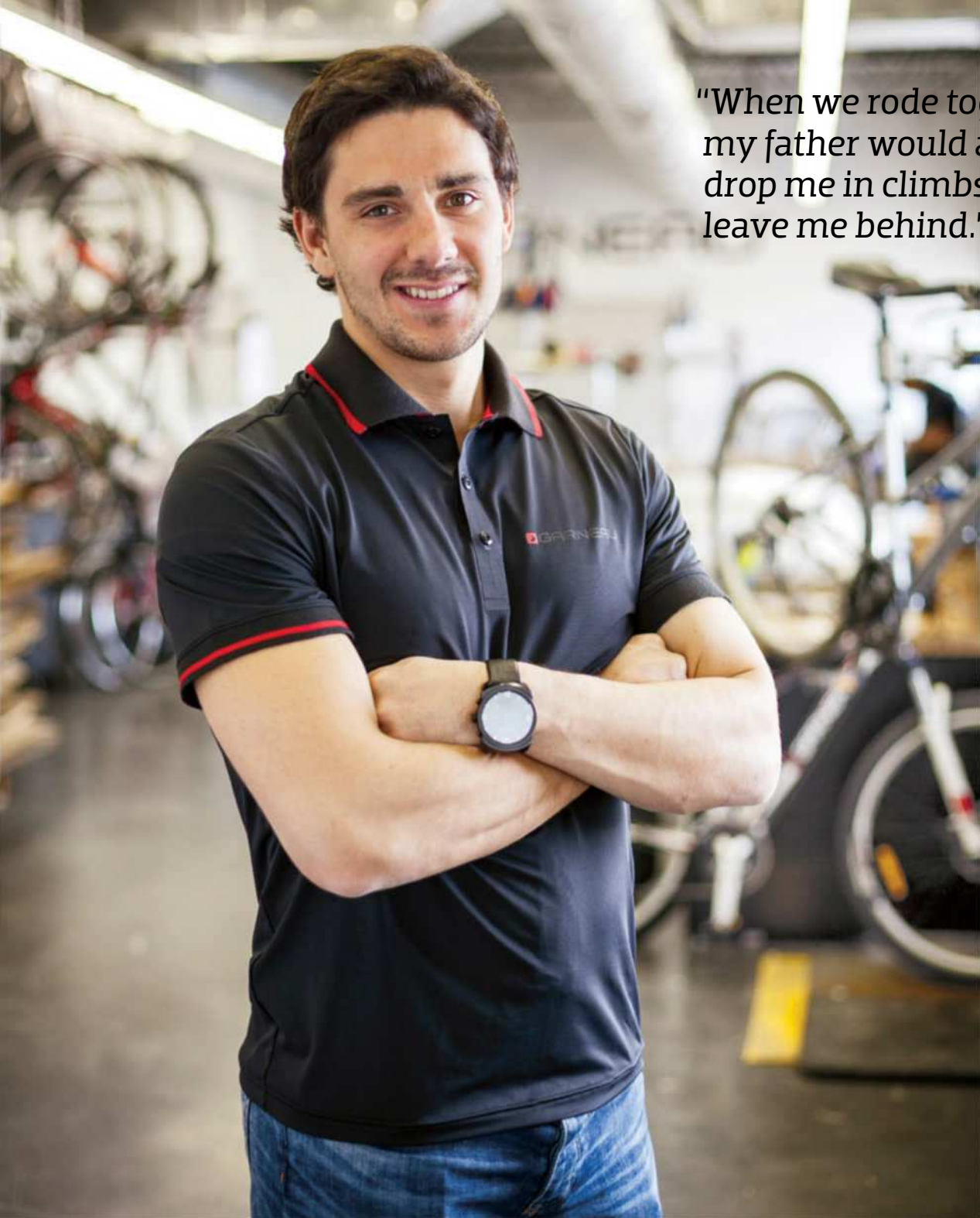
At an early age, William's dad was his coach and motivator. Louis wanted his children to compete. Cycling

was often a family affair. "Riding out as a family with both my parents is also on my list of precious memories, as well as my dad taking time out of his terribly busy schedule to take us on the roads everywhere in the province every weekend possible," he says.

One story stands out for William: "My dad was my coach when I started competing in road racing. He would push me to my limits. When we rode together, he would always drop me in climbs and leave me behind. Then, one day, as I got better and stronger, I took him on and left him behind. Now that was a glorious moment. I'd been trailing him for years and all of a sudden, he was trailing me. That lasted all the while I was competing, up until the junior world championships in South Africa," Garneau says of the 2008 road event he competed in. "Shortly after South Africa, I decided to quit competing to go study in the U.S., so I stopped training as hard. My father is in an incredible shape, never having stopped training, so I'm back to trailing him."

For William, however, the corporate calling was ever-present: he always knew he'd become part of his father's company. Eight years of road racing and a business degree from St. Michael's College in Vermont was enough education to prime him for the cycling business. "My goal was to integrate the family

Photos: Courtesy Louis Garneau



"When we rode together, my father would always drop me in climbs and leave me behind."

OPPOSITE
William and Louis
Garneau

LEFT
William, the new
general manager
of Garneau


business as soon as possible to continue my father's work and take it even further."

William initially joined the company as a manager of the DreamFactory custom bike program (for bikes and clothing), and then led the hard-goods division and sourcing.

The biggest change he sees in cycling companies is not just mastering the new technology of fabrics and gear, but rather the growth of customer culture and community. "Brands need to stand for something. I'm not saying that the product is not important anymore today, but companies need to add value, contribute to the community,

as well as share their values and help their customers experience those values," he says.

While his father will still preside as the president of design, it's the next generation of Garneaus at the helm: William as general manager and brother Edouard as director of IBD for the U.S. Sister Victoria is currently finishing up her studies in fashion design.

William has quite a legacy to maintain, but he's ready. "My father's motto is 'never give up.' That's something that's been ingrained in us for as long as I can remember. No matter what we undertook as children, he made sure that we saw it through to completion," he says. 



these chambers to their lines of health and beauty treatments, recreational athletes can now pay around \$60 a session, making cryotherapy a growing trend.

"I don't think it's becoming more popular now. I think it's been popular for decades already. We see more endorse-

ments from different celebrities and people who have been using it that have influence," says Roman Gersh, owner of Cryotherapy Toronto.

Cryotherapy is said to trigger the fight-or-flight response in your system. During this time, blood rushes to the core and becomes oxygen-enriched, which restores energy and stimulates quicker recovery. Because of the increase in blood flow, more oxygen restores energy to muscles, reduces inflammation, creating a more efficient recovery.

"We're trying to fool the brain into thinking you're about to freeze so that it starts to release a lot of beneficial mechanisms into your bloodstream," Gersh says.

Not only is it said to help with sports performance, but some have said it has weight-loss and beauty benefits. Celebrities such as Tony Robbins, Lindsay Lohan, Alicia Keys and Jennifer Aniston have all added cryotherapy to their health regimens.

Too bad, however, there is no science to back up any of these claims. Even though cryotherapy has been around since the late 1970s, no data substantiates the positive benefits, whether it be sports performance, skin or dietary benefits. More study

Should you hit the deep freeze to recover better?

by Tracey Rempel

I'm standing in a cryotherapy chamber and exposing my body to temperatures well below -140°C for three minutes. It's chilly, but bearable, much like standing naked in front of a freezer. I now have something in common with WorldTour cyclists, and NHL and NBA players.

There has been an ever-growing popularity with the use of cryotherapy for athletic recovery and, being an avid cyclist, my curiosity got the better of me. So here I stand with my head sticking out of this padded chamber while liquid nitrogen vapours envelope my entire body in a deep freeze. I'm actually quite at ease with my mittens and booties on. With no humidity accompanying this introduction to extreme temperatures, it's a somewhat comfortably cool experience.


Previously, this cold therapy had only been accessible to top athletes and sports teams willing to invest in the \$60,000 units. With spas and wellness clinics now adding

is also needed to gauge the long-term effects.

There has been one death due to cryotherapy, but it was a spa worker who trapped herself inside a unit after closing and froze to death. Most units have magnetic doors that easily push open, preventing this type of accident from happening. Technicians have been advised to never use these chambers without supervision. Other adverse effects could be inert gas asphyxiation from breathing in the liquid nitrogen vapours, as well as frostbite.

Despite the risks, sports teams, celebrities and recreational athletes are increasingly signing up for their weekly fix.

After exiting the chamber, I do feel a certain vigour and am excited to get moving and trigger heat back into the body. Whether or not I will experience heightened athletic recovery, time will only tell. One session is not enough to form a proper conclusion, and I'm told five to 10 sessions are recommended to truly feel the benefits.

With only weak evidence and theoretical benefits, the question remains: is cryotherapy a fad or does the science need to catch up with this trend? 

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Randonneurs Nova Scotia

Riding for hundreds of kilometres at a time

by Jules Maitland

“We start our 400-km at midnight. It's really quite a magical experience, to ride through the night as a group. Out in the countryside where there is no traffic, everyone is asleep apart from us. You ride under the stars and maybe hit a coffee shop at 3 a.m. to refuel!” says Mark Beaver, president of Randonneurs Nova Scotia. “Then you're riding along and you see a red glow on the horizon. A while later, the first bird will sing. Then you'll hear a rooster crow. The sun will rise, and then it's morning.” When day does break, Nova Scotia presents the randonneurs with spectacular coastlines, tall pine forests and fertile farmland valleys, all during a single ride, albeit quite a long one.

Randonneuring, with its brevets that challenge riders to cover long distances within set time limits, can take cyclists on 200-km and even 1,400-km routes, or shorter recreational rides called populaires. Everyone in the brevet must be self-supported.

A friend had introduced Beaver to randonneuring by inviting him to ride the 720-km Raid Pyrénéen with members of an Ontario club. Later, Beaver was persuaded to try to qualify for the 2003 Paris-Brest-Paris: the 1,200-km randonnée with a 90-hour time limit. To qualify, riders must complete a brevet series that includes a ride of 200 km, 300 km, 400 km, and 600 km. For Beaver to achieve his goals, he needed a club closer to home. In 2003, Randonneurs Nova Scotia was born. Beaver has completed all four Paris-Brest-Paris challenges since 2003.

The Randonneurs Nova Scotia's annual schedule is built around its brevet series. In the spring, weekly brevets increase in distance incrementally, with the occasional populaire. From July 7 to 9, the club will run its longest brevet of the year, the Fundy Park 1000, a 1,000-km circuit from Halifax along the Bay of Fundy to Fundy Park and back via the Northumberland Strait.

Later in the summer, with the club's big events finished for the season, members participate in rides roughly every two weeks. “It's so people can reconnect with their spouses, and mow their lawns and such,” Beaver says. In fall, the season closes with a weekly schedule of shorter populaires.

The club has grown from eight to 30 members of varying backgrounds and abilities, with a core group who have been members for roughly 10 years. Participation in the rides fluctuates. The longer the ride, the fewer the people. Between 15 to 20 will show up for a 100-km populaire, with

10 to 12 riding longer brevets.

Several members complete the brevet series every year. In 2017, Micheline McWhirter completed the series and became the first Nova Scotian woman to ever complete a 1,000-km brevet. This year, McWhirter will join Beaver and club member David Ross in Minnesota for the Coulee Challenge, another 1,200-km randonnée. Ross, a member since 2004, has already completed eight 1,200-km events.

Beaver acknowledges that anything longer than 600-km is a massive undertaking, but insists that riding 1,000-km in fewer than 75 hours is achievable as long as you work your way through the series, stay in good shape, and have comfortable shoes as well as a comfortable bike, a good saddle and a good leathery butt. “The leathery butt comes from many miles in the saddle,” Beaver says, “so there is no substitute for riding. The best training for randonneuring is randonneuring. Get out there and ride your bike. A lot.”

“Riding 1,000 km in fewer than 75 hours is achievable.”

PROFILE

Randonneurs Nova Scotia

City Halifax

Established 2003

Members 30

Motto Been there, done that, now what?

Website randonneurs.ns.ca

THE SCENE

CANADIAN CLUB

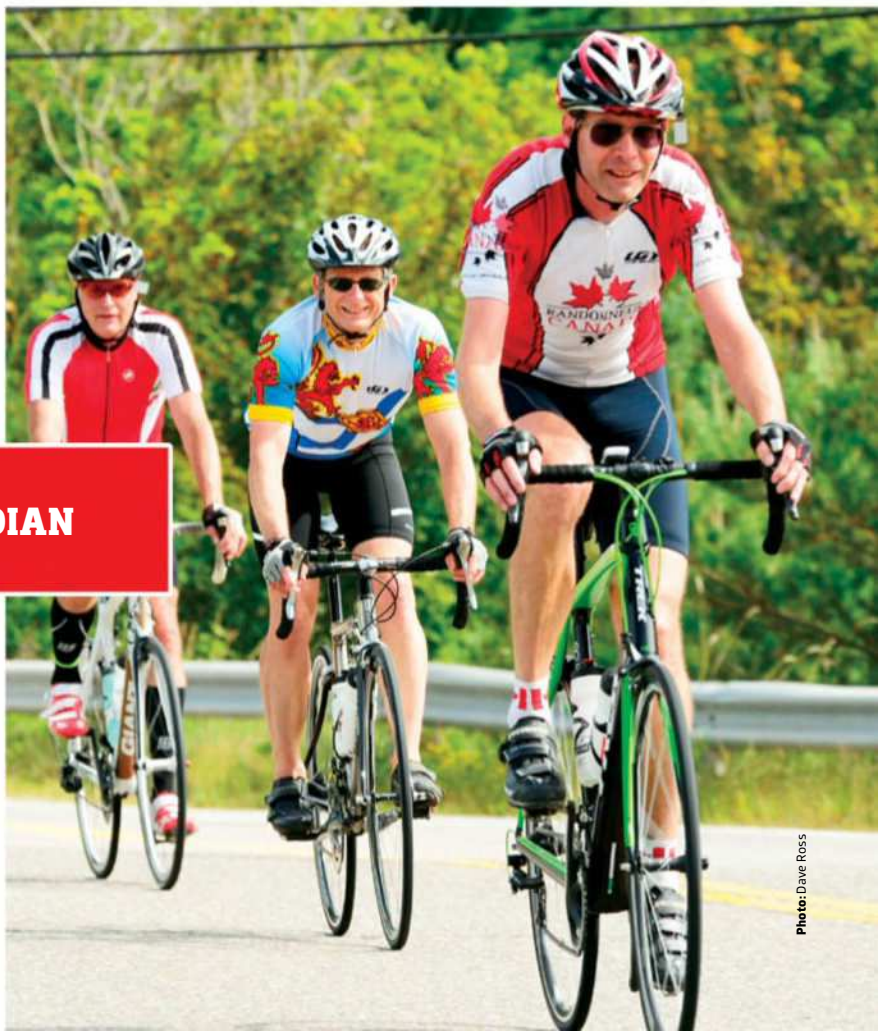


Photo: Dave Ross



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 **GIRO**

Claire Humphrey

On writing and mountain bike riding



by **Carolyn Pioro**

The 2013 iteration of Paul's Dirty Enduro was perhaps the "dirtiest" in the race's 21-year run, and Claire Humphrey was poised to have her worst race result ever. The rain, which started falling the night before, turned the course at Ganaraska Forest near Port Hope, Ont. – about an hour and half northeast of Toronto – into a muddy mess of dirt and sand.

Humphrey, a member of Toronto's Lapdogs Cycling Club, was competing in the 30-km category of the annual long-distance mountain bike race that doubles as a fundraising effort for mental-health awareness.

As the rain began to get heavier in the early afternoon, it became clear that most cyclists would be posting DNFs.

"A lot of people were pulled off because their brake pads were just expired and everybody was taking so long to finish it – especially the 100-km riders, they were not going to make the time cut off," says Humphrey. "I was doing one of the shorter races, but everybody who was behind me was also pulled off." In fact, of the 45 participants in the 100-km classification, only six completed the race.

But Humphrey prevailed, and race

"It was absolutely my worst performance in a ride and yet also the most memorable."

FAST FACTS Claire Humphrey

Lives	Toronto
Profession	Novelist
Bike	Trek Cali

marshals let her finish the course because of a bittersweet connection to the event. The year prior, she was registered to race but had to pull out unexpectedly because her younger brother, Ted, passed away from cancer the same day. A year later, she returned to compete in his memory.

"That was an incredible experience," Humphrey reflects. "I think I ended up being the No. 1 fundraiser in the history of the event because it's one of those stories, and when you tell it, everybody understands and wants to be supportive.

"It was absolutely my worst performance in a ride and yet also the most memorable and the most powerful."


These days, Humphrey finds less time for competitive races, but enjoys taking her bike out to do some gravel riding and hit the trails in and around the Greater Toronto Area: "I love Durham Forest; it's really beautiful. Albion Hills is really convenient and the Hydrocut trails in Waterloo. Those are probably my favourites that are close by," says the St. Catharines, Ont., native.

She currently rides a Trek Cali, purchased using the book advance she received for her first novel, 2016's *Spells of Blood and Kin*. Humphrey, who has worked as a buyer for Indigo for almost 20 years, has also received acclaim for many of her short works of speculative fiction, which have appeared in literary magazines and anthologies.

Late last year, *Spells of Blood and Kin* won the annual Sunburst Award for Adult Fiction in the fantasy genre. It explores the interwoven lives of contemporary Torontonians with elements of all things witchy and macabre, but grounded in relatable themes such as family and personal histories.

"Part of the impetus behind *Spells of Blood and Kin* came from the experience of my brother actually – the one who passed away while I was at Paul's Dirty Enduro," she says. "He was a really conflicted person and had a pretty troubled relationship between what he wanted to be and what his ability let him be; he suffered a lot from anxiety and depression," she continues. "There's a dark underpinning to that, but the other part was also I always loved writing fantasy in particular because there are some tropes that are just really fun."

Her next book – a work in progress – is a cycling-themed story that follows a woman who restores boneshaker bicycles in an imagined 19th-century milieu. Although, Humphrey doesn't do tons of city cycling (she lives within walking distance of her office), she finds that writing and riding are indeed cosy bedfellows. On a recent Lapdogs training camp to South Carolina, the 42-year-old spent time doing some pretty sweet trail riding, as well as tackling writing deadlines from her cabin – among the old-growth trees of Pisgah Forest – while the roadies were off on longer rides.

She lets her writerly considerations impress upon the landscapes experienced from the saddle: "One of the things I love about mountain biking, in particular, is you get out on these trails that you can't really access any other way," she says. "It's a little bit metaphoric, but that's what I feel like I want to do as a writer. I want to give people perspectives that they could only see through my eyes." 

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Cuppa Scuppers Comeback

A spot of tea put me out

by James "Cranky" Ramsay

This past winter and through the spring, I had been planning my return to the start line in 2018. This was to be my summer of glory, in which I would reclaim my rightful place among the top 50 masters road racers in my postal district.

I prepared well by eating right, thinking winning thoughts, doing squats, jumping on and off wooden boxes, engaging in visualization exercises and going to bed before 9 p.m. As the weeks and months ticked by, my fitness increased, my mind was fortified and my body was transformed.

And then I was sidelined. Knocked flat. It all happened in an instant. Today, it hurts to walk. Jumping on or off anything is out of the question, much to Mrs. Cranky's disappointment. Visualizing myself exercising is the closest I've come to actually exercising in the past two months.

How did this happen? It's an embarrassing story, but I offer it as a cautionary tale: I hurt myself procrastinating.

"That's ridiculous," you say. "Procrastination is morally corrupt, but you can't injure yourself doing it!"

Oh, but you can – and I did. Let me tell you how.

It was a Thursday evening a couple of months ago, about 9 p.m. I was at work. I had decided to put in a few extra hours so that I could leave early on Friday to drive up north for the weekend. My plan was to finish up everything I had to do for the week. I estimated this work would take me until about 10:30 or 11 p.m.

"So far, so good. But where's the procrastination?" I hear you ask.

Well, there was one report I needed to write that was proving troublesome. I kept trying to start it, but I couldn't find the right words to get the flow going. So I put it off and did something else. And then I put it off again. And again. Finally, after running out of other productive things to do, I thought, "I'll just go and refresh this cup of tea. That will get me going."

The office cleaner had just come by with his mop. The floor was gleaming with warm, slightly soapy water. As I stepped toward the kitchen, I thought, "This is a bit rotten of me, to be walking on his nice clean floor. Poor fellow will have to go over it again."

Clearly some karmic force agreed that it was indeed rotten of me because at that exact moment, I slipped on the floor, my feet sliding out from under me. I came crashing down flat on my back. Except I didn't land entirely flat. Most of the impact was absorbed by my left elbow and my tailbone, the latter of which hit the floor at a slight angle.

After I spent a second in shocked silence, the pain hit me. I let out a truly foul stream of expletives, at which point two of my colleagues came running. I rolled over,




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grimacing in agony and tried to get up. The pain in my lower back was so intense that I nearly passed out.

My colleagues put me in a chair in the boardroom where I gradually recovered my composure. It seemed I hadn't broken anything, but I felt as though I'd been assaulted (which I suppose I had, albeit with an office floor rather than a more conventional weapon). After recovering for about 30 minutes, I struggled into a taxi and made it home, where Mrs. Cranky experienced a confusing mixture of concern for my well-being and dread at the thought of the moaning and groaning she knew she would have to endure in the coming weeks. I was moving like a 100-year-old man.

Since then, I've been gradually recovering. But I haven't been able to ride my bike (or run or stand on one foot) in several weeks. My physical activity has been limited to walking. As any cyclist knows, walking should be avoided at all costs, even when it doesn't hurt.

My witch doctor tells me I'll be back on my bike by August. That means I'll have some reasonable fitness back by late fall, which in turn means I may be able to put in a good showing at one of the late-season gran fondos. Failing that, I'll be heading into the off-season with a head start on my winter fitness. As long as I eat right, drop weight, do my squats, engage in visualization exercises and go to bed before 9 p.m., I'll be all set for glory in 2019.

Unless, of course, I find myself staying late at the office one night next spring and tempted to put off my work in favour of another cup of tea. Just to be safe, I think I'll buy a kettle for my desk. ☺

"As any cyclist knows, walking should be avoided at all costs, even when it doesn't hurt."



Photo: Russ Tudor

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"Isn't that the race you did on Mother's Day a few years ago?"

A Chat with the Family Directeur Sportif

What's good for the team isn't always what's good for the rider

by **Bart Egnal**

Every year pros gather at training camps in beautiful places like Tenerife to eat only the ends of baguettes, ride up mountains and plan their race seasons. All of the riders are called into meetings with their directeur sportifs and team principals. The athletes are asked what they want to race in the year ahead.

