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BICYCLING AUSTRALIA

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Popular pro cyclist Filippo Pozzato may be one of the elder statesmen of the peloton these days but he still has the style to turn heads. He's also a great guy, as Steve Thomas found when they sat down for a chat.

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If your cycling passion has waned in the depths of a southern winter, and daydreams of a tropical cycling getaway arrive all too frequently, there's a simple and logical solution. Head North.

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Ben Smith should be known as the Wheel Wizard of Oz. He's hand built virtually every pair of Zipp wheels sold in this country. Peter Maniaty stopped by Echelon Sports where Smith plies his trade, to find out more about the business of making premium carbon wheels.

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COVER: By Nat Bromhead



Adios Amigos

WINTER HAS ARRIVED BY A BANG, AND I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU but these cold temperatures sure make me want to go riding. In Noosa.

That's right our next Classic Gran Fondo will be held on the glorious Sunshine Coast on August 26th. It's shaping up to be a fantastic event and the perfect opportunity to get away with mates or your significant other, for the riding but also for the sun, sand, food and wine.

There'll be locally produced food, coffee, beer and wine, live music, sponsor stalls with merchandise for sale and fun for the kids. You don't have to go all the way to QLD though... keep in mind the award winning Bowral Classic, slated for Sunday 21st October, in the NSW southern highlands.

It seems there is a season for everything, and another is drawing to a close. This issue of *Bicycling Australia* will be my last; I'm vacating the editor's chair to take on a new challenge.

I started out with *Bicycling Australia* as Show Director 16 years ago, and then became General Manager of the independent Lake Wangary Publishing Company, and Publisher of its suite of magazines. Then in 2013 I also took on the role of editor of *Bicycling Australia*.

It's been quite amazing to be so closely involved in cycling and to see the innovations that have pushed the industry along. I'd like to thank all of the team from Wollongong including Phil Latz, and also the new owners at Yaffa Media. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have worked alongside you all.

And finally I'd like to thank each of you for your support—you who bought copies from the newsagent, or subscribed, or back in the day visited the *Bicycling Australia* Show, or even now, who have taken up the gauntlet to ride one of our Classic gran fondos. Thank you, we couldn't do this without you.

See you on the road

GARY HUNT – EDITOR

Our Contributors



SARAH HUNTER

Sarah is an associate coach for FTP Training. She is a qualified Triathlon Coach and has a certification in Fitness. She's a lifetime competitive athlete with a 20 year passion for cycling including Ironman triathlon, multi day MTB races, TTs, CX and crits. Her passion for cycling and strength training is boundless and infectious.



ANTHONY TAN

Buoyed by the Olympic Games in his hometown of Sydney, Anthony Tan turned his back on a lucrative advertising career, choosing instead to meld journalism with his experiences as a handy road racer that took him to Europe – albeit briefly, and unsuccessfully. He has covered the TDF since 2001, and is a cycling analyst for SBS.



NAT BROMHEAD

A self confessed velophile, Nat Bromhead lives and breathes the sport of cycling. He's an award winning newspaper journalist, editor and proud digital native. When not on a laptop, there's only one place you'll find him and that's out riding a bike.



MICHAEL HANSLIP

Michael is a cycling coach, a skills instructor and a bike mechanic. He has contributed to *Bicycling Australia* for over a decade. He loves to ride bikes.



BEARDY McBEARD

Marcus Enno A.K.A. Beardy McBeard is known for his emotive cycling images. Beardy spends half the year chasing Grand Tours across Europe and the other half riding his bike capturing images along the way.



DAVID HEATLEY

David Heatley is an accredited Level 2 Cycling Australia Cycling Coach who helps the busy cyclists quickly get awesome results and greater satisfaction from their cycling through proven time saving training programs and coaching support.



STEVE THOMAS

Steve Thomas has spent most of his life chasing bicycle dreams along the side roads and trails of the world. For much of that time he's also been capturing his experiences in words and images, and his tales have been a regular feature here for more than 20 years.



PETER MANIATY

Peter is an award-winning writer and club-level cyclist. When not writing about bikes he likes to ride and race them as much as possible. Occasionally he even wins.





R-SERIES. Pleasure and pain, defeat and glory – they are like two sides of the same coin when you live for the road.

These trials make you stronger, but there's something more: the pleasure of oneness with the elements, with the road, and now, thanks to the new R Series, with bicycles that have been fundamentally re-engineered to perform like never before. **Till the end.**



**TILL
THE
END**

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Toby Orchard

WELCOME TO AN ALL-NEW FEATURE IN BICYCLING AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE. EACH ISSUE WE'LL BE MEETING EMERGING AUSTRALIAN RIDERS WHO ARE MAKING THEIR MARK ON THE DOMESTIC ROAD CYCLING SCENE. IN THE FIRST INSTALMENT WE MEET U23 SPRINTER FROM NSW'S SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, TOBY ORCHARD, A YOUNG MAN IN A BIG HURRY.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN CYCLING?

I was brought up with both my dad and brother riding, so becoming a cyclist was almost a given. Originally I was always riding my little BMX, as most kids do. My first proper bike was a Trek mountain bike I bought from McGee's bike shop probably 10 years ago. I got into road riding not long

after that, my first good road bike was an S-Works Tarmac. That's when I started training properly and began racing with the local club.

WHAT BIKE/S ARE YOU RIDING IN 2018?

This year we're riding the Ridley Noah SL and also Ridley Dean time trial bikes with Shimano Di2 groupsets.

ABOVE: Orchard at the launch of the new Australian Cycling Academy on the Sunshine Coast earlier this year.

We're very fortunate to have the support from FE sports for these amazing bikes. I've ridden Ridley bikes for four seasons now, so cannot recommend them enough!

WHO'S HAD THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CYCLING CAREER?

My family. They've given me the best opportunities to be the best I can. There are a lot of sacrifices made to pursue a sporting career but their support has meant the world to me, as it wouldn't be achievable without them.

WHICH RIDERS DO YOU ADMIRE?

Growing up in Bowral and the Southern Highlands I've been very fortunate to have

trained with Caleb Ewan and I also know Brad McGee. Both Caleb and Brad have been at the pinnacle of the sport, so to have their advice and presence in the local community is very humbling. It's easy to develop an ego in the Australian domestic scene, because you get a lot of people rapidly improving and moving up in the sport. Having people like Caleb (who is very occasionally in Bowral these days) clicks you back into reality pretty fast!

LOOKING BACK. CAN YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST BIG WIN OR BREAKTHROUGH RESULT?

Being a sprinter, having confidence in yourself is a massive thing. One good result is usually the stepping stone to more. Winning the Wagga Wagga Classic last year certainly set me up for the success I had in the 2017 season. The confidence I took from that result allowed me to podium on NRS stages and wear classification leader's jerseys in most of the races I competed in.

WHAT'S THE TOUGHEST RACE YOU'VE EVER RIDDEN?

It would have to be Stage 2 and 3 of the 2018 Herald Sun Tour. Stage 3 was 220km, finishing with the 20km ascent of Lake Mountain (won by Mitchelton-Scott's Esteban Chaves - Ed). Both days were a lot more taxing mentally than physically, with around 5-6 hours on the bike. Racing the Herald Sun Tour gave me a lot of valuable experiences which have helped to broaden my knowledge and skills.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ELITE LEVEL CYCLIST?

The places it takes you and the people you meet. I've been lucky enough to have competed in a few overseas tours already this year. Going to new places and experiencing new cultures whilst being with my team mates racing really is a pleasure. Also, the support network, guidance and

“Most people who ride would think there's nothing better than riding bikes every day. But it certainly feels like a job to get out and ride, especially in the middle of winter.”

environment we have through our team (ACA-Ride Sunshine Coast) is something special, it really sets a great place for us to succeed and be our best.

WHAT'S THE HARDEST THING?

The training. Most people who ride would think there's nothing better than riding bikes every day. But it certainly feels like a job to get out and ride, especially in the middle of winter. It's very rewarding when you do well in a race and it all makes sense why you get up at 6am when it's -1 degrees to go training for 5 hours.

WHERE DO YOU HOPE TO BE COMPETING FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?

I'd like to make a living out of cycling. Moving and living overseas to race for a European Pro Team would be the goal. You don't know what something is like until you do it!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A YOUNG RIDER HOPING TO CRACK THE NRS?

The most important thing is not putting pressure on yourself, just enjoying riding your bike. Get out and race, develop skills that will help you when racing at higher levels.

The time and opportunity will pop up to race NRS, but don't rush things. Enjoy riding and try to gain as much experience as you can. A lot of people are willing to help you and give you support – I can't recommend utilising that help enough!

WHAT DO YOU DO AWAY FROM CYCLING?

In the spare time I have when I'm not training, I try to help my family with their business – returning the favour and the help they've given me to allow me to do what I do. **BA**

PROFILE

NAME: Toby Orchard

LIVES: Southern Highlands

AGE: 21

TEAM: Australian Cycling Academy-Ride Sunshine Coast

CLUB: Sydney Uni Velo

RIDING STYLE: Sprinter

NICKNAME: Toey



Essential Stuff

SOME INTERESTING GEAR THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE...

VELOCIS HI VIS

Bontrager has committed to a range of high-vis cycling apparel and accessories over the past few years. Their research shows the safety value of wearing bright gear—especially shoes and socks which add the factor of constant movement, and of course running daytime lights. The Velocis shoes are built on a regular width carbon/fibreglass composite last (and there is no wider option for those with broad feet), secured with a single velcro strap and one Boa IP1 dial for precise, two-way adjustment.

Perforated synthetic uppers allow increased breathability and comfort and there are socks to match. Good looking, but not so hard to see. **RRP: \$299**



VITAL PACK

Thule has just launched its Vital Collection - a set of bike hydration packs setting a new standard for comfort and design for high-intensity activities. Cargo space is three or six litres, and drink capacity is either 1.75L or 2.5L, so they're good for longer adventure rides where a couple of bidons is just not enough. With light, breathable and broad straps, they're comfortable to wear for extended periods. The Vital is loaded with other features, hi vis reflection strips, quality zips and pockets and storage options for all your gear...and happily the high grade drink bag has watertight closure that opens wide for easy cleaning.

RRP: 3 litre \$169, 6 litre \$189

ULTEGRA GOES OFFROAD

Shimano recently released a variant of the Ultegra rear derailleur, the RX800/805, specifically designed for adventure and off road riding. It shares much of its design with the regular on road unit but adds the chain stabilizing switch or 'clutch' that MTBers would be familiar with (known in road circles as Shimano Shadow RD+ technology) to damp chain slap and chatter over rough ground. The new derailleurs are compatible mechanical or Di2 levers and will accommodate cassettes as low as 34T, and chainrings from 34 to 50T.

RRP: Mechanical \$199, Di2 \$489



ATHLETES GEL

Athletes Gel is a fast acting, Australian made therapeutic gel perfect for pre-race warm up and also for use in a remedial context. It is ASADA and WADA safe, and containing four active natural ingredients including clove oil, menthol, wintergreen oil, arnica, capsicum oleoresin, allantoin and almond oil it works to aid recovery from muscle aches, bruises, inflammation, stiff joints and osteoarthritis. It's also good for use in massage therapy.

To purchase Athlete's Gel go to bit.ly/BAGel



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EXAKT POWER METER

Innovators in their respective spaces, LOOK and SRM have joined forces to create a new pedal-based power meter, naming it Exakt. Featuring a steel spindle, carbon body, and stainless steel contact platform the pedals weigh just 155g each. LOOK claims the power function comes at a cost of just 20g per pedal. They have a 54.6mm Q factor, 11.9mm stack and float of 0, 4.5 or 9 degrees.

The pedals are IPX7 rated, use Low Energy Bluetooth and ANT+, and the rechargeable batteries last a claimed 100 hours. They'll be available in single sided format, dual sided for left and right power meter balance, or in a bundle with the SRM PC8 head unit.

Pricing TBC.



2XU

Along with a performance enhancing and compressive fit, the Steel X bib range from Aussie company 2XU offers a unique 'graze protection system' - abrasion-resistant hip panels engineered from fabric 15 times stronger than steel, claimed to be tough enough to limit road rash should you hit the deck. The bibstrap is a single piece to minimise irritation and the firm but comfortable pad should keep you in the saddle longer. There's a matching jersey and socks too, to finish the look.

2XU's Steel X men's bib knicks and women's shorts are available now and priced around \$290 while their Elite Cycle Jersey is around \$180.



CYGNETT BIKE MOUNT

This new phone case allows you to stay connected with your digital life. It'll keep your phone safe and secure, and with full 360-degree rotation, it allows both landscape and portrait viewing, making it easy to access maps, music, camera or apps throughout your ride. Its hard outer shell and cushioned silicone lining protect your phone from rain, sweat and vibrations and it unclips from the handlebar mount with a simple QR. There's even a GoPro style mount below for a camera or compatible lights. Available in 4.7 or 5.5 inches. **RRP\$89.95, www.cygnett.com.au**



AUSSIE BUTT CREAM

Chafing 'downstairs' can be painful, and if that's not bad enough, it can put you out of action for prolonged periods should things get infected and really out of hand. So if you are serious about riding, a good chamois cream is absolutely essential.

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Even in team tracksuit Pippo is about as Italian in style as they come.

The Style Council

ITALIAN RACER FILIPPO POZATTO IS NOW WELL INTO HIS 19TH SEASON AS A PRO RIDER AND QUICKLY MARKED HIMSELF OUT AS ONE OF THE MOST STYLISH AND GIFTED SINGLE DAY RACERS IN THE PRO RANKS. NEARLY 20 YEARS LATER HE'S STILL OUT DEFINING COOL ON A BIKE AND HOLDING HIS OWN. WE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM FOR A LONG CHAT ABOUT THE CHANGES HE'S SEEN, AND MOVED WITH THROUGH HIS CAREER.

BA: DURING YOUR CAREER THE SPORT HAS BECOME FAR MORE GLOBAL. HOW DO YOU SEE THIS?

FP: The globalisation of the sport is very good, because it's opened up to Asia and Africa, which is good for cycling.

It's not only European now; it's good that it's becoming possible for other riders from outside to be competitive, but it does make it more difficult for the historically strong cycling nations like Italy and Belgium. Everybody thinks, for example, that the talent in Italy has gone; but no – it's still there, it hasn't gone, it's less clear because there are other nations now that are getting stronger and spreading this.

BA: WHEN YOU STARTED TRAINING SYSTEMS WERE VERY DIFFERENT. AND YOU TRAINED UNDER ALDO SASSI AT MAPEI. HOW DIFFERENT ARE THINGS NOW?

FP: Now it's changed a whole lot. It's completely different now; before we trained

too much on long distance, because cycling is an endurance sport, we were doing way too many hours. Now, when I speak to riders with Sky and Quickstep, their training is not so long anymore, but is much more intense. I see in the races now that it needs to be different.

Now 90% of the races will end in a sprint, before no. Before, on the climbs there would be attacking; one rider or two riders would go. Now there are attacks, but they are small groups, up to 10 riders in the big tours. This is not because the individual talent is not there anymore, it's because everybody's level is very high.

The training system has changed because now the speed is very fast at the top end. For example, Sagan, I train with Peter every day in Monaco, and we speak a lot. The difference is in the top-end power now, not the endurance. In the final, when it's all block, Peter can push that extra power out. It's a small difference but it makes him a winner. This is a big change compared to before.

BA: YOU WORK WITH A TRAINER STILL. HAS YOUR TRAINING ALSO BECOME MORE SCIENTIFIC AND MODERN OVER THE YEARS?

FP: Yes, I think it's important to progress. I train with a power meter all of the time, it's important to look at the Watts; but, what is difficult for me now is to train like a race when it's only in training.

Yesterday for example I met with Cancellara at the airport for a coffee, and we were talking about how training was easier before. If you tried to make race level training efforts 2-3 times in a week that was enough.

Now you have to train at really high Wattage race level much more, which is difficult for the mind and for health. For younger guys it's not so hard, because is normal for them. For me – I try, but I don't have the concentration to do that level so often in training. In the race it's no problem because you are focussed, but I find it hard in training.

BA: YOU TRAIN MOSTLY WITH SAGAN. DO YOU STILL ENJOY THE TRAINING?

FP: Yes, with Peter we enjoy every day. It's the best cycling time ever for me. I speak with other guys about Peter, and I always say that if Peter and Eddy Merckx were riding together at the same time then Merckx would not exist – because at this time in cycling it's far more difficult to be a winner. He has to fight every day with all of the teams, because they all want to push him, and he still wins 10-15 races a year, and it's not easy. Last year he didn't have the strong team around, but this year he does so it's easier for him now.

I think if he went to a team like Quickstep that it would not be good for the 'show', because he would win almost every race.

There are a lot of other guys in Monaco, but mostly I like to train with Peter, Gatto (Oscar) and Viviani; we can stop and take a coffee and enjoy it.

BA: NUTRITION AND DIET HAVE EVOLVED A LOT DURING YOUR CAREER. AND RIDERS ARE NOW VERY SKINNY – WHAT'S YOUR CRUNCH ON THIS?

FP: It's almost anorexic with many riders, very close to the limit. Years back every rider took carbohydrate, and now nobody takes carbo, only protein - to stay skinny all of the time.



When you were a little bit fat it was okay, and when you started a big tour all of the doctors said you were okay to start 3kg over and you came out perfect. Now, it's hard –from January on the riders are very skinny, and I think this has a big effect on the length of your career, they are much shorter now.

Wiggins, I really liked him as a rider, for his character. For 2-3 years he raced very hard and lost a lot of weight, but after 2-3 years of that it was over, because it's just too hard to do and not good for health.

I am more focussed on diet than before. My level and the racing level are also different now, and the climbing is harder for me. From my home in Monaco I sometimes do testing on climbs, and now my figures show that I would not stay in the first 20 in a big race, because of these level changes.

Now my weight is about 77kg, when I started pro it was a around 70kg, which is normal (to gain weight). When you get older you get older you also get more muscular, so I think it's not possible to be as light as before, even with new diets.

“ONCE YOU’VE TRIED GOOD DISCS IT’S HARD TO GO BACK TO REGULAR BRAKES. I tried discs two times in the team training camps, and on the descents the sensitivity is so much better.”



IMAGE © SIROTTI

LEFT: Pozzato after Stage 2 of the 2016 Abu Dhabi Tour.

BELOW: Coolly and calmly riding to the start of a stage of the Tour of Antalya in Turkey. Fancy footwear, but stylish, not garish.



BA: DO YOU HAVE TIME OFF THE BIKE IN THE WINTER?

FP: Yes, originally I used to take one month off in the winter, but now it's only 15 days. I like other sports a lot though (which helps keep me active); I like motor cross, skiing, I run a lot too, and I play tennis.

BA: EQUIPMENT HAS EVOLVED HUGELY OVER THE YEARS. WHAT REAL-TIME DIFFERENCES DO YOU NOTICE?

FP: We still had steel frames and forks when I started. Now the bikes are very fast, and for sure the technology is moving forward fast, and I think it's good for cycling and for the bike industry.

Now it's also really good for the riders; the bikes are much more light and stiff, and the shifting with electronic is super smooth – perfect. Once you've used them it's not possible to turn back to cable shift.

For the time trial, before the bikes were not really important, but now they are crucial, it's like Formula 1 now; so important.





IMAGE © SROTTI

“Sure, WHEN YOU HAVE A STYLE LIKE WIGGINS ON THE BIKE, (he has so much class) and can also get results, that’s best.”

mechanics to put 25mm tubulars on to soften the ride, and now most teams are using them. I only use 28mm for Roubaix. When the wheels are very rigid, the frames are rigid and aerodynamic it’s better when you use 25mm; not only for comfort, they are more reliable too.

BA: HOW PARTICULAR ARE YOU WITH YOUR BIKE AND SET UP?

FP: I’m very particular. I have a one-off special frame made just for me. I don’t like the standard issue. I ride very long – 1.5cm longer than the regular frame at this size, and the bars, they are also just made for me.

They are monocoque, and I like the angles different, to suit me better.

My position on the bike has only changed just a little over the years, just about 8mm longer than when I started. I only ever once went for a bike fit, and because I ride for so long on the bike I don’t want to change things, so have kept that position all though my career.

BA: HOW ABOUT THE TREND TOWARDS RACING MORE OFFROAD SECTORS IN GRAND TOURS AND SINGLE DAY RACES?

FP: When they put gravel into stages of the Giro and Tour de France, as I rider, I don’t like it, because it’s dangerous for nothing. For the GC riders it’s very dangerous.

But, I understand that for the show it’s very good, and the cycling is the show. When the Tour de France puts these sectors in and more people watch cycling, I think it’s good for the sport. For single day races, yes I really like them.

BA: STYLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A BIG PART OF YOUR IMAGE – HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

FP: For me it’s important; jokingly, I always tell my teammates that style is more important than speed. For sure it’s important to have style on the bike, but winning is the most important thing on the road.

Sure, when you have a style like Wiggins on the bike, (he has so much class) and can also get results, that’s best.

Froome, ahh, that’s not a style I like. **BA**

BA: HOW ABOUT DISC BRAKES?

FP: I’m using discs this year. I had one bike to try last year, but Wilier didn’t want me to use it, as it was not ready for production. In the winter they asked me what I wanted to ride this year; I said I wanted to try discs, if they were good I would race on them, if not I would not.

Once you’ve tried good discs it’s hard to go back to regular brakes. I tried discs two times in the team training camps, and on the descents the sensitivity is so much better. In the Tour du Haut Var I managed to stay in the front a lot more, even though my climbing is not so good any more - the brakes allowed me to make up time on the descents in the rain.

BA: HAVE YOU MOVED WITH THE WIDER TYRE TREND?

FP: I think I was one of the first to start running 25mm tyres, in around 2000 or so. Because the frames now are getting so rigid I asked the team

ABOVE: A young Pozzato riding the 2004 Giro for Fassa Bortolo.

ZIPP

RIM BRAKE REVOLUTION

All new Firecrest Wheel sets: 303, 404, 808 Firecrest Carbon Clinchers - now have key technologies ABLC™, Sawtooth™ dimpling and ShowStopper™ textured braking surface previously only available at NSW level.

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Destination NOOSA

ONE OF THE MOST REVERED, ADORED AND SOUGHT AFTER HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS IN AUSTRALIA, THE RESORT TOWN OF NOOSA HARBOURS SOME DEEP HIDDEN SECRETS – SEVERAL OF WHICH WILL CERTAINLY PIQUE THE INTEREST OF *BICYCLING AUSTRALIA* READERS.

A Sunday bunch riding the David Low Way, a staple local classic, on a typical Noosa winter's morning. See 'Top 3 Local Rides' for more.





