



BIKES OF THE RIDE OFFICE

THESE VOX POPULI PAGES WHERE PEOPLE GET TO TALK about their bikes, what they like and dislike about them, why they ride and more are always popular. So to mark the 10th year of *RIDE Cycling Review* we decided to subject our staff members to the same questions thrown at the usual candidates for what had been known as Bikes From The Bunch... until now. This instalment heralds a new notion: Bikes From The Office – what do we ride, how far do we go and what have we learned?

It's only coincidental that, of the five machines featured, three are Cannondales but each has its own story and personality. To many outsiders a bike is considered just a piece of equipment used to get you from A to B and back again, but there's so much more to it. Even if it is ridden rarely, the right bike will earn its place in the family home. Consider it art, many people do. Why else would we go to such extremes as finding the right colour for bar tape or tyres to make sure it suits the overall package?

Go for a ride anywhere in Australia early on a Saturday morning and you soon realise how popular this sport has become in recent years. Participation is at an all-time high despite the negative headlines that are generated by stupid cheats at the elite end of the spectrum. If reader reaction is anything to go by, its race coverage that gets people interested but few then transfer this enthusiasm to competition.

It's a social scene more than a training bout for most of the riders pedalling along Beach Road in Melbourne or hanging out at Bar Coluzzi in Sydney. As I've been told many times while conducting the interviews for these pages, cycling is a great way to escape the pressures of modern life, get exercise and meet new friends. Conversation isn't too much of a strain while riding and sufficient distances can be covered to ensure that each outing is an exploration revealing details you don't notice while speeding past inside the shell of a car.

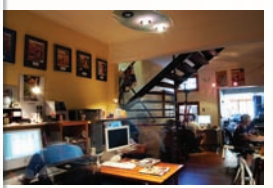
My cycling career really began with BMX when I lived in the Netherlands in the early 1980s. I took my beloved 20-inch back to Australia and raced for 10 years. It's been a constant progression ever since and although I never ride as much as I'd like, I've found new inspiration to saddle up for adventure.

Riding with my son Louis has been a sensational experience. He'll soon have outgrown the WeeRide seat that's attached to one bike in my rather humble collection. From the cheshire grin that emerges if I suggest we go for a pedal, I believe he's caught the bug. He has a lot of cycling ahead of him and that's something I'll support and nurture.

The nature of my job means that I hear many examples of how cycling has changed lives. There are times when I feel bombarded by it, and I'm often frustrated by it, but whenever I get any spare time instinct takes hold and I grab a bike.

I will never win the Tour de France but I know "riding is my special gift, my chiefest sole delight". Bikes will come and go but the passion will always remain the same.

ROB ANNOLD



ROB
PUBLISHER
AGE: 37
WEIGHT: 72kg
HEIGHT: 177cm

THE BIKE >>> "Old faithful. Cannondale's special edition CAAD7 Black Lightning has been my bike for a few years now although I ride it rarely. When I do, I love it! It was originally a test bike; it's number 156 of a run of 300 to celebrate some anniversary – I can't remember what, the company's 25th birthday perhaps – so it's a collectable. I liked it and just never returned it. After about 10 months, a bill arrived...

"It's an all-aluminium frame and has a slight dent on the down tube that I've come to like because it's so mild and, to me, it adds a bit of character. The wheels are the original set, special-edition Campagnolo Neutrons that ooze style. Low profile rims, razor sharp bladed spokes and a simple design will all stand the test of time. Pedal options have come and gone – I've tried them all, trust me, and after years of using Speedplay, I'm now back with Shimano Dura-Ace. The other amendments worth mentioning are the Nokon cables, seat and old-school titanium post.

"I've ridden a lot of bikes over the years. I've liked many of them but haven't invested in any purely because there's no need. For a while if a bike got a little dirty, I sent it back.

"The testing routine is fun but I think it's important to have a break once in a while and ride something that's totally familiar. The 'dale is good for that but I can feel a purchase happening again soon. I put in a bid for the Ducati (*RIDE* #35) because it is something special. Badged "01" it was the first off the Italian production line, its graphics suited my sensibilities and it handled like it was on rails. It felt fast, looked great but came in limited supply. I grew tired of negotiations and waiting.

"The latest love is the Scapin (*p.188*). This is the 39th bike I've tested for *RIDE* and again it has that certain something about it that appeals to me. It's classic... but chances are it too will be returned to the distributor and I'll continue to ride this wave of constant supply for a few more years yet."