"I'd like to race the Classics and peak for Roubaix," says the young neo pro. The DS smiles and says, "We have you down for bottle duty at the Tour Down Under. Start fasting tonight."

"If you are OK with it, I'm ready to take the lead in a smaller stage race, so I can prove my suitability for Grand Tours," says the five-year veteran climber who long ago won the Baby Giro. The DS utters sweet nothings about the climber's talent and then looks at his sheet, "We had a few injuries so you need to go ride the cobbles. We'll see how you're doing when the Tour of Alberta comes around." His colleague leans over and whispers something in the DS's ear. "Oh, on second thought, maybe not."

As a masters racer, I don't get to go to Tenerife and spend weeks riding up and down the same climb while some ex-pro sits in a car and yells at me. But I do get to sit down with the DS and discuss my race schedule. My DS married me 10 years ago when my exercise consisted of playing hours of *World of Warcraft*. In the years since the bike has infiltrated my life, she has borne me two beautiful children who are biologically suited to fit into a skinsuit and save watts at any speed. Like any strong-minded DS, she must balance her primary rider's delusions and ambitions with the broader needs of the team (family) and her own sanity.

THE SCENE

NOTES FROM THE GRUPPETTO

The dance between this rider and his DS begins as the Ontario Cycling Association posts tantalizing clues of the forthcoming race calendar. Like a subject in a psychiatrist's session, I read the organization's ever-shifting posts like the Rorschach ink-blot test they are, hoping to discern some sort of final schedule. Will the provincial road championships be running this year? Will the race calendar go beyond July 1? As clarity emerges, I arrange a tentative sit down with the DS.

We begin carefully, like two duellists each worried about being struck by a mortal blow. I fend for my licence to ride. She endeavours to guard her sanity and minimize the inevitable absences she is required to endure, which are salvaged only by the balm of two hyperactive children.

I make the first tentative move, "So I'm thinking I'll aim for only 10 or

so races this year..." Silence. The DS processes the information. I go on, "Well, my season would normally start with the Good Friday race, but I'll be in Girona for a training camp." I realize this argument is not a compelling one.

"How about I do Calabogie, Springbank, K-W for provincials, Blue Mountain, Honda crit –"

The mention of the Honda crit provokes a response, and not a positive one. "Isn't that the race you did on Mother's Day a few years ago?"

I consider mentioning I got a podium in that race, but her raised eyebrow suggests this would be a poor time to bring that forward. Like any DS, she quickly forgets what you did for the team years ago.

I barrel on, even more tentatively. "I can try to race some crits on Tuesday, too. And maybe you guys could even come see one!"

Silence. The DS looks at the page where I have hopefully (delusionally) sketched out my race program. She takes a red pen from the drawer. Then she looks up.

"Your race program will have to be adjusted to meet the sponsor commitments."

Like a pro, I resign myself to the reality that no race program is created in a vacuum. The sponsors must be satisfied. The DS must be obeyed. And personal goals must be subordinated to those of the team. Only thus can a race program come together and, most important, can another year's licence to ride be granted.

So it was. So it will always be.

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The Cyclist's Park

La Mauricie offers Quebecers and visitors to la belle province beautiful and hilly challenges

by **Christina Palassio**

The Parc National de la Mauricie sits in the Laurentian Highlands between Montreal and Quebec City – an easy two-hour drive from each centre. The 536-square-kilometre park is a favourite spot for club rides and training – a place where the roads are smooth, the cyclist rules and the hills, well, they just don't stop.

"This is the spot to train if you're a cyclist in Quebec," says Marie-Josée Gervais, the former professional triathlete and cyclist who founded Les Défis du Parc, a gran fondo that attracts thousands of riders to the park every year. "It's a very demanding route both physically and psychologically."

The main way through the park is along La Route de la Promenade, a 63-km road with roughly 1,000 m of elevation gain on roughly 20 climbs. If you're

through the region on their way between the St. Lawrence River and the boreal forest to the north. The presence of the Atikamekw is immortalized by red ochre rock paintings on the cliff walls above Wapizagonke Lake. In 1634, the French established a trading post in nearby Trois-Rivières. For the next few centuries, the park's forests fed the pulp and paper mills that sprung up along the St. Lawrence, as the region became the world's biggest producer of newsprint. These days, conservation efforts have focused on re-naturalizing deforested areas and improving aquatic ecosystems, bringing the park back to health, and making

it an attraction for canoeists and kayakers, campers, mountain bikers and road cyclists who flock to the park by the tens of thousands each year.

"Cyclists have really become part of the scenery in the park," says Gervais. "When I used to train here, it was only the *crainqués* – the real hardcore cyclists – who rode here. But since Les Défis and Les Roses started up, use of the park has become a lot more democratized. Now cyclists of all levels come to challenge themselves at their own pace. Lots of cyclists stay for the weekend and camp. It's a totally different atmosphere."

While road cycling continues to be a main attraction for many, the mountain biking community in the area has been growing steadily during the past few years thanks to trails in the Parc Récréoforestier, which sits just on the edge of la Mauricie, and Energicomb in nearby Trois-Rivières, which has 15 km of singletrack and freeride trails, dirt jumps and a pump track. Parc National de la Mauricie itself boasts roughly 30 km of rolling trails, however, they'll all be closed in 2018 because of the construction and will reopen for the 2019 season.

If you want to cycle past the park's borders and explore the surrounding area, you have a few options. You can ride Route 351 for 25 km southwest to the quiet village of Saint-Élie-de Caxton, birthplace of beloved Québécois singer and artist Fred Pellerin. Tack on another 11 km to the nearby village of Saint-Paulin before heading back to the park. Or you can head southeast from Saint-Mathieu-du-Parc along Route 351 to Shawinigan, birthplace of former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, and grab some lunch there. Be prepared: English isn't often spoken here, so if your high school French is a bit rusty, have Google Translate handy. *Bonne aventure!*



"You can see Wapizagonke Lake stretch out before your eyes for more than 10 km. It's where you'll find the most challenging climb: the Côte du Passage."

planning a trip in 2018, enter on the Saint-Mathieu-du-Parc side and make the Shewenegan picnic area your starting point. The Route de la Promenade is undergoing a phased resurfacing over the next two years, and the eastern part of the road is closed to traffic in 2018. Roadwork will switch to the west side of the park in 2019, and the road will reopen completely in 2020, just in time for the park's 50th anniversary.

Even with this year's road closures, you can still net 100 km and 1,800 m of climbing with a double out-and-back starting from the Shewenegan picnic area and turning back at the Belvédère du Passage. Along the way, you'll fly by some of the park's 150 lakes, ride past imposing granite escarpments that were carved by the passing glaciers 12,000 years ago, and glimpse waterfalls and the sandy shores of sinewy Wapizagonke Lake. You might also spot black bears, moose and red foxes.

Guylaine Ricard's love affair with the park started when she joined Les Roses, the all-women's cycling club that makes the park its home. She's been a devotee ever since. "The park has tons of impressive views, but I think the most spectacular spot is the Belvédère du Passage," says Ricard. "You can see Wapizagonke Lake stretch out before your eyes for more than 10 km. It's where you'll find the most challenging climb: the Côte du Passage."

The history of the park is as captivating as its scenery. Five thousand years ago, the Algonquins, Iroquois, Abenakis, Hurons and Atikamekw travelled

Details

How to get there

Parc National de la Mauricie is an easy two-hour drive from either Montreal or Quebec City. There's a \$7.80 fee to enter the park. In 2018, enter via the Saint-Mathieu-du-Parc entrance and make your way to Shewenegan picnic area. In 2019, enter via the Saint-Jean-de-Piles entrance. In 2020, all the roadwork should be complete, allowing you to choose either entrance.

Where to stay

If you want to camp, you can rent basic campsites and *otentiks*, which are a blend of a tent and a cabin, through the Parks Canada website (pc.gc.ca/fr/pn-np/qc/mauricie/activ/passez-stay/oTENTik). Otentiks are in high demand, so book early. If indoors is more your speed, stay in the Wabenaki Chalet (info-nature.ca) or Andrew House, lodges that once belonged to the many private hunting and fishing clubs that dot the area. On the higher end of things, the Auberge Le Baluchon in nearby Saint-Paulin, 30 minutes from the park, boasts a restaurant and a spa (baluchon.com).

Where to eat

This is Quebec, so there are plenty of tasty spots to refuel. In Shawinigan, try the Trou du Diable brew pub (troududiable.com). In Sainte-Flore, try the quaint café Le Bucolique (cafebucolique.ca) or the Crêperie de Flore (819-533-2020). In Grandes-Piles, Auberge le Bôme is a good spot (bome-mauricie.com).

What to do off the bike

Learn about hydroelectric power at Shawinigan's Cité Énergie, located just across from the impressive Shawinigan Falls (citedelenergie.com/en/home). The museum has a pavillion devoted to documenting international relations during former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's tenure. Or go the food route and get a taste of local flavours at the public market, open Wednesday to Sunday (marchepublicshawinigan.com).

Where to find support

For equipment, repairs or rentals, hit Le Coin du Vélo (lecoinduvelo.ca) or Le Yéti (leyeti.quebec) in Shawinigan. 📍



THE SCENE

48 HOURS



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Steer toward the best
convenience store fuel options

by **Matthew Kadey**

In a perfect world, all long rides would glide you past local food markets serving up homemade baked goods and expertly pulled espresso. But in the real world, you'll more likely park your bike in front of a convenience store or gas station when you're in need of some mid-ride fuel. Sometimes you just have to eat and drink or risk the dreaded bonk. While far from nutritional nirvanas, these outlets are not all about stuffing you full of Twinkies and hot dogs on rollers. With a bit of scrutiny, it's still possible to make smart fuelling options that will keep your pedals spinning without a side order of a gut bomb. Here are the grab-and-go champs.

Fig Newtons

Chewy and delicious, high-octane Fig Newtons contain 80 per cent carbohydrates mostly from flour and dried figs. They'll give you a good mix of fast-acting simple sugars for immediate energy and slower-acting complex carbs to help power an all-day excursion.

Raisins

Think of these as Mother Nature's rocket fuel. Dried fruit, such as raisins and apricots, are dense in natural sugars that go toward energizing working muscles to give the second half of your ride a big boost. But since they are parched, be sure to chase them down with a few gulps of water to hasten digestion and prevent digestive woes.

Jerky

When you've grown tired of the ubiquitous sugary energy solutions, savoury jerky and pepperoni sticks offer your taste buds a welcome respite. Plus, their sodium can help replenish what's lost through sweat. But be warned: when you hop back on your bike your body prioritizes powering your muscles and puts processes involved with digestion on the back burner. That helps move your legs, but makes digesting the protein in jerky a slower affair. It's best to wait a bit after gnawing on jerky before jumping back on the saddle, or make sure to go slow for the first several kilometres afterward.

Black licorice

Most brands are made up mostly of sweeteners, such as corn syrup. Generally, it's not a healthy option, but when you're in the midst of a long ride, those sugars are going to deliver a quick source of efficient fuel, much like gels and chews would. The salt in licorice is an extra bonus if you've been sweating up a storm.

Coffee drinks

The combination of liquid, quick-digesting sugars and caffeine (more than in a can of Coke) can give your ride a boost. Liquefied sugar, which provides the majority of calories in bottled coffee drinks, is generally absorbed by your system faster than solid sugar. Just keep in mind that it can take as long as 60 minutes for caffeine to peak in your system, so don't expect to perk up as soon as you've downed a bottle.

Bananas

Yes, some stores have a few pieces of fresh fruit, such as bananas and apples, lingering by the checkout counter. They are good for riders looking for more "whole food" fuelling options with more moisture than dried fruit. Bananas decorated with dark spots indicate that much of their starches have been converted into easy-to-digest natural sugars for better gut comfort. Some outlets also sell fruit cups.

Skittles

Clean eaters may scoff, but Skittles are little sugar bombs that can quickly top up your gas tank if you've let it run dry. Their crunch is a nice break from syrupy sport nutrition products, and the absence of fat means polishing off a bag carries with it less risk of digestive problems. Gummy candies also hit these performance benefits. It seems Peter Sagan was onto something.

York Peppermint Patties

When a chocolate craving strikes, reach for this minty option. Compared with other candy bars, nut-free peppermint patties have a higher carb-to-fat ratio, so you're not asking your stomach to perform any tough digestive tasks. And preliminary research suggests that consuming peppermint oil may boost exercise performance by relaxing muscles.



Trail Mix

Packets of nuts, seeds and dried fruit are energy-dense, so they can help you meet your needs when your body is blowing through calories to keep up the pace. The extra protein and fat in the crunch bunch will slow down digestion, so leave some time between eating and going hard to avoid playing Russian roulette with your stomach.

Pop Tarts

Sure, these dorm-room favourites are the definition of processed food, but salads alone can't fuel multi-hour rides. About 70 per cent of the calories in Pop Tarts hail from carbs. With generally low levels of fibre, fat and protein in each tart, your body won't have to go through a huge effort to tap into this energy source. You can eat them hot or cold, so go ahead, pass around a box.



Pretzels

Sticks or twisted – pretzels offer a famished rider some crunchy, low-fibre carbs and salt. They come in a form that can give you a break from any performance-food monotony you may suffer. Pretzels are a better option than chips, which are higher in fat because of the frying process they go through and are much more difficult to absorb.

Bottled Water

It's true that you won't get any calories or electrolytes from plain, old water. But when you're taking a break and consuming energy from other sources, such as pretzels and bars, your stomach and performance are best served by washing them down with a sugar-free drink. Water will facilitate better digestion by diluting the carbs in your gut. So save the sports drinks for on-bike hydration. 🍷

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Dominique Rollin's

Ceviche with Leche de Tigre

by **Matthew Pioro**

Dominique Rollin's phone rang. Even though he was in the middle of an exam, he had to answer it. It was 2005. He was in Montreal studying restaurant management. He thinks that there must have been something in the way he said to his teacher, "I gotta take this one," that allowed him to leave the exam and return later.

Rollin had been exchanging emails with Cyrille Guimard, the French directeur sportif who had worked with Bernard Hinault, Laurent Fignon and Greg LeMond. Guimard called during Rollin's exam to offer the rider from Boucherville, Que., a spot on Vélo Club Roubaix, a high-level amateur team. Cycling then put Rollin's career in the culinary arts on hiatus for about 10 years. Except for a break in 2014, Rollin rode until the end of 2015, finishing his career at Cofidis.

In 2016, he enrolled in the Hofmann culinary school in Barcelona. It featured a gruelling program with many long hours in one of the school's three restaurants. Rollin's endurance help him with the 17-hour days.

With his studies now completed, Rollin will soon be running a small kitchen that's part of bar in Girona. His focus will be on sandwiches and salads. He knows the pastrami he'll use. He'll be making his own sauerkraut. He's also been experimenting with different pickles. With those ingredients, it might seem like he's planning a deli-style restaurant like Schwartz's of Montreal. "I wouldn't pretend to be at their level," Rollin says, "but I'm trying to bring a touch from home."

This past October, CeramicSpeed brought Rollin to Kona to do a bit of cooking for some pro triathletes. One recipe he used was a variation of his ceviche dish, which he learned from some of his Latin American classmates. "It's quite easy to do, and fresh and flavourful," he says.

Ingredients


- ½ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup lime juice
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tbs coconut milk
- 2 lb. of white fish such as halibut, sea bass, mahi-mahi or ono (wahoo)
- 1 red pepper, finely chopped (brunoise)
- ½ cup green onion, minced
- ½ cup red onion, minced
- 2 Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced
- ½ cup cilantro, chopped

Nutritional Information

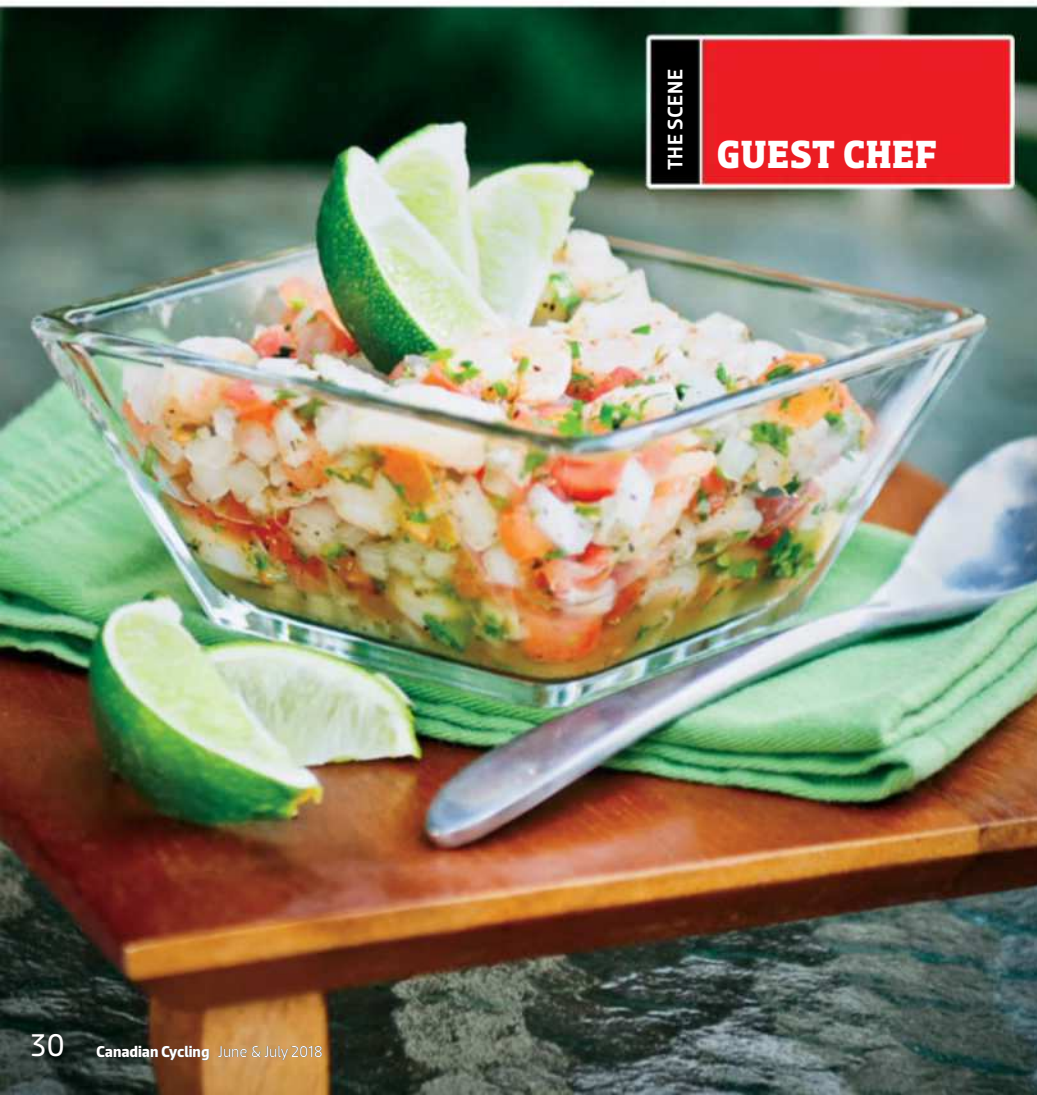
For one serving

Calories	638
Carbs	10.1 g
Saturated Fat	3.1 g
Fibre	2.3 g
Protein	127.5 g

Directions

1. Mix the lemon juice, lime juice, salt and coconut milk to create the leche de tigre.
2. Cut the fish into small cubes, about ½" thick.
3. In a small container, add the fish, red pepper and red onion. Mix with care.
4. Pour in the leche de tigre covering the fish mixture.
5. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. The acidity from the citrus will cook the fish. The longer you leave the fish in the marinade, the more cooked it will be.
6. Drain the liquid.
7. Serve the fish mixture with the tomatoes, green onions and cilantro.
8. Add pomegranate or avocado for a more exotic feel. Make it Peruvian with some toasted corn (*cancha*) to give it a bit of crunchiness. Serving with steamed rice is also an option. 

Serves 4



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Why You Should Stop Worrying about Your FTP

While the metric is helpful, it's not necessarily something you need to increase to ride stronger

by **Andrew Randell and Steve Neal of The Cycling Gym**

For the past 10 years, functional threshold power (FTP) has been the metric that much of the cycling community has focused on for training. It's the amount of power, measured in watts with a power meter, you can hold for an hour, theoretically. Not many people want to do a one-hour time trial, though, so the standard estimate of FTP has been to take 95 per cent of the power you can push for a 20-minute time trial.

Much of the training you read about and many of the programs you can find online focus almost exclusively on improving FTP. While this focus in your training may improve your 20-minute time trial number, we would say that it doesn't necessarily translate into making you a better rider out on your group ride. Training at FTP involves a great deal of high-intensity work. When you do a 20-minute time trial, much of it will be done at VO₂ max, a state in which your body is using as much oxygen as it can, as will the training to improve your time trial.

For most of us, we are training to be better out on our group rides. Group rides are typically something in the range of two to three hours, most of which will be done at an endurance or tempo heart rate. To be better on your group ride, you need to improve your aerobic engine, which requires a different focus from that of improving FTP. An improved aerobic engine means a positive change in your ability to ride at a higher percentage of your FTP power, while having a stable heart rate, for longer periods of time. For example, let's say on your three-hour group ride you end up with a normalized power that's 85 per cent of your FTP. To maintain that normalized power, your heart rate climbs to, and stays at, 90 per cent of your max heart rate. With proper endurance and tempo training, you should, over time, be able to change how high your heart rate climbs. As you

improve, you will still ride at a normalized power of 85 per cent of FTP, but your heart rate will only climb to 80 or 85 per cent of your max heart rate. This ability to ride at a lower percentage of your max heart rate and at the same power will mean you'll save energy, which you can call upon when push comes to shove later in the ride.

We saw this happen this past winter with one of our clients at the gym. While his FTP has remained unchanged, he is now able to ride closer to his FTP power number with a lower perceived exertion and for longer periods than when his training focus was only on improving that 20-minute time trial wattage.

Now, we're not saying that threshold and VO₂ training shouldn't be part of your program. They have a role to play. But for most of us, they should play less of a role than they do in your typical training program. Too much sustained focus on threshold and VO₂ is detrimental in the long run. It may work for a year or two, but after that you will likely find yourself experiencing diminishing returns and heightened levels of fatigue.