BETTER KNOWN FOR ITS ICONIC NORTH FACING beach, world class shopping and fantastic food and wine scene, the subtropical oasis that is the greater Noosa area just so happens to offer virtually all the requirements the fussy southern-based cyclist could ever wish for.

Located 140 kilometres or around 2hrs north of Brisbane, with a permanent population of around 50,000, nestled in the corner of a stunning bay and without - believe it or not - a single traffic light in sight, could this be Australia's best kept cycling secret?

I'll admit I wasn't backward in coming forward when the opportunity arose to spend some quality ride time in the Noosa region. With temperatures heading south in Sydney I loaded the car, drove 14 hours north, and felt like I'd landed on another planet.

“Ask 10 Noosa locals for their three favourite rides and YOU’LL NO DOUBT RECEIVE 10 CONFLICTING RESPONSES.”

Mid May in Noosa and the warm and cloudless days were delivered with almost monotonous regularity - chilly nights, brisk starts but 23 to 25 degree days complete with clear blue skies and light sea breezes.

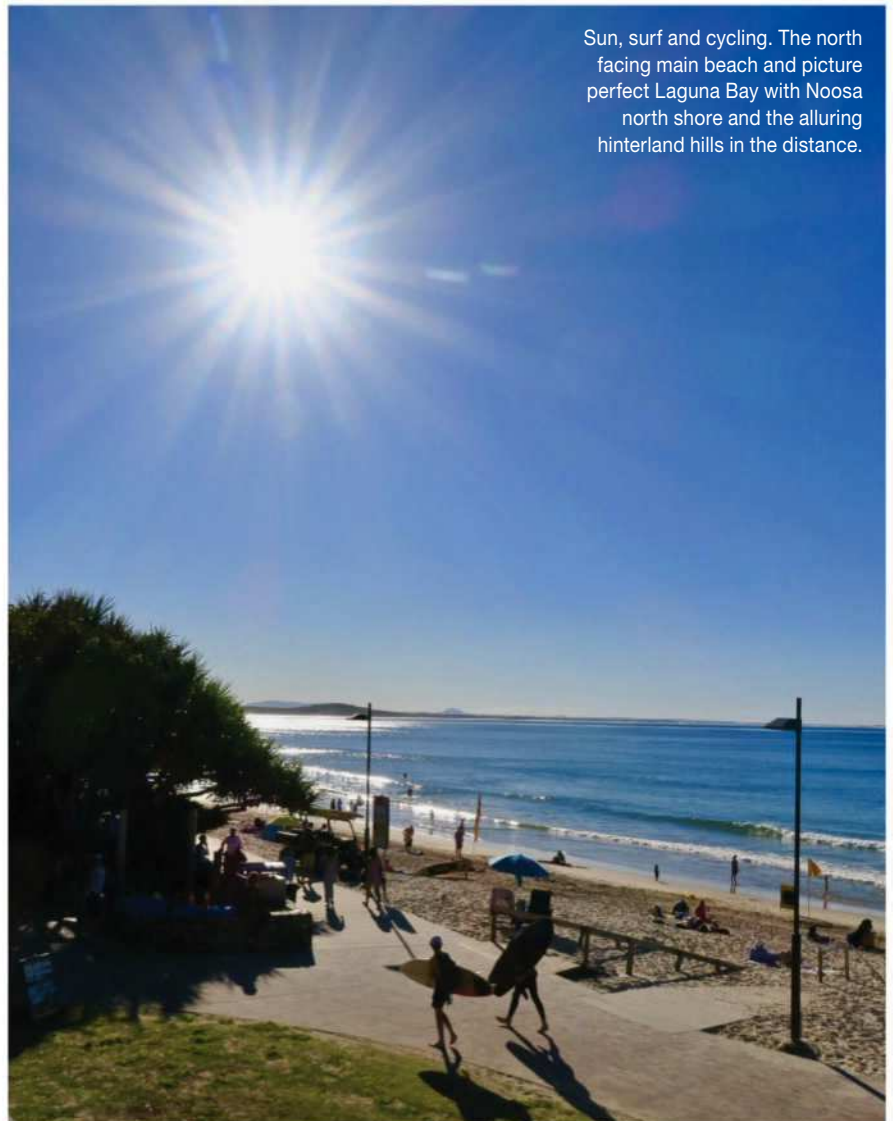
“It's like this throughout winter,” keen local rider and Le Cyclo Sportif mechanic Toby Hood told me over coffee after a morning ride.

“The nights get cooler but daytime is just like this,” he said, pointing to the rich blue sky. “It really is the perfect place for cycling,” he added with a proud and parochial grin.

We were sitting at the popular post-ride haunt Little Cove Coffee, opposite the calming Lake Weyba at around 8am on a Tuesday morning. For some reason I imagined the crawling traffic on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, or a broken down semi on the Tullamarine Freeway, before being snapped back to reality by the waiter presenting a freshly roasted skinny flat white.

With many enjoying the popular local brew ‘the Bongo’, those spoilt and ever-tanned locals waxed lyrical about those aforementioned Noosa secrets.

“Anywhere hinterland,” Jules Emblin, a current world Gran Fondo age champion and passionate local cyclist said.



Sun, surf and cycling. The north facing main beach and picture perfect Laguna Bay with Noosa north shore and the alluring hinterland hills in the distance.

TOP 3 LOCAL RIDES

Ask 10 Noosa locals for their three favourite rides and you'll no doubt receive 10 conflicting responses ... the region is simply riddled with quality cycling destination options. Narrowing the myriad of results down to just a few, these are our three 'must ride' Noosa routes.

1 NOOSA TO BOREEN POINT AND RETURN

A scenic and relatively traffic-free out and back, the outward loop terminates at picture-perfect Boreen Point located on the edge of the expansive & scenic Lake Cootharaba. Distance - 50km return.

2 COOROY / POMONA LOOP

Head out through Tewantin and turn left onto the vehicle-free Gyndier Drive.

Follow the climb to the top then head along Noosa-Cooroy (or Sunrise then Dath Henderson Drive) toward Cooroy. Follow the signs to Pomona then on to Louis Bazzo Drive. You can either stop off at Lake Cootharaba or turn right into McKinnon Drive for the ride back into Tewantin then on to Noosa. Distance - Around 60km return.

3 COASTAL RUN

Depart Noosa and head south toward Sunshine Beach. Enjoy a smooth, constantly undulating coastal ride along the David Low Way toward Coolum and on to Mudjimba, Twin Waters or beyond. Early mornings are recommended as this is one of the busier roads of the region however it does feature a generous shoulder and lane markings. Distance - 60km return plus.

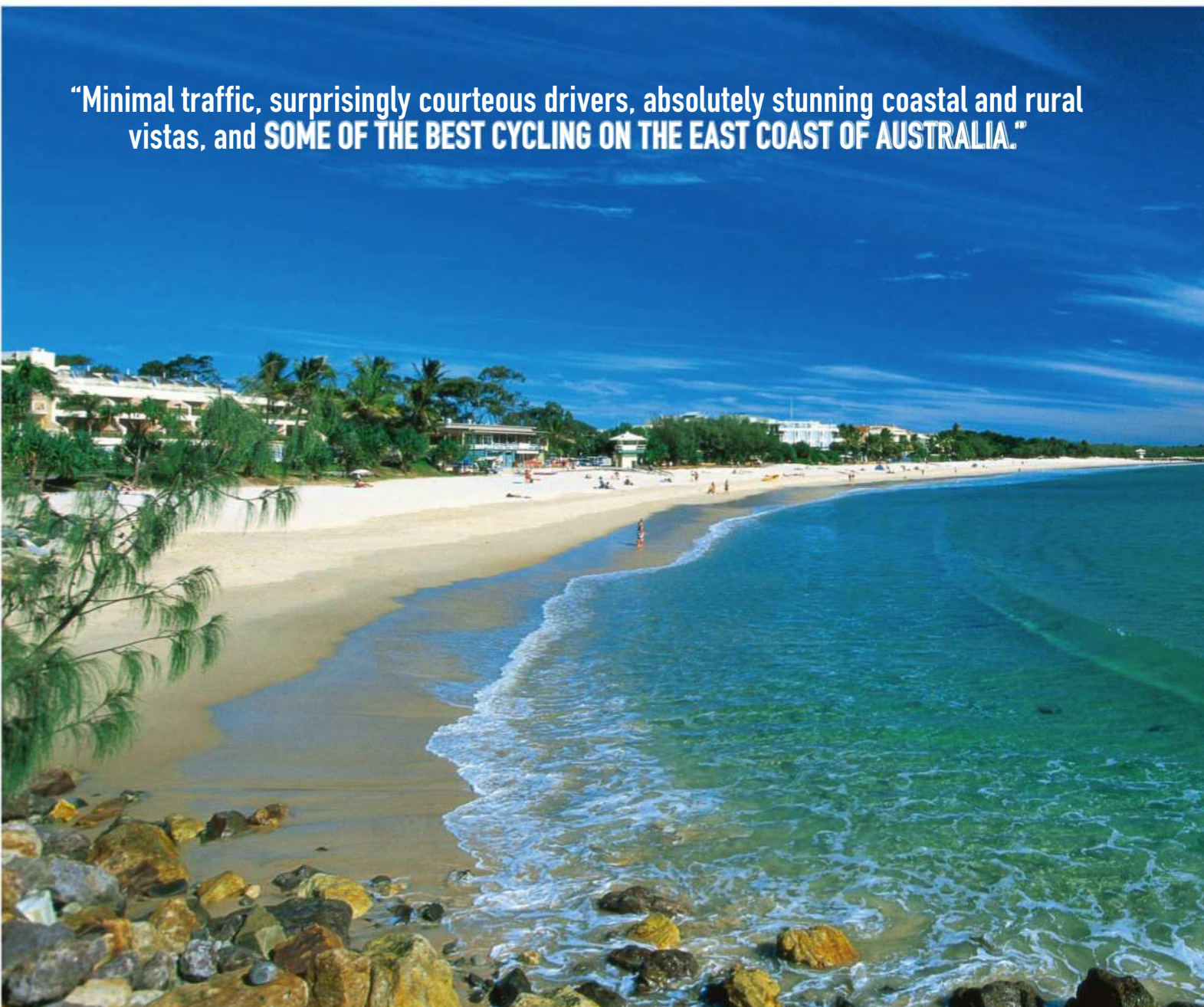
A cyclist wearing a black long-sleeved jersey, black shorts, and a black helmet is riding a road bike on a dirt path. The path is surrounded by tall, dry grass and rolling hills under a cloudy sky. The cyclist is seen from behind, moving away from the viewer.

THE ALL-NEW
CHECKPOINT

It's not just the challenge unpaved roads present that we love. It's the possibilities of where the path may lead, and what we might find along the way, that keeps us seeking the roads less traveled.

VENTURE ON

“Minimal traffic, surprisingly courteous drivers, absolutely stunning coastal and rural vistas, and **SOME OF THE BEST CYCLING ON THE EAST COAST OF AUSTRALIA.**”



MUST-STOP COFFEE SHOPS

Little Cove Cafe - One of the most popular amongst local and visiting cyclists. Nestled in a rainforest atmosphere at 205 Weyba Rd Noosaville, this iconic local coffee stop features ample bike racks out the front, various indoor and outdoor seating areas and, of course, sensational coffee.

Tip - Make sure you ask for ‘The Bongo’ - a double shot half latte on the freshly ground bean of the day.

Zabe Espresso Bar - Located at 98 Poinciana Ave Tewantin, this fascinating coffee shop is also a popular meeting place and post-ride park up location for local riders. There’s a wide-ranging menu and interesting display of curiosities on the walls.





LEFT: The white sands and aqua blue water of Noosa's main beach and Laguna Bay, the perfect place to rest, relax and recover after experiencing the local cycling.

BELOW: Noosa is renowned for not only its family friendly north facing beach but clear blue skies and warm winter days.

BELOW LEFT: The sun sets on another stunning winter's day in Noosa Heads, a region touted as 'The Relaxation Capital' of Australia.

BELOW RIGHT: The greater Noosa region offers all manner of cycling options including climbs and descents that will linger on your mind for months.

3 GREAT PLACES TO STAY

1 Peppers Noosa and Villas – High above Hastings Street but hidden in the hillside is this idyllic tropical getaway consisting of totally indulgent accommodation, numerous pools, a world class restaurant and more. A supporting partner of the Noosa Classic, Peppers Noosa Resort are offering a generous accommodation, meal and day spa discount for event participants. Visit the Noosa Classic website for full details.

2 RACV Noosa Resort – offers 5 Star family friendly accommodation minutes from the heart of Noosa and located in stunning north facing grounds. With a huge range of resort activities including several pools, floodlit tennis courts, bars, restaurants and even a day spa, this resort has it all. There is bike hire, free shuttle transfers and even electric car hire onsite. Search RACV Noosa for full details.

3 Ivory Palms Resort – Nestled in subtropical rainforest mid way between Noosaville and Tewantin, drive into this surprisingly expansive resort and you'll find 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartment style accommodation, 2 large pools, numerous activities for the kids including a giant bouncing pad and more. There's an onsite cafe, fantastic restaurant and the aforementioned craft beer. Details at www.ivorypalmsresort.com.au

Bicycling Australia stayed in Noosa as a guest of Ivory Palms Resort and Tourism Noosa.





Not only famous for its beaches, restaurants and laid back lifestyle, Noosa is equally well known for the boutique shopping strip of Hastings Street.

“Our roads, the places we get to cycle, are just fabulous,” she said. “We have such a great choice cycling here - hinterland, coastal, hills, flats, and such a lovely bunch of people to ride with. It doesn’t get too cold in winter and is fine in summer,” she said as she looked skyward. “Who could beat this?”

“We are totally spoiled for cycling options,” Jules continued. “But I really do enjoying getting out to the hinterland - the rolling green hills, the minimal traffic, it’s certainly my favourite riding anywhere.”

Precariously perched atop ‘Turn 7’ of the popular local road Gyndier Drive the following morning, a Wednesday, I was pleasantly surprised by the number of riders making their way up what would have to be one of the most ridden roads in the region ... and for very good reason.

Gyndier, as it’s known, is off Noosa-Cooroy Road around 4km out from the town of Tewantin - the start/finish point of the forthcoming Noosa Classic on August 26.

A completely closed road, bollards block the lower entry point and upper exit point of the 3km Gyndier climb - a gradual ascent of 3 to 4% and the perfect place for traffic-free repeats at anytime.

That day I enjoyed a mix of sampling the local roads and cycling destinations which included Sunrise Road, Dath Henderson Drive, the challenging climb up to Mount Tinbeerwah and a return loop out to Lake Cootharaba. Late afternoon and I couldn’t help but stop the bike riverside at Noosaville to take in a stunning sunset and listen to an incredible cacophony made by what must have been 3000 lorikeets. They too were enjoying that late afternoon in this timeless paradise.

Upon returning to the top-level accommodation of Ivory Palms Resort and settling in to a local craft beer (a surprisingly well priced one at that ... this place ain’t the city folks!) I looked over the day’s photos and started thinking.

“This region has absolutely got it all,” I mused, as the chef cheekily asked how my chicken / cranberry / rocket / camembert pizza was going (I’m sure he knew the answer as soon as he took it out of the oven).

“Minimal traffic, surprisingly courteous drivers, absolutely stunning coastal and rural vistas, and some of the best cycling on the east coast of Australia,” I thought.

It’s no wonder the region has been selected as the location for Bicycling Australia’s third Gran Fondo event - the Noosa Classic to be held on August 26 this year - and we hope to see you there! **BA**

5 THINGS TO DO OTHER THAN CYCLING

1 Hit Hastings Street - An absolute hive of activity day and night, this shopping and dining strip retains a laid-back beach feel of yesteryear while offering the latest in food, wine, coffee and fashion.

2 Walk The National Park - Just a few hundred meters from the hustle and bustle of Hastings St is the start of the Noosa National Park. Boasting a beautiful walk out to the headland, fantastic surfing and fishing, and even koala spotting, this is a must-see destination.

3 Learn to Surf or Hire an SUP - Noosa is synonymous with surfing and several local businesses offer learn to surf along with stand up paddle board hire.

4 Go Fishing - River, Dam, Beach, Surf or Ocean, the fishing options border on endless in the Noosa region. Take a walk along the river at busy little Noosaville and you’ll see various tour operators and information centres offering fishing trips to the current hotspots.

5 Watch The Waves Roll In - A sign above the Noosa Surf Club reads ‘The Relaxation Capital of Australia’. Having enjoyed a refreshing ale or two and taken in the stunning views from the well-known surf club, we’d highly recommend it as #5 in Noosa’s ‘must do’ list.

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LIFESTYLE



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REACH UP TO 150 KM WITH QUICK
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LI-ION BATTERY CAN BE CHARGED
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TO SPEED AFTER A FULL STOP

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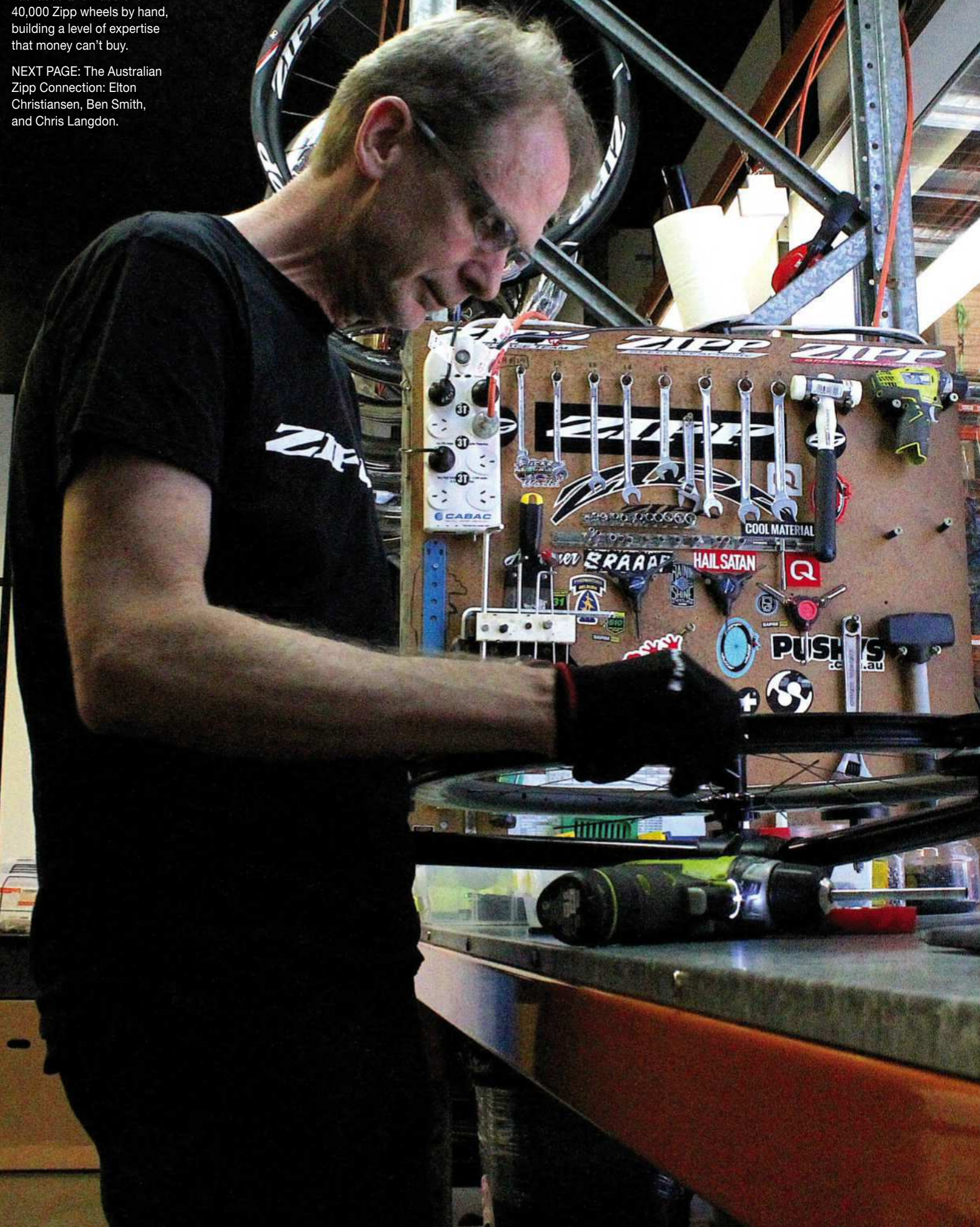


SHIMANO
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Artist at work. Ben Smith has laced and trued over 40,000 Zipp wheels by hand, building a level of expertise that money can't buy.

NEXT PAGE: The Australian Zipp Connection: Elton Christiansen, Ben Smith, and Chris Langdon.



The Tzars of Zipp

YOU MIGHTN'T KNOW BEN SMITH BY NAME. BUT IF YOU OWN A SET OF ZIPP WHEELS CHANCES ARE THIS ONE-TIME ART STUDENT WAS THE GUY WHO HAND-BUILT THEM, JUST LIKE HE'S DONE FOR OVER 40,000 OTHER WHEELS IN AUSTRALIA DURING THE PAST DECADE. PETER MANIATY SAT DOWN RECENTLY WITH SMITH, TOGETHER WITH HIS BOSS AT ECHELON SPORTS, CHRIS LANGDON, TO TALK RIMS, HUBS AND ALL THINGS ZIPP.



HOW MANY MANAGING DIRECTORS IN THE WORLD can hand-build carbon racing wheels? I'm guessing not many. But right now I'm sitting with one, Chris Langdon, who also happens to be the Founder of Brisbane-based Echelon Sports, long-time Australian importer of Zipp Wheels. We're joined by Zipp Wheels Production Manager, Ben Smith, and the more we talk, the clearer it becomes you'd be hard-pressed to find a pairing who know more about the evolution of this American wheel brand that, ironically, began thanks to the efforts of an Australian.

BICYCLING AUSTRALIA: HOW LONG HAVE YOU GUYS BEEN INVOLVED WITH ZIPP?

CHRIS LANGDON: I bought the business from the original Zipp distributor in the early 2000s, but the Australian connection goes right back to the very beginning. The Zipp story was started by an Australian motor racing engineer, Leigh Sargent, who made the very first Zipp disc wheel in 1988.

It was called the 1150. He would jump up and down on it at bike shows, that was his party trick to show just how stiff and strong it was. We actually still have those 1150 disc wheels here today.

BA: HOW DID THINGS CHANGE WHEN SRAM PURCHASED ZIPP IN 2007?