THE GROUPSET >>> "Campag Record graces the 'dale. It was the first example of black callipers for this ensemble as they were specially made for the Black Lightning. They are not the best brakes in the world but the unique nature appeals to me so I won't ever swap them. I believe Shimano's shifting is more efficient and the braking better but I usually opt for Campagnolo because... well, mainly because I can get comfy on the levers which is something I fail to do with Shimano."

KILOMETRE COUNT >>> "Not a lot on this bike these days. It's sad but true. Most of my riding is done with Louis (*right*) but I savour the times when I have a few uninterrupted hours in the saddle without the pressure of other commitments. There was a time when I would do over 350km a week – most of it as part of a commute – but that's a distant memory! I now walk to the office – it's 350 metres from home – so I can get in at least 3.5km of exercise per week. The more I ride, the less grumpy I am. On the bike it's my time. I enjoy the solitude but then 'Whitey', 'Brownie' and a few other colourful characters return from Europe and cycling is a good way to catch up."

GOOD POINTS >>> "It's my bike. It fits. It's cool."

BAD POINTS >>> "It does get dirty. But I have staff..."

MISCELLANEOUS >>> "It started with a dragster, moved to BMX, then road, MTB and all else in between. I ride bikes and love it. Always have done and always will. It's my life."



CAM
OFFICE MANAGER
AGE: 30
WEIGHT: 58kg
HEIGHT: 166cm

THE BIKE >>> "This is a Surly Pacer frame made from 4130 double-butted chromoly. It was purchased as a frameset and immediately sent to Greenspeed in Melbourne. It's a company that makes recumbents; they are also the agent for S&S couplings, the silver things on the top and down tubes.

"Greenspeed cut the frame in half, so it could be folded into a suitcase. I had wonderful visions of travelling all over the world with my bicycle and I wanted to avoid airline charges. Despite my intentions, I've never travelled with it except for one trip home to New Zealand... it's nice to know I can again.

"Harry The Welder did the cutting and I asked him to surprise me with the colour. I'm happy with how it turned out.

"The singlespeed has been unreal through winter. I had to persist for the first two weeks because I'd grown accustomed to gears and the return trip home is all uphill which tested my resolve. After about the first month, I didn't think about shifting at all. I feel like I'm lacking nothing with this bike."

THE GROUPSET >>> "It's not a standard ensemble. I realised that my travel would be more limited than initially intended and that's when the project changed. The bike became an über-commuter. Simplicity was of utmost importance as was a limited maintenance outlook for the build. I started with an SKF German-made bottom bracket which has special bearings that allegedly last 10 years without servicing.

"Then came FSA cranks which have a 39-tooth chainring that connects to a 15-tooth Surly cog. The brake callipers are Dura-Ace because I had a spare set floating around. I found the Soma brake levers while searching for the cranks. The shape is a mirror copy of Campagnolo levers.

"When the commuting project was rolled out, I decided I'd like to enjoy riding with my hands on the bar tops every now and then, which is a risk given the traffic in Sydney and the distance from the brake levers. This problem was solved with Salsa cyclo-cross levers. The cable runs through a small, bar-mounted lever and creates a new anchoring point. They have the wrong leverage ratio, so they are a bit grabby... but I'd still recommend it. They are the best addition to the bike."

KILOMETRE COUNT >>> "Most of my riding is done on my commute which is a 34km return trip. When I joined *RIDE*, I was initially disappointed by my new commute as my old ride to work was twice the distance. But riding through the city and seeing the 6.00am all-night pub crawlers or being in the centre of town when the streets are bare make up for the distance difference. And now I try harder to get out for a ride on the weekends than I did before."

GOOD POINTS >>> "It's so simple."

BAD POINTS >>> "The freehub is very worn and parts are hard to come by. Also, my tyres are at 100psi and if the roads are poorly surfaced, steel is not so real. It hurts my bottom."

MISCELLANEOUS >>> "My leg speed has improved a lot since using this. The cruel side of a single-speed road bike is that, after you've busted your balls climbing, you really can't enjoy the descent like you can on a geared road bike. It's either sit up and coast, or spin like a hamster in a wheel.

"I still covet other people's bikes but I've reigned in my spending over the years although I think some of my friends – and fiancée – would probably disagree with this."



LES
JOURNALIST
AGE: 25
WEIGHT: 74kg
HEIGHT: 176cm

THE BIKE >>> "This is a Cannondale System-Six that I bought on Melbourne Cup Day in 2006. After having talked to Dave Heaven about the bike – and his experiences at the launch last year in Bedford – I thought it'd serve my needs.