To improve your aerobic engine, you need to focus primarily on endurance and tempo riding, with limited bouts of threshold and VO₂ training. We prefer training mainly below threshold, with appropriately timed VO₂ and anaerobic sessions. Make your aerobic system strong enough and eventually the wattage you can push at tempo gets close to your threshold ability.

"To be better on your group ride, you need to improve your aerobic engine."

The goal when trying to improve our aerobic engine, or indeed of all our training, is to be able to push a greater wattage for longer and at a lower heart rate. When you're out on your group ride, you don't want to be cruising in the group at a threshold heart rate. When your heart rate is that high, you are burning lots of energy. It's better to be able to cruise in the group at an endurance or tempo heart rate, thereby burning less energy and saving it for when it matters toward the end of the ride.

For the newer rider, or the rider who really isn't able to push that much wattage even when going hard, we actually recommend a different focus away from endurance. We see many examples of such riders at the gym. For them, we don't use heart rate as a guideline. We use wattage to guide the workouts because, at first, newer riders need to work on simply pushing more wattage. They will often be prescribed a VO₂-type block of training to get started. Then, once they can push more power and the training gets "hard," we change the focus and start bringing heart rate into the training as a metric to watch.

Make your aerobic system strong enough and eventually the wattage you can push at tempo gets close to your threshold ability. Once you get this strong, you are in a great place for riding well. left when things might get feisty near the end of the ride. 🚴



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Although we often see superb power climbing demonstrations on the great murs and bergs of Flanders, we mostly encounter hills at home that are relatively smooth and well-graded. On these rises, you can focus much more on getting the power out effectively and less on traction.

You should ride mostly out of the saddle if you're going all out on a power climb. Brace your legs from your trunk to get the maximum power efficiency.

The upper body is an area often neglected by amateur cyclists. Yet, most pro riders put in a great deal of upper-body and strength work year-round without bulking up. By improving your core and upper-body strength, you will take advantage of a full-body effect on the bike, which helps to spread the workload greatly.

If you wrestle and bob your way up a short, steep climb, a significant amount of power almost evaporates with every wasted action, which adds up significantly after a few climbs. If you bob too much, you should reach for the weights.

To the fore

Being close to the front of a group on a short climb is essential. Gaps can open up quickly. There is little time to make up ground and get around other riders. Plus, the hammer will often go down over the top of a shorter climb, which makes for a bubbling lactic bath of a chase if you've lost ground.

Even if you think you can't stay with a group on a power climb, you should get as close to the front of the pack as possible heading to the hill. This positioning will allow you to sag throughout the climb and, ideally, slide back on over the top. Get into position ahead of time to avoid putting yourself into energy debt before you even start going up.

If you are suffering through a bunch of sharp rises, hold on for a slight lapse in pace or a slow corner that will allow you a moment to recover and return to the group if you do lose contact. Do what you can to hang in there.

Sprocket selector

On shorter power climbs, you will nearly always use larger gears, compared with long climbs, to maintain speed before, during and after the rise.

If you know the climb, then judging your gearing is much easier. Always remember that if it's steep and the gas is on full burn, you will quite probably be stuck with whatever gear you select for the duration of the climb. Play it safe: keep things one gear lower than you think you can handle. Also, factor in your accumulated fatigue.

If you don't know a climb, try to find out what lies ahead from other riders. Play it safe with gearing. Changing on and off the big chainring under pressure could drop your chain, so it's often wise to slip to the small ring and a smaller sprocket, just in case. ©

by **Steve Thomas**

Power climbers, such as the Classics specialists, are usually bigger powerhouses who can hammer away on the flats, too. They can handle many repeated efforts on shorter climbs. They tend to outnumber pure climbers.

That said, many great all-rounders, such as Chris Froome, Richie Porte and Alejandro Valverde, have also managed to excel on the short climbs as well, proving that with training, it's possible to up your game on any grade or terrain.

"The hammer will often go down over the top of a shorter climb, which makes for a bubbling lactic bath of a chase if you've lost ground."



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How to Size a Chain Correctly

Keep your drivetrain working at its best with the right length of links

by Nick Di Cristofaro

You have to keep a close eye on your bike's chain. It wears and you have to replace it regularly. Chains come in many different types, configurations and widths. There are also myriad crank and derailleur combinations, so sizing the chain to the correct length is extremely important for drivetrain longevity and shifting performance. If you install a chain too short or too long, you can affect performance. You could also have a safety hazard beneath you.

There are essentially two types of connecting methods for multi-speed chains: quick links and rivet pins. A quick-link chain uses two removable outer links to connect the chain. A rivet-pin chain uses a special pin to connect the chain. There are also master-link chains that use a link, outer plate and circlip to connect the chain, but these are mostly for single-speed setups. Here, I'll focus on multi-speed chain sizing.

When you are installing a new chain, you might not be able to use your old chain to help you set the right length. Maybe you added a new cassette with a wider range of cogs. In that case, you'll likely need a longer chain. I always recommend going with a new chain rather than trying to add new links to an existing chain that is already worn.

First, see if your current chain is the correct length. Shift into the largest chainring and largest cog. You should be able to make the shift to the largest cog easily. You should also see two slight bends at each jockey wheel of the rear derailleur. If the chain is too short, this shift is difficult to make and the derailleur cage is stretched out and almost parallel to the chainstay. If the chain is really short, then you might not even be able to shift into the largest cog. Then, if you shift into the smallest chainring and smallest cog and if the rear derailleur pulls the chain back so far that it comes in contact with itself, the chain is too long.

Before you remove the chain, make sure it's on the small chainring and smallest cog. Take out the rear wheel to release the chain tension. Next, push out a pin using a chain tool. Or remove the quick link with special link pliers or



with needle-nose pliers. Using the specific link pliers makes this job much easier.

If the chain is the correct length, you can cut the new chain to the same length by counting links and placing the old chain next to the new chain on a long bench. I find this method both cumbersome and time consuming. I like to just remove the old chain, then install the new chain and size it on the bike to make things much quicker. I use the small/small method for most double-chainring setups.

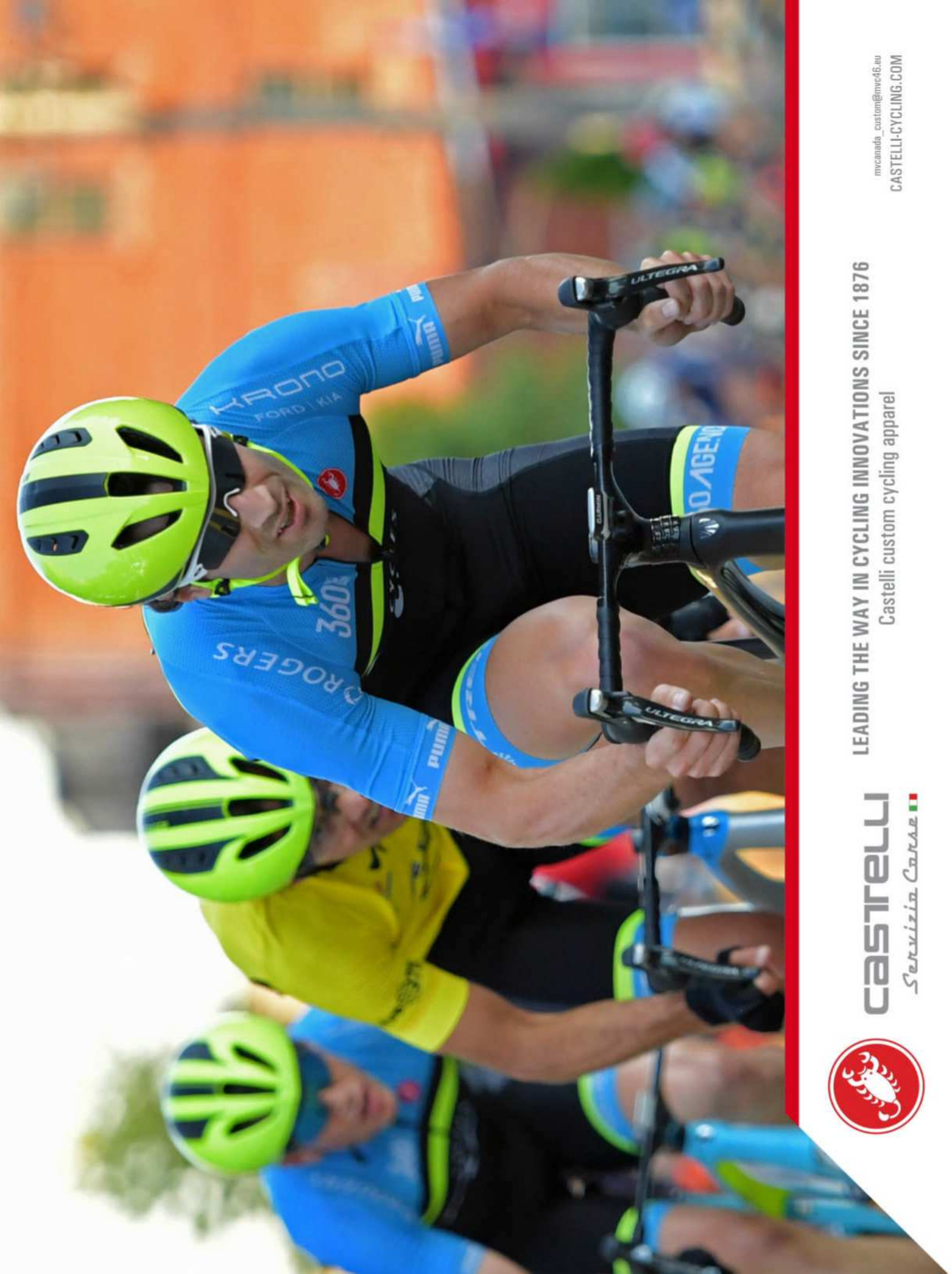
With the chain threaded through the rear derailleur, and around the smallest cog and small chainring, pull both ends of the chain together until you get some tension in the rear derailleur cage. This is the point at which you want to cut the chain. You should have approximately 10 mm of clearance between the chain wrapped around the upper jockey wheel and lower run of chain. Ensure you cut the link with one "wide" and one "narrow" end remaining, if you're using a pin. Make sure the chain has two "narrow" ends if you're using a quick link.

"I always recommend going with a new chain rather than trying to add new links to an existing chain that is already worn."

For 1-by systems without rear suspension, the chain must be a little shorter in the smallest cog for the derailleur to tension the chain sufficiently. To measure the chain, wrap it around the chainring and the largest cog, but bypass the rear derailleur. Make sure the chain is engaged fully on the teeth of the largest cog. Pull the chain tight. Engage the closest pin to where the two ends could be joined on the chainring. Make sure to match inner to outer plates if you're connecting via a pin. Or, install one half of a quick link if you're connecting via a link. From this closest chain pin, count four rivets. Cut the chain at this

fourth rivet only if it matches the opposite end according to your joining method. If it does not match, then add another rivet. You can also use this method on most double-chainring setups but adding two rivets instead of four. I, however, prefer the small/small method for double-ring setups.

For mountain bikes with rear suspension, you must account the distance between the cassette and front chainring that changes as the suspension moves through its travel. Get your bike on a repair stand. Remove a shock bolt and compress the linkage. Hold it in place by wrapping a toe strap or bungee cord around the rear wheel and the frame. At this point, the cassette cogs and front chainring are the farthest apart. You can now size the chain with the same method as above, adding two to three rivets. 📍



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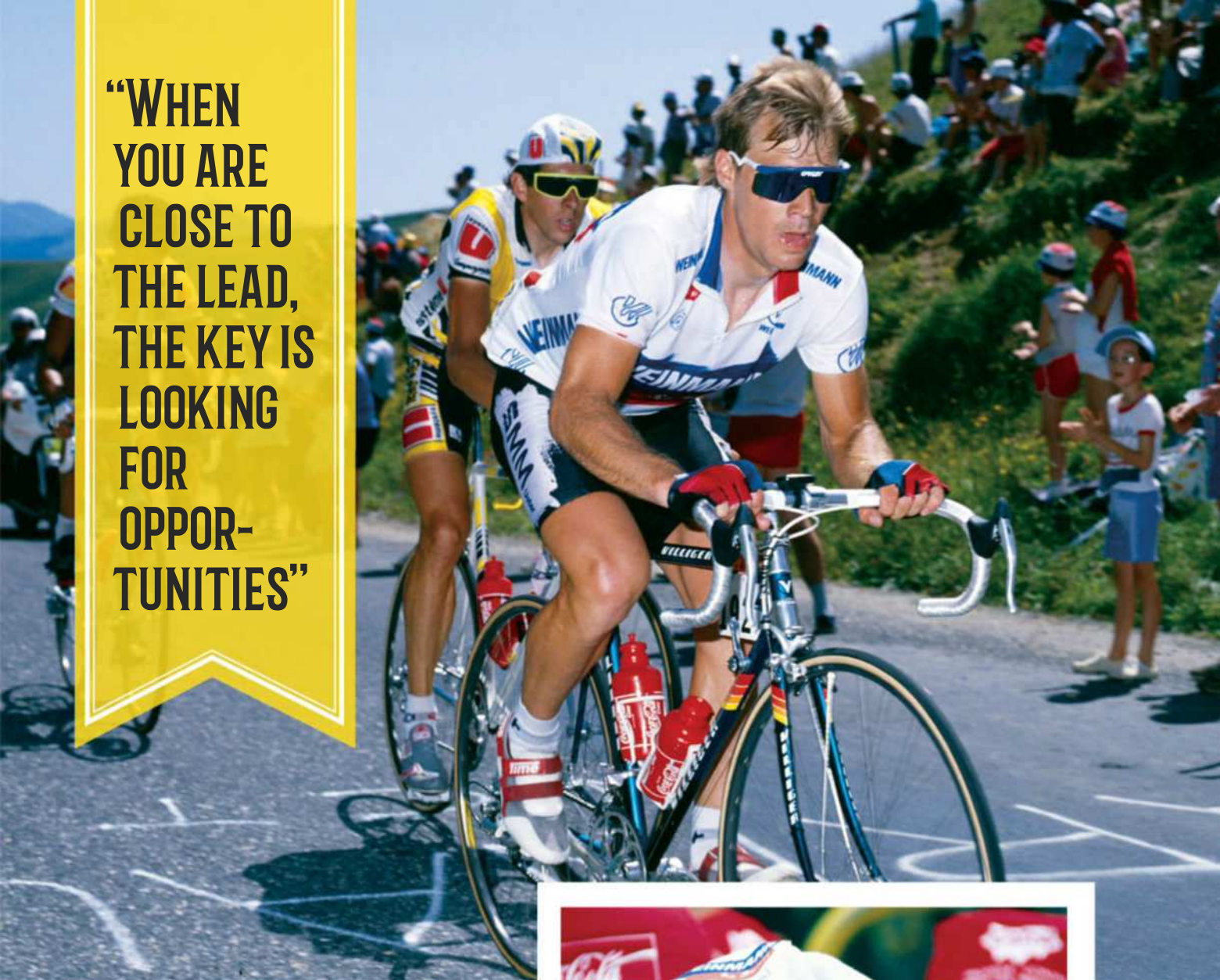
by **Matthew Pioro**

In a way, the first yellow jersey that Steve Bauer won at the 1988 Tour de France was set up two years prior. In 1986, fellow Canadian Alex Stieda broke away during the first part of a split stage. Because of the time bonuses Stieda had gained, he became the first North American to wear yellow. He had gone so hard on Stage 1a that on Stage 1b, a team time trial, both he and his 7-Eleven team struggled and he lost yellow. "Alex, he was proud he started that first stage in a skinsuit. He just went for it from the gun," Bauer remembered with a laugh. Bauer himself was in that peloton riding for La Vie Claire with Greg LeMond and Bernard Hinault. In 1988, Bauer was on a new squad, Weinmann - La Suisse. "The stage was similar with a team time trial in the afternoon. No team would ever take full control of the early stage to save their energy for the team time trial. It gives an advantage to the breakaway, which Alex used. I was looking for a similar opportunity in 1988."

Bauer and I spoke at the Grupetto Café in Dundas, Ont., surrounded by cycling memorabilia, some of it Bauer's. It wasn't too long ago, during one of Bauer's seemingly rare stays in Southern Ontario. The St. Catharines, Ont., native spends months at a time in Europe working as director of VIP services for BMC Racing Team. The events we discussed, which had happened almost 30 years ago, he remembered surprisingly well.

"That stage was a bit broken," he said of the morning race. "There was a union protest along the way, so the stage got stopped. The weather was crap. Nobody was really committed to the race. It was bizarre: not many attacks. It was

“WHEN YOU ARE CLOSE TO THE LEAD, THE KEY IS LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES”



almost like the peloton was rolling toward the finish. I decided, at about 7 km from the finish, to attack and open up the race. I got a bit of a draft from the vehicles in front – motorcycles and official cars. It gave me a good gap on the field. The peloton didn't really commit until it was too late. I managed to hold off the peloton and win that stage and get the yellow jersey. It was a bit of luck, a bit of initiative and some solid fitness that carried me to that first Tour de France stage win."

Before the French Grand Tour, Bauer's year had gone well. In April, he was eighth at Paris-Roubaix. In early June, he won a mountain stage in the Tour de Suisse. "It finished on a descent," Bauer was quick to add. He was second overall in that 10-day event. Next was the perennial TdF tune-up race, the Critérium du Dauphiné Libéré. Bauer won the 93.2-km Stage 1b. Before heading to la Grande Boucle, the 29-year-old Bauer was likely in the best condition of his career.

He was on a new team in '88, Weinmann - La Suisse. It, however, had familiar riders and staff. Paul Köchli, who



Photos: Graham Watson

had worked with Bauer on La Vie Claire, started the squad. The group that went to the Tour included Niki Rüttimann, a strong Suisse climber, who was also from Bauer's previous team. Jean-Claude Leclercq was good in the mountains, too. Michael Wilson from Australia brought his skills as a solid domestique and time triallist. "We had a really good balance of talented individuals, maybe not one standout that people could say was a Tour de France winner. But collectively, we proved we were a really solid group of professional bike racers who could challenge the race," Bauer said.

Favourites who lined up at the Tour that year included two-time winner Laurent Fignon and U.S. rider Andy Hampsten, who had won the Giro d'Italia less than a month before. Third-place TdF finisher Jean-François Bernard carried French hopes with him. Pedro Delgado had ridden against Stephen Roche in '87 and lost out to Roche by 40 seconds. The first Irish rider to win the Tour didn't return in 1988 because of chronic knee problems, but Delgado was back. Bauer's former teammate Greg LeMond missed the Tour in '88 as he still wasn't in top shape following his hunting accident the year before.

"Going into the race, I wasn't really thinking about who I'd have to beat to do well," Bauer said. "I think I was more focused on the team and how we could ride to the best of our abilities." Bauer felt that that outlook allowed him to achieve one of the best performances of his career.

After Bauer won yellow, Weinmann - La Suisse had to ride the team time trial later that day. He figures the presence of the jersey inspired the squad to ride harder than they might have otherwise. They couldn't beat the powerhouse Panasonic team, whose ride put Teun van Vliet at the lead of the general classification. Still, Weinmann - La Suisse was second, 24 seconds behind Panasonic. While Bauer had fallen to ninth overall, the team's work had set the foundation for the Canadian's return to yellow.

Bauer had to be shrewd during that first week of the Tour. "When you are close to the lead, the key is looking for opportunities," Bauer said. "You can't really force it, unless you strong-arm the race on a stage that is particularly suited to you. For example, now in the Tour, it would be a mountaintop stage for a climber. It seems obvious there. But in the first week of the Tour, it's not obvious. There's rolling terrain with different types of finishes. You cannot lose time. And you look for those spots, like maybe a breakaway, that could get you that jersey back."

On Stage 6, a 52-km individual time trial, Bauer put in an impressive ride, which got him within one second of the new leader, Jelle Nijdam of Superconfex. The next day, Bauer slipped a bit in the GC to nine seconds back. Of Stage 8, he remembered a short climb before the finishing city of Nancy, then a descent ahead of the final sprint. About 10 km from the finish, Bauer attacked. He pushed the pace. Nijdam got dropped from the main group. In the sprint, Rolf Götz took the stage, but it was Bauer who pulled on the yellow jersey once again.

Next, Weinmann - La Suisse had to defend its lead. Bauer had more work to do both on and off the bike. "When you're leading the Tour de France, there are other demands: anti-doping, media, attention from the

fans," Bauer said. "There's more energy that you need to expend than if you weren't in the jersey. I think the added pressure did not necessarily affect my performance." Although the maillot jaune can bring extra work for a rider, it can also boost his abilities. The psychological term for this phenomenon is the audience effect. With people watching, with the responsibility to lead the team and defend the jersey, an athlete digs deeper and performs better than ever before. The yellow jersey gave Bauer a boost, a boost that far surpassed the extra duties that affected the race leader.

After Nancy, the stages started to feature more and more climbing, which wasn't Bauer's strength. Stage 11 from Besançon to Morzine included Pas de Morgins, Col du Corbier and high temperatures. "I love the heat," said the rider from the great white north. "Everybody else was cracking." Fignon finished 19 minutes off of the stage winner Fabio Parra. The French rider's Tour was ruined. Bernard had a bad day, too. Both Sean Kelly and





“THE YELLOW JERSEY GAVE BAUER A BOOST, A BOOST THAT FAR SURPASSED THE EXTRA DUTIES THAT AFFECTED THE RACE LEADER.”

Robert Millar lost a lot of time. Bauer rode well and finished with the favourites, 23 seconds behind Parra.

The Canadian started the next day, which would finish on Alpe d'Huez, in yellow. He would face the Col de la Madeleine and Col du Glandon before the iconic climb. For Bauer, the final kilometres before the summit of Glandon were the toughest, tougher than even d'Huez. A large group of top riders were ahead, including Hampsten and his teammate Raúl Alcalá. Colombians Fabio Parra and Luis "Lucho" Herrera, and Charly Mottet and Peter Winnen. Farther ahead, Steven Rooks and Pedro Delgado were driving for Alpe d'Huez. After passing the summit of Glandon, Bauer blasted down toward the group at speeds he doesn't think he's matched since. "When you have the yellow jersey, you have to do what you have to do," he said. Riding solo, he caught up with the Hampsten group.

Once they hit Alpe d'Huez, the initial steep inclines affected Bauer. He fell off from much of the group. He then rode his own pace. His team director, Köchli, kept giving him the times. Bauer knew he was still close to the jersey. He passed a shattered Hampsten and kept riding. Rooks took the stage, while Delgado rode into the lead. Bauer finished seventh, 2:34 behind Rooks and 25 seconds off of the yellow jersey. "It's probably the best mountain stage I did in my career. I think the jersey helped as well as being in top shape," he said.

