

NICE BIKES

To whet a few appetites and perhaps push a few over the edge, here are the most recent bikes to leave our doors. Mostly customs and all with happy owners

Nick O'Day – Sydney
Custom **Baum Ristretto Ti** with Record, Selle Italia Signo seat, FSA K Force seat post to allow lateral offset, Fulcrum Racing 3 wheels, Deda Deep bars, Deda Newton stem.



Kate Roberts – Sydney
Custom **Teschner Race Pro 650c** with Ultegra, Easton EC 50 seat post, Pro stem, Modolo Venus bars, Easton Circuit 650c wheels

Trevor Coward
Perth W.A.

Custom **Seven Axiom Race** with SRAM Force, Selle Italia Pro Link seat, Zipp carbon bar and stem, Zipp 404 wheels, Ritchey WCS carbon seat post





Colin Evans
Auckland N.Z.

Custom **Baum Espresso Ti** with Record CT

Kevin Black –
Sydney

Colnago Cristallo with Dura Ace, Arione seat, FSA K Force seat post, FSA 115 stem and FSA RD 200 bar, Dura Ace wheel set.



Beer Reviews:

I enjoy a drink but am not a big drinker. My simple philosophy is that given how little I drink; 2 – 3 beers, or the equivalent in wine, every week, it makes no sense to drink anything but quality. As many of you know, I think that life is too short to drink the impostors that often pass for beer. Here is a brief report on a few 'real' beers that came my way over the break.

HY Super Beer.

An Italian beer made under licence in Belgium? Well that's what the label says. Packaged in champagne bottle with cork and foil, at 11% this is one of the strongest ales available. There is so much yeast floating around that your glass looks like a lava lamp, but this in no way detracts from the taste which is magnificent. Reminiscent of the Trappist Westmalle Tripel but with more flavour again. One to sip and enjoy, but not on your own.

Reissdorf Kolsch

The antithesis of the HY. A subtle beer of modest alcoholic content with little discernible bitterness. Not memorable but worth trying for a different take on a real beer.

Murray Pale Ale and Murray Blonde Ale

Murray are a new entrant into the beer market and are located at Taylors' Arm (population 50) on the N.S.W Mid North Coast near Taree. Great beers! A layer of yeast sits in the bottom of both bottles so that you know they are the real deal, but they pour clear except for the last few drops. The Pale Ale is their answer to Little Creatures and is better if that is possible. The Blonde Ale is also very good. Not expensive and highly recommended.

Duvel

Means devil in Flemish and is supposed to be one of the worlds' great beers. It's not bad, in fact it's good but not THAT good. Maybe it is fresher in Belgium or perhaps its 8.5% can only be appreciated in the land of it's birth where the rain is horizontal, the wind is strong and somewhere out there is a bunch of sodden, freezing bike riders.

Weihenstephaner Bayrisch Dunkel

Weihenstephan claims to be the oldest brewery in the world. I am not a lover of dark beers (which is what Dunkel means) as rule but have been known to make exceptions and this is one of them. A couple of Bavarians I know say that for 6 – 8 months of the year, Bavaria is a miserable place. Cold, snowy, overcast, depressing. Yet they are happy people. This beer could be the reason. A great beer which somehow manages to taste like honey without the sweetness. As good a version of a dark lager as you will get. Their Pilsener also betters anything the Czechs who invented the style can do!

Westmalle Tripel

A very good example of a Trappist ale. Very pale in colour, unfiltered but only moderately cloudy, 9% alcohol and flavour, flavour, flavour. One to sip, not quaff.

Bright Dubbel

We were down in Bright recently while the Alpine Classic was on and the finish line area was interesting. There were plenty of riders with slurred speech tripping over their bikes and each other and generally getting in each others way. I thought, "Yeah, I know it is 200kms with 55 kms of climbing (only counting the major stuff), but gee, why is everyone such a mess?"

Then I saw the queue into Bright Brewery where the tippie of choice on the day seemed to be 500ml glasses of their 8.5%, twice fermented Belgian style strong ale. Just the thing for dehydrated and tired cyclists after a big day out! I tried one; not as good as the Flemish variety but close and a worthy try. Check the place out next Alpine Classic as their other 3 beers are around 4.5% and a 'safer' bet after pretending to be a climber.

Long Distance Visitors:

We are getting an increasing number of people for Fits from distant places. Thank you to :

Hans Dusink – Melbourne
James MacPherson - Gunnedah
Rob Roseby – Alice Springs
Milford McArthur – Hobart
Steve Wages – California
Andy Bennett – Boulder Colorado
Stuart Hastings – Melbourne
Susan Johnson – Lennox Head

Damian Harris – England
for making the trip.



Mt Hotham 1700m

As mentioned before, I was in Bright while the Alpine Classic was on. I went down with Margaret and the kids to give a speech about principles of positioning at the Bright Boot Camp (www.bright.boot.camp.com) which went over fairly well. (if anyone wants a transcript – pedalpushers@bigpond.com with Bright Speech in the subject line) I rode the next day with Boot Campers to the top of Mt Hotham and back and learnt several lessons.