"I used to ride a Cinelli, but I can't remember the model. It was an aluminium frame with a carbon fork and seatstays; that was good but one thing that attracted me to the new bike is that it has an aluminium rear and a carbon front.

"I also remember reading the article about the launch of the Six-13 that Rob wrote before I started working at *RIDE* and it impressed me how the company works with the teams it supports and how they make that partnership work.

"If I had to nominate a replacement in the form of any bikes I've reviewed at *RIDE*, I think the Anatomic (*p.192*) would get the nod if I could afford to buy it in the spec it came. It was a very complete package and it was fantastic to be on."

THE GROUPSET >>> "This is a real mix. I have Dura-Ace brake callipers, SRAM levers and derailleurs, and Cannondale Si cranks and bottom bracket. I chose this because, again, I got some feedback from one of the guys in the office who went to the launch last year. Some would argue that it's a bit of a gamble to buy a product that was relatively untested in the field but, from my experiences, the Force ensemble ticks all the right boxes. It's a really reliable groupset.

"There's trim in the small chainring but it's limited. That's something I've been told that SRAM has addressed. In terms of compatibility, it's also beneficial for me. It works well with both a Shimano and Campagnolo cassette, which is handy because I'm in a situation where I test different wheels... to be able to put them all on one bike with a standard set-up helps give me a sense of how they perform."

KILOMETRE COUNT >>> "If I had to average everything out in a week, I'd do about 200km; four rides of about 50km. I'm too lazy to get out of bed most of the time. Most of my riding is done on my own. I like to get out around the world-famous Bondi beach; I honestly don't understand why more riders in Sydney don't take advantage of that area – it's beautiful! For the proximity to the CBD, the traffic is relatively tame if you time it right. Perhaps one of the reasons that it's not a popular destination is that there are a lot of hills."

GOOD POINTS >>> "I changed from a Fi'zi:k Arione saddle to this Selle SMP Stratos because of the massive cut-out in the middle. It instantly alleviates pressure on your perineal area. I'm aware of some health issues and I decided that I'd rather take preventative measures... in case too much time in the saddle does any damage to my body in that area. Ah, and I think everyone knows what I'm talking about."

BAD POINTS >>> "It creaks like a bitch. There's not an issue of reliability but the front end does groan a lot. I'm working on finding a remedy but it can be a little disconcerting."

MISCELLANEOUS >>> "I started cycling a few years ago. I'd always appreciated it but never had enough dough to get into it. I worked hard after university, got my first decent bike and just went from there. It's interesting to see how far I can push myself. When I achieve more than I thought possible, it's extremely satisfying. It also gives me a lot of freedom. I'm never restricted to playing times or access to fields."



SHANE
DESIGNER
AGE: 34
WEIGHT: 78kg
HEIGHT: 175cm

THE BIKE >>> "It's an Eddy Merckx 3XM carbon frame and it looks fast. I like the finish, that it's clear and you can see the fibres underneath the lacquer and the orange also appeals because, to me, it says "Eddy" without even having to look at the decals. The heritage of his team bikes when he was racing is the reason for this. It's a 53cm frame that gives me an effective 54cm top tube which is the perfect length for me. I'm built like a *tyrannosaurus rex*: huge legs and little arms.

"I used to own a Ridley Damocles which was too long. Apart from the size suiting me, this frame feels more agile than the last one. It gives a lot of feedback and I find that I can make small adjustments in turns and it's still very steady. On the Merckx I always feel like I push it as far as I'm prepared to but still am able to pull it back and not lose control."

THE GROUPSET >>> "This is Campagnolo Centaur. Before this I had Record... the cheaper group performs as well as the previous incarnation of the high-end ensemble. The new bottom bracket feels strong and, unlike the previous one I rode, it does *not* creak. I did remedy the noise complaints with the last bike but it took a bit of work to find out what the cause was; the wrong kind of grease had been used between the aluminium bottom bracket shell and titanium cups.

"The thumb shifter on Centaur is angled more than the old Record option and I think this makes it more comfortable.

"The reason I have this groupset instead of transferring the old one across is that I want to eventually put SRAM on. I rode the Force group when it was released and if RED is half as good, then it's bound to be fantastic. Ergonomically I like the size and feel of the Campag and SRAM levers the most."