After d'Huez, Bauer focused on a podium spot. He was third overall after Stages 13 and 14. He then kept fourth all the way to Paris. He had yellow for five stages and a stage win, the first for a Canadian. In 1990, he'd get the yellow jersey for nine stages. His fourth place finish in '88, however, still stands as the best result for a Canadian at le Grande Boucle.

So many cycling performances from that time, unfortunately, come with asterisks. Questions about Delgados' performance were raised before he had even finished the 1988 Tour. Probenecid, a drug that can be used to flush

the residue of steroids from the kidneys, was found in Delgados' urine. At the time, the drug was banned by the IOC, but it was still about a month away from being on the UCI's list. Lucky for Delgado, it was the UCI's list that took precedence. He raced on to win the '88 Tour. In late 1999, the runner-up in 1988, Rooks, admitted in a television documentary that he had taken testosterone and amphetamines throughout his career. Bauer doesn't seem to dwell on these injustices. He seems to bear them with the same stoicism that got him through the nine Tours de France he completed throughout his career.

When I asked him about the effect of his fourth place in '88, he joked a bit about how there was no social media to bring the news to Canada quickly. But, he added that the media coverage at the time did inspire people to take up cycling or follow the sport. He'd heard that first-hand from many riders throughout the years. I think the effect grew as Bauer continued to race beyond '88. In 2015, at the induction ceremony for the Canadian Cycling Hall of Fame, Lori-Ann Muenzer, Alison Sydor and Curt Harnett all cited Bauer as an influence. Riders too young to have seen Bauer race in the '80s, such as Astana's Hugo Houle and Milton, Ont., track rider Michael Foley, have benefited from Bauer's experience and cycling wisdom gained abroad. Even the cycling-themed Gruppetto Café in which Bauer and I spoke, about 80 km away from where the cyclist grew up, likely owes part of its existence to Bauer's accomplishments. The influence of Bauer's 1988 Tour on those younger athletes and the café may not be direct, but they do take from the glow of five days in yellow that happened 30 years ago. 🇨🇦



Photos: Graham Watson

The

FEATURE

CANADIAN
Cycling
MAGAZINE

Guide to the

Tour de France



Photos: Stefano Sirotti

The key stages, the riders to watch, a Canadian drought – find all all you need to know about this year's Grande Boucle

TWO things have disrupted the 105th edition of the Tour de France. One of them seems much easier to manage. The biggest cycling event of the season has a slightly later start than usual to accommodate soccer's World Cup in Russia. The Tour begins in Noirmoutier-en-l'Île, Pays de la Loire, on July 7, and concludes on July 29, only 27 days before

the Vuelta a España kicks off in Málaga. In total, the French stage race has eight flat stages, five hilly stages, six mountain stages, one team time trial and one individual time trial. The Tour spends a lot of time in the northwest and runs roughly clockwise around the country, climbing the Alps before the Pyrenees.

The other thing that is troubling this year's event is the adverse analytical finding of four-time and reigning Tour champion Chris Froome. This past December, it was revealed that Froome had twice the allowable amount of salbutamol, a bronchial treatment for asthma, in a urine sample taken after Stage 18 of the 2017 Vuelta. This revelation has cast a pall over the cycling season and has proven extremely divisive in pro cycling ranks as Froome carried on racing in 2018. If Froome returns to the Tour this year, and wins, he'll gain access to the Five Win Club (see below). No one has ever won a fourth without winning a fifth.

by Rob Sturney

Will Canada End its Tour de France Drought in 2018?

OK, maybe one year without Canadian representation at la Grande Boucle isn't exactly a drought, but 2017 was a disappointment after nine consecutive years of Canuck participation in cycling's most famous race. A new problem for Canadians hoping to race the Tour is that Grand Tour teams are now limited to eight riders instead of nine.

From 2008 to 2015, Ryder Hesjedal was the real stalwart of this streak. His fifth place in 2010 is the second highest general classification finish for a Canadian after Bauer's fourth in 1988.

It's not expected that Michael "Rusty" Woods (EF Education First Drapac presented by Cannondale) will make his Tour de France debut; the Giro d'Italia was his aim since the beginning of the season. If he were to ride a second 2018 Grand Tour, it would most likely be the Vuelta, in which he set the Canadian GC high mark with seventh this past season.

Forty-one-year-old hardman Svein Tuft (Mitchelton-Scott) is probably going to race the Canadian national road race championships in Saguenay, Que., from June 21–24. If he does, he'll have just two weeks to get back over to Noirmoutier-en-l'Île, France for le Grand Départ.

Hugo Houle (Astana) and Antoine Duchesne (Groupama-FDJ) have joined new teams for 2018. "Tony the Tiger" Duchesne is the last Canadian to ride the Tour with French wild-card team Direct Energie in 2016. This year, Duchesne's captain would be Thibaut Pinot. If selected for July's race, Houle would be making his Grande Boucle debut and likely riding in support of Jakob Fuglsang, a Dane who had a strong start to the season in Spanish races.

Canadians at the Tour

2008–2016

2008	Ryder Hesjedal, Garmin-Chipotle, 46th
2009	Ryder Hesjedal, Garmin-Slipstream, 47th
2010	Ryder Hesjedal, Garmin-Transitions, 5th Michael Barry, Team Sky, 97th
2011	Ryder Hesjedal, Garmin-Cervélo, 17th
2012	Ryder Hesjedal, Garmin-Sharp, DNF
2013	Ryder Hesjedal, Garmin-Sharp, 70th David Veilleux, Europcar, 123rd Svein Tuft, Orica-GreenEdge, 169th (His last-place finish in the GC made him that year's lanterne rouge.)
2014	Christian Meier, Orica-GreenEdge, 121st Svein Tuft, Orica-GreenEdge, 131st
2015	Ryder Hesjedal, Cannondale-Garmin, 40th Svein Tuft, Orica-GreenEdge, 159th
2016	Antoine Duchesne, Direct Energie, 107th



LEFT
Rigoberto Uran wins Stage 9 at the Tour de France in 2017 while stuck in his 53 x 11

Five Key Stages

While there are some important stages that don't make this list, such as Stage 3's team time trial and Stages 6's double ascent of the Mûr de Bretagne in the first week, the following quintet should make for the most compelling racing. Each day has the potential to shake up the GC. Only Stages 9 and 20 from this list fall on a weekend for easy viewing, *malheureusement*.

July 15, Stage 9

Arras to Roubaix, 154 km

Moving east from Brittany the race takes on the cobbles of Paris-Roubaix including the brutal Mons-en-Pévèle section. The riders will assail 15 cobbled sectors before the first rest day. Twenty-one and a half kilometres of cobbles is the most since 1980. Instead of packing them all in the latter half of the stage, the pavé is distributed evenly, making for a mini-Hell of the North. A cobbled stage was Froome's undoing in 2014, and also where eventual winner Vincenzo Nibali stamped his authority on the race. It's very likely that mechanicals or crashes will put the yellow jersey beyond the reach of one of the main contenders, or even bring his race to a close as similar ones did for Iban Mayo in 2004, Fränk Schleck in 2010 and Froome four seasons ago. While the cobbles ended Schleck's race, they helped Ryder Hesjedal to his top-10 finish at the 2010 Tour. He was the fourth rider to cross the line in Arenberg that year.

July 19, Stage 12

Bourg-Saint-Maurice Les Arcs to Alpe d'Huez, 175 km

Any Alpe d'Huez stage must be included among the days to watch. It's been three years since the storied 21-hairpin turns of its road last appeared. The climb ascends for 13.8 km at 8.1 per cent with a maximum of 13 per cent. The long climbs that come before the summit finish, the Col de la Madeleine and Col de la Croix de Fer, will make this a day of attrition instead of one of attacks.

July 25, Stage 17

Bagnères-de-Luchon to Saint-Lary-Soulan (Col de Portet), 65 km

The final week takes the race into the Pyrenees. Recently, Grand Tours have included short, intense mountain stages that tend to be like full-gas sprints, as opposed to marathons as with the Alpe d'Huez day. Riders face three climbs in 65 km, immediately taking on the 15-km Montée de Peyragudes after the flag before storming the 7.4-km Col de Val Louron-Azet and finally clambering up the Col de Portet, the last of the 105th edition's three summit finishes. The Portet is a real beast averaging 8.7 per cent over 16 km. Likely, someone will do an Alberto Contador: try to get away on the Val Louron-Azet or even the Peyresourde. Don't take your eyes off this one.

July 27, Stage 19

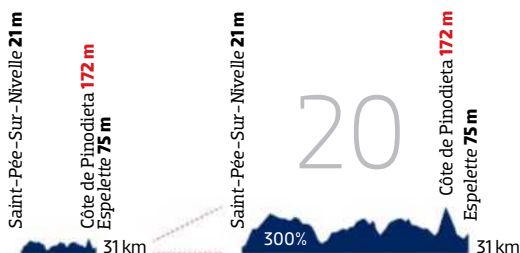
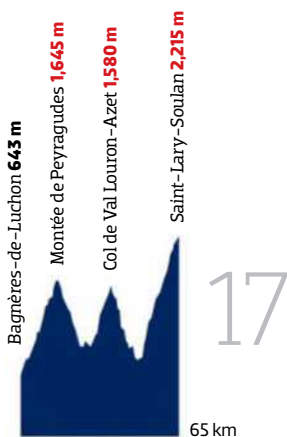
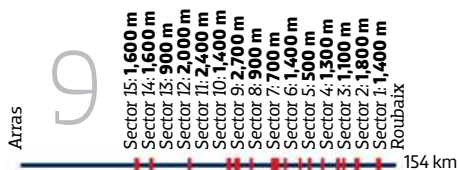
Lourdes to Laruns, 200 km

It's the final day in the mountains, albeit one without a summit finish. Stage 19 features a long route for a mountain stage with four categorized climbs, including classics such as the Col d'Aspin and Col du Tourmalet, before the last ascent of the 2018 Tour de France, the Col d'Aubisque peaking 19.5 km before the finish line in Laruns. Look for Nibali and desperate GC men attacking on the downhill.

July 28, Stage 20

Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle to Espelette, 31 km (ITT)

As in 2017, the final GC battle is a time trial, but the 2018 one is longer by 8.5 km. The course is hilly enough to give the non-specialists a chance, with the Côte de Pinodieta (900 m at 10.2 per cent) situated near the end. Last year the final chrono, also on Stage 20, was a disaster for Romain Bardet, who went from second place and 23-seconds down on Froome to 2:20 in arrears, holding onto the podium by single second.



The Five Win Club

If Froome lines up in Noirmoutier-en-l'Île this July, he'll be aim to do what only five other cyclists have done: win five Tours. The most recent inductee to the club, however, comes with a big asterisk as one looms over Froome.

Jacques Anquetil

France (1957, 1961–64)

The founding member of the Five Win Club, Maître Jacques Anquetil was confident and glamorous and seemed to embody the new, post-war France. He earned his wins in both the national-team and trade-team eras. His strength was in time trialling, giving him the second nickname Monsieur Chrono. Anquetil's 1961 win saw him lead from the second stage to the last. One of the most memorable rivalries in cycling history was between Anquetil and poor old Raymond Poulidor, "the Eternal Second," who represented the old, agrarian France. Second three times and third on five occasions, Poulidor, whose career spanned that of Anquetil and Eddy Merckx, never even wore the yellow jersey for a single day.

Eddy Merckx

Belgium (1969–72, 1974)

The most dominant cyclist in history, the Cannibal, owns the record for most Tour de France stage victories with 34. He claimed eight stages in both 1970 and 1974. His first Tour victory was by a margin of nearly 18 minutes. He captured the mountains and points jerseys along with the yellow. Injuries suffered in a velodrome crash in the off-season between 1969 and 1970 meant he was never as commanding as in that initial victory. He still won four more titles and even took 45 per cent of the races he entered in 1971. That year at the Tour, Spaniard Luis Ocaña led Merckx at the top of GC by seven minutes when both were involved in crashes. Ocaña was forced out of the race. The Belgian refused to wear the yellow jersey the next day.

Bernard Hinault

France (1978–79, 1981–82, 1985)

"As long as I breathe, I attack," said Bernard Hinault, also known as the Badger, a rider who attacked on feel, often to glorious effect. The man from Brittany was a true patron of the peloton, leading rider protests, pressing for better wages and working conditions, and even once announcing to the field, "There will be no attacks today because tomorrow's stage will be difficult." His last Tour triumph is infamous not only for the strain it put on his relationship with American La Vie Claire teammate and runner-up Greg LeMond (Canadian legend Steve Bauer was also on the team and came 10th), but also for Hinault battling on with two black eyes and a broken nose after a bad crash.

Miguel Indurain

Spain (1991–1995)

Modest, quiet and well-liked in the peloton for not putting on airs, Big Mig was the first to win five in a row. More than any of the other riders in this list, he based his quintet of triumphs on one discipline: the individual time trial. Powerful and blessed with both an enormous lung capacity and a resting heart rate of 28 b.p.m., Indurain would put huge time into his rivals in the chronos and then hold steady in the mountains, although he could win on the climbs, too. In a 1992 Tour time trial, he caught French two-time champion Laurent Fignon, who started six-minutes ahead of the Spaniard, and went on to win the stage by more than three minutes. Of the 10 time trials across his five Tour victories, he claimed eight.

Lance Armstrong

United States (*-*)

The American won seven Tours in a row, an excruciating time for both German Jan Ullrich, who came runner-up thrice in that period (1999–2005), and those who despised the brash Texan. Long suspected of doping, Armstrong, and thus his yellow jerseys, were forever stained after the United States Anti-Doping Agency concluded in 2012 that he had utilized performance-enhancing drugs throughout his career and acted as a ringleader in "the most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen." Armstrong admitted as much the next year in an interview with Oprah Winfrey. His legacy of cancer research fundraising tends to be overshadowed by his dragging the sport of cycling into further disrepute and leaving its showcase race with a huge hole in the GC winners' list.



Six Contenders Beyond Froome



Vincenzo Nibali

Italy, Bahrain-Merida

Apart from Chris Froome, no one had a better Grand Tour season than Vincenzo Nibali last year with a third-place finish in the Giro and second at the Vuelta, where he at least worried Froome a few times in the race's latter half. Nibali will likely bring a strong team team to the Tour. Gorka Izagirre could join brother Jon and Domenico Pozzovivo in the role of lively helper in the mountains. Nibali shipped 57-seconds to Froome in the 2017 Vuelta's 40-km time trial, and will be looking to limit losses in both the Tour's team and individual chronos. The Italian, who has won all three Grand Tours, is the oldest of the contenders. The Shark of Messina's early season form at stage races was satisfactory, but his Milan-San Remo victory was sublime.



Richie Porte

Australia, BMC

Richie Porte was on the form of his life last year and considered the main rival for Froome's crown. The Aussie's poor Grand Tour luck, however, continued with a nasty crash that took him to the hospital and swept up Dan Martin, scuppering the Irishman's chances of finishing on the podium. Porte is a great stage racer with Paris-Nice, Volta a Catalunya and Tour de Romandie titles on his palmares, but he always comes up short in Grand Tours, with only three top-20 achievements in 11 attempts, zero stage wins and no podiums. Can his luck change for 2018? Back-to-back wins in the Santos Tour Down Under eluded him in January by less than a second.

Nairo Quintana

Colombia, Movistar

Not everyone can win two consecutive Grand Tours in the same year like Chris Froome. Nairo Quintana, Movistar's Colombian climber, was one of three notable stage racers, including Thibaut Pinot and Romain Bardet, who followed up a fine 2017 Grand Tour with a mediocre one. Quintana was a shell of himself in last year's Tour: seldom making the mountain selections and placing 12th after coming second to Tom Dumoulin in the Giro. This year, Quintana is concentrating on the Tour, and will have Mikel Landa and Alejandro Valverde in his corner. The route might not be climb-y enough for Quintana. The cobbles of Stage 9 are a real threat to his chances. In February, he came runner-up in the inaugural Colombia Oro y Paz race.



Romain Bardet

France, Ag2r-La Mondiale

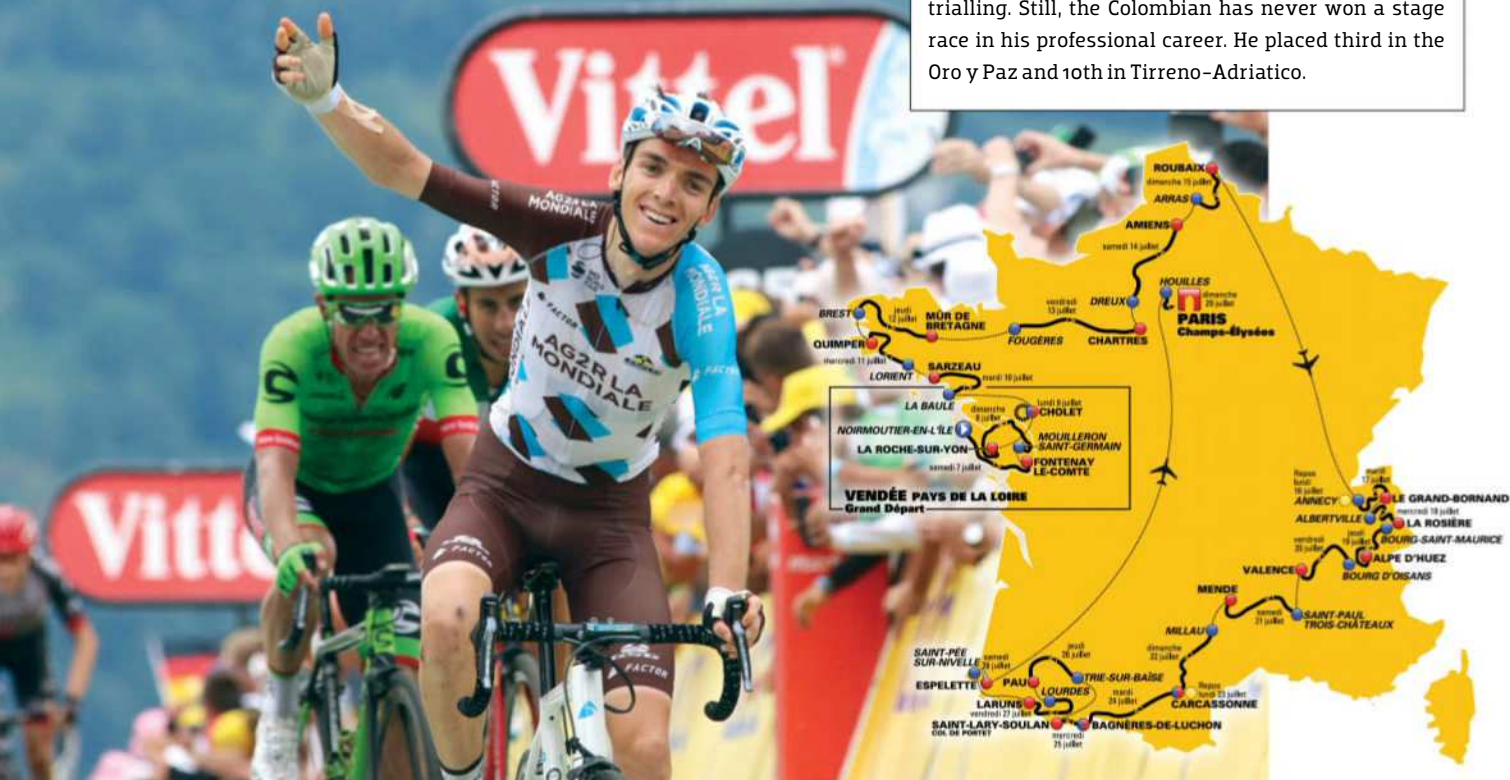
Ag2r-La Mondiale's ace, Romain Bardet, is the French favourite and has stood on the final podium twice, posting four top-10s from five starts. But Bardet's weak time trialling hampers him. If he can't crack Froome on the climbs, he has no chance of winning. Last year, even with his team making strong, smart moves, he was, for the most part, frustrated in his attempts to shake his rivals, although his triumph on Peyragudes was sheer brilliance. Bardet took a one-day race victory in late February before earning a surprise runner-up spot in the Strade Bianche. His notable stage race results were 13th in both Tirreno-Adriatico and Itzulia Basque Country.

Rigoberto Uran

Colombia,

EF Education First Drapac presented by Cannondale

After back-to-back runner-up spots in the 2013 and 2014 Giros, Rigoberto Uran's unspectacular Grand Tour results during the next couple of seasons almost made one dismiss him as a main contender. But in 2017, the EF Education First Drapac man was back to his finest, earning his greatest Grand Tour accomplishment by coming second to Froome. His stage win while stuck in his bike's 53 x 11 gear is the stuff of legends. Uran tends to follow attacks instead of launching them, but it's an effective strategy, especially with his sharp time trialling. Still, the Colombian has never won a stage race in his professional career. He placed third in the Oro y Paz and 10th in Tirreno-Adriatico.



OPPOSITE TOP
Vincenzo Nibali
battles Chris
Froome at the 2017
Vuelta on Stage 11

OPPOSITE RIGHT
Nairo Quintana at
the 2017 Tour

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
Richie Porte

ABOVE
Romain Bardet at
the 2017 Tour de
France takes the
Stage 12 win ahead
of Rigoberto Uran

RIGHT
Tom Dumoulin
wins the 2017 Giro

Tom Dumoulin

The Netherlands, Sunweb

The Butterfly of Maastricht was the last on this list to throw his casquette in the 2018 Tour ring and the only fellow besides Froome to win a Grand Tour last year. Dumoulin was able to use his somewhat disappointing 2015 Vuelta experience, where he led going into the final day in the mountains before placing sixth on GC, to great effect in the 2017 Giro, holding off Nibali and Quintana to become the first Dutch Grand Tour winner since 1980. Dumoulin is the one contender who not only can hold with Froome in the chronos, but who can also beat the Brit. An early season full of difficulties had Dumoulin place 38th in the Abu Dhabi Tour and crash out of Tirreno-Adriatico. 📍



A mountain biker wearing a red and blue outfit and a helmet is riding a trail bike through a forest. The rider is leaning forward, and a cloud of dust is kicked up from the front wheel. The background consists of tall, thin trees with green foliage.