1st lesson: I didn't know that Australia had any 30 km climbs but I do now. The first 13km is solid with one section of 6 – 700 metres called the The Meg that was off the seat stuff in 39 x 25. The middle 10 kms don't deserved to be called a hill as speed for that part was 28 – 35 km/h. This only serves to soften up the unwary as the last 7kms is ridiculously steep; in places over 10%. I got dropped by the front 3 skinny whippets several times but kept scrambling back on until about a km from the top and that was it for me. No polka dot jersey, but as a bloke whose major forms of racing are crits and shorter TT's, I was chuffed to have got to the top in touch with the skinny young blokes.

2nd lesson: Wearing summer jersey and knicks felt fine on the way up but after 10 mins of 4 degrees at the top it was a bit coolish, whereupon the 'team' car came up and disgorged everyone's warm gear for the descent. Well almost everyone. One dope didn't bring any because he believed the weather forecast and had heard the war stories of last years Alpine Classic in 42 C degree heat!

3rd lesson: Newspaper down the front of your jersey is useless at 4 C and 90+ km/h! Not that it doesn't keep the wind off your chest, it does, but I felt like I was getting brain freeze and pulled over and took the newspaper from under my jersey and stuffed it under my helmet and continued.

4th lesson: In these conditions and after getting hit by a passing shower, it is impossible to ride a 30 kms descent at any speed above 45km/h without shaking uncontrollably and needing 3 or 4 bites at every corner. No guard rail, sheer drops on one or both sides, so 45km/h it was.

5th lesson: Campag brake blocks will last more than 30 kms when constantly applied. I had to get off 3 times and get out of the wind and into the sun to hug myself for 10 minutes or so at a time to warm up. It took me an hour and 20 something minutes to get up the damn hill and nearly as long to get down it.

6th lesson: Even at the bottom I was so cold that after I had thawed out enough to stop pedaling in squares, I rode back to Bright at between 38 and 45 km/h to stay warm. I drifted off mentally and didn't realise where I was until I got to the FAR side of Bright and had to back track several kms to where we were staying.

So the message is for anyone tempted to ride in the Victorian Alps is take warm clothing no matter what the weather forecast.

American Classic J post

Many of you have heard me say ad infinitum that hardest positioning problem to solve is where the rider drops or rotates forward one hip. Many of you drop one hip to varying degrees. Simon Kessler (www.simonsayscycling.com), a gent who works for American Classic in the States was kind enough to send me a sample to play with. One feature of the J post is that the seat can be tilted several degrees to right or left which raises one hip and lowers the other. Jayson Austin mentioned before, has a long history of right hip drop and attendant low back pain and right hamstring niggles. Never debilitating but always there at a niggly level. I fitted the J post to Jaysons' road bike, raising his right hip and fitted a small shim under his right cleat to partially compensate for the increased distance that the right leg now had to reach. The result – end of back pain and hamstring origin tenderness and an extra 40 or so watts on the SRM! Supercoach (Pete Montford who is masterminding the record attempt) couldn't believe this and so checked the calibration of the SRM's. The 382 watts average output isn't bad for a 63 kilo guy. Actually, it's better than not bad, it's world class. Forza Jayson!

"I feel lilke I finally have 2 legs" is Jaysons' take on this. These posts have only just been manufactured and I am trying to secure some now. Plenty of current and future customers would be better off with them, so I will keep you informed.

Here is the next installment of the book of anecdotes:

20. A tale of two (non) sprinters.

It's time to meet Bill and Simon. Bill is the same age as me and was for years a training mate and friendly rival in local races. Bill is Mr Slow Twitch. On long training rides Bill would spend the first hour complaining "Where's the fire?" "Why are we going so fast?" "I thought this was a training ride" etc. You would never see him do a turn for the first couple of hours. By the third hour Bill would be rolling through regularly and by the fourth hour I and others would be asking him to get off the front and slow down. He would be asking why and protesting that he had warmed up now and wanted to get on with it.

Bill didn't have a sprint. In local races, if he made it into a break of five, he was a sure bet to get fifth. If there were eight in the break he would finish seventh or eighth. In a field sprint he would finish in the middle of the bunch. I'm sure that you all know similar type riders. One day he was complaining to Derek and I that he just wasn't the sprinter type. Without being a super sprinter, I won a fair few local races in those days in the sprint and knew that there was more to sprinting well than just sheer speed. I asked Bill when was the last time he had done any sprint training. His reply was that as sprinting wasn't a strength of his, he didn't see the point. My answer to that was that we all knew that sprinting wasn't his strength, but that was exactly why he should put some time into it.