CL: The previous owner, Andy Ording, was a huge driver of Zipp's growth as a brand, but when he sold, I think the time was right for both him and SRAM. The relationship stayed pretty similar and overall it's been a good thing. Certainly, Zipp couldn't be doing what they're doing today without SRAM's investment, systems and structures.

BA: WHAT'S THE SWEET SPOT FOR ZIPP IN AUSTRALIA THESE DAYS. WHERE DOES YOUR VOLUME COME FROM?

CL: The 404 has always been our best-selling wheel, but that's levelled out in the last couple

of years with the 303. Cycling is definitely having a conversation about wider tyres and lower pressures these days, and the 303 better fits that profile. We've also seen a big shift towards disc braking since the start of last summer, it's just going up and up. The other big trend is tubeless and clinchers. Since carbon clinchers came along it's really changed. I'd say it's around 90/10 (clinchers vs tubular) these days. It used to be 60/40.

BA: YOU'RE ALSO DOING ZIPP CUSTOM BUILDS NOW?

CL: ZIPP gave us approval to run our own bespoke program about 18 months ago. It's only available through our dealers, you can't just ring us up for it. It's a bit like buying a new BMW or Mercedes. Sure, you can get one off the lot. But some people want something a bit different.

BA: WHAT'S THE NEXT BIG ADVANCEMENT IN WHEELS?

CL: 'Biomimicry' has been prominent lately with a lot of engineers looking back to nature to find how evolution has developed over millions of years. That's actually where the development of 454 NSW wheel came from.

BEN SMITH: That's true, but I do think it's always going to be a variation on a theme, spoked wheels have been around for over 100 years for a reason! I would also say Zipp exhaustively wind tunnel tests everything, so when they launch something new it's not just a marketing ploy. There's always a genuine reason, it really works.

BA: THE MAJORITY OF ZIPP WHEELS SOLD IN AUSTRALIA ARE ACTUALLY BUILT HERE TOO. WHY IS THAT?

CL: About 90% are laced, built and trued right here,

"...YOU'RE NOT JUST PAYING FOR WHEELS, YOU'RE PAYING FOR HERITAGE. Decades of experience, quality control, R&D and expertise."

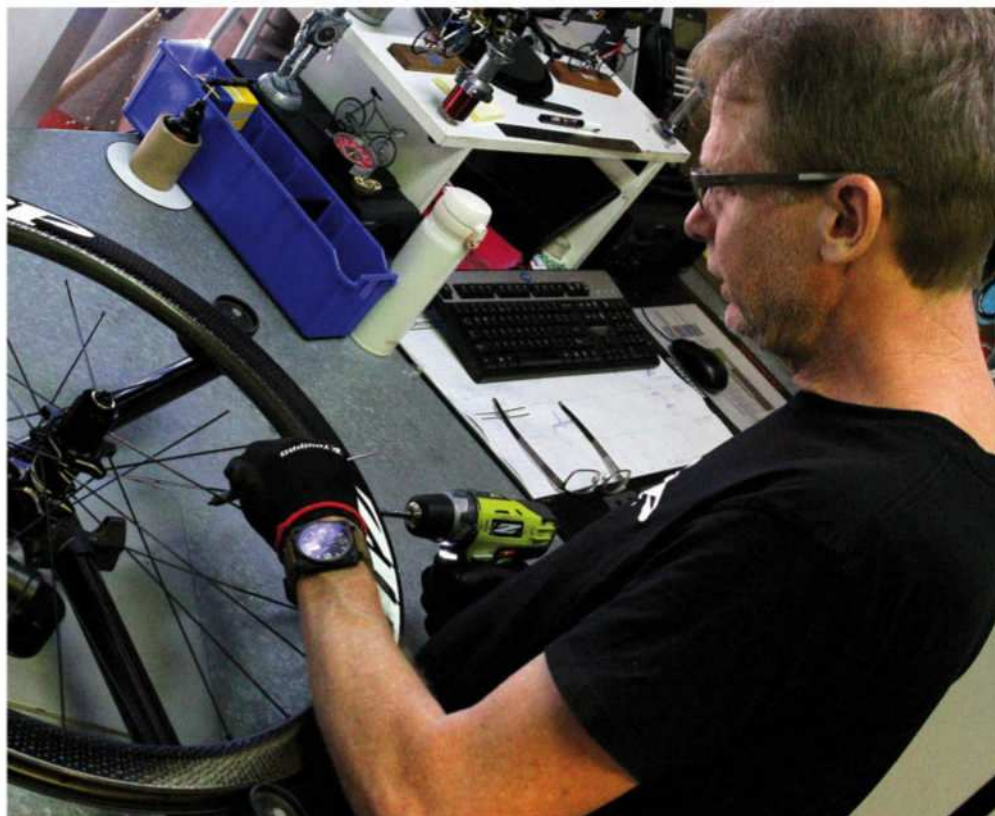
mostly by Ben. It's our choice. We're the only major Zipp market that does it. That said, most people probably don't even realise, and they never notice Ben's signature on the inside of their rims. Every wheel Ben builds is dated and signed with his initials.

BA: YOU MUST BE A VERY BUSY MAN, BEN?

BS (LAUGHS): I think I've built upwards of 40,000 Zipp wheels. But that's what I do, day in, day out. 15 is about as many as I can put out on a single day. Typically, I'll do about 10 – that's lacing and truing them to a point where I would be very happy to buy them myself. I aim for 0.1mm roll out – up and down, side to side – just about nothing. In my experience, with a lot of other wheels they just punch them out, and that's not what Zipp is about.

BA: ZIPP WHEELS CERTAINLY AREN'T PUNCHED OUT. WHY ARE THEY WORTH THE EXTRA MONEY?

CL: Well, you're not just paying for wheels, you're paying for heritage. Decades of experience, quality control, R&D and expertise. Most of the senior people at Zipp have been there a very long time, my relationship goes back with those guys about 20 years.



For several years now Ben Smith has hand-signed and dated inside every rim he's built. Perhaps he's even signed yours?



RIDING THE DARKER MORNINGS?



HD Copper (Cat1) darkens to Brown (Cat3) in full sun.



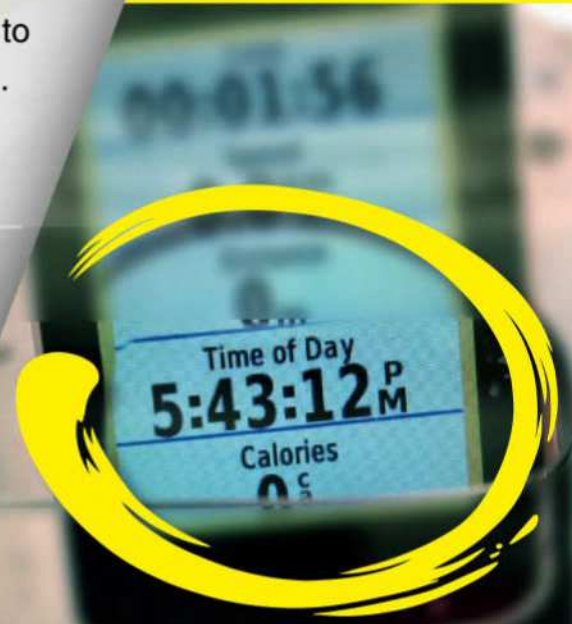
Clear (Cat0) darkens to grey (Cat3) in full sun.

*With or
without
reading lenses*

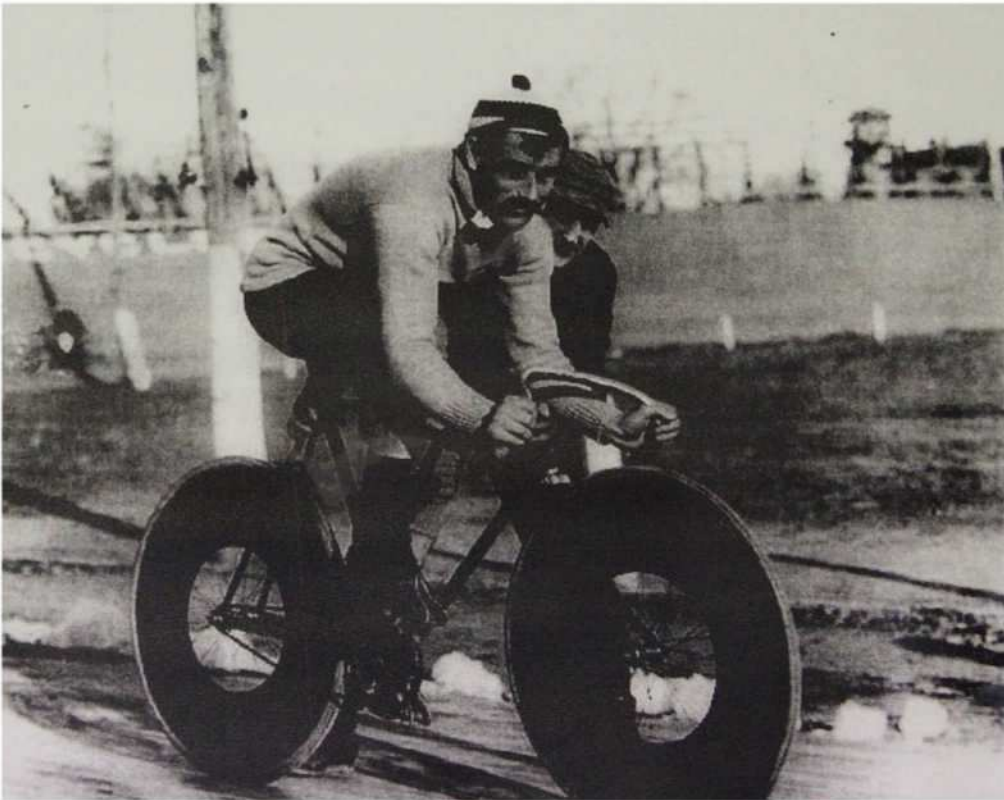
Check out the website for more information.

www.bzoptics.com

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None other than 'Valentino Zippicelli' (an April Fools Day gag from 2009) keeps watch from the wall of Ben's workshop, deep rims and all.

BS: An eye for detail and patience. Mentally it's very draining, even building just one wheel takes a lot out of you. If you can imagine just doing the same thing all day long. I want every wheel to be perfect.

BA: WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF BUILDING A WHEEL?

BS: Zipp wheels are quite different, especially in the way they true up. You need to know exactly how it tensions, how it centres in relation to what input you're giving. There's a real trick to get it right. There's also a big difference in the quality of tensiometers

on the market. I rely on a very specific custom-built testing unit, a really good one. I can usually get things pretty close by hand, but then I use the tool to confirm it, and I'll re-confirm it probably 20 times before I finish each wheel. It's all part of the rich experience of building wheels!

BA: IS 'WHEEL BUILDER' A GOOD CAREER CHOICE THESE DAYS?

BS: It's a pretty rare profession. There's not that much around nowadays because so much is done in Asia with teams of 30 to 40 people finishing off what a machine has done. I do think there will always be a need for a human to hand-finish the truing, especially on racing wheels. The machines are getting better, but they haven't been fully perfected. Can you imagine what a wheel-building machine looks like?

BA: WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ZIPP WHEEL?

BS: As a rider, it would be a combination. Deeper rim at the back, slightly shallower on the front, maybe a 404/303. As a wheel builder, it's the 808 because it's the truest to start with. It's a very stiff rim because of its depth. You lace it up and give it a medium amount of tension and it's almost true.

BA: HYPOTHETICALLY, IF BEN STOPPED WORKING, DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WOULD NOTICE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR WHEELS?

CL: I would! Ben is the same. If a wheel isn't right he takes it very personally, it's like he is being stabbed in the heart.

BS: You do put so much effort into a wheel, you want it to be right. That's really important to us. That's really important to me. **BA**

Take Nick James, the head wheel builder in Indianapolis, he's probably the only person on the planet with more Zipp wheel building knowledge and experience than Ben. Ultimately it comes back to SRAM's overall view of quality. All these things combine to produce an end product of the highest possible standard.

BA: HOW MUCH DO YOU GUYS WORRY ABOUT COPIES?

CL: We know there are fake Zipp's out there. SRAM spends a lot of time and resources policing that. There's actually a team of guys, all they do is scour places like eBay and Alibaba. Getting

that counterfeit message out to customers is important. They've often unwittingly bought these wheels and we'll see them at an event and we tell them "Look mate, sorry but they're not ours."

"I think I've built upwards of 40,000 ZIPP WHEELS.."

BA: SHIFTING THE FOCUS BACK TO THE WHEELS THAT ARE YOURS. HOW DID YOU BECOME A WHEEL BUILDER IN THE FIRST PLACE BEN?

BS: Originally, I trained to be a commercial artist. But when I graduated from art college I went to work in a bike shop because it was a quicker way to make money than trying to set up an art studio. There was never an apprenticeship, it really was the school of life. There are a lot of colleges and institutions teaching bike mechanic skills these days, but truing is such a hands-on skill. It's something you learn over many years. It's an art.

BA: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A GOOD WHEEL BUILDER?



BOSSI FABRICA CX

The Bossi Fabrica CX brings down barriers. Responsive road manners, intuitive control, and utility for the longer rides. It's the do-all bike that's ready for anything - custom built from the ground up.



Hot and gusty winds added to the challenge of 1600m of climbing over the 160km route.

WHAT A CLASSIC!

TOUGH LOVE. THE CLARE CLASSIC DISHED IT UP IN SPADES WITH UNSEASONABLY WARM CONDITIONS AND SOME STIFF HEADWINDS. NO DOUBT IT MADE FOR A CHALLENGING RIDE BUT FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, RIDERS WILL BE BACK 'WITH BELLS ON' TO EXPERIENCE THE CLARE WELCOME AND A TRULY AUSTRALIAN GRAN FONDO.

“WE ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT ... IT WAS A challenging ride and far harder than Bowral...”

They were the words of Judy Hansen who, along with husband Mike, made a 1500km road trip to the inaugural Clare Classic Gran Fondo in April.

“It was tough out there,” she continued, as we spoke at the virtual ghost town of Silverton, west of Broken Hill.

“The wind and the heat ... and my chain jammed between inner ring and the frame near the Mintaro rest stop,” Mike said. “But overall it was an event won't forget, and the perfect motivator for a three-week bike-based road trip.”

I'd literally bumped into Judy and Mike in that tiny outback town more than 500km from Adelaide and 1100km from Sydney a few days after the Clare Classic.

Such, I thought at the time, was a clear indication of the reach and popularity of the booming Classics series events – the Bowral, Clare and looming Noosa Classic on August 26.

After more than a year of planning the Clare Classic was on. Come dawn on Sunday April 8 all that could be heard in the Main street of Clare were crickets and the occasional birdcall. A few short hours later that same main street was filled with riders, bikes and the sweet sound of 900 or so freewheel hubs as wave after wave of riders left town to take on the challenging surrounds of the Clare Valley district.

With some saying it was as challenging as a true Classic – and ironically held the same day as the world's most famous 1-Day race, Paris Roubaix – before too long riders were facing unseasonably warm temperatures of up to 36 degrees complete with hot and gusty northerly winds.

“Sure the heat made things very challenging – it was one of the toughest rides I've ever done,” Judy Hansen continued.

Others agreed, from weekend warriors through to Tour de France royalty – no exaggeration required.

Five-time Tour de France participant and former Tour Down Under winner Patrick Jonker is a proud South Australian and even prouder ambassador of that State's Cancer Council. He described the Clare Classic as the best Gran Fondo he'd ever taken part in.

“I've ridden the Marmot and many of the bigger European mass participation events in France and Italy,” he said. “The organisation, attention to detail, the management, the course and considerations here in Clare were second to none,” he added.

It wasn't just a lifelong cycling and Tour de France legend impressed, the ever-colourful Mayor of the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council, Allan Aughey OAM, described the positive impact the event had on the revered riesling region.

“Even a week before the event a certain hum began to envelope the region,” he told us.

“There were a lot more cars with interstate number plates, so many with bike racks, and new faces in our wineries and attractions,” he said. And despite the summer-like conditions, he saw the event as a huge success and major boost for the reason.

“They were comforted on the green Clare Oval, recuperating amidst a plethora of local gourmet food, famous Clare Valley wines and sponsors displays,” he said.

“The Clare Classic delivered everything any Mayor would want for their regional community. A significant economic boost, great publicity and exposure.”

Mayor Aughey concluded by offering his heartfelt thanks and appreciation to “the dedicated Yaffa team for s delivering this significant event that has benefited our entire region.” His parting comment...“Please come back!”





MEG SCOTT, Winner female overall, 30-49 female

HOMETOWN: Sydney

OCCUPATION: Lawyer

CLUB / BUNCH: Sydney Uni - Staminade is my race team; Giant Cycling Club Sydney and the mighty Cani Pazzi!

BIKE: Trek Emonda SLR-9

WHEELS: Bontrager Aeolus 3 D3 carbon

HELMET: Bontranger Velocis MIPS

SHOES: Bontrager Meraj

NUTRITION: Always have Staminade to keep my hydrated, and the Science in Sport energy gels are great. Pure makes a great recovery drink too.

USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK: 300km to 400km

FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE? Cani Pazzi itburns is a local loop which does all the hills around Mosman area. It is always a tough ride with nowhere to hide up the steep pinches. For longer weekend rides I like to get out of Sydney - the gorges (Bobbin Head, Galston, Berowra) feature quite a bit but I love to go on longer rides around Wisemans Ferry and Mangrove Mountain.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS? I am pretty consistent with my training or riding so I always do plenty of kms. I just made sure to do a long Sunday ride with some interval work during the week. To prepare for "race" day I always make sure I take a look at the route and if I can download it to my Wahoo, check the weather and carry enough food and water to try to limit any stopping time.

WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE? As the first event in Clare the organisation was great. The community of Clare really supported the event and it was great to see all the orange bikes around the course and all the spectators out cheering us along. The course was really stunning as we wound our way through the vineyards and through the country side. Although the overall elevation wasn't that high the real killer of the day was the wind and the heat and it really was a tough day out. It felt like there was a cross wind most of the day, although perhaps it was because the section with the tail wind went so quickly when we were flying! The festival vibe at the end was great with plenty of wine, beer and food from the local area. Looking forward to next year already!

ANNABEL COX, QOM

HOMETOWN: Clare, South Australia

OCCUPATION: Animal Health - Biosecurity (livestock)

CLUB / BUNCH: Port Adelaide CC

BIKE: Wilier Zero 9 (DA mech)

WHEELS: Zipp 404 tubs

HELMET: Bell Volt

SHOES: Lakes CX401

NUTRITION: Pancakes a couple of hours before the ride. During the ride snakes and a muesli bar if needed, energy/electrolyte drink and water.

USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK: Fluctuates from 100 to 250+km, I haven't got a serious routine at the moment. I had a shoulder reconstruction at the end of 2016 and had trouble dealing with that but I'm slowly getting my fitness back, having a goal like this ride is just what I need.

FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE? I love riding my cyclocross bike on the Riesling Trail (Clare Valley) when I have time, it's nice to get away from the traffic and the scenery is spectacular. Riding on the roads around the Clare Valley in general is pretty easy, and I have many favourite courses. When I'm in Adelaide it's Monty (Montacute Rd) to Mt Lofty or anywhere near a gelati shop.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS? I actually rode the course three days before to check it out so I knew I could do the distance I just wasn't sure if I had the fitness for a fast one. I decided to put myself on the tape at the start line of the fast group with the aim of staying there for as long as possible and to drift back to a pace that I could finish the ride if I needed to.

WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE? The course was great, I do about 20% of the course regularly about 40% back to front and rarely the rest so the change made it interesting. After the first 17km loop I ended up riding with a couple of guys and we kept a steady pace to Manoora. For the last 40km we were joined by another guy and from then on it was a real battle against the head winds and hills back to Clare. I made a mistake with my fluid intake, started cramping in both legs just out of Mintaro and had to drop back and pace myself the last 10k home. I was so relieved to roll into the recovery area at the oval, it was very much appreciated, and I was pretty happy with the cold beer I found in my hand too.

I'd like to say congratulations to the organisers for a well-managed event and well done to the many riders that kept going to finish their respective rides. And thank you to BZ Optics for my new sunnies.





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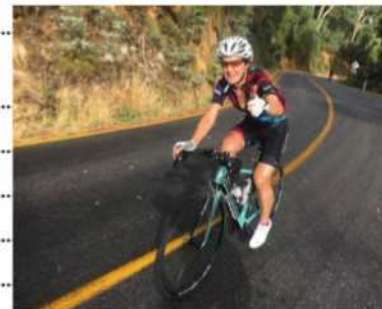
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MANDY TOWLER, Winner 50-54 female**HOMETOWN:** Adelaide**OCCUPATION:** IT support**CLUB / BUNCH:** none**BIKE:** Specialized Amira S Works**WHEELS:** Roval**HELMET:** Met**SHOES:** Specialized**NUTRITION:** Hammer Perpetuem,
bananas, coffee**USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK:** Varies a lot from 80km to 350km
depending on training**FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE?** Adelaide Hills – Ashton,
Picadilly, Lobethal, anywhere up there.**HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS?** Respectfully**WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?**

Great atmosphere but the weather created a tough day!