AN ENDURO RIDE FOR YOU

THE YOUNG MOUNTAIN BIKING DISCIPLINE,
WITH ITS VERSATILE FORMAT AND OPEN
CULTURE, REALLY DOES HAVE SOMETHING
FOR EVERYONE — INCLUDING LOADS OF FUN

by **Tara Nolan**

What's it like to do an enduro? Some of the words riders use to describe enduro events are "community," "social" and even "party." While you don't often hear races referred to as parties, there is something about the scene that's so much more relaxed and different than, say, cross country or road. "It's taking what most people do on the weekend and turning it into a race – you bomb down, race a stage, high five and do it all over again," says Jay Balabas, a part owner of Bicycle Cafe Canmore and organizer of the Canmore portion of the MEC Canadian National Enduro Series.

If you are a competitive type, you still get that personal accomplishment of riding against the clock down some kick-ass trails – or against a fellow competitor – but then the race circles back to that social aspect as you climb once again. "It's a fun format that I find slightly more relaxed," says Eric Goodwin, who is on the board for Squamish Off Road Cycling Association (SORCA). "In an XC racer, Goodwin says, you go go go until you almost fall over the finish line and feel like you're going to die. With enduros, it's different. "You go hard and then you get a rest."

Peter Appleton, a former elite pro racer and co-owner of the Grupetto Café in Dundas, Ont., witnessed the early years of enduro in Europe, around 2006. As he explains it, there was a wide gap between cross country and downhill, and enduros filled it, essentially by taking what alpinists and hikers were doing (that is, not taking the gondola up the mountain) and doing it on a bicycle. When he ran the Ontario Cup DH race series, Appleton created a version of this enduro format, which took the name Super D – essentially a precursor to the events now being held across the country.

Although enduro racing is still at a relatively nascent stage in Canada, the country has established itself on the enduro scene with a few notable series, some with events that serve as qualifiers for the international Enduro World Series. To get a snapshot of the national scene as it continues to grow, I spoke to a few organizers and racers of various levels. (Spoiler alert: they say enduro super social and fun. But you'll still want to know why and how.) They also have nuggets of advice, which will make you want to out on the trails.



FROM BACK WOODS TO BIKE PARKS



“ENDURO IS OFTEN PERCEIVED AND ORGANIZED AS AN EXTREME DISCIPLINE OF MOUNTAIN BIKING, BUT IT HAS THE ABILITY TO BE FORMATTED TO FIT ALL LEVELS OF RIDERS.”

Part of the appeal of a lot of enduros is the remoteness and technical aspect of some races, which, on the flip side, could be a deterrent for some. How remote? Ted Morton, founder of the Canadian National Enduro Series, also owns and operates the Revelstoke 3-Day Heli-Enduro, North America's first-ever helicopter-supported mountain bike race. The event is for confident black or double-black level riders because the trails are so remote. Being self-sufficient is a must.

The remote, backwoods races are what Adrian Camposilvan, now a Hamilton-based carpenter, found most appealing when he was doing DH and enduro races while living on the West Coast. The Big Mountain Enduro in Crested Butte, Colo., where a shuttle took racers up forest service roads before a long pedal farther out into the backcountry with little to no radio service, was especially memorable.

Balabas, who had to pivot from racing to behind-the-scenes work after a serious crash in 2015, is happy to remain a part of the enduro community by organizing various races. In 2017, Balabas launched the TransCR Enduro in the remote jungle of Costa Rica, where he's been mountain biking since 2008. "It's a great way to show people an area I appreciate riding in," he says, adding that the steep, gnarly terrain is best suited to advanced riders.

On the other side of the enduro spectrum, the Quebec-based Marin Wildside Enduro Series, now in its third season, states on its home page that its goal is to offer quality enduro mountain bike events for all levels of cyclists. "Enduro is often perceived and organized as an extreme discipline of mountain biking, but it has the ability to be formatted to fit all levels of riders and we would like to see more of that in the future," says one of the series' founders, Andre Lecompte, who adds that there are stages for kids all the way up to the pros, so everyone can participate.



Photos: James Cattaneach, James Cattaneach, Paris Gore



TIPS AND TALES FROM THE TRAILS

MELANIE POEL

For Melanie Poel, a Trek women's advocate from Dundas, Ont., getting a spot in the 2014 women's-only Hot On Your Heels enduro was a stroke of luck that coincided with a trip to Squamish, B.C. Apparently it's a hot ticket because prior to her travel plans, Poel's friend, Anita Cairns, had tried to register (the event sells out in a matter of hours), but got wait-listed. A week or two before her visit, Cairns was informed she got in, so she made sure Poel could join her. Poel spent the week in Squamish and avoided pre-riding the course so she could ride as many trails as she could before going home.

Although racers were to drop in 30 seconds apart on the timed downhill sections, Poel and her friend managed to drop in together each time. "She would holler out things as she was going," explains Poel. "'Big drop, stay left,' that kind of thing. I couldn't really tell what she was saying, but if I heard her yelling, I paid attention."

Poel admits she was a little nervous that first year, but had a great time. "That race is very different than anything I've ever seen before," she says, partly referring to the "scantily clad, really fit dudes" that were there

to volunteer. At one point, as she describes it, there were a couple of random guys wearing speedos and aprons cooking bacon on a barbecue. At another point, there were a couple of guys wearing loincloths handing out freezies. "It's like one part race, one part party, which I think really helps take away from the competitiveness of it," Poel says.



POEL'S TIPS

- If you travel across time zones to your race, give yourself at least a day or two to get over the jet lag.
- Don't compare yourself with other people. Compare yourself with yourself and enjoy the ride.

EVENT-SPECIFIC TIP

- If you're doing **Hot On Your Heels**, you definitely need to bring your phone or a camera. Put it in a bag because you most likely will get wet, either by a Super Soaker or the conditions.



WE'RE NOT JUST RACING BIKES; WE'RE CREATING, BUILDING AND COLLABORATING AT EVERY STEP.



OZ REN

As someone who has done a lot of racing – road, track, cyclocross, cross country, 24-hours, adventure racing – Oz Ren, a mechanic at Freewheel Cycle in Dundas, Ont., says he really likes the format of an enduro and the social piece. He tried the Blue Mountain Enduro in Ontario this past summer. "The big part is, whether you're faster or slower than your friends on the climbs, you can stay with them," says Ren, who recommends that if you're doing the race with friends that they're in your age category. "A lot of the time when you're racing, you're by yourself dealing with your own stuff and you don't get a chance to reflect on it with your friends."

At the end of last season, Ren and his friends organized a "Stravaduro," where the group would ride together stage to stage and then time themselves on certain Strava segments. "It was a fun way to do a group ride," he says. This season, Ren is looking at Grinduro California, another hybrid that mixes a gravel grinder with MTB-style enduro.

TIPS CONTINUED

TED MORTON'S TALES

"I have so many stories to share," says Ted Morton, "but two stories I always tell. One story is about one of the kids who raced our series. His dad came up to me after an event and told me that he was thrilled about the day. Why? Because his child had to struggle, his kid had to push, ride, hike his bike up, up, up and up. His dad was honest in saying that he didn't know if junior would make it through the day and that he'd never done anything like this. He was ecstatic at his child's perseverance, his willingness to endure, and his patience when things broke or when he was tired. It was such a cool story.

"The other one is about the heli-enduro [the Revelstoke 3-Day]. I really created this event to help build capacity for a trail that needed some revitalization; it's iconic, a turn-of-the-century forest lookout. With the series, I am able to help create stewardship capacity for local communities and trails. We've given back close to \$90,000 in four years. For this specific trail in Revelstoke, I worked with some key partners to bring \$15,000 and leverage that through partners to a total project value of \$25,000. That's what is cool. We're not just racing bikes; we're creating, building and collaborating at every step.

"Also, we had an athlete receive a \$40,000 scholarship to university because of his racing results and involvement on our development team. That's wild."



REN'S TIPS

- You can self-seed, in a sense, when you're at the top of a segment. At the top, racers are usually spaced out by 30 seconds, but a friend recognized a former pro DH racer at one point. They allowed him to cut in. "There's no need for me to be in front of someone who is a lot faster," he says.
- Make sure to stay hydrated and well-nourished – it's a pretty long day.
- While Ren recommends bringing a few things that can help with minor fixes – shift cable, derailleur hanger, spare links – he says only bring what you know how to fix.



Photos: Paris Gore, Courtesy Trans CR, Flow Photo

WHERE IS ENDURO HEADING?

When I spoke with Ted Morton in March, he had just completed the Enduro World Series event held in Lo Barnechea, Chile (as a privateer) and was headed to Manizales, Colombia for the next one. And with his aforementioned credentials (and a few others related to enduro), it's fair to say Morton is pretty tapped into Canada's enduro scene. I asked Morton where he thinks the sport is going and whether it might soon fall under the UCI umbrella.

"I think the sport is maturing quickly, local clubs are doing a phenomenal job at hosting inclusive beginner events, while we've become somewhat of the more competitive series," he said. "There are literally more than 30 enduro events in B.C. alone this summer. With so many events there is something for everyone.

"The uci is likely looking at sanctioning this year or next – it's a complicated process for event organizers like me who've helped create the discipline. I'm hopeful that they'll reach out to people like me and collaborate on creating the best process for the discipline. I am a little hesitant on the implications for our series, as of right now, we have a lot of freedom to grow and change to be whatever the riders want."



ROANNE ENGLISH

Roanne English of Cumberland, B.C., naturally fell into enduros because they featured the same community of riders she rode and raced XC with on a regular basis. English has pedalled through most of the Island Cup enduros and a couple of other B.C.-based races. While she considers enduro to be her racing weakness, she likes the fitness challenge, but is a bit afraid of speed and steepness. She says that for her, it's all about the community of riders and pushing herself harder than she would on a regular ride. To newbies, she says to just go for it. "Also, practise riding fast and doing long descents without stopping," she adds.

ADRIAN CAMPOSILVAN


"Have a bike that doesn't break," recommends Camposilvan, who says he is pretty hard on his bikes and has cracked three or four frames. If you are doing a multi-day race, your bike needs to last.

CAROLYN DUNCAN

Not long ago, Carolyn Duncan picked up mountain biking when her knees started to give her trouble. She's only been racing cross country for two and a half years with the Toronto chapter of The Wild Bettys women's mountain biking club, but has dipped her toe in the enduro scene in Virginia where she is currently based. She says the terrain there is more conducive to enduros than XC because it has a lot of big climbs and fast downhill, and it's technical. Duncan, who plans to do the Blue Mountain edition of the Canadian National Enduro Series this year, says Virginia has a great intro series called the D-Cup. "For me, every time I go out is a personal best," she says. "Seeing my times improve is really encouraging."

DUNCAN'S TIP

- Speak with somebody who has done the event before. Try to pre-ride the course with somebody who knows the area. 📍

A photograph of two cyclists riding on a gravel trail. The cyclist in the foreground is wearing a green and black jersey and a black helmet, with a large black pannier bag on the front of their bike. The second cyclist is further down the trail, also wearing a green jersey and a helmet. The trail is surrounded by lush green vegetation and a stream flows alongside it. The background is a dense forest of tall evergreen trees under a clear blue sky.

Bikepacking just 115 km from Toronto. Seriously.

**A FULLY LOADED ADVENTURE ON
THE CENTRAL ONTARIO LOOP TRAIL**



Since bikepacking's birth, the discipline has been closely linked to big rides in western North America, such as the iconic Continental Divide route and the Arizona Trail. But as the popularity of this backpacking or bike-touring style of travel continues to grow, more adventure-seeking riders are looking to kick up some dirt well east of the Rockies. So when an email landed in my inbox inviting me on a predominantly off-road multi-day ride in Ontario this past September, I had to sign on to see if I could have an inspiring bikepacking trip without the need of a plane ticket.

The Central Ontario Loop Trail (COLT) makes use largely of an extensive network of rail trails converted from a once thriving railway. The trail is an underserved tourism initiative linking together a handful of communities in the heart of the province that were major players in Ontario's mining and forestry industries years ago. Long a popular playground for ARVs, dirt bikes and snowmobiles, the paths are now seeing more non-motorized bikepackers as they ride the route that's within easy striking distance of major hubs. At certain points, it's as close as 110 km to Toronto and 215 km to Ottawa.

My trip included the brothers Steve and Greg Shikaze, along with Hal Judd, a veteran of nearly every North American mountain bike stage race and who had just completed a harrowing bikepacking trip along the Colorado Trail. Everyone but me was outfitted with cushy fat bikes and full-on bikepacking gear. I had a mountain bike frame that had many features for touring. But how gnarly could the Ontario backcountry really be?

Our pedalling began on the Haliburton County Rail Trail, which shoots south from the town of Haliburton as it follows the lazy Burnt River. Along the way, it rewarded us with plenty of eye candy including postcard-perfect tree reflections in small lakes and historical trestle bridges that speak of the region's industrious past. A caravan of cheerful women on carts being pulled by ponies proved you never know what you'll come across when touring on two wheels.

Kinmount, a village of roughly 500 denizens notable for once thriving on forestry and being among the first Icelandic settlements in Canada, came quickly, followed by the Victoria Rail Trail, which is dominated by smooth, crushed gravel all the way to the refuelling station of Sweet Bottoms Coffee in Fenelon Falls. "Follow me and I'll show you guys that you've come to a cycling-friendly business," said owner Wayne Jolly. A bit apprehensive, we followed him into a back room of his heritage building only to encounter bike porn. Throughout many years, Jolly has amassed a collection of celeste Bianchi race bikes dating back decades. We could see that it gave Jolly great pleasure to present such cycling history. I, however, do prefer the modern convenience of not needing to dismount from my bike for the simple act of changing gears.

As we rode south toward Lindsay, more and more fecund farmland appeared on either side of the trail. When I would sometimes get ahead of everyone in my group, the rumble of their approaching fat bikes sounded like a build-up to a *Lord of the Rings* battle scene.



story and photos by
Matthew Kadey

From Lindsay, colt riders can continue south via the Ganaraska Forest, home to a trail that has an Epic designation by the International Mountain Bike Association, which means the route meets a high standard of backcountry riding. Once they reach Lake Ontario, they can pedal along the paved Waterfront Trail through towns

Provincial Park where a falling sun set the beach aglow. We had ridden roughly 100 km. Greg and Hal cast their fishing lines. We swatted at swarm of pestering bugs that were still thriving in the late-season heat wave.

Awakening to another absurdly sultry morning, we broke down camp, spooned up oatmeal and jumped on

our bikes with uncompromised optimism for the day ahead. The Kawartha section of the Great Trail heading east toward Peterborough is nearly as smooth as ancient river stones. It brought us to the Doube's Trestle Bridge. The decommissioned railway bridge spans 200m and is perched over the verdant Buttermilk Valley, affording us plenty of photo ops.

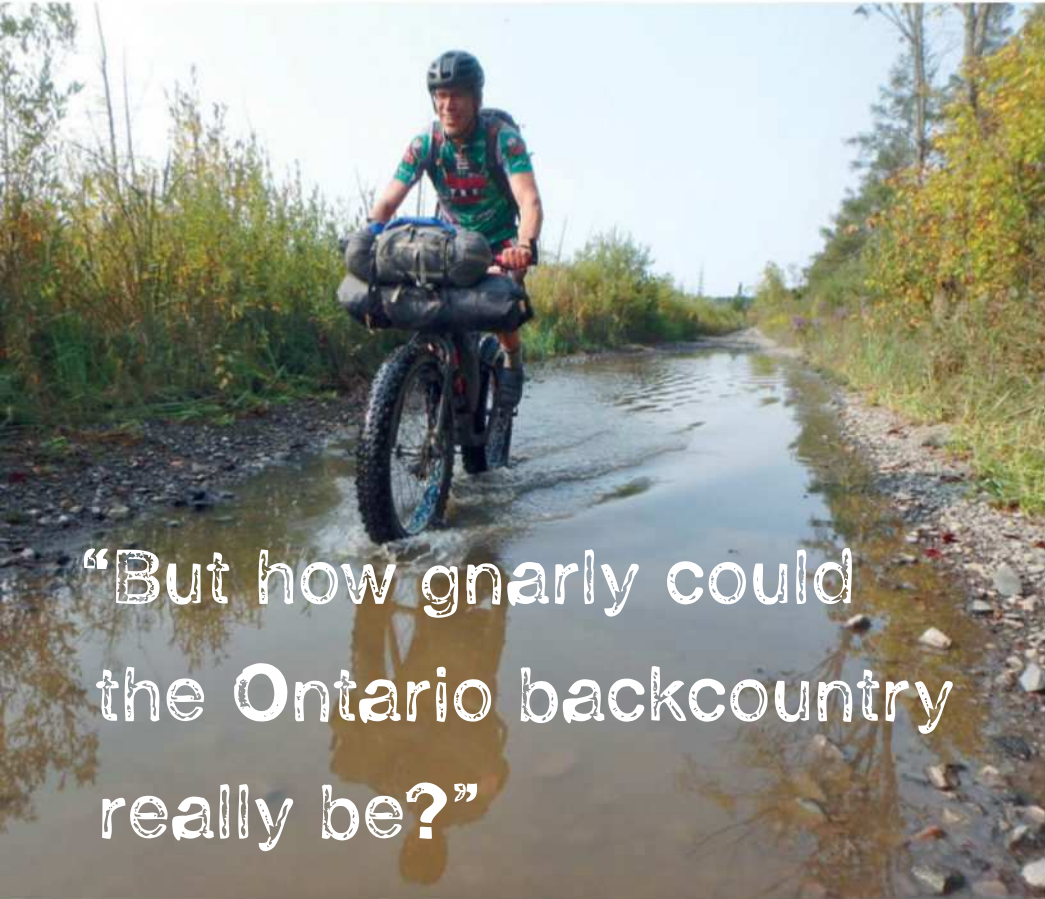
I had plotted a route, and then used GPS to take us around bustling downtown Peterborough in favour of quiet side roads and community trails. Modern technology can simplify route finding to keep your bikepacking trip smooth. For less-than-confident map readers, GPS removes any was-that-the-correct-turn angst. Leading the group around the town, I felt a tad like a tour guide and considered asking for post-trip tips.

After a couple hours of mellow rail trail cycling that skirted us around soft-hued farmers' fields, I was hungry for a touch of more varied riding. I lacked the trail Zen of my riding mates and craved the undu-

lations that back roads can afford. I've always found the constant pedalling (read: no coasting) that rail trail riding demands to be surprising difficult, both physically and at times mentally. And who says bikepacking is only about riding the trails and can't be something you make your own? So breaking away from the pack, I selfishly bolted off onto dirt-road goodness. Between Peterborough and

such as Port Hope and Cobourg before heading back north. We fancied the more inland option of pedalling due east from Lindsay on a section of the Trans Canada Trail, now promoted as the coast-to-coast Great Trail.

After a first day that was less rumble and tumble than expected and much warmer than the September date suggested it should be, we set up camp at Emily Lake



“But how gnarly could the Ontario backcountry really be?”





COLT Essentials

For an excellent resource on COLT and need-to-know information, such as accommodation and fuelling options, go to bikepacking.com and head to the Routes section. For the most part, there are plenty of services along the way.

Depending on your route choice and speed, the COLT is a three-to-five day undertaking. It can be pedalled in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction and has no set starting point.

Owing to some rugged sections, it's best to tackle the COLT on a mountain bike. But a large stretch from Kinmount to Campbellford is smooth enough for a gravel bike. You can go with bikepacking style handlebar, frame and seat bags. Or, you can do as I did and use old-school panniers.

To save yourself from being carried off the trail by bugs and from getting wet through foot-soaking flooded sections, the route is best tackled in late summer or early fall. The benefit of going after Labour Day is there can be less pressure on camping spots.

Hastings, the tree-lined back roads were deliciously undulating and car-free. I arrived in Hastings famished and in good spirits. A plump boy boasted about the meat-lovers' pizza on offer at the Bridgewater Café, but I decided on a bagel and cream cheese – less of a gut bomb – washed down with iced-coffee rocket fuel. Situated near Rice Lake, where I used to reel in largemouth bass in my pre-cycling youth, Hastings oozes with that classic small-town Ontario cottage-country charm. The historic Lock 18 on the Trent Severn Waterway was clearly luring in the from-out-of-town crowd, particularly with the sun beaming brightly.

The day's highlight was in the town of Campbellford: the Ranney Gorge Suspension Bridge in Ferris Provincial Park. Hovering above the expansive Ranney Gorge and rushing Trent River, the 92-m-long bridge swayed ever so slightly as our loaded rigs moved over it. Down below were rows of hefty turtles sunning themselves on the rocks.

It was hard to believe that the air in September could be impregnated with

so much humidity. By the time the trail dumped us in the former iron-mining town of Marmora after 125 km of pedalling, our collective water reserves and energy levels were nearing empty. Even if dominated by trailers, the Crowe Valley Campground perched along the eponymous river was a pleasant spot to pitch our tents for the night. We passed Scotch around a fire and trumpeted tales of great bike feats as the night flowed in. Tomorrow, we'd create more stories.

We pedalled onto the Hastings Heritage Trail just outside of Marmora. It was the most rugged riding of the trip in wilderness. The trail was populated by rutted sections (thank you, motorized vehicles). A number of puddle crossings requiring careful negotiation to keep us from soaking our feet. In spring, I imagine that riding

into an eyeball-rattling bumpy, sandy obstacle course. Everyone else in my group cruised on more suitable extra-fat tires. With my more humble 2.5" setup, I was flailing around like a fish on a dock. Steve had entered into a dark place and was in little mood for conversation. Still feeling the consequences of a

concussion-inducing fall several months ago, Steve found the long days in the saddle tested his resolve. As it is often the case with bike touring, it's mind over matter. On the whole, Steve was rocking it.

After another day with more than 100 km of riding loaded bikes with a net uphill, the guys were in the mood for just one thing upon entering Bancroft: well-earned craft beer and burgers at the Bancroft Brewery Co. I was overjoyed when I saw a small ice cream parlour ready to satisfy my urge for sugary, creamy calories with a number of Kawartha Dairy flavours.

Blessed with a picturesque setting on the meandering York River, River Bend Park was the perfect place to rest our ragged bodies and partake in calorie gluttony. Dreams of sun, sand and saddle sores under a star-filled sky were only interrupted by the sounds of bodies flopping around on sleeping mats.

To connect our loop, we plotted a route that moved west from Bancroft back to Haliburton. A morning fog that danced off Baptiste Lake greeted us as we took on a ride dominated by enthralling paved and dirt country



through this marshland would be bug-infested and so misery-worthy of a #packrafting hashtag on Instagram. But in the early fall, with the puddles more subdued, we embraced our childish sides and relished the chance to splash up water still with the rubber side down. Jumping out of harm's way, the frogs didn't share our enthusiasm.