KILOMETRE COUNT >>> "It depends a lot on how hard my boss is working me. If all goes according to plan, I'd get out for about 200km per week. I ride with a bunch of between three and 10. I rarely go on my own; I like riding by myself but I find it more motivating with other people because I have made the commitment, otherwise I might stay at home and sleep.

"I'd say I ride more now that I work at *RIDE* but that's come more with finding a group that I'm comfortable with. They're not pretentious at all. It's a good mix."

GOOD POINTS >>> "That it fits me perfectly. I don't think anything else is more important. This bike looks great but I thought the same of my last one... the most important point is that I feel better on this than I have on any other bike.

"The tyres also suit the bike perfectly. These are Conti's GP4000 and, for Sydney – with the amount of glass on the roads – I reckon they're the only tyres to have."

BAD POINTS >>> "The cranks stand out a bit because of the polished silver colour; they do the job but they'd look better in black carbon. It's an aesthetic complaint only. The look is important when I'm considering the parts. I love this shape of seat but I might change it if one was released in a colour that suited the bike a little more."

MISCELLANEOUS >>> "I started at *RIDE* in 2004. Cycling is something I like doing and although I'm surrounded by the sport during the working day, it feels quite separate. There's no obligation to ride because of where I work; it's that thing – once you've been a cyclist for a while, you start to feel like you've missed something on the days you don't ride."



LOUIS
SON OF PUBLISHER
AGE: 2.5
WEIGHT: 14kg
HEIGHT: 94cm

THE BIKE >>> "My *big* bike! I go with Daddy. We go *whoosh!* Up and down. And faster, faster! Yay!"

(Dad: This is the first MTB ever featured in this section. It comes with a catch, or rather an extra seat, added weight and the great bonus of a fabulous riding companion. He may not pedal but having Louis on board makes my weekend jaunts around Sydney so much fun. The first time we rode, he was a year old and since then it's become a weekend tradition.

I attached the WeeRide to a Cannondale I got years ago as a grown-up's BMX. It now has Hutchinson City Slick tyres and old-school Shimano DX style pedals mimicking the best platform pedal shape in history. I had wanted to change the saddle from a shape that bruised me to the Alianté for a year before finally doing so this spring. I'm happy now. Alas, Louis is growing fast and our days on board together are limited.

The child seat was sent as a demo. It heralds an awakening. Every time we ride, people ask me about it. It's immediately appealing to anyone who has a child. It is standards approved, has somewhere for small hands, foot holders which put the little man in roughly the same position as the rider and straps to keep him in place. The only alteration was to cross the harness at the rear so they don't slip off Louis' shoulders.

I've been told hundreds of times by fellow parents that if the child is on the rear, they tend to fall asleep and it's difficult to engage them. Having Louis up front means that there is a constant chatter. Even before he uttered words, I could lean in and ask him to point out objects; it started simple – blue car, big dog, tree, red light.

He now talks to me as we ride. We have conversations about our journey or just chat. I recited Mulga Bill's Bicycle once and he laughed along. 'Riding is my special gift,' I told him, 'my chiefest sole delight...' And he said, 'Ha-ha-ha! Faster!'

The seat comes with a steel brace that bolts onto the head tube and seatpost. The HeadShock suspension works well and means I don't worry too much if I jump off a gutter or if the road is rough. I'll tell him, 'Hold on; bump coming up.'

Louis has grown up around bikes and it's amazing to see him adapt. He now leans into corners and he's starting to eye off the brakes and gears, but it's a stretch to reach them.)

THE GROUPSET >>> "Brakes go stop! Pedal Dadda, up and down. Wheels go round and round." (It's crucial to know that I can get us out of a sticky situation and the Coda V-brakes are excellent. It's difficult to stand on the pedals, so the wide range of gears helps. We've been up very steep hills and never need to step off and push. Louis has started to mock me though; at the top of a climb he now starts panting like a dog and when we get home and his Mum asks about our ride, he repeats it... there's *no* hiding bad form when he's around.)

KILOMETRE COUNT >>> "*Big* ride with Dadda!" (It's not rare to have adventures that last up to five hours. Don't know the distances but every outing is packed with exploration; we've been all over Sydney and are still finding new playgrounds.)

GOOD POINTS >>> "Bye Mama!" (She doesn't ride with us.)

BAD POINTS >>> "Bye Mama!" (She doesn't ride with us.)

MISCELLANEOUS >>> "Louis' big bike. Check tyres. Pack bag. Banana, drink, sunscreen. Helmet on. Strap, click! Hands up. Feet in. Go on green. Faster Dadda, faster!"