**TERESA MOLYNEUX, Winner 55-59 female****HOMETOWN:** Adelaide**OCCUPATION:** Community
Mental Health Team Leader**CLUB / BUNCH:** Megabike**BIKE:** Bianchi Infinito**WHEELS:** Tunes**HELMET:** Kask**SHOES:** North Wave**NUTRITION:** On the ride SIS gels, Carman's Muesli Bars, bananas and
one piece of cake from the refreshment stops.**USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK:** 250 - 300kms**FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE?** Anywhere in the Adelaide
Hills - especially Chain of Ponds, Swamp Road to Hahndorf, Adelaide
to Strathalbyn via Meadows & Paris Creek Rd, back via Macclesfield.**HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS?** Knowing how lucky I
am to be able to do them, prepare and enjoy the ride, fuel up and pace
myself but give a good push if I can.**WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?** It was a
tough ride with the weather and wind, I thought the course was great and
would like to do again in cooler less windy conditions but that's the way
it goes on the day! Organisation excellent, plenty of rest stops, fuel and
water. Big thanks to volunteers who were out in the heat keeping us safe.**TRISH PLANT, Winner 60-64 female****HOMETOWN:** Adelaide**OCCUPATION:** Administration Manager**CLUB / BUNCH:** Rapha Women Adelaide,
Adelaide LIV social rides, Cycling SA**BIKE:** Cervelo R3 and LIV Envie
Advanced Pro**WHEELS:** Fulcrum Racing Zero**HELMET:** Kask**SHOES:** Louis Garneau**NUTRITION:** Vegetarian and lots of carbs**USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK:** 300+**FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE?** Norton Summit then up
to Marble Hill followed by the terrific Montacute Road descent OR
Greenhill Road through to Hahndorf, down to Mylor and back via
the beautiful Aldgate Valley Road ascent up to Stirling and down
the Crafters bikeway. Generally anywhere in the hills to enjoy the
scenery and riding downhill!**HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS?** During the week
before I do easier rides but about the same kilometres. At the event
I just 'go with the flow' and aim to enjoy it!**WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?**The Clare Classic was a welcome addition to the SA calendar.
It was well organized with good pre-event information and ride
options for all abilities. The event village and refreshment stops
were located well and the volunteers and marshalls were terrific.
The course was varied and challenging, especially on the day
with the heat and wind! I would have preferred the start to be
adjacent the event village, and there could have been more
water on the course on that particular day.**JANE (ADRIANNA) BENNETT, Winner 65-69 female****HOMETOWN:** I live in Goolwa South Australia.**CLUB / BUNCH:** I belong to 3 riding groups...Goolwa and Districts Bicycle
Users Group, Southern Suburbs Road Cyclists and Coast Cruzers.**BIKE:** I ride a Bianchi Infinito CV (of which I own 2) and ride about 400
to 500 kilometers per week. I mostly ride around the Fleurieu Peninsula
and the Adelaide Hills. My husband and I are both retired and cycling
is our passion.**WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?**Thoroughly enjoyed the Clare Classic despite the heat and wind. All
things going to plan will definitely be doing the event again next year.
I love the challenge and the course was fantastic.

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MAX HARDY, Winner 19-29 male**HOMETOWN:** Adelaide**OCCUPATION:** Bike mechanic/student**CLUB / BUNCH:** Treadly bombtrack racing**BIKE:** Bombtrack hook 3 /

Cannondale SuperSix Evo

WHEELS: Hed Belgium**HELMET:** Rapha**SHOES:** Bont Vaypor S**NUTRITION:** 1x Clif bar, 1x Shot Blok, Nuun hydration**USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK:** 350km**FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE?** Super Elliot's bunch.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS? I didn't prepare, or have any thoughts regarding pacing this ride. I knew of a few other strong riders who were coming along, and thought it would be good to ride with them. At around 40km in, we had a group of four riders that worked together for most of the ride until the final 30km, which I rode solo.

WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE? Clare seems to be a great place to run an event such as this. It was a great group out on the road, and I hope to see the event return next year. It was a good fun, hard day on the bike, and was good to come out with a decent result.

**CLIFF GRANT, Winner 50-54 male****HOMETOWN:** Kanmantoo, South Australia**OCCUPATION:** Medical/Data Scientist**CLUB / BUNCH:** Race with the Adelaide Hills Masters and Norwood Cycle Clubs. Member of Bicycle Express Adelaide-BMW Masters cycling team**BIKE:** 2015 Cannondale Supersix EVO Hi-Mod.

Over 30,000 kms and still a great bike.

WHEELS: 50mm Fibrous Wheels.**HELMET:** Lazer**SHOES:** Bont

NUTRITION: I actually used the ride as an experiment to see how I would go without the usual gels and electrolyte drinks over a longer ride. For the Clare Classic I drank only water and had 9 baby potatoes in a zip lock bag that I boiled the night before and coated with a little salt. I had a few pieces of apricot delight and a couple bananas. After eating the first potato I thought I was going to end the ride with a lot of uneaten potatoes in my jersey. However, in the end they were all eaten, although I am not sure a jersey pocket full of cold potatoes is overly convenient or will catch on in the pro peloton.

USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK: 8-12 hours. Depending on what I am doing, road, gravel or trainer that works out to 200-350km a week.

FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE? The Adelaide Hills have so many fantastic options, but a loop including Gorge Rd and Lobethal Rd through Ashton, Basket Range and Lenswood will never disappoint. Lately I have been spending more time on the gravel than the bitumen and have been loving exploring the back roads and trails of the Bremer and Mt Lofty Ranges. The other week I rode 110km and saw two cars, and they both slowed down and waved!

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS? 4-6 weeks out I start focusing on tempo or sweet spot work. Regular days with two 20 minute intervals at about 85-90% of FTP (solid but nothing crazy) to build the engine. In the last month or so I try and make sure I fit in a four to five hour ride each weekend to just get the body used to being on the bike for that length of time.

WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?

Clare is a great location for an event like this, quiet roads, a variety of riding conditions and plenty of options to amuse those in the family who aren't riding. The looping course meant you were never far from the next feed station or town if required. The feed stations were efficient, well run and well placed. For me personally it was great to spend time riding with my mates and other riders from all over Australia. I even got to swap turns on the front with the legend that is Pat Jonker. Little Ol' me, imagine that!

DAN BONELLO, Winner 30-49 male, KOM, Overall winner male**HOMETOWN:** Redfern**OCCUPATION:** Mechanic**CLUB / BUNCH:** St George CC**BIKE:** Wilier Cento 1 Air**WHEELS:** Dura Ace**HELMET:** Giro**SHOES:** Bont. Always Bont

NUTRITION: I am a massive fan of Foodie Fees. It is a Sydney based company that has some amazing product lines. Their protein balls are amazing off the bike. I don't really eat gels. They just do not agree with me that well.

USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK: Anywhere from 400 to 700km a week. I am very lucky in that sense, I get to ride my bike a lot in many amazing places.

FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE? I am a huge fan of the Royal National Park on the southern end of Sydney. However, there are numerous places around Australia that trump this road and are much much quieter.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS? I look at the weather mostly. I am always concerned about what the wind is doing and what to wear. Events like this are always hard, because they start early, so you either have to start cold or commit to carrying some layers later in the ride. Other than that I don't do any specific rides to target this sort of event, just lots of long kilometres, with a bunch of intensity seems to get me going the best. What was your overall impression of the day in Clare? It was tough. At times it felt like there was a hair dryer turned on in front of my face. The wind makes it really difficult for everyone. It makes the riding so tough. Apart from sailors, no one really appreciates the wind.





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BRETT LINDSTROM, Winner 55-59 male**HOMETOWN:** Hampton Victoria**OCCUPATION:** Talent Lead**CLUB / BUNCH:** Southern Masters CC / CTX Crew**BIKE:** Giant TCR**WHEELS:** Reynolds Assaults 40mm with Schwalbe Pro One's**HELMET:** Kask**SHOES:** S-Works**NUTRITION:** Torq bars, GU gels and bananas**USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK:** 300-350k's**FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE?** The Hurt Box and CTX Crew, mostly Beach Road, Mt Eliza and the Dandenongs. With some MTB added in.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS? Being coached by Dave "Steggles" Sturt of The Hurt Box, I was well prepared. Steggles always hammers into us how to ride the bunch, especially when its windy like it was at Clare. So I'm constantly thinking about where I'm positioned, who's wheel I'm on, and what I need to eat and drink. I also stuck a note on my top bar to enjoy the views, I'm very competitive and often forget to look around, and having never been to Clare before I wanted to take all that in. On such a long ride I want to make sure I'm always riding with others, but I kind of screwed that up. With about 60k's to go I was in a 5 person bunch including Megan Scott. Megan, Diego and one other guy stopped for water, but Mark from Tasmania and I kept riding. Unfortunately as we got to 30k's to go, all into a strong headwind, Mark got a flat. Not good, and then I took a wrong turn. If I'd stayed on course I reckon Megan would have caught me and I could have ridden with her, but ended up doing the 30k's solo into the headwind. Sometimes the best planning gets let down by dumb stuff.

WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?

It was a great event. I always enjoy riding in different places....I can only go up and down Melbourne's Beach Road so many times. My wife Deb also rode the 100K event, so we made a 10 day holiday out of it. The event was really well run, everyone was friendly and helpful, and the roads were great. I really enjoyed the course, anyone could do the ride off the back of not too much training, which means it suits everyone. Like all good Gran Fondo's there was some great craft beer at the end...what more could you ask for!

**PAUL SMITH, Winner 60-64 male****HOMETOWN:** Kiama NSW**OCCUPATION:** Retired**BIKE TREK:** Emonda SLR**WHEELS:** Aeolus 3 TLR**HELMET:** Bolle**SHOES:** S-Works**NUTRITION:** Just eat well**USUAL K PER WEEK:** 240 - 300**FAVORITE RIDE:** Jamberoo pass Southern Highlands loop**TRAINING:** Extra interval training more climbs, plus my regular day to day training.**PHILLIP NORRIS, Winner 70+ male****HOMETOWN:** Adelaide**OCCUPATION:** Professional cyclist (wife = sponsor)**CLUB / BUNCH:** Norwood Cycling Club/ Veterans and Ladies Cycling Club**BIKE:** Colango EPS/DuraAce 11 speed**WHEELS:** Carbonal (carbon, 38mm, tubular)**HELMET:** Catlike**SHOES:** NorthWave**NUTRITION:** Vegetarian in general. 3-4 Nodoz before the start and water + Staminade during the ride, plus a gel or two.**USUAL K'S RIDDEN PER WEEK:** 400k +**FAVOURITE REGULAR OR TRAINING RIDE?** Crafers West-Mount Lofty-Montacute Road-Outer Harbour-Glenelg-Glen Osmond-Crafers West.**HOW DO YOU APPROACH A LONG RIDE LIKE THIS?** Plenty of long endurance paced training rides.**WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE DAY IN CLARE?**

Overall a very good day. Horrendous conditions. Tough course.

**TEAM WINNERS: Taylor's Wines - Matt Summers, Matt Schultz, Cliff Grant, Mark Sierp, Damian Vears and Paul Drury.**

LEFT TO RIGHT - Matt Summers, Matt Schultz, Cliff Grant, Clare local Nick Tilbrook photo-bombing our team shot, Mark Sierp, Damian Vears and Paul Drury.

Clare local and El Capitan, Matt Schultz: "A well run and executed event; an excellent circuit with well supported food and drink stops. The event jersey that was supplied was excellent also. A thoroughly enjoyable ride."

Our plan for the day as a team was to try and stay together as much as possible and look after each other where we could. With the differences in ability amongst us, that meant some of the stronger guys in the team spent most of the day on the front in the wind whilst others sat in more. Interestingly, with the expected tough day ahead the early exhortations were more often to show restraint, these turned to encouragement during the latter part of the ride when each of us really had to dig in and slog it out. Everyone in the team put in a great effort and for each of us, knowing that we gave 100%, achieved our best and that our team-mates helped us to do that, well that is an amazing feeling. **BA**

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View From the Top: Hotham

IT'S TIME WE TOOK A LOOK AT SOME OF THE NATION'S ICONIC BUCKET-LIST CLIMBS; ASCENTS THAT INSTIL FEAR IN MORTAL MAN, AND COMMAND THE RESPECT OF HARDENED PROS. THERE'S USUALLY SOME CHANCE OF A VIEW, BUT ALWAYS AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE. LOCAL CLIMBING STALWART, DAVID HEATLEY, TAKES US UP MT HOTHAM.



MT HOTHAM IS BRUTAL CLIMB classically approached from the Bright side. The township of Bright is centrally located to the three iconic, and world-class cycling climbs the region has on offer. Mt Buffalo, Falls Creek and of course Mt Hotham; the toughest of them all. Bright also has a wide range of accommodation options and plenty of restaurants, cafes, pubs, a brewery and two supermarkets.

During spring, summer and autumn there are plenty of opportunities to get to the top. Be mindful though as even during summer it can snow on the top of Hotham. Mt Hotham is an alpine resort, so it makes it very dangerous to climb due to the heavy snow traffic and treacherous icy conditions during winter.

Mt Hotham can also become dangerously windy. So, when you check the weather take note of the expected wind speed and gusts at Hotham. Anything over 35 km/h will mean that you have a higher chance of getting blown off your bike if you are caught by the winds that funnel through some of the narrow passes that you'll encounter on the climb towards the top where it opens up.

Mt Hotham is around a 30km long climb that will take the average rider between two and three hours to ascend. From Bright, it's a 110 km round trip. To get to the base of the climb, you'll ride from Bright up a false flat of a 1-2% gradient for around 20km till you reach Harrietville where you can get a coffee and have a toilet stop.

Once you leave Harrietville, you'll encounter a sharp bend to the left with a gradient of

IMAGE © EAMON FITZPATRICK

ABOVE: An unforgettable and iconic stretch of bitumen with spectacular views.



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STRAVA STATS

Current KOM:

BRENDAN CANTY,
26.6KPH, 312W,
1:07:42, DEC 2015.

Current QOM:

JUSTINE BARROW,
21.1KPH, 194W,
1:21:21, DEC 2016.

Distance:

29.99km

Avg
Grade: **4%**

Lowest Elev:

538m

Highest Elev:

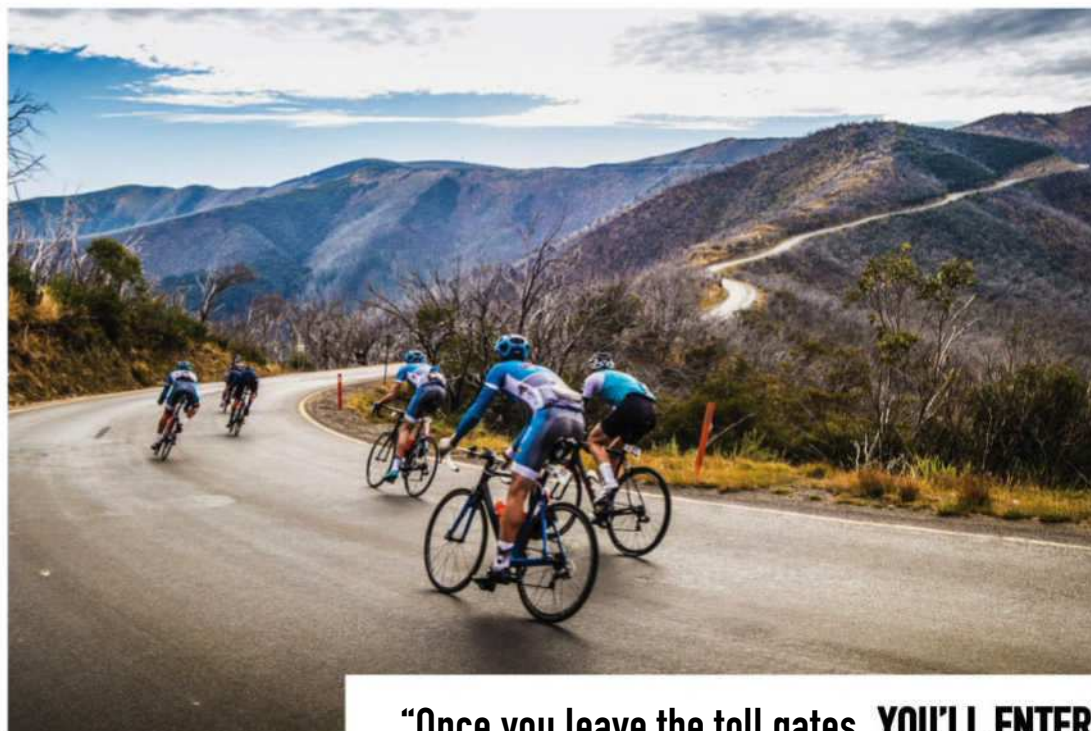
1,841m

Elev Difference:

1,303m

Climb
Category: **HC**

21,747 Attempts By
11,439 People



IMAGES © BEARDY MGBEARD

“Once you leave the toll gates, YOU’LL ENTER THE DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE PART OF THE CLIMB. The gradient quickly steepens up to 6-8% then settles into a 6% climb which breaks through into the famous moonscape views.”

around 6-7% which then flattens out after around 800 meters as you ride through lush alpine forest, as you head up towards the first major gradient part of the climb, the Meg. The Meg is around 400m at around 9%.

After the Meg, it reverts to around 4-6% for several kilometres of winding road that diminishes to 2-3%, 9km false flat as you near the toll gates at around the 19km mark. Once heavily forested, fires in 2013 have opened this section of the road which now provides a stunning view of the surrounding ranges that are punctuated with eerie trees.

Once you leave the toll gates, you’ll enter the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde part of the climb. The gradient quickly steepens up to 6-8% then settles into a 6% climb which breaks through into the famous moonscape views. Then you’ll traverse through a short flat ridge line that provides you with almost 360-degree views before you pass by a small equipment building then plummet down to confront the

iconic CRB Hill. At 1.1km with a 10% gradient, it’s one of the most talked about and quoted sections of the entire climb.

The next major part of the climb is where you come around Little Baldy Hill and encounter another sharp 600m descent that leads into the last major sustained part of the climb. A few km’s up this last section is the Diamantina. This 9%, 1.4km section of the road is the last thing Mt Hotham will throw at you. Once you crest it there is breathtaking views to your left as you descend to the Alpine resort via the Hull Skier Bridge. It’s a great time to catch a picture.

Once you have a rest in the village where there is a public shelter, it’s about forty-five minutes to an hour long descent back to Harrierville. If the wind is favourable, you might even get a tailwind back down to Bright. **BA**

ABOVE: Riding with mates is more fun and safer than going solo.

LEFT: Be ready for any and all weather in these alpine regions.



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IMAGES © BEARDY McBEARD

Artificer, Surry Hills

CYCLING-FRIENDLY SPOTS TO ENJOY A POST-RIDE BREW – #BAPARKUP

IF EVER THERE WAS A PLACE TO run a cycling-friendly café, this would have to be it. Artificer sits barely one metre from the Bourke Street Cycleway in the inner Sydney suburb of Surry Hills, just a short roll from Centennial Park and the CBD. First coffees are served at 7am and, as former electrician and Artificer co-founder Dan Lee explains, you'll usually find at least a few cyclists at the front of the morning queue. "The bikes are waiting outside when we open

up," he says. "It used to be just a few days a week, now it's every day – we're seeing more teams and larger groups, plenty of regulars, there's always lots of banter. It's interesting watching the dynamic between the different riders and bunches."

Standing at the front counter sipping a perfectly-made piccolo, it's clear there are a few things absent from this place. The first is attitude. There's a distinct lack of the self-importance often found at inner-city cafes. The décor here is clean,

functional and modern with plenty of standing and seating room, inside and out. The welcome is inclusive and warm, as is the temperature thanks to a prized north-east corner location providing plenty of sunlight, greatly appreciated on brisk mid-year mornings. As those who know the local area will also attest, Bourke Street is more leafy and residential than the frenetic bustle of nearby Crown Street. It's a relaxed setting that sits perfectly with the laid-back vibe Dan and his

ABOVE: Close to both Centennial Park and the Sydney CBD, Artificer is the perfect spot for an early morning park up.

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LEFT: The location is great. The vibe is relaxed. The coffee is superb. Just don't ask for food ;-)



cyclists like the simplicity of just coffee anyway, it's fast and easy." What if someone wants to bring a bacon and egg roll or banana bread from somewhere else? "We're not against food," he chuckles. "We don't sell it, so if someone wants to bring their own, no problem. Hopefully they bring some for me too!"

"I don't ride it very much, BUT YES I DO HAVE A FIXIE. I am a barista after all."

Delving deeper into the subject of cycling, Dan admits to riding and doing triathlons when he was younger. However, a close shave with a bus on the North Shore about twenty years ago sent him on an alternate trajectory towards bikes of the motor-powered variety. "I have a Ducati, a Harley and a few Hondas," he says, before confessing he does still own a bicycle. "I don't ride it very much, but yes I do have a fixie. I am a barista after all. No Lycra though."

As for any two-wheeled coffee-trends? "Cyclists tend to keep things pretty simple, strong coffee, black coffee, filtered coffee, lots of double shots, we sell that by the bucket-load," he explains. "But one thing I would like to see more of are riders rocking up outside with a big skid, just for old time's sake. I think skidding is a lost art form!" **BA**

What's your favourite post-ride coffee stop? Let us know at #BAparkup

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business partner, Shoji Sasa, were looking to create. "We really wanted to get rid of the elitism you get from so many cafes and baristas, we hate it," he explains. "Who are they, or we, to tell a customer how they should or shouldn't enjoy their coffee?"

The other thing you notice about Artificer is the lack of a menu. This place is all about the coffee, quite literally. They don't do food. Could this be a problem for famished cyclists? Not at all according to Dan. "We didn't want our attention going elsewhere, this way we can focus on what we're really passionate about, coffee and customer service. We actually find most



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WORKS WHERE IT HURTS

The Domination Game

ANNA VAN DER BREGGEN IS WITHOUT DOUBT THE DOMINANT FORCE IN THE WOMEN'S PRO ROAD PELOTON, AND SHE SHOWS NO SIGN OF STEPPING DOWN FROM THAT TOP SPOT JUST YET.

DURING THE PAST COUPLE OF decades there has been a steady and brilliant stream of top Dutch female road racers. Headlining acts such as Leontien Van Moorsel and Marianne Vos and on to the current top bill Anna van der Breggen, their accomplishments have been truly amazing.

Now 28, Anna came from an enthusiastic cycling family, and has raced since she was seven years old. In the past few years she has arguably been the most successful racer in the female peloton, and has dominated the spring classics, taken the Olympic Road Race title, and also proven to be one of the best stage racers there is – a pretty versatile and broad mantle.

As she recovered from the early season classics we took time out for a chat, here's what Anna had to say.

BA: YOU STARTED YOUR 2018 SEASON BY RIDING THE SUNSHINE CUP MTB STAGE RACE IN CYPRUS (AND WON A STAGE). WAS THIS YOUR FIRST REAL MTB RACE?

AVDB: Yes, well – sort of. The year before I did the Costa Blanca Bike Race in Spain (2-rider teams), and that was my first real MTB race.

I had no idea what to expect when I rode there – the downhill, the terrain, I'd never ridden like that. So, this year in



IMAGE: © SIFOTTI

ABOVE: How sweet it is. Rio Olympics road race victory 2016.

Cyprus I knew better what to expect. There were better riders in this race, and it was also my first solo MTB race.

BA: GENDER EQUALITY AND FINANCIAL EQUALITY IN MOUNTAIN BIKING IS FAR CLOSER THAN ON THE ROAD. DID THIS SURPRISE YOU?

AVDB: It surprised me. I didn't know how it was. To see that we all did the same and the differences were small, it was really special, because on the road

the differences between the men and women are huge (in every way). It's something we really want to achieve in road cycling.

Cyprus was not a really big race. It's a season opener for many teams, so I guess it's very different in a World Cup, which I watch on Red Bull TV, that's really special already, to be able to watch this live – men and women.