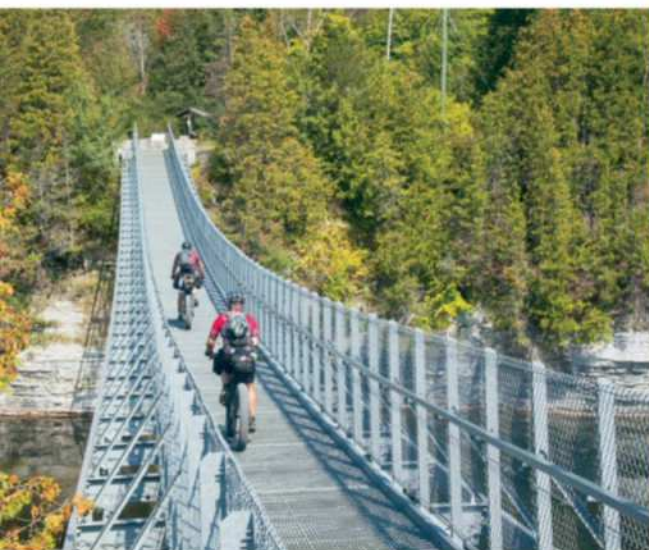
As we cranked northward, this section of the COLT provided a visual buffet of tree tunnels, blue heron-populated marshes and leaves beginning to show their late-season blush. As a rider, you also feel the most isolated on this section of the route owing to a very light population density. I once again took some rugged dirt roads, but these verged on eerily empty. The only thing I could hear on the frequent rocky, punchy climbs was my heart ready to pound out of my chest.

On the run into Bancroft, the trail changed personality

roads. They don't call it the Highlands for nothing. These paths have more ups and downs than a Van Halen guitar solo. But despite legs that were crying foul, there were few complaints in the group as our ride weaved its way through some of the best Canadian Shield landscape that this northern part of Central Ontario has to offer. It's a land where lakes seemingly outnumber residents by a good margin. Also, I was amazed how fast the fatties could move on pavement when motivated to do so.

We refuelled at Agnew's General Store, known as the geocaching capital of Canada, in the hamlet of Wilberforce. In case you're playing along, this store that sells everything from fishing line to ice-cream sandwiches can be found at N45° 02.267' W078° 13.383'.

Owing to the plethora of lakes and ponds, there is no direct line from A to B in this land. So we snaked our way toward the finish line slowly. By the time we arrived at the Little Tart bakery on the outskirts of Haliburton, the number of inclines had redlined my blood sugar. Just like tackling the COLT on two wheels, the oozy butter tart at the bakery was satisfyingly sweet. 🍪





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SPEED IS NOT.**

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POC



FOIL DISC

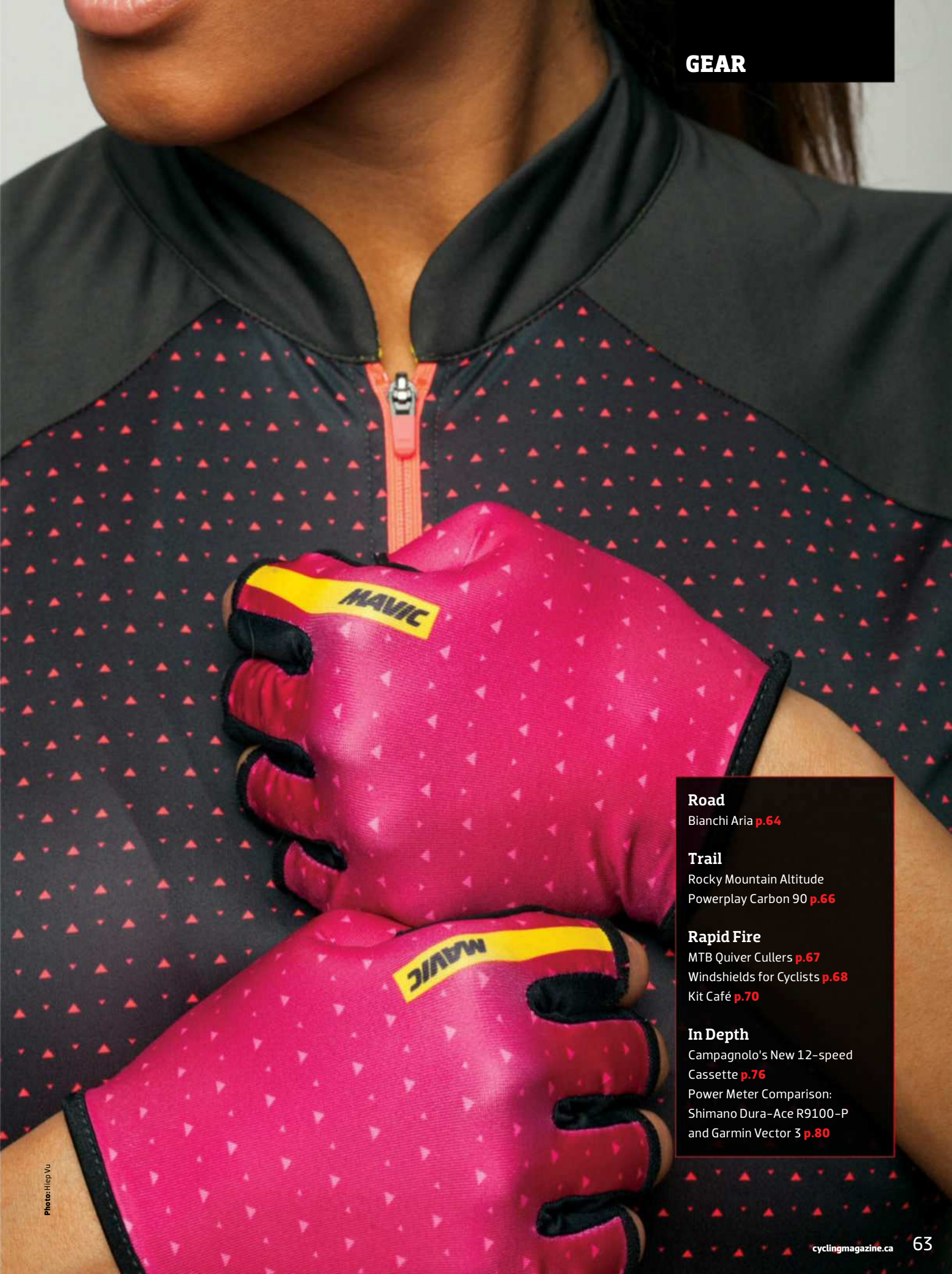


FASTER FOR LONGER

NO SHORTCUTS

The later you brake the longer you can keep your speed. We gain speed and performance not only with aerodynamics and increased power output but also with braking performance. The Foil Disc gives you trust in your bike to carry your speed until the last possible moment in all conditions.





Road

Bianchi Aria **p.64**

Trail

Rocky Mountain Altitude
Powerplay Carbon 90 **p.66**

Rapid Fire

MTB Quiver Cullers **p.67**
Windshields for Cyclists **p.68**
Kit Café **p.70**

In Depth

Campagnolo's New 12-speed
Cassette **p.76**
Power Meter Comparison:
Shimano Dura-Ace R9100-P
and Garmin Vector 3 **p.80**



Bianchi Aria

Wind slicing made more accessible

reviewed by **Matthew Pioro**

One of my early rides on the Bianchi Aria was a blustery one, which is appropriate for the bike by the Treviglio, Italy-based company. Bianchi started developing the aero road machine in spring 2016. It made its debut just before the 2017 summer riding season. I, however, got a hold of the bike early this spring, a season that seemed designed for testing an aero bike. I "enjoyed" headwinds and crosswinds, and somehow was able to avoid tailwinds.

The Aria draws features from the company's high-end aero-road Oltre line and the Aquila time trial bike. Bianchi had specific goals for this new rig. "The project for our engineers was to develop an aero racing geometry bike, at a medium-high level price range, because it was missing in our product lineup," said Bianchi global product manager Angelo Lecchi. Lecchi's words are well-chosen: at \$4,250, I'd say the bike is at the higher end of medium-high.

The Campagnolo build, while very close in price to the Shimano 105 model, is well matched with the frame. Campy released Centaur last year with the hopes of getting its mid-range gruppo spec'd on stock bikes. It's just appropriate to have the two Italian brands together. The Centaur system worked great. As expected, it wasn't as refined as Super Record or Record sets. With the Centaur, I needed a bit more muscle for shifts from the small, 34-tooth ring to

the big 50-tooth than I would have with the carbon groupsets. The stopping power provided by the dual-pivot brakes was strong and consistent. For fans of disc brakes, the Aria also comes in Ultegra and 105 models with rotors.


The alloy Vision Team 35 Comp wheels worked well with the frame. They're a good all-round set of workhorse hoops that can slice the wind. For a bigger aero advantage, and to really complement the frame, I'd run slightly deeper wheels. Vision's carbon Metron 55 SL clinchers would be a good pick.

Angelo Lecchi said the Aria isn't as stiff as the Oltre, which I remember as race-ready rigid. The Aria, however, is no slouch when it comes to channelling the power you put into the pedals. It has a 86.5-mm-wide bottom-bracket shell. The head tube is tapered with a 1 1/8"-diameter bearing at the top and a 1 1/4" at the bottom. I'd say the handling isn't as sharp as Bianchi's high-end Specialissima, but totally capable in the corners. My only quibble with the design is the seatpost clamp. Instead of a collar to hold the post in place, the frame uses a plug that you drop into the top tube and snug up with bolt. Setting your saddle height as you get the piece wedged into place is tricky,

at best. I understand that this setup keeps the shapes more aerodynamic, but this gain comes at the expense of a smooth user experience.

Bianchi says the Aria's tube shapes have been tested in a wind tunnel, but is short on details. The shaping of the fork and its integration with the head and down tubes look legit. My own aero testing is a bit anecdotal. On one of those blustery spring days, I rode with a group into a headwind. While my early season fitness was coming along, I was

Bianchi Aria	
Components	Campagnolo Centaur drivetrain and brakes, Reparto Corse handlebar and stem, Selle San Marco Monza Startup saddle
Wheels	Vision Team 35 Comp
Sizes (cm)	47, 50, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61
Price	\$4,250
Website	bianchicanada.com

surprised to find myself at the front not huffing and puffing, but chatting, actually able to have a conversation for kilometres at a good pace. I was comfortable in drops and happy to cruise. Whatever the drag coefficient, the Aria was a pleasure to ride into the wind. 

Gran Fondo
Badlands 

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2 GREAT RIDES 1 AMAZING DAY



GRANFONDOBADLANDS.CA

Rocky Mountain Altitude Powerplay Carbon 90

A little bit of help makes for fast and fun rides on the trails

GEAR

TRAIL TEST

reviewed by Brad Hunter

In February, Rocky Mountain's eMTB lineup, which has seen substantial European success, launched at home. The company itself engineered a motor-drive-and-battery system to fit neatly in and around its desired pivot and shock locations. By not having to build the frame around an outsourced motor, the company didn't have to make compromises with its geometry. As a result, the Altitude Powerplay, a nearly 50-lb. bike, feels surprisingly nimble and quite easy to manoeuvre through all but the most techy trails, especially when trying to get the front wheel up over obstacles.

Altitude Powerplay models have proper ebike-specific components including a stiffer more robust Fox 36 fork, SRAM Guide RE four-piston brakes and the wide-range EX1 drivetrain. The full carbon frame on the top model, the Carbon 90, helps keep flex minimal. Most people who picked the bike up were surprised it was not heavier. The 1 x 8 drivetrain works very well; it's designed to shift only one gear at a time, reducing the chance of a

broken chain with all the torque that motor could deliver. That said, the sensitivity with which the power assist operates is impressive. When you need to finesse the output over slippery rooted climbs, the system reads your input well to keep you from spinning out. If I ever found myself stalled out, not able to get restarted on a tricky climb, the integrated walk mode was helpful as pushing the 47.6-lb. bike uphill is not a fun task. In this mode, you can change gears while walking along, which adjusts the speed that the bike moves.

The controller for the system sits tidily above the dropper lever on the left side of the bar and gives basic information to the rider, such as battery level and current assist level. For more detailed GPS-based data, including maps and speed, a phone bar mount and a free download of the Ebikemotion app will pair most smartphones, via bluetooth, to the system. This feature also allows you to adjust the motor maps to your own liking, instantly. During early testing, I needed to turn down the full power slightly as there was still ice and snow on the trails. I found the Ludicrous setting, as they call it, too much for those conditions. Once things dried up, it was a different story. I raised all the power settings up from stock. I found myself being able to fit rides into much shorter time windows and would always finish with lots of charge leftover. You will be fresher in the legs. I found, however, the extra weight of the bike did show my lack of upper-body work this past winter. I was knocking out 15-km trail rides with 600 m of climbing and black-diamond descents in around 50 minutes, after doing five hours of trail work that day and having no real desire to get on my unassisted bike.

For some riders, the eMTB category is still a bit contentious. There are fans and haters. Still, anyone who threw a leg over my test bike had a pretty big grin after a few pedal strokes. 🍷

"I was knocking out 15-km trail rides with 600 m of climbing and black-diamond descents in around 50 minutes."

Rocky Mountain Altitude Powerplay Carbon 90

Components SRAM EX1 rear derailleur, SRAM XG-899 11-48 tooth cassette, SRAM Guide RE brakes and levers

Suspension Fox 36 Float EVOL FIT4 Factory fork with 160 mm of travel, Fox Float DPS EVOL Factory shock with 150 mm of travel

Wheels Rocky Mountain 30AM Carbon

Sizes S, M, L, XL

Price \$13,000

Website bikes.com



Quiver Cullers

Five mountain bikes that can almost do it all

GEAR

RAPID FIRE

by Matt Stetson

With so many different brands offering so many different bikes, it sometimes feels like you should have a collection with various travel lengths and geometries for any given ride. The term "quiver killer" gets tossed around in the mountain bike world. The idea of replacing a stable of steeds with a single stud certainly has its appeal. The quiver-killing mountain bike, however, still holds unicorn status, and has yet to be spotted. In the meantime, here are five bikes that are extremely versatile and capable, depending on where you ride.

For the West

A quiver killer for the region that brought us freeride and seemingly endless descents needs to be capable of soaking up some seriously steep terrain littered with obstacles.

Intense Recluse Foundation \$4,490

From a brand with a storied history in gravity racing, the Recluse from Intense is one capable and versatile bike. The full carbon frame keeps weight down while the RockShox 140-mm rear and 150-mm front suspension are both JS Tuned, which optimizes pedalling efficiency for climbing. Coming in with a 66-degree head-tube angle, the Recluse is set up for tackling steep trails while also offering plenty of agility and manoeuvrability thanks to the 27.5" wheels. (*mec.ca*)

Scott Genius Contessa 720 \$5,400

The 2018 Scott Genius platform saw a huge update. As a result, the company has produced one of its most capable trail bikes to date. The standout feature is the bike's ability to change its rear-shock tune and travel on the fly. With the flip of the TwinLoc remote switch, the Genius can transform from a 150-mm boulder-gobbling beast to a more efficient-pedalling, 100-mm-rear-travel climbing machine. Even though the Genius can't compete with a 100-mm XC bike in the climbing department, it would be hard to find a 150-mm trail bike with the climbing capabilities of the Genius. (*micasport.com*)



"The quiver-killing mountain bike still holds unicorn status."



For the East

With thousands of kilometres of winding singletrack, jagged rocks and very little lift access or resort riding, the Canadian Shield of the east demands a quiver killer that is as good at pedalling up as it is at shredding down.

Rock Mountain Thunderbolt Carbon 70 \$6,799

From the West Coast brand comes the Thunderbolt, a bike that works well in the East. With 130 mm of travel, the Thunderbolt is capable of soaking up most of what the Canadian Shield has to offer. With Rocky's Ride-9 adjustment system, you can set the suspension and geometry the way you like them for climbing and then for descending. The Thunderbolt is only available with 27.5" wheels, which makes it a great option for those who like to rail corners or prefer the faster acceleration of smaller hoops. Rocky does stay true to its roots with a 140-mm B.C. edition Thunderbolt for those who need the extra travel. (*bikes.com*)

Trek Fuel EX 8 Women's \$4,300

Trek's Fuel line has evolved to meet the current needs of riders looking for bikes that can tackle varied terrain. The Fuel EX 8 Women's edition follows the line and offers up a very well-rounded package. It has an aluminum frame paired with a custom-tuned Fox Reaktiv shock that offers great small-bump sensitivity while pedalling, but also excellent big-hit capabilities. The shock, with its regressive-damping technology, is better adapted to varied terrain than shocks with only progressive and digressive characteristics. Simply put, you don't really need to worry about switching between shock settings; Reaktiv technology has you covered. (*trekbikes.com*)



A Wild-card Ride

Norco Optic C3 \$4,399

The Optic is a new breed of short-travel bike with trail-style geometry. Norco gave the Optic 110 mm of rear-wheel travel paired with a 120-mm fork on its frame for 29" hoops. The 27.5" model has 120 mm at the rear and 130 mm at fork. The relaxed head-tube angle offers great control on steep technical descents, while the travel remains efficient for climbing. The Optic has so much range that it can be found with Norco Factory Team racer Haley Smith as she trains for the UCI World Cups or Jill Kintner on the slalom course, where the Optic helped her gain the title Queen of Crankworx in 2017. (*norco.com*)

Windshields for Cyclists

Six sunglasses for big summer rides

GEAR

RAPID FIRE



The Cinelli model of the **Smith Attack Max** (\$210, smithoptics.com) has one orange and one green temple: hues that speak to the Italian bike brand and that match Smith's Cinelli Network helmet. The glasses also feature the Mag system of attaching the temples. They click on and off the single-piece lens easily. The package comes with a ChromaPop Sun Red Mirror lens for bright, sunny days and a Contrast Rose Flash lens for days with cloud cover. They are big lenses, 53-mm high and 135-mm wide, giving you excellent protection from the sun's rays as well as the wind.



In April, **Oakley Field Jacket** (\$293, oakley.ca) and its single-lens counterpart, the Flight Jacket, made their debut. The Field Jacket is designed to accommodate your prescription if your vision needs a bit of correction. The two glasses share Oakley's new feature: the Advancer. At the top of the nose piece, there's a small toggle. When you flip it down, it levers the lenses outward, while the nose piece and temples continue to keep the glasses secure on your face. The Advancer then lets more air circulate around the lenses to keep them from fogging up. Those lenses employ Oakley's Prizm technology, which enhances the colours and the contrast you need as you navigate out on the road.



The **Bollé B-Rock** (\$260, bolle.com) are feature-rich. The lenses, which have an anti-fog coating that also keeps grease and grime from building up, are interchangeable. The nose piece and temples are easily adjustable. If you wear corrective lenses off the bike, you can get a pair of B-Rock glasses with your prescription.

Photos: Matt Stetson



The **POC Want** (\$150, pocsports.com) glasses look good both on and off the bike. The frame is made of grilamid, a strong thermoplastic with a bit of a flex. This model, with its Grey 16 lenses, has a visible light transmission (VLT) rating of 16 per cent, which means it will block 84 per cent of incoming light. At the nose and temple ends, hydrophilic rubber pads make sure things don't move around as you do.



With the **Shimano S-Phyre X** (\$220, shimano-lifestylegear.com) glasses, the Japan-based company continues to expand its premium line of road products. The S-Phyre X sunglasses come with three lenses. The Optimal PL Red blocks the most light of the bunch. It's 80 per cent polarized, so you can still see your smartphone through the lens. For changing light conditions, there's the photochromic Dark Grey-Red lens that can move from its lightest to darkest tint in roughly eight seconds. The Cloud Mirror lens is what you should use in the lowest light conditions. The swappable frame has two pieces that cover the bottom part of the lens. These pieces come in black and red, so you can really dial in the right look.