I used to have a sprint training regime in those days that I did once or twice a week. There was no science to it, just a bit of commonsense. After a solid warm up I would do rolling start efforts from 25 km/h. The first effort would be on a slight downhill in 42 X 15 for 200 metres and was all about rpm. I would then change up to the 53 and the next 200 metre effort, about 500 metres later, was on a slight uphill and was all about monsterring the bike to get it going from a slow speed in a big gear as quickly as possible. I would then cruise and recover for 3 kms and then do the same double interval. I had found that this really worked for me because it developed both leg speed and strength. The small group who did it with me had found much the same thing. Normally, the second set was the fastest and once a set was completed where terminal

speed dropped by more than 2 km/h from the fastest I had done on the day, I would warm down and go home. The reasoning being that I was training for speed, not to go slow. Once I was too tired to manage real speed, it was time to call it a day.

Bill came along for 6 weeks and the improvement was remarkable. In a six man break he was now getting seconds and thirds and he had to be watched. If you did anything silly or made a mistake, he would roll you. So Bill strengthened his biggest weakness and his results improved markedly.

Now to Simon. Simon was in his early 20's and lived on his bike. He had run his first marathon at 12 years of age and came from an athletic family. He was one of those blokes who develop the mindset that if they don't ride at least 100kms a day they'll somehow lose fitness overnight. He loved training and racing. Racing wasn't something he was good at though. We all become good at what we train at, and Simon, knowingly or not, became one of those one speed riders who can go all day at quite a respectable pace, but that is the only pace they have. He would have been the fittest rider in A grade at Heffron Park in those days, but could never get into the breakaway because he lacked the acceleration to match it when the attacks were coming.

He was so bad in this regard that Derek gave him a great piece of advice. Derek told him to attack off the line every week. That way he would be out in front for half the race which wasn't a problem as he was so fit. When the break eventually formed they would catch Simon, who by default was now in the break. It sounds crazy but it worked a treat and his results improved, but it was still a foregone conclusion that he would not only get last in the break but would be 50 metres back in the charge to the line.

Derek and I decided that we were going to take him sprint training and Simon agreed. His brother Tim had the same genes but wasn't in love with the miles, miles, miles, Simon style training. Tim had a very respectable turn of speed in the gallop and had won a few races. We knew that somewhere in Simon lurked similar abilities. They just needed to be brought out.

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So Simon agreed to meet Derek and I in Centennial Park for some sprint training. I drilled into him that he needed to show up fresh. There is no point training for speed unless you are jumping out of your skin. If you want to train to go slow, perform sprint training when you are tired. If you want to train for speed, you need to do sprint training when fresh.

He said that he agreed with all of this and understood completely and a date was set.

On the day, Derek and I thought that for starters we would have a three man train. We would nominate a finish point, wind it up with Simon on the back, when the first man cracked, the second would come around and then Simon would try and come around that person as the line approached and the second man faltered.

On the first run through, Simon finished 30 metres behind. Derek and I put our heads together and felt that we were being too hard on him, that we needed to knock about 5 km/h off our top speed for these intervals. We did and this time Simon was 20 metres back at the finish. Frustrated, we tried again at about 45 km/h and Simon was still there on the back but could not come around the second man. He was struggling to hold the wheel.

At the end of this, I said to him "Simon, what's going on?"

"Are you fresh?"

"I can't believe that you could be fresh and not be able to ride above 45 km/h in a sprint effort"

"Steve, of course I am fresh. I did a slow ride yesterday and didn't hurt myself at all"

"Yeah, how far was this slow ride?"

"230 kms. But I took it easy"

Derek and I accepted defeat gracefully and shelved any further plans to turn Simon into even an average sprinter.

Happy Holidays



Quiz Answer

In the 1985 World's road race, little known U.S. pro Jonathan Boyer (the Chris Horner of his day) in his final year as a pro had a near unassailable lead as the race entered the last kilometer. The bunch were watching each other closely as no one wanted Boyer to win, but no one wanted to be the bunny that dragged the bunch up to him either. Boyers' teammate and previous room mate, Greg Lemond took a flyer and jumped out of the bunch and went after Boyer. Unfortunately, he took the premier road sprinter of the day, Giuseppe Saronni, with him.

The bunch had no choice but to charge after them and Boyer was swamped, finishing 6th and missing his final chance for glory. Lemond didn't win either and had to settle for second after being comprehensively rolled near the line by Saronni. Boyer never forgave Lemond for this episode.

As a post script, Boyer was asked on his return to America what the thought of RAAM, the 5000km endurance race across continental U.S. His reply was along the lines of "It's not a bike race, it's a go-without -sleepathon". He was challenged by the best ultra distance riders of the day to take part, sleep 8 hours a night and see where he finished.

Boyer took up the challenge, was behind by more than 200 kms after a day and a half, got his 8 hours every night, hit the front on the final day and silenced his critics by winning RAAM! A great and little known American rider.

Boyer was the first U.S. rider to ride the Tour de France and rode 5 editions, finishing as high as 12th. He had 49 professional victories.