When you see the huge crowds on TV, the great organisation... I think that

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IMAGES: © SIROTTI

having the races on the same circuits, and doing laps, at the same time (and often the downhill too), that's great.

BA: JUST A WEEK AFTER CYPRUS YOU RODE STRADE BIANCHI. AND WON IN FINE STYLE. FROM THE OUTSIDE THIS MAY SEEM LIKE A RISKY STRATEGY?

AVDB: As a cyclist, I think you can't think too much like that – there's always a risk, it's a dangerous sport.

I think the Strade was very similar to Cyprus – with the conditions. It was a really nice race to start with. Also the climbs; in road cycling those climbs are really steep, and in mountain biking you see it's really steep all of the time – up and down, so I think it was a good way to start the season.

ABOE: Van der Breggen riding for Rabobank in the Giro dell'Emilia Internazionale Donne Elite 2016.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Also an exceptional time trialler, Van der Breggen finished second to Annemiek van Vleuten at the 2017 World Champs in Bergen, Norway.

BA: YOU HAD AN AMAZING CLASSICS SEASON. WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES YOU SO VERSATILE – AS MALE RIDERS CAN RARELY SEEM TO WIN FLANDERS AND LIEGE IN THE SAME SEASON?

AVDB: They're all similar races; short climbs, and with a hard finale. The timing is tough, for sure. I like to have a lot of climbs, one after another. First of all to make it a real fight, and to offer chances to play tactically and to have many chances to attack.

Strade and Flanders, they are in many ways similar races – not the finishes, but they are hard, and just go on and on, and mentally that's quite tough, because when you finish one climb you know there are 3-4 more coming after. You need to be focussed after about 3-hours, and that suits me well.

BA: FLECHE WALLONNE: THE FINISH ALWAYS HAS TO BE TIMED TO PERFECTION. HOW DO YOU LEARN THIS?

AVDB: The Mur, is quite a difficult finish, because you really have to know the climb.

Many times I've thought to go full gas from the start of the climb, but it's too early. The first times I rode I even thought to get off and walk.

It's longer than you think; when you pass the 150m to go sign, normally you know you're almost there, but in Fleche there's still a long way to go.

I already tried it for many years, and I know how hard it is, and know how to time it, the best lines, that helps a lot mentally. This does not mean that you could not win it without knowing the climb,

if you are a strong climber you'll do well in that race.

BA: DO YOU MOSTLY TRAIN ALONE?

AVDB: Yes, because when you ride alone you're really training. When you ride with someone else you're not really as focussed and can't do that.

When I'm doing longer endurance rides, then I like to ride with someone else, to have a chat and make it 'less long'.

"The Mur...MANY TIMES I'VE THOUGHT TO GO FULL GAS FROM THE START OF THE CLIMB, but it's too early. The first times I rode I even thought to get off and walk."

BA: YOU CAME FROM A CYCLING FAMILY, AND HAVE RACED FOR MOST OF YOUR LIFE – HAVE YOU EVER LOST ENTHUSIASM AND BEEN CLOSE TO QUITTING?

AVDB: Oh yes, I had a period when I was younger when cycling was not what it to me now, we just played games in training, and did some races on a Saturday, and I was quite serious then, but that was all.

When I was older I did my nursing internship in Ghana, and quit for half a year. After that I thought I needed to make a choice; I was riding with the elite women and could not follow them, so knew I either had to stop or take it more seriously. I chose to try it, and if it didn't work out I'd try something else.

BA: DO YOU THINK THE WOMEN CYCLISTS ARE SEEN AS EQUALS TO THE MEN IN HOLLAND?

AVDB: Equals, no not really – but that's also because there are differences with the men's teams and budgets. If you look to social media, yes it's getting more equal. Media coverage also, that's getting better – especially when we have the races on the same days at the men. The TV interviewers also come to us as well as the men, which is good.

But, the budgets, they are very different. Our team, we have 10 active riders, which isn't a lot. But more people are starting to watch women's cycling.

BA: DO YOU THINK THAT THE POWERS THAT BE IN CYCLING HAVE LIVED UP TO THEIR APPARENT INTENTIONS OF SUPPORTING WOMEN'S CYCLING?

AVDB: Not always, but that's also understandable. It's always about money, and if people want to watch women's cycling on TV then they will push it, because you can make money out of it, which is good for sponsors.

But, if people don't want to watch it then who cares. In Holland it's getting more popular, if there's a big race like Liege and there isn't live broadcast then people are getting angry about it, as they've been able to follow the big races earlier in the season. If you're a fan you want to see all of the big races, as they can do with men. We're a way off that, but it is growing, and we are getting more fans. It needs time, and it is going in the right direction.

BA: YOU'VE WON SO MUCH IN RECENT TIMES, BUT NEVER QUITE MANAGED TO TAKE A WORLD TITLE – DOES THAT STICK OUT TO YOU?

AVDB: Yeah, well, that's something I didn't achieve yet. I wouldn't say that if I'm never world champion that my career has not been successful.

Of course I try to do well every year in the world championship, and I've been close, but not

quite there. It's nice to still have something that I can really focus on, and I will try very hard to win one time – It's difficult to be World Champion.

BA: DO YOU THINK THAT YOU WILL CARRY ON TO AN OLDER AGE, AS SEVERAL GREAT WOMEN OF THE PAST HAVE DONE?

AVDB: I have uncles who are almost 60 and still racing, because they love cycling. In women's cycling, of course it's different. I have a boyfriend, and we would like to have kids some day. It would be really tough decision, but I won't race until I'm 40, that's for sure.

WHAT'S YOUR VO2 MAX?

I have no idea.

HOW MANY KM'S DO YOU RIDE IN A YEAR?

I really don't know, I'm not one for keeping statistics.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD?

I like a lot of food, and eat a lot. I like really good Italian food, basilica and pasta. In Holland I like to have a really good burger with vegetables.

MUSICAL TASTE?

I listen to the radio a lot, lots of pop stuff and old songs on Spotify. **BA**



Masterclass

BY SARAH HUNTER

Use Your Power Meter

SO YOU'VE JUST BOUGHT, OR ARE PLANNING TO BUY A POWER METER, TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE...BUT DO YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO USE IT? ACCREDITED COACH, SARAH HUNTER OUTLINES A PLAN FOR POWER METER SUCCESS.

IN THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE ON training with a power meter we briefly touched on the training zones which are calculated as percentages of your FTP (functional threshold power) which is the power you can sustain for an all out effort for one hour.

The training zones enable you to target specific areas of fitness and help you get the most out of out each training session.

Here is a review of the training zones and how they should feel:

THE RECOVERY ZONE

(30 – 59% OF FTP) is exactly that, it is a means of active recovery without building any fatigue. This is surprisingly difficult to most riders to achieve, with many finding the pace embarrassingly slow. Going too hard on a recovery ride means the purpose of the ride has become void. What happens then is you are then riding too hard to recovery properly and not hard enough to train effectively.

THE ENDURANCE ZONE

(60 – 79% OF FTP) is your classic 'long, slow distance' training zone, or a place you could comfortably ride at all day.

THE TEMPO ZONE (80 – 90% OF FTP)

is 'comfortably hard'. Many self coached athletes spend a large proportion of time training in this zone. Don't get me wrong, it has its place in any program but don't let it become the default.

THE THRESHOLD ZONE

(91 – 104% OF FTP) is where you feel like you are really putting in the effort. Intervals in this zone require total mental concentration and focus, there is definitely no way you can talk or chat during these efforts, however breathing is still rhythmic just rather deep.

“Now is a good time to mention that GAINS IN FITNESS ACTUALLY ONLY HAPPEN DURING RECOVERY.”

THE VO2 ZONE (105 – 120% OF FTP)

is a zone that Mark Fenner aka Fenz likes to refer to as frothing. Breathing is strained and definitely not rhythmic, any idea of talking during VO2 efforts should be abhorrent to you! Intervals in this zone require a very strong mindset and the ability to dig deep.

THE ANAEROBIC ZONE (121 – 300% OF FTP)

is all about near maximal power that can be sustained for 30 seconds or longer. Intervals in this zone are anywhere between 30 seconds to 2 minutes. At the end of the interval you should feel like you couldn't have gone for any longer.

There is one final zone called **Neuromuscular Power** (maximal

power), this zone is in effect sprinting, for durations of less than 10 seconds.

Note that training effectively in the VO2 and anaerobic zones is very difficult to do without a power meter. As mentioned before the lag between putting the effort in and the heart rate is such that more often than not the heart rate only reaches the prescribed zone right at the end of the interval, if at all.

GRAN FONDO PLAN

Let's take a look at how we can put all this information together and build a plan for a typical rider who wants to ride his/her first Grand Fondo. Let's say the Grand Fondo is moderately hilly (about 1500m of vertical climbing) over a distance of approx. 100km. This rider has been riding consistently over the past year, nothing structured, riding five days per week mostly commuting to work and a longer bunch ride on the weekend. Now is a good time to mention that gains in fitness actually only happen during recovery. Training provides a stimulus for your body to adapt so it can handle greater workloads, however, continual training without sufficient recovery will lead to a breakdown. Most riders who balance a full time job, family commitments and riding perform well with a 'two week on, one week recovery' protocol.



BELOW: Need some inspiration? Caleb Ewan didn't get legs like this by ignoring his power meter.

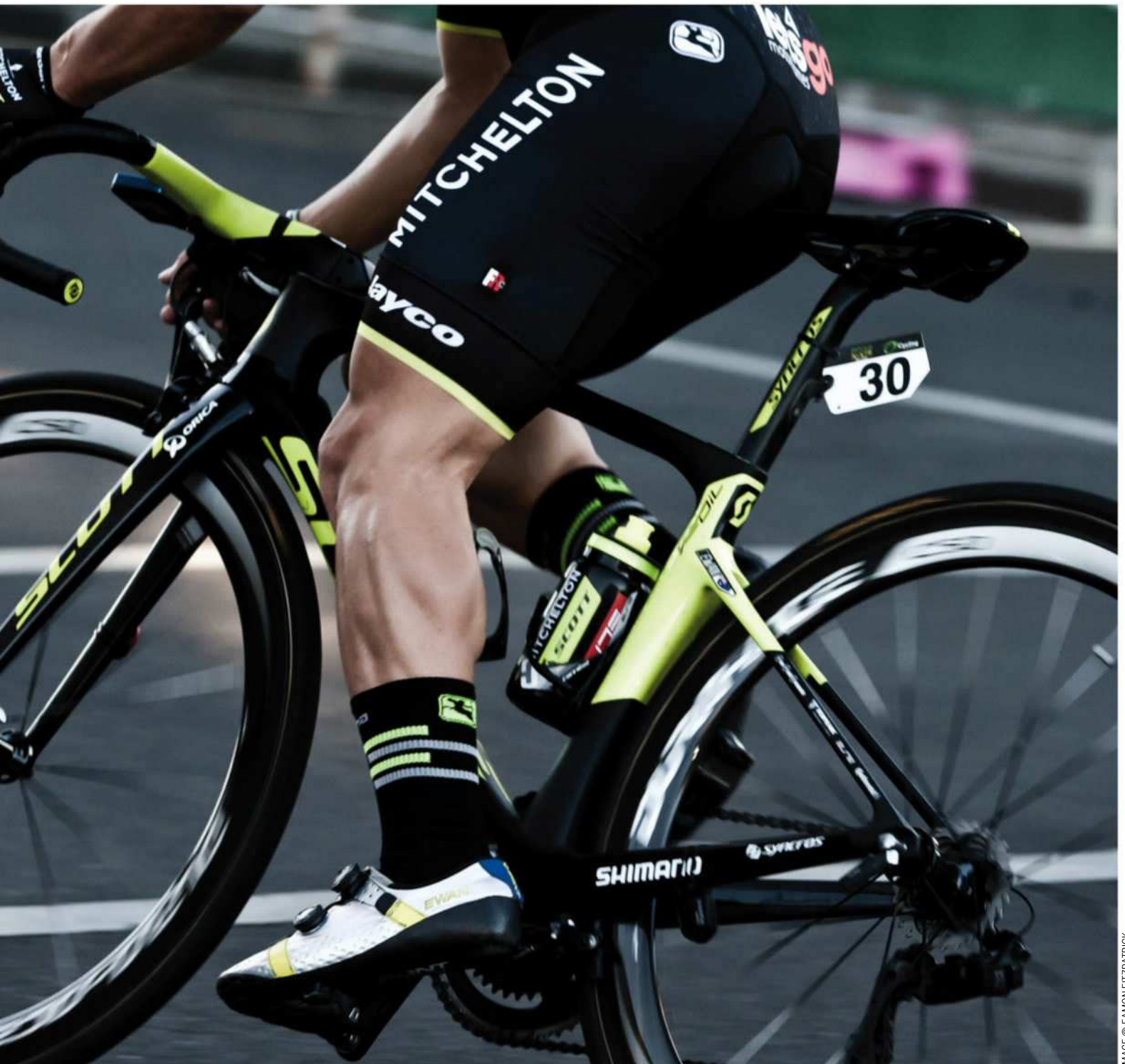


IMAGE © CANON FITZPATRICK

FIGURE 1

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	40 mins	60% - 70%	
Tempo Interval	2	10 mins	80% - 90%	5 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time	1 hour			

FIGURE 2

Reps	Duration	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
		Cadence	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%		
Main block	1	1 hour	60% - 70%		
SST SE Interval	4	5 mins	60-70rpm	88% - 92%	5 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%		
Total Ride time	1h:20mins				

FIGURE 3

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	1 hour	60% - 70%	
Tempo Interval	2	20 mins	80% - 90%	5 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time	1h:20mins			

FIGURE 4

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	2h:10mins	60% - 70%	
Tempo SE climbs	4	8 mins	85% - 90%	5 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time	2h:30mins			

FIGURE 5

Reps	Duration	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
		Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%		
Main block	1	40 mins	60% - 70%		
Threshold Interval	2	10 mins	92% - 100%	10 mins	55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%		
Total Ride time	1 hour				

Remember above I mentioned that many riders tend to spend too much time in the tempo zone, however do not underestimate the amount of adaptations that can happen whilst purposefully training in this zone. Agreed, it won't improve your top end power, but at this phase of the training that is not what we are targeting.

So, what makes a good tempo training session, here are a few ideas: SEE FIGURES 1 & 2.

The SE (strength endurance) intervals are completed at a lower cadence and are designed to use higher force through greater recruitment of leg muscles (rather than the central system of heart and lungs). Do be mindful that lower cadence efforts place more stress on the joints and therefore do not overload your body with too many low cadence efforts too soon. These sessions can be built upon by adding duration to the interval length, no more than 20% increase week on week.

For example, a Tempo session toward the end of the 8 week base block might look like this: SEE FIGURE 3.

During the base phase we are also trying to build the duration of the longer weekend ride.

This ride should predominantly be in the endurance zone of 60-80% of FTP. However do not get obsessive about the numbers in this ride. This ride is where looking at normalised power for the duration of the ride is useful. Start to build in tempo climbs

into this ride, with a typical ride looking like this: SEE FIGURE 4.

This longer ride should be gradually increased each week, aiming to get to 3.5 – 4 hours in duration by the end of the base block. In the recovery week, which should be after two weeks of solid purposeful training, you should replace the tempo intervals session with an endurance session riding at a normalized power of 60-80% of FTP and the SE session replaced with a recovery session, which should feel so easy it's the equivalent effort of a walk, but on the bike. I can't stress enough the importance of the recovery week, so many riders want to press on with their training, worried that if they don't continue smashing themselves every week that they might somehow be missing out. Continuing down the non-stop smash-fest path is a recipe for overtraining and nothing good will come from this.

In the last recovery week of the base phase is a great time to do another FTP test to see how you are progressing.

BUILD PHASE

Once the base phase has been completed, more specific training can be introduced during the build phase.

The focus now shifts towards threshold intervals and threshold climbs. The intervals are designed to have you holding your power

With the correct type, duration and intensity of training during these two weeks, followed by a week (or a block of 3-5 days) of sufficient recovery, your body continues to adapt to a higher level, called supercompensation. Thus training leads to fatigue, which leads to recovery, which leads to supercompensation.

BASE PHASE

The first part of the jigsaw puzzle in designing a training plan working with power should be building a solid aerobic base level of fitness. As they say 'Rome wasn't built in a day' and this is very true for any kind of fitness training.

The base phase of any plan can last between 4-8 weeks depending on when the race is and the riders fitness level. The 'meat and two veg' sessions for this kind of rider during the base phase will target their aerobic energy system. The intervals will be completed in the tempo zone and top end of the tempo zone which is also known as the sweet spot (or SST).

"I can't stress enough the importance of the recovery week... THE NON-STOP SMASH-FEST PATH IS A RECIPE FOR OVERTRAINING AND NOTHING GOOD WILL COME FROM THIS."



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FIGURE 6

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	1 hour	60% - 70%	
Threshold block of under/over	2	12 mins		10 mins 55% - 65%
Repeat below 4 times				
Threshold over	1	2 mins	102%	
Threshold under	1	1 min	95%	
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time		1h:20mins		

FIGURE 7

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	2h:40 mins	60% - 70%	
Threshold climbs	3	12 mins	95% - 100%	10 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time		3 hours		

FIGURE 8

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	40 mins	60% - 70%	
VO2 Interval	4	3 mins	105% - 112%	5 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time		1 hour		

FIGURE 9

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	1 hour	60% - 70%	
VO2 longer	3	4 mins	105% - 112%	4 mins 55% - 65%
VO2 shorter	3	2 mins	112% - 118%	2 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time		1h:20mins		

FIGURE 10

Reps	INTERVALS		RECOVERY	
	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)	Duration	Intensity (% of FTP)
Warmup	1	10 mins	45% - 65%	
Main block	1	40 mins	60% - 70%	
Tempo	3	8 mins	80% - 85%	10 mins 55% - 65%
Threshold	3	1 min	97% - 100%	2 mins 55% - 65%
Cool Down	1	10 mins	50% - 60%	
Total Ride time		1 hour		

“With the correct type, duration and intensity of training, followed by sufficient recovery, YOUR BODY CONTINUES TO ADAPT TO A HIGHER LEVEL... IT’S CALLED SUPERCOMPENSATION.”

right on the edge. They are important to perform so you can increase your ability to handle this type of intensity and help build your FTP. The shorter session to be completed during the week can look like this: SEE FIGURES 5&6.

FIGURE 6 is an atypical threshold workout, it’s a fun session to complete on the indoor trainer, and gives you a different way to think about threshold training.

These sessions can be progressed according to the specifics of your event. If the climbs are shorter but more frequent then add to the number of 10 minute threshold intervals over the weeks. If the climbs are longer but less of them, then add to the duration of intervals. These types of intervals are really where working with a power meter starts to shine. You have precise zones to work it, there is no guesswork or having to account for external factors outside your control as you might have to if working with heart rate.

FIGURE 7 shows the longer workout. It is shorter in duration than your last workout in the build phase, but because the efforts are now at threshold rather than tempo, the overall intensity of the ride is greater and the load placed on the body is greater. This ride can be progressed by adding to the overall duration of the session over the build block, aiming to complete one ride during this phase which mimics the race you are training for. Again during this phase the recovery week after every two weeks is all important and should not be skipped.

PEAK PHASE

Moving on from the build phase we enter into the peak phase where you can work on your VO2 max. A rider’s VO2 max is an important factor in racing, and therefore training at this intensity is important if you want to race.

It is also important to note that these sessions are really tough, and it’s easy to burn out if you try to do too many of these sessions. That why we would cap these to two sessions per week and only for a block of two weeks.

An example of two sessions to fit into your peak block are below in FIGURES 8 & 9. Make sure there are 1-2 days of recovery or easy endurance between these sessions as you need to be pretty fresh to be able to get the most out of these sessions and hitting the target watts.

TAPERING

Finally as the race draws closer, there needs to be a taper. The length of the taper is quite individual to the rider and the race. Typically the longer the race the longer the taper.

During the taper you are aiming to reduce overall training volume but still keeping some level of intensity to the efforts. You want to arrive at the start line feeling super fresh, but not stale. I like to program a pre-race session for the rider on the day before the race. This session is designed to blow away the cobwebs and get the body primed for the next day.

SEE FIGURE 10. **BA**

A note to the recovery weeks: Some people tolerate a 3 week/1 week training to recovery ratio, this is up to you and your coach to find out what works best for you. You should now be equipped to have some great workouts to build in to your training plan with your new power meter. Remember, you do not have to be a slave to your power meter and watts all the time, but during structured sessions it gives you the tools to train smarter and to manage your levels of training intensity wisely. During your less structured rides it lets you monitor your normalised power so you don’t go too hard or too easy.



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Race Tyre Buyers' Guide

MICHAEL HANSLIP DELVES IN THE STICKY SUBJECT OF CHOOSING RACE TYRES, AND REVIEWS NINE OF THE BEST.

TYRES ARE IMPORTANT

Tyres are essential to your bike - that is obvious (no tyres, no ride!). That they are also incredibly important to the quality of your ride is perhaps less obvious. There is more potential to alter a bike's ride in the tyres than in frame and wheels combined.

Tyres cover a huge range of types, sizes, costs and performance characteristics. It would be impossible to select a best tyre from that range because "best for what?" is a critical question - in fact I don't plan to select a best tyre at all! This guide looks at racing tyres only. Racing tyres are lighter and they have lower rolling resistance than any other type. To achieve these two (light and fast) they often compromise on longevity (thick rubber tread sacrifices rolling resistance) and puncture resistance (anti-flat protection can hurt both weight and rolling resistance).

WHY RACE TYRES?

I see too many riders on durable, puncture resistant tyres where they should be on high performance tyres. While I hate punctures as much as the next rider - and due to being large, I suffer from them more often than the average - I also detest the compromises inherent in heavy, slow tyres. Do yourself a favour and try some good racing tyres.

WHAT ABOUT SINGLES?

Professionals still mostly ride singles (aka tubulars) because they are lighter, less puncture prone, can be ridden flat, and (many claim) offer a smoother ride. But pros also have a team car with spare wheels behind them in races and the pros that I know train on clinchers. As good as they might be, we excluded singles from this guide completely.

WHAT ABOUT TUBELESS?

Tubeless has been "the way" for at least ten years in the mountain bike world. Almost every rim and tyre combo works together safely. This is relatively easy when tyre pressure is typically under 30 psi.

Road tubeless has been around for a while now, but there are still issues with it. No supplier wanted to provide tubeless wheels for this review once they learned I intended to put multiple brands of tyres on their wheels - they know their rim works with one or two brands of tyres but they can't comment on the quality of fit with other brands of tyres. As a result there are no tubeless tyres in this review either (they are listed in the guide however). Paradoxically, I tested every tyre on a pair of tubeless wheels that I was reviewing at the same time. There is no issue using tubes on a tubeless rim but the opposite (tubeless tyres run tubeless on regular rims) is expressly forbidden!