The **100% Speedtrap** (\$289, orangesportssupply.com) in gunmetal grey have a chunky, angular frame. It's a bit Optimus Prime, in a good way. Despite the visual heft of the glasses, they are quite light. Changing between the green multi-layer mirror lens, for sunny conditions, and the clear lens, for when the clouds roll in, is simple and quick. These glasses not only perform well out on the road, but are kind fun, too – kind of like 100%'s famous brand ambassador, Peter Sagan.
—Matthew Pioro



GEAR

**RAPID
FIRE**

A

B

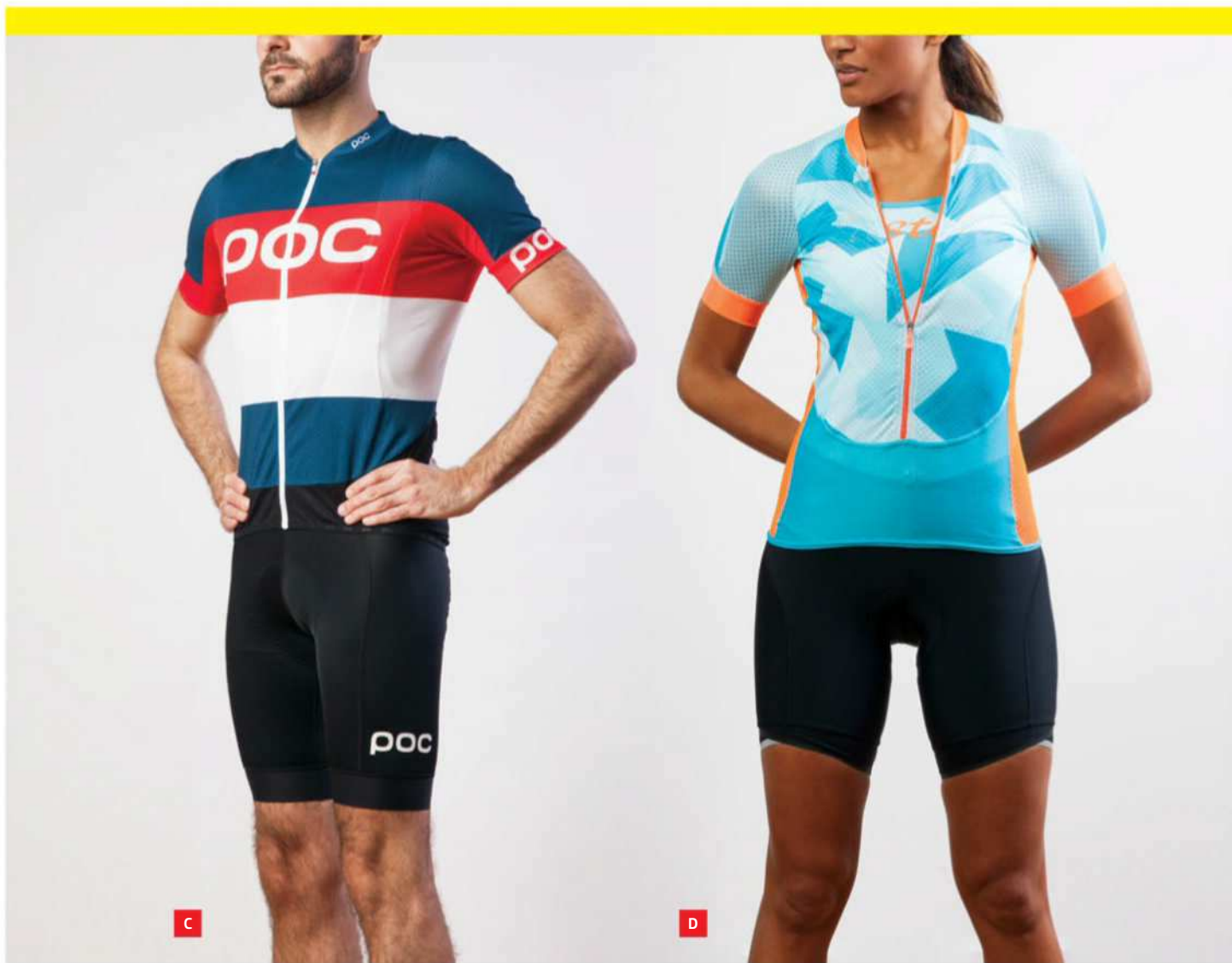
Kit Café

Before you even get to that pre-ride espresso, you need to suit up for the day's outing. Check this selection of summer jerseys and shorts that will match whatever ride you set out on – after a another coffee

Photos: Matt Stetson

The **Giordana Silverline men's jersey** (\$210, *unoimports.com*) has a bit of a retro feel with its raglan sleeves. The design, with the material for each sleeve extending up to the collar, gives you a good range of motion for getting in the drops. The cuffs have subtle but effective 4-cm grippers. The jersey's fabric is nice and airy to let the breeze in. The mesh at the back of the **Silverline men's bib shorts** (\$225) also lets air circulate near your skin. On the inside of the shorts, the fabric is quite comfortable, and it's durable on the outside. **A**

The collar of the **Shimano Women's Team jersey** (\$100, *bike.shimano.com*) is very soft. The 2.5-cm wide gripper at the back of the waist keeps the jersey in place, as the three back pockets hold your essentials. The middle pocket has a sweat-resistant section, perfect for your phone. Under the hot sun, the fabrics give you an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of more than 40, which means they only allow about three per cent of UV radiation through. The **Women's Team shorts** (\$100) have a minimal, breathable chamois. The waistband is widest at the front for best fit and comfort. The 2.5-cm wide cuffs work well without silicone grippers. **B**



On hot days, the light polyester fabric of the **POC Essential Road Logo men's jersey** (\$120, *pocsports.com*) will wick sweat away. The mesh under the arms increases ventilation whether you're pushing the wind at the front of the group or sitting in the draft. The **Essential Road VPDs men's bib shorts** (\$180) use what the company calls visco-elastic polymer dough in the chamois. VPD has appeared in POC's body armour for the material's shock-absorption properties. In the chamois, VPD mitigates the effects of road vibrations. **C**

The **Castelli Climber's W jersey** (\$135, *mvc46.eu*) is lightweight, not only for climbs, but for hot rides. If you do work up a sweat faster than the garment can wick moisture away, there's a liner to prevent sweating through. The **Castelli Vista W bib shorts** (\$135) use a two-layer fabric that increases breathability. The material is used in six panels to achieve a top-level fit for an entry-level price. **D**

For long days on roads both smooth and bumpy, the **Pearl Izumi Men's PRO Escape jersey** (\$200, pearlizumi.com) has five pockets for whatever stuff you need. The jersey's construction nicely balances breathability with durability. Take the back, for example. In the centre, there's a mesh panel. It's flanked by slightly heavier fabric. Everything is held together with flatlock stitching. The **Men's PRO Escape bib shorts** (\$250) use the company's PRO Escape 1:1 chamois, which came out last year. It's designed for a slightly more upright position you might be using on your endurance or gravel bike. The PRO-level means its meant to keep you comfortable for hours and hours. **E**

The **Sportful Diva W jersey** (\$150, mvc46.eu) has a cut designed for comfort. Yet, it has performance features, such as a fast-wicking fabric the company calls DryPro. Reflective elements bounce back light for added safety when you return from your ride late in the day. The chamois in the **Total Comfort W bib shorts** (\$220) has as much as 18-mm of padding. The fabric on the sides of the shorts is slightly thinner to keep you cooler on the road. **F**

The **Biemme Polka men's jersey** (\$140, logicasport.com) is made with Coolmax fabric, a polyester that will keep you dry in the heat. The jersey has five pockets: three standard ones at the back and two smaller ones at the sides, which are perfect for stashing empty gel wrappers. Silicone grippers that spell "Biemme" line the waist and keep everything in place. The **Legend men's bibs** (\$170) have a durable material where the shorts meet the saddle called Lycra Ceramica. The BTR chamois has different densities. The company says the pad also has specific perforations to allow air to circulate. **G**





A half-length zipper lets you get more ventilation with the **Mavic Sequence Graphic women's jersey** (\$89, [mec.ca](#)). The breathable Ride Wick ST material will carry your sweat away to keep you cool. The fit is a snug, pro-level construction. The **Sequence women's shorts** (\$149), with their 15-cm inseam, won't have you overly covered on hot days. The Ergo Waist design minimizes pressure on your stomach, so it will feel fine as you spend time riding on the tops or in the drops. **I**

For top-level aerodynamic features, but with a real-person fit, the **Garneau Maillot Elite M-2 men's jersey** (\$160, [garneau.com](#)) is a great choice. You don't have to be able to ride like Tony Martin to fit this jersey. The cuffs are laser-finished to keep things smooth. The **Course LGneer Race men's bib shorts** (\$300) are a nice complement to the jersey. Garneau developed the bottoms with the help of Montreal-based Alphamantis, a company that specializes in aerodynamic testing in velodromes. The work done inside will help you out on the road. The compressive fit of the fabric is said to help your muscles perform better on long outings. **I**





While the **MEC Bolt women's jersey** (\$65, mec.ca) is a great entry-level top, it can still meet the demands of more advanced riders. The quick-drying polyester is made up of 43 per cent recycled materials. The three pockets at the back are there for your ride essentials. The **Bolt women's bibs** (\$99) won't overwhelm you with their snug fit. They feature a clip at the front to help you manage the position of the straps. The waist has an elastic and the cuffs have silicone grippers – to maintain a good fit as you sprint and coast throughout a ride. **J**

In the latter half of 2017, Oakley debuted new cycling kit. The **Oakley Premium Branded men's jersey** (\$255, ca.oakley.com) has aero touches with laser-cut sleeves and collar. The textured panels at the top of each sleeve also have some wind-cheating abilities. At the back, a fourth, lined zipper pocket offers good water protection to a few of your valuables. The company carries the aero elements to the **Jb Premium men's bib shorts** (\$280) with laser-cut cuffs and textured side panels. Those cuffs grip your legs more by virtue of their elasticity, as opposed to the use of silicone pieces. It's a subtle setup that works well. **K**

The **Jakroo Nova women's jersey** (\$179, jakroo.com) shares many performance features of the men's jersey of the same name: aero, form-fitting construction with sweat-wicking fabrics and a full-length zipper. The cut, however, differs from gender to gender. If the pro, slim fit isn't right for you, there's also the standard fit. The **Solar Pro women's bib shorts** (\$215) are the company's top-of-the-line racing bibs. You'll see them on members of Canada's Rise Racing and UnitedHealthCare Pro Cycling. The shorts are recommended for a fairly wide temperature range, so you'll be able to get a lot of mileage out of them this season. **L G**



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Campagnolo's New 12-speed Cassette

First impressions of the company's new mechanical groupsets

GEAR
IN
DEPTH



by Matthew Pioro

When I landed on Gran Canaria near the end of March, the island was covered in dust. A wind, called Calima, had brought the dust from the Sahara desert over all of the Canary Islands. I had flown to the third largest island to test something from Campagnolo. Like Gran Canaria itself, the purpose of my trip was a bit hazy. But I was used to it.

Campagnolo, the 85-year-old Italian component company, has been holding product launches on the mountainous island for three years. When I went in 2016, things were murky at first, too. Back then, the company released the Potenza groupset and Shamal Ultra wheels. The big story, however, was Campy's disc brakes. At that time, I could see them, but couldn't ride them. In 2017, my colleague rode the H11 system on roads that took him up hundreds of metres and back down again. So for this year, I wondered, what could the folks in Vicenza have cooked up for us? The night before the first presentation, the other journalists and I tossed around ideas. A power meter?



A mountain bike gruppo like the old Euclid set? A 12-speed cassette? Of our guesses, the latter seemed the most reasonable. In the days before the event, some bike websites had dug up a Campagnolo patent for such a component.

The morning of the first presentation, we saw it. The company had relaunched its top-end mechanical groupsets, Super Record and Record. As part of the redesign came a 12-speed cassette – two of them, in fact: 11–32 tooth and 11–29 tooth. So why 12? Isn't 11 enough? Well, maybe not. While cassettes with a big cog on the inside of the freehub – either 28-, 30-, 32-tooth – are common today, it wasn't that long ago, that a 23-tooth was as big as you got. Michele Tittone, product manager at Campagnolo, remembers that as recently as six years ago, Team Europcar with Thomas Voeckler and David Veilleux was still running the old school cassette range. "But in the years following, teams started requesting 11–27 and 11–29," Tittone said. "When we arrived at the 11–29, to get the 29-tooth sprocket in the 11th position on the cassette, we had to remove the 16-tooth. Some pro riders said that they still needed the 16 on some roads."

Campy looked into this request. What was the effect on the bike and the rider when he shifted from the 15-tooth to the 17-tooth? The company measured the distance a bike travels



throughout one pedal stroke. With the chain on a 50-tooth ring and a 15-tooth cog, one pedal stroke will move the bike 7.12 m. Shift to the 17-tooth, and a full crank revolution will move you 6.28 m. That's a difference of 0.84 m. It may not look like a lot, but on certain roads, that change requires a noticeable jump in cadence and/or power. A move from a 15-tooth to 16-tooth only creates a difference of 0.45 m, a more subtle change.

Out on the roads, during my first rides with the 12-speed cassette, I didn't notice the slight changes among the smaller cogs. Gran Canaria features a lot of climbing, which sent me right to the bigger sprockets, right up to 32-tooth for some pitches. The six high-tooth-count cogs are actually part of two one-piece triplets. Each set of three is machined from a solid piece of steel for high strength. The smallest six cogs are separated by aluminum spacers with tight tolerances, tolerances beyond the range of regular polymer spacers. The jumps from the 11-tooth through to the 17-tooth are one tooth at a time. Everything is so precise. Where this precision seemed to work the best was on more rolling roads, specially on the southern coast of the island and into the Soria Valley. The right gear was always one satisfying click away.

Campagnolo made sure the 12-speed cassette fits on a standard 11-speed freehub. There's no new hub spacing, no new "standard." The company made the cogs thinner, and then found a way to bolster their durability. Of course, a whole set of changes to both the Super Record and Record groupsets stem from the 12-speed cassette. The chain is thinner. Campy says it's just as strong as its 11-speed version. The rear derailleur has been redesigned. It seems to sit more outboard compared with the preceding versions of Super Record and Record mechs, and which is also in contrast with more recent Shimano derailleurs. Those rear mechs by the Japan-based

company sit more inboard for better crash protection. With the Campy rear derailleur, the upper jockey wheel is always close to whatever cog the rider has selected. The jockey wheel also stays a bit more forward than it would have with the previous model. This position ensures the chain wraps around more of a cog's teeth, providing a better connection and better power transfer.

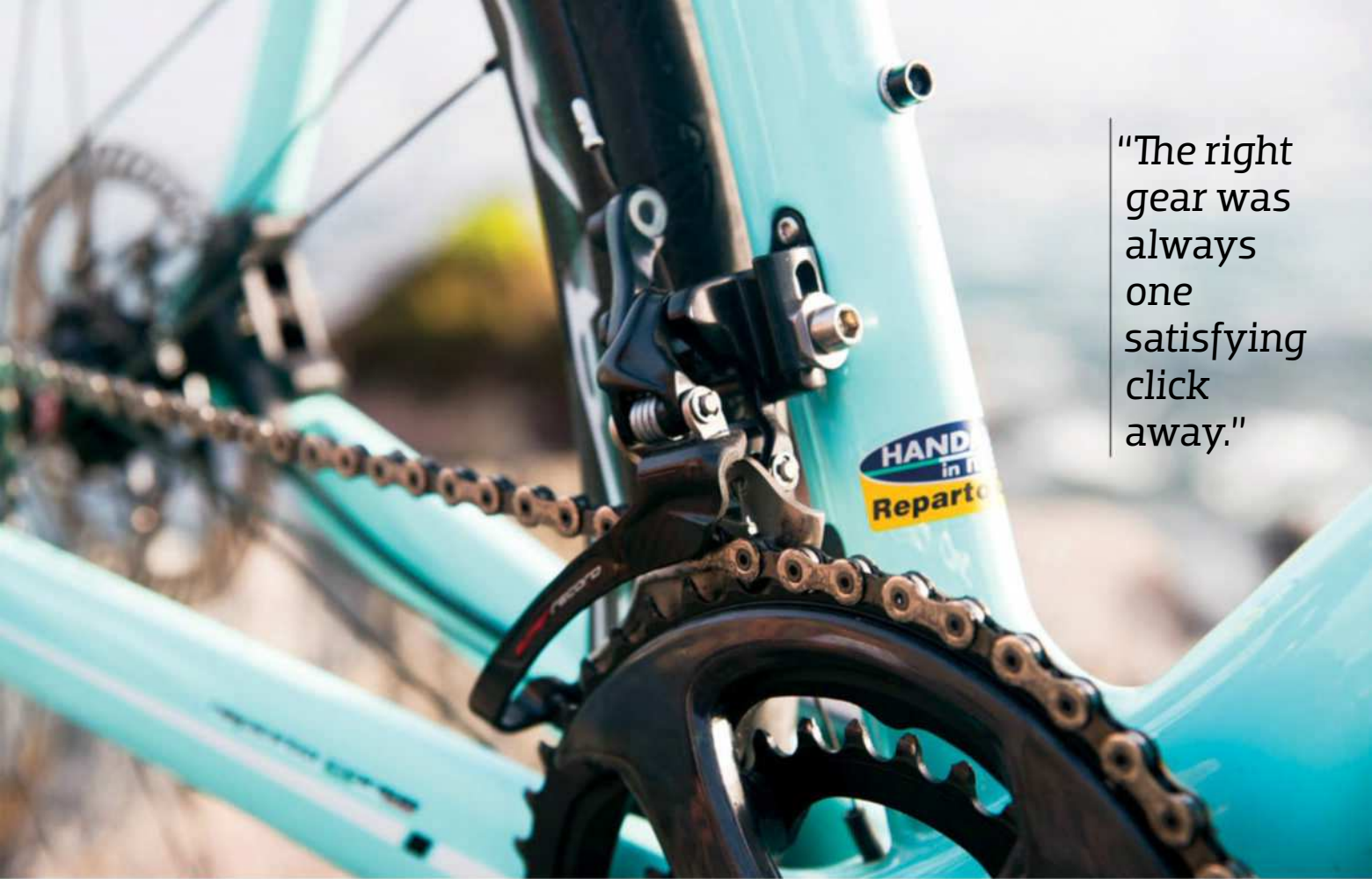
The new front derailleur is quite refined. It features two springs that lighten the action. The cage moves in a linear motion, as opposed to a more pendulum-like swing. As I rode the Record group on a De Rosa Protos on my first day out, and shifted into the big ring (50-tooth) for a descent, the

OPPOSITE
12-speed
cassette

ABOVE
These Super
Record disc-
brake hoods
are 8 mm
taller than
rim-brake
models

BELOW
Record
crankset





"The right gear was always one satisfying click away."



lever throw was so easy, so effortless. Did I actually make the shift? Yup. Campy says its new front derailleur offers enough clearance for tires as wide as 32 mm. The cable-grip bolt can twist in from the front side of the swingarm or from the back. These two positions give you two options for running and securing the derailleur cable, so you can find a route away from the frame and rear tire.

The Super Record and Record components are similar. One noticeable difference is at the crankset. Both have four-arm spiders. On the outside of the Super Record, there's some bracing between two sets of arms for better rigidity. The Super Record has a hollow carbon construction in the cranks, whereas the Record does not. The top-end group gets the company's CULT (ceramic ultimate level technology) bearings, which Campy says are nine-times smoother than stainless-steel bearings. Record gets USB (ultra-smooth bearings), said to be twice as efficient as stainless steel.

The rim brakes on the new groupsets have moved away from the "skeletal" look of their predecessors. They now have solid brake arms that are more aerodynamic. They come in traditional and direct-mount options, the latter with a brace for added rigidity and to keep unwanted forces from being applied to the frame.

Super Record and Record levers get a bit of a remake. The brake levers have a new shape. The shifters behind each lever are a bit larger, as are the thumb shifters. I found the new thumb shifters felt more comfortable and made dropping to a smaller cog or ring feel a bit easier. These changes carry over to the disc-brake levers and hoods, which are 8 mm taller to

accommodate vertically-oriented hydraulic master cylinders.

In a way, my final ride on the brief trip to Gran Canaria took me full circle. I rode with the H11 disc-brake setup I had first seen two years previous. On my final descent, one that I took as quickly as I could through wonderful hairpins, I was impressed with modulation and power of the brakes. On the rolling run-in to town, I had 12 cogs to choose from. It was easy to find the right one.

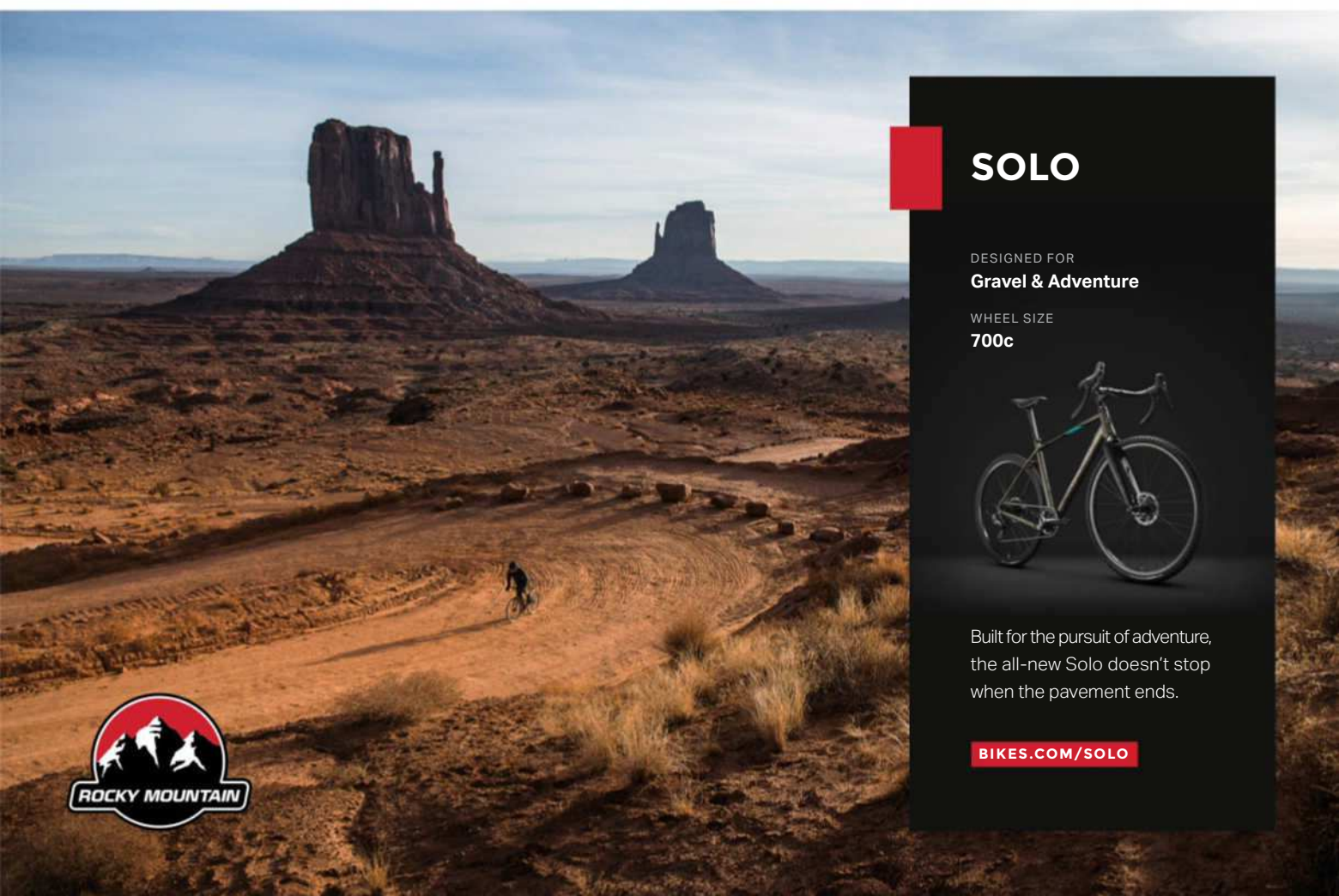
(Full Super Record 12-speed with disc brakes: \$4,570; with rim brakes: \$4,060. Full Record 12-speed with disc brakes: \$3,480; with rim brakes: \$2,760.)

OPPOSITE

**Super
Record front
derailleur**

BELOW

**Super
Record rear
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Power Meter Comparison

A head-to-head look at the Shimano Dura-Ace R9100-P and Garmin Vector 3



by **Matthew Piro**

A few months ago, I headed out on a short ride. I had been planning to keep things mellow: not ride too hard. I encountered some nice hills, which I didn't attack. (OK, I kinda attacked them.) After the ride, my training software, Xert, told me I had made a training breakthrough, which was welcome news. The next day, I went out for a longer ride. It felt harder. I went for broke on the final climb, chasing a faster time than I had ever clocked before. Back at home, a social media app told me I had set a personal record. (Full confession: there was a good tailwind.) The training software, however, provided less of an ego boost. No great breakthroughs.

Xert does all of its calculations off of power. The watts you produce are the most honest measurement of fitness going. While training with heart rate is still very valuable, especially for long, slow distance work, it can be affected by many

things – from coffee consumption to a hot day. Speed, as my tailwind hill climb

showed, is not a good indicator of how fit you are. But power – it's the standard for pros and amateurs alike.

To measure power, you need a power meter, which is essentially a set of sensitive strain gauges that detect the deflection of the material they're attached to. For example, the Shimano Dura-Ace R9100-P has its strain gauges on the crankarms. When you pedal, your force deflects the material in the cranks ever so slightly. Combine this deflection force with the velocity of the arms, and you can derive the power. The technology for detecting, calculating and transmitting this data is likely the most complex stuff you can put on your bike. Recently, I tested the high-tech Shimano power meter and the equally advanced Garmin Vector 3 pedals.

The Power Meters

Shimano announced its crank-based power meter in the summer of 2016. It has taken a while for the company to get those units out. I had brief test of the power meter in January 2017, but it was only this year that I could spend a good amount of time on the **Dura-Ace R9100-P**. The gauges on each arm are connected via a wire that runs through the crank's spindle. Both left- and right-side power is sent via one ANT+ signal to a head unit. (The meter does not broadcast via Bluetooth, just ANT+, but can do firmware updates over Bluetooth.) The power meter components add about 70 g to the R9100 crank. The company says it has an accuracy of ± 2 per cent.

Garmin debuted its third generation of pedal-based power meter this past August. The transmitter pods of the previous model are gone. Also, the need to use a torque wrench when installing them is no longer necessary. The gauges are located on the spindles. The **Vector 3** units broadcast data via ANT+ and Bluetooth, but not all available data can be sent via the latter. For example, pedal smoothness and torque effectiveness numbers are only sent over ANT+. The claimed weight of the pedals is 316 g, about 68 g heavier than a set of Shimano Ultegra pedals. Garmin says the units have an accuracy of ± 1 per cent.

Installation

When it comes to getting the Garmin power meter on the bike, the process couldn't be any easier. It's crazy simple. You just get a 15-mm wrench and put the pedals on your cranks. You can't insert an Allen key at the end of each spindle because there are indicator LEDs at those spots. Then you install the Look Keo-compatible cleats that ship with the pedals onto a pair of shoes.

The Shimano power meter can't help but be a bit more involved when it comes to installation. The process, however, is fairly straightforward. Since I have a Dura-Ace 9000 crank, putting on an R9100 was no problem. The only extra elements included affixing a magnet to the frame, for cadence and torque calculations, and wiring the two sides together. Making the connection can be a bit tricky. You have to take care not to kink the wire as that could cause some serious damage. The whole process took me a little more than 20 minutes.

GEAR

IN
DEPTH



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GLOBAL RELAY CANADIAN ROAD CHAMPIONSHIPS P/B LEXUS (MASTERS)	

JUNE 21-24	SAGUENAY QC
GLOBAL RELAY CANADIAN ROAD CHAMPIONSHIPS (ELITE/JUNIOR/PARA)	

JULY 7-8	DRUMMONDVILLE QC
CANADIAN BMX CHAMPIONSHIPS & CANADA CUP BMX #1	

JULY 21-22	CANMORE AB
CANADIAN XCO MTB CHAMPIONSHIPS	

JULY 28-29	PANORAMA BC
CANADIAN DOWNHILL MTB CHAMPIONSHIPS	

SEPT. 27-29	MILTON ON
CANADIAN TRACK CHAMPIONSHIPS (ELITE/MASTER)	

NOV. 10-11	PETERBOROUGH ON
CANADIAN CYCLO-CROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS	



On the road

Not surprisingly, the Garmin Vector 3 works quite well with a Garmin Edge 820 head unit. The head unit makes calibration quite simple. With the Shimano power meter, I could calibrate from the head unit, but I preferred to use the button on the crank itself for the procedure.

Out on the road, both power meters faced rain and cold quite well. The Shimano unit has a battery life that is much longer (300 hours) than the Garmin's (about 120 hours). The LR44 batteries that fuel the Vector 3 pedals (two in each) don't seem to like the cold. After roughly 40 hours of riding in early spring, I got a "low battery" warning displayed on the head unit. New batteries were easy to find. But, after I made the swap, I checked the low batteries on a multimeter. It said the cells were only at 70 per cent.

Checking the numbers

To compare the data from each power meter, I grabbed my smartphone, which can pick up ANT+ signals. It also runs the Android app called IpWatts, a handy program that can record information from multiple ANT+ devices at the same time. To get one more power meter in the mix for comparison, I hooked up my bike to a CycleOps Hammer direct-drive trainer. I did a few rides with this setup. The data shown below is from a ride of roughly 25 minutes that I feel is a good representation of the three units. I also had each power meter broadcasting to its own head unit. The

data captured by the head units match that grabbed by my smartphone.

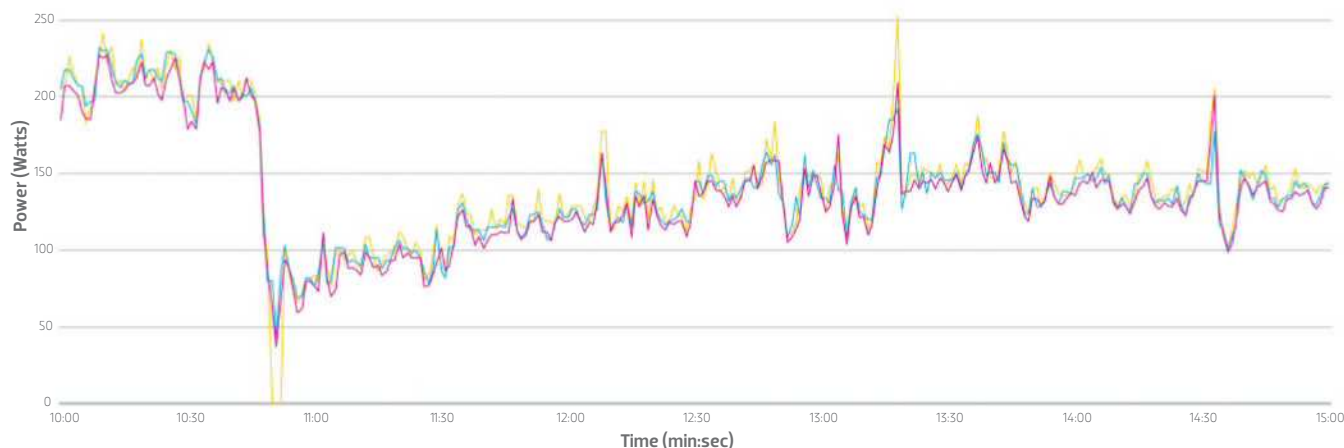
The Hammer's power numbers were slightly higher than the other two meters, with one or two noticeable spikes. The Garmin showed an average power two Watts higher than the Shimano (see chart). There was a 2.23 per cent difference between the Garmin's power numbers and the Shimano's. There was a 1.65 per cent difference between the Garmin and the Hammer. Finally, there was a 3.34 per cent difference between the Shimano and the Hammer. All figures, I'd say, are very close.

Once every second, the IpWatts app checks to see if it has new real data. When a head unit doesn't get new data, it simply averages things out. But more data means a slightly shaper picture of your activities. The Garmin pedals had 152 out of 1,542 instances at which no new data came through. These figures are similar to those I got with a set of PowerTap P1 pedals I tested a few years ago. The Shimano power meter only had 15 instances of no new data, which approaches the strong abilities of Pioneer's power meter. So, what do those figures mean? Well, for me, they seem to explain why I found

FULL RIDE WITH THREE POWER METERS



FROM MINUTE 10 TO 15



it easier to connect the Shimano power meter to a finicky app on my phone (not IpWatts) than the Vector 3. For most riders, the head units they use are designed to manage ANT+ signals much better than that finicky app, so the effects of the missed data will be quite minimal.

"The watts you produce are the most honest measurement of fitness going."

POWER METER DATA

	Average Power (Watts)	Missed Signals (out of 1,542 signal checks)	Maximum Power (Watts)
Shimano Dura-Ace R9100-P	150	15	852
Garmin Vector 3	152	152	853
CycleOps Hammer trainer	153	56	904

Picking a power meter

Since the Shimano and the Garmin power meters both have a high degree of accuracy and consistency, choosing one or the other comes down to other practical factors. Take price. The Shimano costs \$2,100, while the Vector 3 is \$1,300. If portability, or swap-ability, is important for you, the Garmin pedals are the way to go. Do you want flexibility in your cleat and pedal choice? Then, the Shimano crank gives you the freedom to run any pedals you'd like. If you'd like data transmission via Bluetooth, pick the pedals. Is a rigorous data stream a priority? If it is, go with the Shimano crank.

Choose your meter. You have the power. **G**

Other Powerful Meters

While the **Race Face Cinch** crank-spindle-based power meter made its official debut this past December, Canadian mountain bike pro Evan Guthrie had been testing the Cinch for much of the past year. The unit is designed for the trail, with the big bounces and variable traction. Roadies can use the power meter, too, when it's mated with a set of Easton EC90 SL cranks and rings. (\$800 for the power meter **A**, eastoncycling.com)

Quarq, which has been in making power meters for more than 10 years, revamped its lineup in late 2016. The **Quarq DFour** spider-based unit, got a new measurement circuit and updated strain-gauge design. It broadcasts in ANT+ and Bluetooth. You don't have to attach a magnet to your frame because the unit relies on an accelerometer to detect cadence. You can manage the power meter with Qalvin, an app that allows you to zero offset, run diagnostics and update firmware. (\$1,617 for DFour **B** compatible with Shimano Dura-Ace 9000, Ultegra 6800 and 105 5800 chainrings, quarq.com)

Pioneer Electronics has been in the power meter game for roughly six years. Throughout that time, its products have been getting slicker as they've continued to capture a wide range of metrics. The company was one of the first to get true right-and-left power readings. Pioneer has been keeping up with current cranksets by releasing a dual- and single-leg power meter for the Shimano Ultegra R8000 last year. You can get the most out of the Pioneer units with the company's own head units. (\$1,350, R8000 dual-leg **C**; \$800, R8000 single-leg; \$330, SGX-CA500 head unit; pioneerelectronics.ca)

The weight-weenie's power meter hails from Cochrane, Alta. In 2017, **4iiii** released its **Precision Podium** pods. Each pod is about 7-mm high and weighs 9 g. With a pod on each arm of a Shimano crankset (Dura-Ace R9100 and R9000, and Ultegra R8000 and R6800), you get left-and-right side power information. The company says the pods are accurate to ± 1.5 per cent. In March, 4iiii and Specialized announced the S-Works power cranks with 4iiii technology measuring your watts. (US\$750 for dual-pod factory install **D**, 4iiii.com)

Before Garmin released its Vector 3 pedals, the **PowerTap P1** pedals were probably the easiest power meters to install. Simply get your 8-mm Allen key and install the P1s just like any other pedals. Each unit runs on the very common AAA battery, so replacing the cells is quite easy. The data is broadcast in ANT+ and Bluetooth. The two pedals with batteries weigh 432 g. Unlike the Vector 3, which have a rider weight limit of 105 kg, the P1 have no weight limit. (\$1,080 **E**, powertap.com)





DESTINATION

LAOS

The Great Green North

Ride in one of the last wild and wonderful frontiers of Southeast Asia

photos and story by **Steve Thomas**

The rice fields and distant rippled mountains of the remotest corner of northern Laos were before me. There was little more than the odd stretched-out tractor to dent the scene. The annual rainy season was in mid-flow, when it could get hard to string together enough dry hours in a day to make riding fun.

My choice of season had, in part, been out of practicality, but more so because it's by far the best time to see the true colours and beauty of this place. It is often dubbed the "green triangle," due to its vaguely triangular-shaped borders with the deep eastern fringes of Myanmar and China's southeastern Yunnan province. Plus, parts of it overlap with the opium-producing Golden Triangle.

Luang Namtha is the major town in the region: a small, charming and sleepy place that sits just a few hours off the main Mekong River slow-boat tourist trail to Luang Prabang. This remote but accessible location means that the area receives just a handful of more adventurous tourists. It's a wild and down-to-earth place.

I was running on relatively limited time, just a week all in, and had decided to concentrate my riding

and exploration to the far north of the area rather than riding the whole hog from the Thai border and then on to Luang Prabang. This focused approach allowed me to move fast and light, and ride off-road a whole lot more, which is the best thing about this area. You can hit the maze of dirt roads that link together the many ethnic tribal communities.

I saw barefoot children with catapults and makeshift fishing poles. There were women clothed in deep blue with banded ankles and babies strapped to their backs. They weaved cloth and carried large bundles of firewood on their heads. There can't be that many places left in the world where you can find such things and yet be so close to a comfortable bed and WiFi.

Not being at the peak of my condition, I had bounced a psychological tennis ball around in my head for a few days before finally deciding to brave the 60-km ride from Luang Namtha northwest to the small village of Muang Sing. Now, 60 km doesn't sound like much, but having ridden this rough and twisted road before, I can tell you that it feels more like double that distance, and with your

brakes on – and in both directions. On my previous visit, I'd tackled it in the opposite direction – the slightly easier north-south option – although that still includes around 30 km of continuous climbing.

The scenery is amazing. When you're grovelling uphill for 30 km you do get plenty of chances to take it all in, too. Your mind tends to wander as you struggle through remote villages where old ladies and small children smoke pipes. Some children jumped from the bushes to try to sell me their freshly trapped squirrels and other rodents.

You should ride the dirt in northern Laos. With the mountains on either side of you, it's easy to keep a sense of direction. Also, you'll never be more than a 40-minute ride from town.

Details

When to ride

The prime season for riding in northern Laos is from late September to early February – the dry winter season. It can get cold during the nights in January, but it rarely rains.

It's best to avoid mid-February to mid May, the annual burning season. The air quality is abysmal.

Rainy season is between June and September. At this time the colours are at their most vibrant, but the riding can be hit and miss. Budget on having a couple of days rained out. Still, the riding you will do will be worth it.

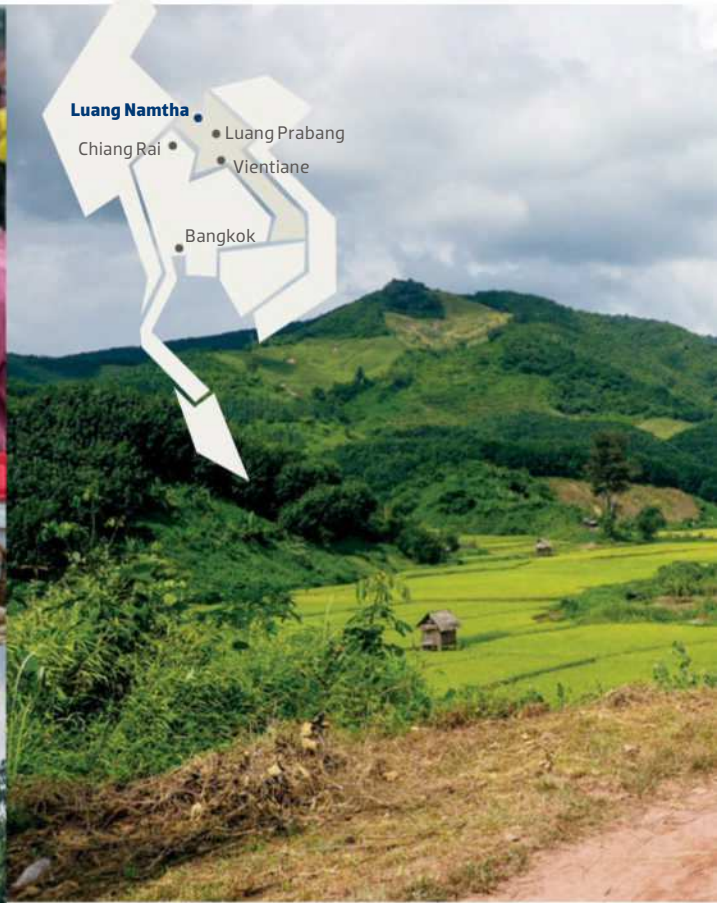
Routes and rides

This region is just made for light-weight bikepacking adventures. Most overland travellers and cyclists tend to hop the slow boat down the Mekong River from Huay Xai to Luang Prabang, and then continue on to Vientiane. As pleasant as this may be, they really do miss out on the best of Laos.

Recently, there have been bandit-related incidents on the road between Luang Prabang and Vang Vieng, so that really is best done by bus, or even avoided all together.

The road from Huay Xai to Luang Namtha is one tough and amazing 175-km ride. The best way to break it up is with an overnight or two in Vieng Phou Kha, 120 km from Huay Xai. There are a couple of basic resorts





here, and some nice dirt roads to explore, too.

From Luang Namtha and Muang Sing, there are some interesting road and dirt options, for circular and point-to-point rides.

Route 13 from Luang Namtha to Muang Xai is a logical step on a road tour (117 km), followed by a very mountainous and rough ride over to Pak Mong (82 km), where there is basic accommodation. You can take a diversion up to Nong Khiaw (30 km from Pak Mong) for good accommodation and great scenery. From there, it's a long day ride (142 km) to Luang Prabang.

Logistics

There are several direct flights to Vientiane. Also, Lao Airlines has connections to Luang Namtha, which is not the best option when travelling with a bike. It's expensive and baggage is limited.

A wise option is to fly to Chiang Rai in Thailand via Bangkok, and then take a local bus to the Friendship Bridge at the Thai/Laotian border at Chiang Khong/Huay Xai. If you are travelling fully by bike, simply start riding here. Otherwise take a tuk-tuk to the local bus station and then on to Luang Namtha.

If you do not want to carry luggage, it can be sent on mini-vans or local busses between bus stations. In Laos, bus stations are usually about 5 km outside of towns.

The same transport system can be applied right through to Luang Prabang. From Luang Prabang, there are reasonable air connections to Bangkok and elsewhere. Alternatively, take the two-day slow-boat trip back up river to Huay Xai to complete the loop.



MARKETPLACE

British Columbia

Bike Barn
300 Westminster Ave. W.
Penticton, BC
250.492.4140
info@bikebarn.ca
bikebarn.ca

Ontario

Racer Sportif – Oakville
151 Robinson St.
Oakville, ON
905.815.2100
info@racersportif.com
racersportif.com

Racer Sportif – Toronto
2214 Bloor St. W.
Toronto, ON
416.769.5731
info@racersportif.com
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Trysport Inc – Parry Sound

77 Bowes St.
Parry Sound, ON
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Visas, money and health care

Most nationalities can obtain visas upon arrival in Laos (and in Thailand). In Laos, these cost around US\$30–\$35. You will need a passport photo. It is wise to carry U.S. dollars to avoid exorbitant exchange charges.


ATMs are found all over Laos, but not all work with foreign cards. Withdrawals are limited to small amounts, so have some cash to hand.

In the country, costs are comparatively low, but around 20 per cent more than in Thailand. A reasonable but basic ensuite room will cost C\$12–\$30.

Hospitals and medical facilities are very basic in Laos. Be sure to have travel insurance and carry any prescription medication you may need.

Bikes

Roads and surfaces can vary a lot with the seasons. Potholes are regular fare. Road bikes with 25- to 28-mm tires are fine, but if you have a cyclocross or gravel bike, then it would be better for the rough stuff. A mountain bike would also be a good option.

Be sure to carry spare tubes, a tire and tools. There are no decent bike shops in the area. 

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Sara Poidevin

Rally rider leaves the peloton behind



by **Dean Campbell**

Sara Poidevin is heading into her third year as a pro, racing for Rally Cycling. A strong climber, she turned heads last year in Colorado, demolishing the peloton on the steep climbs to the finish and sweeping all of the winner's jerseys. Recently, the soft-spoken Albertan took some time to reflect on her career so far.

STATS

Age	22
Hometown	Canmore, Alta.
Bikes	Diamondback Podium, Diamondback TT
Pro Team	Rally Cycling

How did you get started with bikes?

When we were living in Cochrane, I was riding my bike to school when I was young, going with my mom every day. Once we moved to Canmore, we got more into mountain biking.

I started riding with the local mountain bike club in Canmore, the Rundle Mountain Cycling Club. I wanted to get into winter training as well, but at the time they only spring and summer programs, so I started working with a coach in Calgary. He was also the coach for the Alberta Cycling Association, so I got some opportunities to race for the provincial team doing both road and mountain bike racing.

well. We give each other time to work alone, but also figure out when we need time together.

It's pretty funny. We will talk a lot about what courses we're taking, and we're also good at keeping each other motivated to study in the evenings.

Last year in Colorado, you swept all of the jerseys at the Colorado Classic after leaving the entire peloton behind. What was that like?

I've wanted to race in Colorado for a long time because it's such a beautiful. That event was a lot of fun. Some of my teammates and I went down a week early to get altitude-ready and get familiar with the area.

The race was on beautiful roads

"Leah Kirchmann has been my mentor through the Bridge the Gap program, and has been an amazing role model for all cyclists in Canada."

When I was 16, I felt stronger on a road bike, so I wanted to put more effort into that. I joined the Bicsport Calgary Cycling Club.

And now you're studying at the University of Calgary?

Yes, I am studying kinesiology. It's really busy, but there are a few students on Rally Cycling, so we fit in study sessions around our training rides to make it work.

Katherine Maine is in kinesiology. Allison Beveridge is in the same program as me. Kelly [Catlin] is at school in math; Emma White is in computer science. Gillian Ellsay is also taking some classes. Erica Allar is taking her masters in education. One of our riders is still finishing high school.

How do you all fit in your studies when at a training camp?

When we're at a training camp, we're training together. Then we have time together off the bike. Then we all have our time where we need to do our recovery stuff, and study as

through parks, and then way up in Breckenridge the next day. It was a really good event overall.

How have you developed your race-craft skills?

I think our team has done a really good job of developing those skills. Rally Cycling has riders who have a lot of skills and who can give us advice. We always have a detailed plan going into every race, and then always have a debrief after, so we're learning from our mistakes at every event, too.

Who do you look up to in the sport?

Leah Kirchmann has been my mentor through the Bridge the Gap program, and has been an amazing role model for all cyclists in Canada. She's always been good at communicating with me even though she's busy racing. She always takes the time to reach out to see what's going on.

Most of her advice is tied to specific situations, so it really helps me understand the details of the sport. 🇨🇦

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