"Hysteresis between the tube and the tyre INCREASES RAPIDLY AS TYRE PRESSURE DROPS BELOW 100psi (a reason to go tubeless, perhaps?)."

TYRE TECH 101

1-WIDTH – rated versus actual. Do not confuse nominal tyre width (as in 700x25C or 700x32C - width is the 25 or 32 in those labels) with actual tyre width. It depends on the rim width it is installed on, the tyre pressure inside and to a small extent the length of time the tyre has been in use (because most tyres stretch out slightly from new). It also depends on the manufacturer. A 25C tyre can measure around 23mm at the narrowest if the manufacturer overstates their sizing, the rim is narrow and the tyre is recently installed; or it can measure up around 28mm at the widest if the opposite factors are in place.

2-ROLLING RESISTANCE. All other things being equal (and they seldom are equal), a wider



IMAGE © CON CHRONIS

tyre has lower rolling resistance than a narrower tyre. This is because the wider tyre deforms less to support the load than a narrower one. Actually, things are getting more equal with modern tyres than they were with even the last generation - and that is because of the wonderful trend towards wider tyres for everything. It used to be that a given model of tyre would have more rubber on the 28 width than on the narrower ones. That could even be true of the 25 width. Only the 20 and 23 had the minimal (desirable from a performance view) rubber layer on them. But with 25 as the new normal, these wider tyres are now built to the same spec as the narrow tyres.

3-AERODYNAMICS. Aerodynamics trumps rolling resistance; all the time. Old school aero wheels were sharp V-shaped wedges

best suited to 20mm tyres (that required up to 140psi for rim protection). New school aero wheels have complex shapes that behave better in the wind and work optimally with 23 or 25mm tyres (and only require about 90psi). Fast now means matching the tyre with the rim.

4-AIR PRESSURE. Rolling resistance on a smooth surface decreases asymptotically, with the flattest part of the curve above 100psi. In other words, for smooth surfaces (think indoor velodrome) use at least 100 psi to minimise rolling resistance. In the harsh reality of poorly paved roads, more air pressure can increase rolling resistance and decrease bike control because the bike bounces off the larger imperfections of the surface.

Hysteresis between the tube and the tyre increases rapidly

as tyre pressure drops below 100psi (a reason to go tubeless, perhaps?). The realistic minimum pressure, however, is that which will protect the rim for the load being carried - so it is higher on a laden touring bike than on an unladen one, for example. What is ideal pressure? For a 25mm racing tyre on a modern, wide rim - try about half the rider's weight in pounds as a starting point. That is a low 65psi for a 60kg rider and around 100psi for a 90kg rider.

5-FLATS. Puncture resistance is dramatically increased by the addition of a tightly woven layer of fabric inside the tyre's structure. If the layer is made of a supple material that is effective in a thin sheet, rolling resistance will not increase by much. The tradeoff is worth it (a flat tyre is very slow indeed). The most

puncture resistant tyres use a thick layer of dense rubbery material that increases rolling resistance and weight markedly.

TYRE INFO...

The table on the next pages contains a list of all of the racing tyres for sale, with their specifications. In order to help with the translation from specifications to reality, I got together nine of the popular/new/interesting options and tried each one out for long enough to compare it with the other tested tyres. The idea wasn't to restrict you to the tyres actually tested, but to see if I could discern real differences when testing very similar tyres (on paper) back to back. Pricing varies dramatically across outlets so we have not included this information.

BRAND	MODEL	SIZES	CLAIMED WEIGHT	MAX PRESS	COLOURS	TUBELESS
Bontrager	R4 320	25			tan	n
Bontrager	R3 TLR	24			black	y
Bontrager	R3 TLR	26			black	y
Challenge	Criterion SC S	23	205	145	white, black	n
Challenge	Criterion SC S	25	215	145	white, black	n
Clement	LCV	23	180		tan, black	n
Clement	LCV	25	205		tan, black	n
Clement	LCV	28			tan, black	n
Clement	LGG	23	220		black	n
Clement	LGG	25			black	n
Clement	LGG	28			black	n
Continental	Attack F	23		120	black	n
Continental	Force R	25		110	black	n
Continental	Grand Prix 4000 S II	20	185	160	black	n
Continental	Grand Prix 4000 S II	23	205	120	black	n
Continental	Grand Prix 4000 S II	25	225	120	black	n
Continental	Grand Prix 4000 S II	28	265	115	black	n
Continental	Supersonic	20	140	170	black	n
Continental	Supersonic	23	150	145	black	n
Continental	TT	23	180	120	black	n
Continental	TT	25	190	120	black	n
Hutchinson	Fusion 5 Galactik 11Storm	23	180		black	n
Hutchinson	Fusion 5 Galactik 11Storm	25	190		black	n
Hutchinson	Fusion 5 Galactik 11Storm	23	260		black	y
Hutchinson	Fusion 5 Galactik 11Storm	25	285		black	y
IRC	Aspite Pro	24	205	130	black	n
IRC	Aspite Pro	26	245	115	black	n
IRC	Formula Pro Lite	23	245	115	black	y
IRC	Formula Pro Lite	25	265	115	black	y
IRC	Formula Pro Lite	28	300	100	black	y
IRC	Formula Pro RBCC	23	255	115	black	y
IRC	Formula Pro RBCC	25	275	115	black	y
IRC	Formula Pro RBCC	28	320	100	black	y
Kenda	Valkyrie	23	178	125	black	n
Kenda	Valkyrie	25	182	125	black	n
Kenda	Valkyrie	28	235	100	black	n
Kenda	Valkyrie	30	265	100	black	n
Mavic	CXR Ultimate C	23		125	black	n
Mavic	CXR Ultimate C	25		110	black	n
Mavic	CXR Ultimate C	28		110	black	n
Mavic	Yksion Pro C	23	190	125	black	n
Mavic	Yksion Pro C	25		110	black	n
Mavic	Yksion Pro C	28		110	black	n
Mavic	Yksion Pro UST	25		100	black	y
Mavic	Yksion Pro UST	28		85	black	y
Maxxis	Campione	23	265	170	black	n
Maxxis	Campione	25	290	170	black	n
Maxxis	Campione TT	23	250	170	black	n
Maxxis	Campione TT	25	265	170	black	n
Maxxis	Columbiere	23	200	130	black	n
Maxxis	Columbiere	25	205	130	black	n
Maxxis	Cormet	23	200	130	black	n
Maxxis	Courchevel	23	225	130	orange, black	n
Maxxis	Dolomites	23	185	130	black	n
Maxxis	Radiale	22	215	145	black	n
Maxxis	Radiale	23	230	145	black	n
Maxxis	Xenith Equipe Legere	23	150	145	black	n
Maxxis	Xenith Hors Categorie	20	175	130	grey	n
Maxxis	Xenith Hors Categorie	23	220	130	grey	n
Maxxis	Padrone	23	295	125	black	y
Maxxis	Padrone	25	310	125	black	y
Maxxis	Padrone TR	23	250	125	black	y

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BRAND	MODEL	SIZES	CLAIMED WEIGHT	MAX PRESS	COLOURS	TUBELESS
Maxxis	Padrone TR	25	260	125	black	y
Maxxis	Padrone TR	28	300	115	black	y
Maxxis	Radiale TL	22	280	125	black	y
Maxxis	Radiale TL	24	305	125	black	y
Michelin	Power Competition	23	195	116	black	n
Michelin	Power Competition	25	215	116	black	n
Panaracer	Race A Evo3	23	210	150	red, blue, black	n
Panaracer	Race A Evo3	25	240	140	red, blue, black	n
Panaracer	Race A Evo3	28	250	110	red, blue, black	n
Panaracer	Race L Evo3	20	175	155	black	n
Panaracer	Race L Evo3	23	180	150	black	n
Panaracer	Race L Evo3	25	200	140	black	n
Panaracer	Race L Evo3	28	220	110	black	n
Panaracer	Race A Evo3	23	280	120	black	y
Panaracer	Race A Evo3	25	330	120	black	y
Pirelli	P Zero Velo	23	195		black	n
Pirelli	P Zero Velo	25	205		black	n
Pirelli	P Zero Velo	28	230		black	n
Ritchey	WCS Race Slick	23	189		black	n
Ritchey	WCS Race Slick	25			black	n
Schwalbe	One	23	205	145	black	n
Schwalbe	One	25	225	130	red, blue, white, black	n
Schwalbe	One	28	245	115	black	n
Schwalbe	Pro One	23	235	125	black	y
Schwalbe	Pro One	25	255	110	black	y
Schwalbe	Pro One	28	275	95	black	y
Specialized	S-works Turbo	22	200	125	black	n
Specialized	S-works Turbo	24	210	125	black	n
Specialized	S-works Turbo	26	220	125	black	n
Specialized	S-works Turbo	28	240	95	black	n
Specialized	Turbo Cotton	24	220	125	yellow	n
Specialized	Turbo Cotton	26	240	125	yellow	n
Specialized	Turbo Cotton	28	260	95	yellow	n
Specialized	Turbo Pro	24	240	125	black	n
Specialized	Turbo Pro	26	250	125	black	n
Specialized	Turbo Pro	28	280	95	black	n
Specialized	S-works Turbo tubeless	24	240	115	black	y
Specialized	S-works Turbo tubeless	26	280	115	black	y
Tufo	Calibra Lite	23	150	145	black	n
Tufo	Calibra Plus	23	180	145	black	n
Tufo	Calibra Plus	25	210	130	black	n
Tufo	Calibra Plus	28	235	115	black	n
Tufo	Comtura Aero	25	215	130	black	n
Tufo	Comtura Aero	28	240	115	black	n
Veloflex	Corsa	23	195	145	black	n
Veloflex	Corsa	25	205	130	black	n
Veloflex	Master	23	195	145	tan	n
Veloflex	Master	25	205	130	tan	n
Veloflex	Record	23	145	145	tan	n
Vittoria	Corsa Competition	23	245		gum, grey, black	n
Vittoria	Corsa Competition	25	255		gum, grey, black	n
Vittoria	Corsa Competition	28	270		gum, grey, black	n
Vittoria	Corsa Speed	23	225		grey, black	y
Vittoria	Corsa Speed	25	240		grey, black	y
Vredestein	Fortezza Senso Superiore	23	220	140	black	n
Vredestein	Fortezza Senso Superiore	25	235	140	black	n
Vredestein	Fortezza Senso Superiore	28	280	110	black	n
Zipp	Tangente Speed	23		145	black	n
Zipp	Tangente Speed	25		145	black	n
Zipp	Tangente RT	25	292	115	black	y
Zipp	Tangente RT	28	302	100	black	y



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IMAGE © EAMON FITZPATRICK

TESTING UP AND DOWN

I didn't have ages to ride each tyre so I sped up things by riding each model up and down my local hill (steep enough that aerodynamics were basically removed from the equation). Up was done at a constant 300W (a level that produces a decent ascent time but isn't so fast that I can't do it over and over again) with the vain hope that faster tyres will come out with a faster ascent time.

Down was done at a variety of speeds to see how confidence inspiring the tyres proved.

All tyres were installed on the same pair of review wheels – the Mavic Ksyrium Pro UST (full review on these in the next issue). These are an appropriate performance wheel for testing fast tyres.

All tyres were run at 90psi.

ROLLING RESISTANCE

I set out to perform the most scientific test of tyre differences possible (for me, with the equipment I owned). I rode every tyre up the same hill (2km @ 4.5%) at a target 300W multiple times. Most tyres only got one session (several repeats per session) but to check consistency I ran some tyres in multiple sessions. All repeats were on

the same bike with the same rider (me). I compensated for air temperature (hence air density) and variations in the power output (I was never off by more than 2%, and my all-runs average was 299.8W). The mathematical modelling suggests I should travel at 4.71m/s up this hill with 300W of power, and across all runs I averaged 4.73m/s. So I give myself a pat on the back for well-disciplined riding.

Despite all this, I was sure that the variation between runs would be greater than the variation between tyres. Actually each tyre produced incredibly consistent speeds across their multiple runs (even on different days). The differences between these top racing tyres

“The upshot of my testing is that I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO RACE ON ANY OF THE TESTED TYRES. These are all terrific tyres.”

are miniscule. Almost all of them fell within 1% on either side (faster or slower) of the predicted speed and, for those that didn't, they came into line when I corrected for wind speed. In other words, these nine tyres were so close together that I am unwilling to report the results.

Even though we are quite confident in our methodology, picking a winner from the batch of nine 'top of class' tyres, or even dividing the group on rolling speed, is not possible; a positive result for buyers considering options here. I'd be more than happy to race on any of the tested tyres. These are all terrific tyres.

NINE TESTED TYRES – TABLE NOTES

The tested tyres are listed in the table below.

WIDTH is 'narrow' (around 1mm narrower than rated); 'true' (at rated size); 'wide' (around 1mm wider than rated). All the tyres were within 1mm of specified width.

TREAD is 'slick' (no tread pattern at all); 'minimal' (barely more than a slick); 'full' (I am quite certain that these treaded tyres have done it for aerodynamic purposes rather than grip).

COMMENTS are observations from riding. I had expected more profound observations across the group – but they are extremely similar. The one area I would expect some variation is in puncture resistance – but I am delighted to report zero punctures throughout the testing.

NINE TESTED TYRES

TYRE	WIDTH	TREAD	COMMENTS
Vittoria Corsa G+	Wide	Minimal (grooved)	I set PBs on descents, a confidence inspiring tyre.
Hutchinson Fusion5	True	Minimal	Quiet; smooth; reassuringly grippy.
Continental GP4000Sii	Wide	Full	A fast feeling tyre.
Schwalbe One	Wide	Full	The second generation of Schwalbe's top tyre was as good as I remembered.
Michelin Power	True	Slick	I love slicks and I loved these tyres; really grippy rubber; more sound than other tyres.
Pirelli PZero Velo	Wide	Minimal	The softest feeling tyre unmounted was the softest riding tyre in a good way.
Zipp Tangente Speed	Narrow	Full	The stiffest feeling tyre unmounted rode really well; felt fast.
Specialized Turbo Cotton	True	Slick (with texture)	Old school tyre technology – an actual cotton casing – made fast.
Mavic Yksion	True	Full	My first ride on Mavic tyres was very favourable.

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MICHELIN POWER



Michelin made some of the first high-performance clincher tyres (offering a substitute to tubulars) back in the 80s. The Power tyres are the great-great-great grandchildren of those tyres, and they share a certain look. The Power Race tyres might have a family resemblance to 30 year-old tyres, but they are fully modern in their performance! Based on the amount of small stuff that stuck to the tyres, these have the stickiest rubber in this group. Like some slicks I have ridden in the past, they were quite noisy. They measure true to size.

SCHWALBE ONE



This is the second generation One. They went from a pure slick on generation one to a shoulder-treaded tyre with this version. The original One was revolutionary for Schwalbe, prompting them to create a new factory to make them in. It seems to have been worth the effort as these tyres were really enjoyable. They measure wide. They were particularly quiet.

ZIPP TANGENTE SPEED



When I think of Zipp, I think of aero wheels and equipment. The tyres would be right at home on a set of expensive Zipp carbon wheels; cosmetically and performance-wise. The unmounted tyre felt quite stiff, which translated to a firm feeling on the road – firm feels fast. The tread is quite different to all the others in appearance, but I believe it accomplishes much the same end result – a small aero benefit from the roughness of the shoulders. The tyre was the only one that measured narrower than nominal width.

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MAVIC YKSION



Mavic was the only company to provide a different front and rear tyre for this test (other companies do make them). The tread is almost the same across the two tyres, but runs in opposing directions front to back. This tread is the most extensive of all the race tyres here. I found only a miniscule difference in width between the front and rear tyres – both were true to size. In a tightly-grouped set of tyres (there really was minimal difference across all tyres), the Yksion was not at the extremes on any front. A solid tyre choice.

PIRELLI P ZERO VELO



Pirelli rejoined the bike tyre business with the P Zero models, after a decades-long gap, last year (sharing a name with F1 and sports car tyres). They are worthy of the name. They have the most supple feeling casing when unmounted and this translates into the softest feeling when on the road (not the same as low air pressure however as they hold around corners). They are wider than stated. The tread is a slash mark on the shoulder borrowed from MotoGP.

CONTINENTAL GP4000SII



This Continental is an evolution of a long series of top racing tyres (GP3000>GP4000>GP4000S and finally GP4000Sii), so it has a big set of shoes to fill. It does. While my testing revealed virtually zero difference among this group of tyres, it felt fast. I love fast feeling equipment because they push me to be fast. These tyres measure wide. They have quite a lot of tread on the shoulders, but are bare slicks when riding straight along. They have a unique sound.

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SPECIALIZED TURBO COTTON



Specialized took us forwards to the pinnacle of their racing tyres by taking us back to the past – cotton instead of nylon for the fibres in the tyre body. Like the Vittorias, these look a bit retro with their coated cotton sidewalls. As Specialized makes their tyres in even measures, there were no 25s to test. The 24s measured wide at 25mm (the same 1mm extra as the other “wide” tyres). The tread is almost a pure slick, with some roughness on the shoulders. I really enjoyed my time on these tyres.

VITTORIA CORSA G+



The Corsa was a favourite for actually riding around – but for reasons I can't put my finger on. It was confidence inspiring on descents such that I set a few PRs on local roads without even trying to go fast. The distinctive white walls of the test tyres gave my bike a retro look (they also come in all black). These tyres measure wide. The tread is a series of circumferential grooves, which are nice and quiet.

HUTCHINSON FUSION 5



The Fusion left an impression of all-around competence. They were quiet on all types of road surfaces. Like other Hutchinsons I have ridden in the past, they were smooth riding. At speed they were reassuringly grippy. These tyres measure true to size. The tread is a minimal series of “lightning bolts” across the shoulders (a common theme in this group). **BA**

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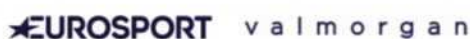
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Bont Riot +

BY NAT BROMHEAD



THEY ALMOST SOUND TOO GOOD to be true - an entry-level cycling shoe boasting many of the features and technologies of their higher-profile siblings, but for less than half the price.

That's the recurring theme that came to mind during the first week of testing a pair of Bont Riot Plus, road shoes that retail for around \$230.

Absolutely unmissable in lime green and black - a colour specifically requested to ensure they'd stand out for the photographs - the Bont Riot Plus continue the legacy set by the original Riot.

Featuring a single BOA dial in place of the precursor's micro-adjust buckle, the Riot Plus not only exude the pro-level feel of their more superior siblings, but offer a quicker and more efficient closure and tensioning system over the superseded model.

In addition to the BOA dial is a velcro tensioner, angled to ensure the frontal section of the shoe is evenly wrapped to the foot.

Following factory advice the new shoes were put into a pre-warmed oven of 70 degrees celsius - this was done before fitting the cleats and after sliding out the insole. After 20 minutes in the oven, and after a few minutes of cooling, I fitted the shoes, tightened the velcro then BOA and allowed to shoes to cool to room temperature. The result - fully customised fitting in a \$230 cycling shoe!

With the shoes fitted - and the added luxury of brand new compression socks from 2XU just for the occasion, it was onto the bike and out for an undulating 40km reccy ride around the Noosa Classic course on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Bont Riot+

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First thing I noticed was a firm and comfortable shoe that felt more an extension and less an attachment to the foot. At under 300g in size 44.5, they are noticeably light.

Bont are well known for their research, development and reputation so far as power transfer goes - that is taken as read. One of the first things I noticed about these shoes, particularly as the bitumen curved upward, was the feeling of increased efficiency not just when pushing down on the pedals but noticeably when lifting them as well.

Tough comfort, that could be a way to describe the microfibre upper, a strong yet supple outer layer hardy enough to withstand the rigours of everyday activity yet pliable enough to still feel good after a long and warm session the bike.

Leaning down and giving each BOA dial a tweak just before the climb, the shoes actually felt as comfortable and secure as their big brothers - the premium level Helix (Bicycling Australia are currently also testing a pair of Bont's premium-level Helix in Black - more on those shortly).

The Riot Plus are not quite on the same level as the Vaypor or particularly the Helix - lacking the leather upper, full carbon sole, revolutionary full foot/single BOA closure system etc, but the Riot's certainly punch several divisions above their weight.

Turn the shoes over and you'll see Bont's intricate cleat alignment markings, a smooth, flush and aero efficient base, and sturdy removable / replaceable heel pads. These, complete with new mounting screws,

are available from Bont and dealers as required.

In summary you'll be getting enormous bang for your buck with the Bont Riot Plus. Purchase wise they're a no brainer - perfect for the more advanced rider who might ride Fondo's or race in Vaypor or Helix shoes but looking for a high-performance training shoe. Similarly these would well suit an intermediate rider looking to step into a premium feeling shoe priced at just a few dollars more than the entry-level competition. **BA**

"the Riot's certainly punch SEVERAL DIVISIONS ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT"

Bont's Riot Plus are available in five different colour combinations - Mega Crimson/Khaki, Midnight/Mega Crimson, Pearl White/Black, Totally Lime/Charcoal and Black. Available from European size 36 through to 50 with many half size options, they are priced at around \$230.

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Diamante SV Disc

BASSO BIKES HAVE A RELATIVELY LOW PROFILE HERE IN AUSTRALIA, THOUGH THE BRAND HAS FOUR DECADES BEHIND IT AND CONSIDERABLE ACCLAIM IN EUROPE. WE HAVE BEEN RIDING THEIR NEW DIAMANTE SV DISC FOR THIS REVIEW.

WHEN I STOP TO CONSIDER how highly esteemed the culture of cycling is in Italy, I'm little awed. It's presence there is so tangible, cycling permeates the fabric of life. I can't help but be impressed and a little envious of this. But it's not only the attitude towards cycling and cyclists that has gripped me. It's Italy in general. The Giro—my favourite of the big three. Then there's the art, the coffee, cuisine, fashion and engineering... style, quality, and yes passion; it's evocative,

alluring and pervasive. I haven't thought these words before, but I suppose at some level, I am an Italophile.

We're looking at the new Basso Diamante SV Disc. Italian bike. Made in Italy. By Italians. This patriotic 100% Italian claim is one most other prestige bike brands can't make. Colnago's C60 frame is their only one that's home-made. Wilier and Pinarello frames are made in "the Far East". There is no doubt these brands and Taiwanese factories produce very fine bicycles. But

Basso still makes their frames completely in-house in the Veneto region just 60km from Venice and a stone's throw from Campagnolo's base in Vicenza.

The Basso brand was born 41 years ago to the Basso family, a band of passionate cyclists, but in particular at the hands of the youngest son Alcide. When he was just 19 years old Alcide Basso started building his first frames in his family's garage. He was also mechanic for his elder brother Marino, a formidable and accomplished sprinter of 70's. Marino raced in some of

1. My, oh my...Super Record EPS.
2. Proprietary hidden aero post clamp with vibration mitigation built in clamp.
3. Attention to precise detail is evident even in the application of painted logos.





1 2



SPECIFICATIONS

FRAME: Diamante SV Disc

FORK: Diamante SV Disc thru axle,

BAR: Microtech Carbon 420mm

STEM: Diamante SV alloy

SADDLE: Astute Skylite Carbon

SEATPOST: Diamante carbon

TYRES: MichelinPro 4 Endurance 28mm

BRAKES: Campagnolo H11 hydraulic disc

CRANKSET: Campagnolo H11 52/36t

FRONT DERAILLEUR: Campagnolo
Super Record EPS

REAR DERAILLEUR: Campagnolo Record EPS

CASSETTE: Campagnolo 11-28t

WHEELSET: Campagnolo Bora One 35mm
clincher disc

WEIGHT AS TESTED: 7.9kg

PRICE AS TESTED: \$14,500

3

D I A M A N T E S V



“This frame is noticeably stiffer than my regular carbon ride and **THERE’S A GRATIFYING FEELING OF EFFICIENCY AS I CLIMB THE LOCAL ESCARPMENT, winding up quiet, smooth tree-lined roads.”**

the top pro teams against and alongside the likes of Gimondi and Merckx, claiming 27 Grand Tour stages through his career. All this while, Alcide was alongside his brother, honing his mechanical craft.

Their 41 years of Italian manufacture, makes Basso a young brand compared to Wilier or Bianchi. But Basso maintained this all-Italian aspect of their heritage.

Heritage and family... Do these things make a bike any better? Any faster? Perhaps not. At the limits of performance how do you distinguish variation in value? Once differences in function are negligible what else is there beyond form?

The mere knowledge of a product’s creation by a family of artisans, a family steeped in cycling history, and with the kudos of racing victories at the highest levels... that’s where value lies for some. These esoteric notions may mean nothing when the rubber hits the road, but there is value and meaning in ideas; there’s a sense in which we are what we remember...our history and our stories.

This quote from Basso marketing video makes it clear they understand the value of this exclusive position. “This is what makes us special we give emotions, we give to our customers the feeling of being part of a special group of people”.

It is not all words however; Basso deliver exquisitely crafted bicycles. Attention to detail and finishing of the frame and paint is very pleasing...sharp transitions from white to red, and the pearlescent fleck in the green pay homage to the Italian flag. Paint and the resin below even at the ports, dropouts and bearing faces are all smoothly seamlessly finished.

Beyond the lustrous paint, the frame blends current design features creating an aerodynamic frame which includes room for 28mm tyres. There are flat mount disc brakes, 12mm thru axles, internally routed cables and hoses, tapered headset and a hidden seat post clamp. In this



clamp area too, there's some neat design work with a rubber sleeve designed to moderate road buzz. More notably there's a stepped head tube design that allows you to remove the 'comfort kit' and spacers to effectively 'slam' the stem to a point where it's almost in line with the top tube for maximum aero efficiency. The frame is all carbon, incorporating no alloy components.

This 58cm bike is not ostentatiously light, but respectably so, at 7.9 kilos.

It's kitted out with a selection of premium parts from Campagnolo; their carbon H11 cranks driving the chain through Super Record and Record EPS derailleurs. Aesthetically the Campagnolo spec is a brilliant match and given the Italian connection, an obvious, virtually imperative choice. I find Campag's shifters have a really comfortable ergonomic match for my hands, broad hoods under my palm and with shift buttons and levers optimally placed for easy reach. Campag's disc rotors again bring that Italian style. The slotted cutouts and those smoothly rounded edge profiles look a treat and perform exceptionally well into the bargain. The wheelset is top-shelf too. Carbon Bora One 35mm rims are laced to Campy's Ultra Smooth Bearing hubs with that iconic G3 Megadrive lace pattern that gives extra strength to the drive side rear and disc rotor front with it's 2:1 spoke ratio.

Visually the overall effect of this frame and those wheels is quite stunning. It seems it's not just me who was impressed. This bike has some kind of aura that distinguishes it from the run of the mill. It draws attention immediately as I roll up to join the waiting bunch and curious comments "what's this new piece of bling, Mr Hunt?". Inside I'm grinning, but I try not to be too smug lest I'm made to pay by the (actual) fast men of the bunch.

As we head out the ride is lively, sharp, and direct. This frame is noticeably stiffer than my regular carbon ride and there's a gratifying feeling of efficiency as I climb the local escarpment. Descending is a joy.



6



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I find myself powering down the mountain, the Diamante hanging on tenaciously as I dare to push harder, going deeper under brakes, and then blasting out of corners. It's hard to tell if it's actually the bike, or some placebo effect this glamorous machine is having on me, but the result is the same. I'm climbing with more intent, pushing harder on the front of the bunch, and extracting more from these aging legs than I have in some time. Then riding home through rolling farmland I hunker down in the drops, drilling into the wind. As the ks continue to fly past, I'm more and more engrossed in the ride, zoned out and blissfully elated.

Indeed, this is the most impressive bike I have ridden in a long time. **BA**

Basso frames are offered in Australia without wheels – as wheels are quite a personal choice. Diamante SV Disc frameset (frame/fork, headset, comfort kit, stem and post) \$7,125. The RRP for the SR EPS without wheels is \$13,600 or \$14,500 with.

SUMMING UP

QUALITY

Resplendent in white, red and pearlescent green, and lavishly adorned with electronic gearing and hydraulic brakes from their compatriots at Campagnolo, Basso's Diamante SV Disc makes an immediate, and striking impression.

PERFORMANCE

The Diamante SV is a high performance bicycle. Its aerodynamic frame is stiff and spritely. It feels fast in a sprint, and makes climbing and cornering a pleasure. Component spec is top shelf too, so gear changes are faultless and braking impeccable.

VALUE

This bike as tested has quite a hefty price tag at \$14,500. It's well appointed with expensive components and there is no doubt it performs well. It also looks superb. Those factors account for a good portion of the price. Then there's that Italian passion and heritage. How do you put a price on a feeling?

OVERALL

The Diamante SV is an exceptional bike, and so it should be given the price. But for those looking for a classy, high performing bike with legitimate heritage...look no further. For the speed merchants; if cost is no barrier, I am sure this bike will not stop you reaching the top step. Fast, glamorous and indulgent.

4. Campagnolo took their time, perfecting the product before bringing disc brakes to market.
5. The Diamante SV is truly a work of art; a machine of style and speed.
6. Campagnolo components are beautifully designed - a virtuous addition to this prestige bicycle.
7. There's room behind that 86mm BB for some fast 28mm rubber.

Focus Paralane

NAT BROMHEAD PICKED UP A NEW FOCUS PARALANE IN ADELAIDE FOR REVIEW, AND IMMEDIATELY FELT THE URGE TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL TO DO SOME ADVENTURE RIDING IN THE OUTBACK.

BEING WOKEN BY THE ROAR OF a passing freight train while fast asleep under a billion stars in outback Australia would have to be one of the most surreal ways to ever awake.

The location was alongside the Barrier Highway, in remote South Australia and around 150km south of Broken Hill. As around a kilometre of train thundered by, I sat bolt upright in the swag and momentarily wondered where on earth I was ... the Milky Way above, moonlit rolling hills in the distance and the outline of a road bike leaning against my car just behind.

The bike, a Focus Paralane, was the main reason (read justification) for the trip - the all-rounder machine providing the perfect excuse to take the long way home from Adelaide to Sydney.

"Too many bike reviews are written from the comfort, sterility and security of an office," I told my ever-understanding Editor. "I'd like to do this one in the Outback," to which he fortunately obliged.

Soon after sunrise next morning the Paralane was put through it's paces. Designed, engineered and intended as

an endurance bike, I turned the black test bike - finished with Shimano's latest Ultegra groupset, hydraulic disc brakes, a Mavic disc wheelset and 32mm CX tyres - out onto the road.

The build felt at home on the gun-barrel straight Barrier Highway. Out of the box, and surprisingly (or coincidentally) not needing any saddle, bar or stem adjustments, this was a bike that immediately oozed comfort. An easy bike to ride, from the get go the Paralane felt an immensely capable, incredibly comfortable and ever-reliable all rounder.

1. The bike was delivered with 32mm CX tyres and later fitted with 35mm Schwalbe G-Ones. As shown here there's ample room for fat rubber.
2. The Paralane features Focus's in-house RAT 'Rapid Axle Technology' system - a floating through axle that aides stability and stiffness while allowing for speedy wheel changes.
3. The test bike was factory fitted with BBB alloy 420mm deluxe aluminium bars and Shimano's R8000 Ultegra groupset, the hoods offering solid control and feel particularly when the going got rough.





SPECIFICATIONS

FRAME: Focus Paralane Disc carbon. Internal brake and gear cable routing.

FORK: Paralane, 12 x 100 mm thru axle, R.A.T, carbon

BAR: BBB Deluxe Aluminium 420mm

STEM: BBB Concept

SADDLE: Prologo Kappa 3

SEATPOST: Concept CPX Plus 25.4x 340mm

TYRES: Continental GP 4-Season 28mm

BRAKES: Shimano R8070 Disc 160mm

CRANKSET: Shimano Ultegra 50/34t

GROUPSET: Full Shimano Ultegra mechanical

CASSETTE: Shimano Ultegra 11-34t

REAR DERAILLEUR: Ultegra Long cage

WHEELSET: Mavic Askium Disc, 17mm inner rim.

WEIGHT: as tested: 8.4kg

PRICE: as tested: \$4,499

“blast along some outback single track, or join the Saturday morning bunch when back in Sydney ... THIS BIKE WILL DO IT ALL WITH COMFORT, STYLE AND FLAIR.”



Blown sideways by a couple of passing roadtrains and around 15km south of the makeshift campsite, I pulled off the road onto one of the many sidetracks that accessed the main north/south rail line. The departure from blue black bitumen to rust brown bull dust felt relatively seamless - a lot easier than spotting the soft dust holes in the track ahead.

Off road the Paralane felt equally comfortable. Extra effort was obviously required to push the bike over the softer sections of track, across the dirt and through the occasional gravel sectors, but overall the platform quickly proved itself as a capable steed. Acceleration was sprightly, the bike was well-balanced and relatively easy to control over the uneven surfaces and ups and downs of the monotonous dips and rises.

Bike back on the car and secured into the Thule racks, we were again heading north. Stopping for roadhouse coffee at the tiny settlement of Yunta, I saw a sign to Arkaroola in the Flinders Ranges ... just 192miles (or 301km) away.

“How perfect the Paralane would be for that adventure,” I mused, while chatting to a friendly caravaner about the all-round road bike on the roof of the car.

Later arriving at the historic ‘Silver City’ of Broken Hill, again the Paralane was down from the racks and ready to roll.

Swapping out the tyres, I changed the 32mm knobby's to a new pair of Schwalbe 35mm G-One road tyres - the fat slicks comfortably fitting within the Focus's fork and frame.

A proper road test was in order as I rolled out of the campground and put the bike through its paces on Broken Hill's many short, sharp residential climbs.

Despite its endurance geometry and design intention as an all-day, long-distance comfort machine, the Paralane exudes that familiar Focus feel - light in weight (a 905gr frame and overall build of 8.4kg in Ultegra Disc configuration with the 35mm Schwalbe tyres), a racy geometry, and all the characteristics of a performance bike.

'A racing bike that's ready for anything.' That's how Focus describe their Paralane and after a week in the outback I completely agree. Want to set a PB up Broken Hill's town mining memorial, blast along some outback single track such as the old Singleton rail line, join the Saturday morning bunch when back in Sydney ... this bike will do it all with comfort, style and flair.

Subtleties abound with this bike, the flattened top tube and curved, flat rear stays allow for compliance and comfort while retaining a race-ready and on-trend look. Then there's the beefy head tube and cutaway fork carrying that compliance factor through to the front end. Midships you're sitting on a factory fitted Prologo Kappa 3 saddle bolted to Focus's unique cutaway seat post - a tear-shaped void designed to allow a certain degree of flex and extra comfort.

The bike features Focus's 'Rapid Axle Technology' through axles - quarter turn quick releases designed for fast removal and hasty wheel changes.

Cockpit wise the bike features a blacked out bar and stem - alloy 420mm bars with flat, aero inspired top, perfectly wrapped Focus bar tape and Shimano's



latest Ultegra levers treasuring in size and a perfect pairing.

With an overall theme of black along with well-balanced touches of white (almost 'Back To The Future' style graphics on the down and top tube), I couldn't help but think of another 80s movie while riding this cutting-edge allrounder on the dry and dusty roads around the Mad Max homelands of Silverton west of Broken Hill. (For more on this watch the Outback Paralane videos on the *Bicycling Australia* YouTube channel).

"It feels like the two-wheeled Interceptor," I thought during an outback loop from the historic town out to Mundi Mundi lookout then on to long-dry local dam. Alone, under the sweltering sun and rich blue sky, returning to town with a slight tail wind, I couldn't help but think the Focus Paralane was the ideal

outback adventure seeker. Solid, secure and incredibly comfortable, this bike screamed compliance and capability.

Working through the gears on the climb back to Mundi Mundi - that same hill used in the scene of the fuel tanker rollover in *Mad Max II* - I couldn't help but imagine the distant hum of the Interceptor, a gyrocopter above, and the Paralane playing a pivotal role in the day's defence of the region's roads and fuel supplies.

Snapped into reality by yet another roo bounding across the road ahead, the bike lapped up those final country kilometres back to town. Unclipping the Kask and leaning the bike against the front wall of the Silverton Hotel, I couldn't imagine a better road bike to explore outback Australia aboard. **BA**

4. A viable candidate as a versatile allrounder, the Focus Paralane offers all day endurance style comfort while being ready, willing and able to take to gravel and even sandy trails.
5. The test bike was specced with Shimano Ultegra however various incarnations of the Paralane platform are available in 105 along with the full suite of SRAM builds.
6. A disc specific build and stiff yet bump-soaking frame, Focus engineers see no need to include a bridge between the seat stays. Note the flat tube cross sections mid way along the seat stays - this frame has numerous subtle yet intricate features included a butted base between bottom bracket and seat tube.

SUMMING UP

QUALITY

Focus continue to surprise with their lightweight frames, affordable price points, and standard inclusions. A great looking bike, well finished and quality German feel.

PERFORMANCE

Tested with 32mm CX tyres, then 35mm road tyres, across mixed surfaces from sand to dust to gravel to bitumen, the bike took it all in its stride. It felt as capable on short, sharp suburban climbs as it did on the gravel and single track. Quick off the mark, well geared, and the surety of Ultegra hydraulic disc brakes, the Paralane is a sprightly performer.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Starting from around \$2500 with Shimano 105 disc and ranging through to \$13,000 with SRAM Red eTap, but utilising the identical same frame, the Paralane platform offers an access point for all budgets and builds.

OVERALL

Loved it. Fine German engineering, precise attention to detail, an affordable price point and genuine all day comfort— there's a lot of bike for the buck here. The type of bike you'll instantly bond with. Equally comfortable and as sure-footed on or off the road, it offers quality, reliability, great looks and is a lot of fun to ride. I didn't want to give it back.

Bianchi Aria Disc

BIANCHI'S ARIA HAS NEW BEEFED UP TUBES AND DISC BRAKES, BUT STILL LOOKS TO BE AN AERO-OPTIMISED FRAME, SO WE WERE KEEN TO SEE HOW IT RIDES. GARY HUNT REPORTS.

BIANCHI'S WEBSITE IS promoting the Aria Disc with a headline "Master the Elements", pointing to the performance enhancements that disc brakes can offer. The number of naysayers seems to be diminishing, and consensus seems to have shifted in the market so that disc brakes are now openly being touted as a beneficial feature.

Sporting sleek tube shapes, blade style fork legs, internal hose routing all tends to suggest the Aria being a dedicated aero bike, but it's more than just a one trick

pony. The Aria's frame has been heavily inspired by Bianchi's time trial and triathlon model the Aquila CV which did see some wind tunnel testing. It's also suggested on their website the Aria is tri-ready; just clip on some bars, adjust stack spacing and saddle angle and you're ready to go.

The down tube certainly looks to have an aero profile with a hint of a cutout for the front wheel and being 78mm deep and just 38 wide, tapering to Kamm trailing edge. This blade-like down tube section

transitions to an 86mm wide bottom bracket which anchors a stout looking rear triangle. The chain and seat stays look seriously over-engineered... those chainstays are 46mm deep (though only 19mm wide). The nett result of this chunky rear end is a ride well able to handle all the power you can produce and a one that's very stable confident and assured into the bargain. It's definitely a firm ride, though I wouldn't go so far as to say harsh.

The seat tube also has a shallow cutout for the rear wheel and the seatstays while

1. Stability of the Aria ride comes in part from sturdy rear triangle tubes and thru axles.
2. Fulcrum's alloy wheelset is functional and cost efficient, but the Aria would be better suited to some deep carbon wheels.
3. Those chainstays are 46mm deep!





SPECIFICATIONS

SIZES: 44-47-50-53-55-57-59-61

FRAME: Aria Disc carbon, PressFit 86,5mm BB

FORK: Bianchi Full Carbon Disc, thru axle

HEADSET: FSA Orbit C-33,

SHIFTERS: Shimano Ultegra ST-R8020

REAR DERAILLEUR: Shimano Ultegra

FRONT DERAILLEUR: Shimano Ultegra

CRANKSET: Shimano Ultegra FC-R8000 50x34T,

BB: Shimano SM-BB72-41B

CHAIN: KMC X11-1 EPT finish

SPROCKET: Shimano 105 CS-5800 11sp, 11-28T,

BRAKES: Shimano BR-R8070 Hydraulic disc brake

WHEELS: Fulcrum Racing 618 disc brake

TYRE: Vittoria Zaffiro Pro Slick 700x28

STEM: Reparto Corse Alloy 6061, rise +/-7°, 1.1/8"

HANDLEBAR: Reparto Corse Compact,
Flat Top, alloy 6061

SEATPOST: Bianchi Full Carbon Aero, offset 20mm

SADDLE: Selle San Marco Monza Dynamic, steel rails

RRP: \$5,699

www.bianchi.com



4. The Celeste colour tends to split opinion but Bianchi does offer alternatives. That said, by the end of this review the green and black livery was growing on me.
5. Clean flowing lines and a burly bottom bracket housing.
6. The Aria's low set stays aid stiffness and power transfer and contribute to lowering drag.
7. Bianchi has done a tidy of cable management up front, with neat ports and internal routing.



4

5



“...performs very well especially when **PLAYING TO ITS STRONG SUITS OF POWER AND SPEED...**”



6



7

sturdy, are low set, again looking for that aero advantage. The triangular section top tube tapers evenly from the headtube, giving the appearance of a waist at the seat tube junction where a hidden wedge-style clamp binds on the aero post. While not overtly aggressive it's a speedy looking machine.

According to the importer Bianchi has always maintained the perspective that their bikes must be strong and solid even if at the expense of being the lightest available. This kind of 'safety first' philosophy sits very well with me as tall and solid rider who likes to head downhill at speed. It almost always results in a more direct-steering frame too.

Shimano's Ultegra groupset is a pleasure to use, smooth and quiet while changing gears, the difference between this groupset and that of big brother Dura-Ace really is quite hard to pick in a performance context, with weight and bling value being the real difference in my view. Shimano's 160mm Ice Technology Freeza rotors are the strong silent type and braking performance is exceptional — as you would

hope given Bianchi's 'master the elements' marketing pitch. Modulation is very good, and given the power of these brakes this is essential. As I have come to expect from late model disc braked road bikes there was no squealing from the brakes, though I did occasionally get some rotor rub while climbing, both front and rear. This can stem from a level of flex in the frame and fork, or be a function of close tolerances between pad and rotor, or be the result of some warping of the rotor after heavy, heat-inducing braking. These last two points seemed to be the contributing factors as the rub came and went quickly after descents.

Bianchi has fitted their house brand 'Reparto Corsa' (literally 'Racing Department') alloy bars and stem to the Aria. This large (57cm) frame comes with a 42cm wide bar which they suggest is a flat top unit. Personally I prefer a wider bar, (though the aero leanings of the Aria could probably justify something narrower), and something a little flatter on the tops. If anything lets the Aria down it would be these two items; they are functional

and no doubt helpful on the cost control front, but the rest of the bike is so well appointed these look slightly underdressed. Similarly the Fulcrum Racing 618 wheelset is solid and functional but I'm sure would happily be redeployed to training duties if you were to upgrade to a deeper more aerodynamic set for racing. There's no doubt that, even though they're not at all necessary, the frame could admirably accommodate any upgrades here.

For all the emphasis the frame's sleek profile infers on aerodynamics I found the Aria to be quite a strong performing all rounder. Descending on this bike is a real pleasure. After the first few descents of my test route I was achieving times within my long-standing top three best, and seemingly with ease...it was enough to make me take on hill repeats just for the fun of the descent! Carving wide arcs or ripping tighter corners on the Aria is a blast that I didn't foresee. I'm sure the 28mm tyres contribute strongly on this front, but the frame must also shoulder some of the responsibility for this fun and motivating ride. **BA**

SUMMING UP

QUALITY

A quality carbon frame sporting mechanical Ultegra gears and hydraulic disc brakes...it's a recipe for success. Bianchi has left the ball in your court as to the need for wheel upgrade.

PERFORMANCE

While the Aria Disc looks to be a dedicated aero machine with time trial intentions it's a strong all rounder. It is powerfully built and the resulting ride is firm. Descending and cornering at speed feels assured and the Aria spurs you on, repaying confidence with yet more speed.

VALUE FOR MONEY

While there are other Ultegra equipped bikes on the market for less dollars, there's a level of quality that comes from the learnings of many years, and certainly one that is evident in the Aria.

OVERALL

I found the the Aria Disc a very well designed bike: the whole package of frame and components is a harmonious blend. It performs very well especially when playing to its strong suits of power and speed. A very enjoyable ride.

The Famous Five

ANTHONY TAN MUSES OVER THE FIVE MOST LIKELY TO STAND TALLEST IN PARIS THIS JULY.

HERE ARE FIVE RIDERS WHO have the intention of standing on the top step of the dais in Paris on July 29. Which is different from those who would be satisfied with a spot on the podium - and it's this subtlety that has the potential to make this 105th edition of La Grande Boucle so intriguing and, undoubtedly, explosive.

Only one has not yet stood on the Paris podium, which is of course our own Richie Porte. His fateful crash on the ninth leg to Chambéry ended all hope of emulating what countryman Cadel Evans had accomplished six years earlier. In 2010, the year before Evans created a slice of history, I asked him how many chances he thought he had left to win the greatest race of all. "Certainly, I think two or three... conservatively, I'd say two," he confided to me at his hotel on the outskirts of Pau.

He only needed one. And if everything goes to plan, it's all Porte needs, too.

Aside from the defending champion, the three others have all finished runner-up - which is to say, second again wouldn't do it for them. Have you ever heard the first loser tell you, 'Oh geez, can't wait to do that again!'

Since 2012, however, when Chris Froome wants something he's generally got it. And since last July he's won three Grand Tours on the trot, which not even an ongoing doping case can appear to arrest. The Kenyan-born Brit is not unlike the media juggernaut that pays his reported AUD\$7M salary: imperious, cashed up, unbothered by scandal, unbothered by public opinion, and singularly-focused to the point where only a win will do.



THE FRENCHMAN'S FAVOURITE: ROMAIN BARDET

In 2013, aged 22, he was fifteenth in his maiden Tour de France, also his first Grand Tour. One year later, the still young man from the Auvergne region in south-central France shoots to sixth overall, in part due to the abandons of Chris Froome and Alberto Contador. With the latter pair back in 2015 he finishes ninth - and sixteen minutes behind Froome. Maybe Romain Bardet isn't the rider France expect - or hope - him to be...

Yet in his fourth Grande Boucle, he beats the likes of Nairo Quintana, Adam Yates, Richie Porte and Alejandro Valverde to finish runner-up - yes, second! - to Froome. He ends the race four minutes in arrears to the Kenyan-born Brit, with all bar 34 seconds lost in the two time trials. Like so many French GC aspirants before him it's clearly his Achilles heel, though at 25 years young he will surely improve. And when he does, he'll break the drought that has lasted since 1985, the year Bernard Hinault won his fifth.

Non. Not last year, anyway.

Stubbornly, and, by his own admission, paradoxically, Bardet refused to train like he needed to.

"I made a choice not to focus on the time trial because it's not the way I like to ride," he said in Marseille on July 22, having conceded just short of two minutes to Froome in the final race of truth, bringing his total loss to 2'36 across 36.5 kilometres of time trialling. "Going out to train on my time trial bike is a little bit boring for me."

The sub-par ride also saw him lose second place overall to Rigoberto Urán - and only a solitary second kept him from losing third to Mikel Landa. Somewhat assuringly, even though he dropped a place he came closer to victory: 2'20 in 2017 versus 4'05 the previous July.

The 2018 Tour has 5.5 less individual time trial kilometres, however the inclusion of a 35 kilometre-long team time trial, on stage three, throws a spanner in the works. Unlike French counterpart Groupama-FDJ, Bardet's AG2R La Mondiale outfit, a team he has stuck with since turning pro in 2012, is not much improved in this area of expertise. "Not only with the team time trial, but also with the wind and the cobbles. If you don't have the guys around you to keep out of trouble then you could lose everything in this [opening] week." Bardet, at the route presentation last October, forewarned.

He nevertheless said this year's parcours suits him more. "But I have to do a big workload to get to my best and to try and make [victory] happen. It is a good balance between the marathon stages and the short stages can make the race really interesting."

As much as Bardet finds pedalling his TT bike anathema, and as exasperating it is to hear him say he can't much be bothered - at polar opposites with Team Sky's 'marginal gains' ethos - such is his prowess in the highest of mountains and wont to attack in the old-school style of Eddy Merckx and Raymond Poulidor, the now 27-year-old could still produce the ride of his life. Yes, that's right - win the Tour. "He wasn't far away from pulling off a big exploit," Vincent Lavenu, AG2R's longtime team manager, said at the end of last year's race. "It will come."

When it comes, expect mayhem.



**"Going out to train on my
time trial bike IS A LITTLE
BIT BORING FOR ME."**

ABOVE: After dismissing it as "boring", last winter Bardet spent time in the wind tunnel to mitigate his losses in time trials.

THE DEFENDING CHAMP: CHRIS FROOME



IMAGE © SIROTTI

ABOVE: Unflappable... The defending champion's kit must be made from Teflon, because whatever mud is thrown his way, it doesn't seem to stick.

Come July 29, there could be five members of the 'five times club' once again. He needs to traverse 21 stages and 3,329 kilometres to get there, but if the season previous is anything to go by - not to mention the most recent Grand Tour - the man from Nairobi has shown little evidence of slowing down.

When the 105th Tour leaves from Noirmoutier-en-l'Île on July 7, Chris Froome will be 33 years, six weeks and six days old. As far as history goes it's getting on a bit for a Grand Tour rider, especially a Grand Tour contender, yet he'll take comfort from the fact that two years before his maiden Tour win in 2013, a 34-year-old Australian by the name of Cadel Evans emerged as the oldest post-war victor of La Grande Boucle.

His ability to compartmentalise - nonchalantly placing into remission the fallout and furore surrounding his adverse analytical finding for salbutamol at last year's Vuelta, and the piranha-like posse of Team Sky haters - is reminiscent of a similarly unflappable figure who was an erstwhile member of the five times club. (That was, of course, before a 202-page document known as the 'Reasoned Decision', published in October of 2012 by the US Anti-Doping Agency, took all that and millions more away.) It's not to cast aspersions over his fate or that Froome is anything like Lance Armstrong regarding his proclivity for banned substances; rather an observation that the best stage racers have an innate ability to focus on what they control, and suppress what they can't.

It's with only a skerrick of hope that the incident in Spain will be resolved by Le Grand Départ. So, as the defending champ will do, we must do our best to enjoy the world's greatest bike race without the constant reminder that the

standings may change after the fact - as it did in February 2012 when, following the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling against him, Alberto Contador was stripped of his titles at the 2010 Tour and 2011 Giro d'Italia, and Andy Schleck and Michele Scarponi became the beneficiaries.

Moving on, then, shall we...

By virtue of his four wins to date, Froome has proven he is no one-trick pony like Bradley Wiggins before him. He has the ability to acclimatise - and with him Team Sky appears to have created a blueprint for success. They have found a way to reduce the X-factor. "I don't know if it's a Tour that suits me - I just know I'll have to adapt," he said at the unveiling of the route last October. In other words, he makes the course suit, as opposed to waiting for a parcours that suits him.

The greatest unknown is how his legs will fare coming out of the Giro, which he won with a spectacular 80 kilometre solo escape two days from the finish.

Never has he gone into July by riding Italy's Grand Tour beforehand. Despite recent failed attempts at doing the double - by Quintana only last year (second at the Giro, twelfth at the TdF) and Contador in 2015 (first then fifth at the Giro-TdF) - it nonetheless spurred him to accept what has been since the turn of the century cycling's Mission Impossible. A reported 1.4 million Euros for riding the Giro also helped, though Froome said the idea was first put to him by Team Sky head coach, Tim Kerrison.

On the plus side: Due to the football World Cup, there are eight more days between the Giro and Tour than last year. And as the Giro wore on, he only looked stronger and more consistent. He looked like he was on a roll.

As we've seen before, a rolling Froome is hard to stop.

"...as Irishman Daniel Martin once said after he won a Tour stage in swashbuckling style in 2013, 'THE PERSON WHO HAS THE LEAST BAD DAYS WINS.'"

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“PORTE IS AN EXCEPTIONAL CLIMBING TALENT WITH TIME TRIAL SKILLS TO MATCH. And at his best gives little, if anything, to Froome.”



Consistency - both in performances and luck - will be the key to Porte's success at the Tour.

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN HOPE: RICHIE PORTE

If anyone needed a result at the Tour de Romandie, it was Richie Porte.

Prior to the six-day WorldTour event in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the Tasmanian's best GC result this season came at the Tour Down Under, where he was second on count-back to Michelton-Scott's Daryl Impey - a full three months earlier.

Compared to his 2016 Tour breakthrough where he ran fifth overall, or last year where, prior to his stomach-churning, race-ending spill on the descent of the Mont du Chat on stage nine, he looked to be in career-best form and was considered by many to be Froome's most serious challenger, Porte's race days and results were few and far between.

Flu sidelined him from a traditionally important block of racing in March, seeing him skip Tirreno-Adriatico. In early April it was an unconvincing return at the Tour of the Basque Country - which then placed greater emphasis on Romandie, where he was defending champion. He didn't win but wasn't far off it either, finishing behind one-time Slovenian ski-jumper Primož Roglič and (yet) another Colombian sensation, 21-year-old Egan Bernal.

Confidence restored. Faith renewed. "It's a massive confidence-booster," said Porte of the much needed result. "It was hard all day today. Even on the first climb, the race exploded but I felt really good," he said after the decisive queen stage around Sion. "I'm not in top shape at the moment. I had an interrupted run into this race, so I am quite happy with how things are going so far. It was also nice to finish in such a select group."

Featuring six high mountain stages, half of those ending at altitude, the 33-year-old will, if he's to crack the podium or better, need to continue finishing in select groups throughout the final fortnight this July. He's shown enough to say it's possible. At the time of writing, he hadn't shown enough to say it's probable.

Porte is an exceptional climbing talent with time trial skills to match. And at his best gives little, if anything, to Froome. But as Irishman Daniel Martin once said after he won a Tour stage in swashbuckling style in 2013, "The person who has the least bad days wins." If he can avoid, or at least mitigate, those bad days, a high finish in Paris is within his grasp.

ALL STAGES

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THE COLOMBIAN CONNECTION: NAIRO QUINTANA

Another second place and Nairo may call upon a therapist of a different kind. With the defending champ attempting the Giro-Tour double, 2018 will be the prodigious Colombian's best chance to take the title from his *bête noire*.

Other than 2014 champion Vincenzo Nibali, in the previous five Tours de France he is the only one to get seriously close to beating Froome in July. Three years ago, Quintana was on the precipice of a major upset, as Movistar put the lanky Briton and his team on the ropes in the two stages prior to the Paris finale. One felt it was only a matter of time before the 1.66 metre climber would turn the tables - and it would be sooner rather than later.

However the following year, in 2016, his inattentiveness was exposed on several occasions. He then lost two minutes to Froome in a 37.5km time trial at the end of week two, and another minute in the final TT. He still finished third and took revenge in September, beating Froome en route to winning the Vuelta. Then came the rather strange decision to tackle the Giro-Tour double: Was it an honest attempt at replicating what Marco Pantani could only achieve with the aid of Big Pharma, or a concession that so long as Froome's around he would never win the Tour?

Three years on from his 2014 Giro triumph he expected an easier time; the thought process was to win Italy in a canter, recover, then prepare for the Tour. But he grossly underestimated flying Dutchman Tom Dumoulin (who, together with Froome and Thibaut Pinot, has the Giro-Tour on this season's race menu). As happened

in July 2016, he would lose the race in the time trials. Not only that, he went so deep in May he rode the Tour like a three-legged horse. "This is the first time we've tried this 'doblete', and it didn't turn out as well as we had hoped," Quintana, already four minutes down, said at the race's midway point. "Another year we'll do it better. We'll prepare for the Tour like on other occasions, and we will arrive in better condition." This year's prep has been like no other: Ever since he rode to second in his first Grande Boucle in 2013, it is his lightest race schedule by some margin.

By the Grand Départ, he will have completed no more than 30 race days. Notably, though, one of those race days was the cobbled Dwars door Vlaanderen semi-classic, showing just how serious the 28-year-old 'Cóndor de los Andes' is taking the ninth stage to Roubaix that includes 15 sectors of pavé. One could say he is leaving no stone unturned.

"... (2018) is his lightest race schedule by some margin. BY THE GRAND DÉPART, HE WILL HAVE COMPLETED NO MORE THAN 30 RACE DAYS."

BELOW: All out... Quintana's performance last July was compromised by riding the Giro; this year it's the Tour or bust.






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IMAGE: © SPROTTI



ABOVE: Like his compatriot Quintana, Urán has opted for a light race schedule leading into the Tour.

THE STAGES

STAGE	DATE	TERRAIN	ROUTE	DISTANCE
1	July 7	Flat	Noirmoutier-en-l'Île / Fontenay-le-Comte	201 km
2	July 8	Flat	Mouilleron-Saint-Germain / La Roche-sur-Yon	182.5 km
3	July 9	TTT	Cholet / Cholet	35.5 km
4	July 10	Flat	La Baule / Sarzeau	195 km
5	July 11	Hilly	Lorient / Quimper	204.5 km
6	July 12	Hilly	Brest / Mûr de Bretagne Guerlédan	181 km
7	July 13	Flat	Fougères / Chartres	231 km
8	July 14	Flat	Dreux / Amiens Métropole	181 km
9	July 15	Hilly	Arras Citadelle / Roubaix	156.5 km
-	July 16	Rest	Annecy	REST 1
10	July 17	MTN	Annecy / Le Grand-Bornand	158.5 km
11	July 18	MTN	Albertville / La Rosière Espace San Bernardo	108.5 km
12	July 19	MTN	TBourg-Saint-Maurice Les Arcs / Alpe d'Huez	175.5 km
13	July 20	Flat	Bourg d'Oisans / Valence	169.5 km
14	July 21	Hilly	Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux / Mende	188 km
15	July 22	Hilly	Millau / Carcassonne	181.5 km
-	July 23	Rest	Carcassonne	
16	July 24	MTN	Carcassonne / Bagnères-de-Luchon	218 km
17	July 25	MTN	Bagnères-de-Luchon / Saint-Lary-Soulan	65 km
18	July 26	Flat	Trie-sur-Baïse / Pau	171 km
19	July 27	MTN	Lourdes / Laruns	200.5 km
20	July 28	ITT	Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle / Espelette	31 km
21	July 29	Flat	Houilles / Paris Champs-Élysées	116 km

THE ROCK STAR: RIGOBERTO URÁN

Until last July, despite twice finishing second at the Giro d'Italia, Rigoberto Urán has been looked upon as a bit of a has been that never was.

It probably had something to do with his pre-2017 record of underwhelming results, particularly at the Tour: 50th (2009), 23rd (2011), and 42nd (2015). In fact, besides his pair of podiums at the Giro (2013-14) his 11 other Grand Tour outings had been rather patchy: moments of brilliance interlaced with mediocrity, mainly. Though it wasn't till he signed with his current formation that he was treated like a leader, as opposed to a perennial Plan B. Or, as was the case with Quick-Step in 2014-15, simply being on a team that cared far more for Classics than stage races.

That after 10 years' pro, when many are contemplating retirement, he had to join a quirky American squad with a penchant for all things argyle to get the best out of him, the now 31-year-old Mick Jagger lookalike and his boss Jonathan Vaughters must chuckle to themselves. Chuckle with delight, that is.

They say good things come to those who wait; indeed, by the Summer of 2018, Urán had waited long enough. Following an inauspicious start in Düsseldorf where he conceded 51 seconds to Froome over just 14 kilometres, the situation for "Rigo", as his friends call him, slowly but surely improved - to the point where he was inside the top five after an enthralling stage nine victory in Chambéry. And he and Bardet were the only riders to go toe-to-toe with the defending champ on each and every mountain.

So much that if you took away the time lost in both time trials, all else being equal, Urán would have won the Tour by 22 seconds!

This year there are 5.5 individual kilometres less against the clock: 31 to be precise, slated for the penultimate stage. There is also a 35 kilometre team time trial on stage three, and although once an exemplar (and no less a winner), the squad now known as Team EF Education First-Drapac no longer set the benchmark in this discipline. Truth be told, they're generally way below the mark.

Urán is by no means a poor time triallist. And last July he lost far less over a longer distance in the second TT, where residual strength defines performances more than outright ability. In other words, this is a parcours that should put a smile on his dial. Like Cadel Evans did for Australia eight years previous, the opportunity is there to break new ground and become the first Colombian to win Le Grand Shindig.

If achieved, he really would be a rock star. **BA**

Twitter: @anthony_tan

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RIDES: Trek Madone SSL 700 Series
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LIVES: Noosaville
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A bunch of 5s

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 FIVE QUESTIONS.
 ONE BUNCH.**

WHO?

NOOSA/THE WORLD
 CHAMPS

WHEN? 5:30AM TUESDAYS
 (FAST GROUP, 6AM)

WHERE? 1½ HOUR
 NOOSA LOOP

POST-RIDE? LITTLE COVE
 COFFEE CO

BEAUTIFUL ONE DAY. PERFECT the next. Noosa has long been popular with road cyclists. Most mornings you'll find bunches in and around the local area, and Tuesdays are no exception. We're catching up with the 5:30am bunch, however there's also a faster group that follows at 6am. As local rider Rob Register explains: "It (the early group) originally came about as some of the older statesmen and women found they needed a 'head start' to get around without getting dropped. Both bunches tend to go to the same coffee shop afterwards though,

The bunches are friendly and the weather is fabulous almost every day. All riders are welcomed and encouraged to join the bunch rides.

RIGHT: Owen Macphillamy.



so the 5:30am riders pinch all the good seats and bike racks.”

Further investigation reveals the 6am bunch on Tuesdays is actually one of the region's most searching training hit-outs. Affectionately referred to as 'The World Champs' it's a testing loop of Noosa including the 2.6km ascent of Gyndier Drive which also features in the Noosa Classic. Rob says holidaying riders from all over the country know how strong this bunch is. "The locals have fun pushing the 'foreigners' to their limit," he chuckles.

Beyond Tuesdays, other rides happen on Wednesdays (Verrierdale loop),

Thursdays (Boreen Point return), Fridays (Mooloolabah return), Saturdays (Twin Waters return) while Sundays feature hinterland varieties. "Noosa offers a wonderful balance of beautiful ocean roads with bike lanes and paths and stunning challenges hidden away in the majestic hinterland," Rob says proudly.

"The bunches are friendly and the weather is fabulous almost every day. All riders are welcomed and encouraged to join the bunch rides."

INDI LABORIE

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST BIKE?
A beat up old Scott Speedster.

It wasn't the best-looking bike, but it got the job done.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CAMPAGNOLO'S INTRODUCTION OF 12-SPEED GROUPSETS?

Honestly, I'm not very sure what I think about it. I guess it will give riders an extra gear for the steep climbs instead of walking up it.

WHAT'S THE BEST RIDE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST?

I have many, but it would be the TWC loop on a Tuesday. It has a few little bergs and for some reason I enjoy suffering on this loop!

WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE RIDER IN WORLD CYCLING RIGHT NOW?

Easy. Peter Sagan. A great character on and off the bike.

IF WE GAVE YOU \$500 TO SPEND IN A BIKE SHOP. HOW WOULD YOU SPEND IT?

I'd put it towards a power meter. I feel this would be a great investment.

PHILLIP JENKINS

FIRST BIKE?

When I was in primary school it was a 24-inch Malvern Star. But when I wanted to start riding as a 30-year old nondescript thing I

I traded that up for a blue Tomassini which, 25 years ago, I put aside for a Colnago C40.

While I have other bikes, it's still my favourite.

CAMPAGNOLO 12-SPEED?

I'm an Italophile, so as a dedicated Campagnolo user, anything they produced would be supported by me. I even have their corkscrew.

BEST RIDE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST?

It used to be our early Black Mountain ride on Thursdays. It's spectacular through winter when, as you go over Black Mountain, you see Mount Cooroora and Tinbeerwah in the distance. Now I really enjoy the Noosa-Mooloolaba return ride on Fridays.

FAVOURITE RIDER RIGHT NOW?

Today it's Rohan Dennis. I hope he keeps the Pink Jersey at the Giro (alas, he didn't - Ed).

\$500 TO SPEND IN A BIKE SHOP?

Clothing. You have to look sharp.

OWEN MACPHILLAMY

FIRST BIKE?

Can't remember my first bike, but I did fall off it a lot. The first one I remember was a 20" GT MTB, while the first bike I bought myself was a Shogun – the closest I've been to a real steel bike.

"... A LOOP THAT TAKES IN COOTHARABA AND THE KIN KIN RANGE is always a nice couple of hours."



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CAMPAGNOLO 12-SPEED?

It's great to see, but not because we need more gears. It proves that passion for the sport and R&D is still strong within the bike industry. The other refinements – better downshift paddle and direct mount brakes for wider tyres – mean the tech people are listening to current trends.

BEST RIDE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST?

Tough one. With the Peaks Challenge training rides I organised last year, loops starting and finishing in Palmwoods or Landsborough were always popular. Close to home, a loop that takes in Cootharaba and the Kin Kin range is always a nice couple of hours. For a bunch ride out of Noosa, the occasional 'new' Saturday bunch loop (<https://www.strava.com/activities/1411288967>) is amazing, a mix of hinterland lumps and flats with the sun rising behind you.

FAVOURITE RIDER RIGHT NOW?

Peter Sagan. Here is a guy that clearly loves riding his bike, is an entertainer and puts in the time behind the scenes



“I’m an Italophile, so as a dedicated Campagnolo user, ANYTHING THEY PRODUCED WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY ME. I even have their corkscrew.”

to make what he does look just easy enough.

\$500 TO SPEND IN A BIKE SHOP?

Two new helmets. I'd have change from the first one, so might as well get two.

TOBY HOOD

FIRST BIKE?
Recco Traveller.

CAMPAGNOLO 12-SPEED?

It's an advancement that isn't really necessary, but companies are always looking for a point of difference.

BEST RIDE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST?

Palmwoods–Montville climb. When I'm on this climb it's always before sunrise and when the sun comes up, the views are spectacular.

FAVOURITE RIDER RIGHT NOW?

Tom Dumoulin, he's the epitome of Dutch heritage, tough. His performances where it would be better suited to a 62kg greyhound are outstanding. A great all-rounder.

\$500 TO SPEND IN A BIKE SHOP?

1. Perfect fitting road shoes, a really important part of your cycling experience as an ill-fitting shoe will cause you no end of discomfort on any ride.
2. New handlebar tape, because when was the last time you replaced your handlebar tape? Fresh is best!

JULES EMBLIN

FIRST BIKE?
An original Bianchi Celeste (steel).

CAMPAGNOLO 12-SPEED?

Why not?!

BEST RIDE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST?

Hinterland, west Cooroy, Mary Valley area, Cooran, Kin Kin and home via Dr Pages Road into Boreen Point and back through Coorobah and Tewantin.

FAVOURITE RIDER RIGHT NOW?

Let's choose a girl, our local Shara Gillow.

\$500 TO SPEND IN A BIKE SHOP?

New shoes. **BA**



Jules Emblin



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