



G'day to all and welcome to July. There's a bit happening this month. I believe there is a longish race on in France with a bit of historical interest. And no, it isn't an Audax qualifier for PBP. I was in Singapore last month positioning some people from ANZA and a report follows. As well, there are a few new bits and bobs to mention.

Singapore Report

ANZA is the Australian and New Zealand Association. The pic of my ugly mug shows what an ANZA jersey looks like. Membership is not limited to those nationalities and they are an umbrella organisation for (mainly) ex pats in Singapore who are involved in sport. Cycling and triathlon are a major ANZA focus. Thanks to the efforts of Jean-Francois Torelle and Mike Foster (ex SCC Mike Foster), I spent a week there positioning ANZA riders and drinking Belgian beer.

I would have thought the latter activity was optional, but when hosted by Mike and J-F it is mandatory.

I would like to thank all at ANZA for making me welcome and getting into the spirit of things at the talk at Brewerkz. This meant an audience as well oiled as I was 2 ½ hours into a 'short' speech and Q & A session. (When I asked for fluids; long speeches are thirsty work; J-F would only hand me Trappist beer). That means that the ANZA audience and I probably made sense to each other. I'm not certain of this as I don't have a clear recollection and managed to get lost on the way back to Mike's place. Working like this is tough. With a little arm twisting, I drank more Belgian beer in a week than I would normally drink in 3 months and had an encounter with a snake. If there is a next time in Singapore, I will leave beer and local wildlife alone.

A long standing record was broken. I met an ANZA cyclist with the most rearward seat position I've come across. Ever. His seat nose was 161mm behind the bottom bracket. Coincidentally, he was riding one of the most beautiful frames that I have seen.

I moved his seat forward by a greater distance than I have ever had to do in my 20 years in the bike biz.

So a large thank you to all at ANZA. A special thank you to Ben Distel (Ben is the gent standing next to the good looking gent bloke) and Alex Bok of the Bike Boutique www.bikeboutique.com who gave me space and a well equipped workshop to work in. And a very special thanks to Mike and Sam Foster for putting me up and to Jean-Francois and Henny Torelle for organising the trip. And the beer!



Campag clothing

It is the wrong time of year but we have a large number of Campagnolo summer jerseys reduced from \$130 to \$88. Assos type quality but not price. Also at the right price are Campagnolo socks, under vests, bib and brace knicks and winter jackets in a wide range of sizes. These prices will stay until late October.

Parlee Framesets

Have a look at www.parleecycles.com. They have been making custom carbon frames longer than most and we are now the Sydney end of their custom frame operation. For more info, email us. We have a 59cm Z1 in the shop tipping the scales at 6.3kg complete. More custom carbon frames on the way; stay tuned.

Biomac shoes

www.biomac.biz

These are selling well. Some of you have asked is it possible to modify existing shoes so that you can try the midfoot cleat positioning before you put serious money towards the lightest shoes on the planet and the only ones designed for midfoot cleat position. The cautious answer is yes. I have modified a couple of pairs for would be test pilots and can do it in most cases. Not every shoe is viable for every pedal system though. If you want to know more about midfoot cleat position or Biomac shoes, email us to that effect.

Trainer Overview

This time of year, when darkness and winter temperatures make it that little bit harder to find the motivation to get out of bed, (unless you are in Singapore) is the ideal time to use an indoor trainer. Using an indoor trainer is a time efficient means of developing or maintaining strength and fitness. An hour spent on the trainer in the morning is probably equivalent to an hour and half or so on the road because there are no traffic light stops, no coasting down hills and no drafting behind others. For many, the only problem with using an indoor trainer is the boredom factor. Many wear their heads out before they wear their legs out. To avoid this, get on your trainer with a plan, either written down or in your head where resistance, cadence or gear changes frequently so that there is some necessity to think and boredom doesn't set in. To that end, next month I will include a couple of trainer routines given to me by Carl Paton. If you can't wait until then, email us.

Trainers are available in a variety of categories; rollers, wind, magnetic, fluid, virtual reality and scientific. What follows is brief overview of the strengths and weaknesses of each type.

Rollers:

These consist of a frame that can be fixed, or in some models, can fold up for storage. There are 3 rollers; two that bear the weight of the rear wheel and a third that the front wheel sits on. The front and second roller are linked by a rubber cord. This rubber cord allows the front roller (and hence the front wheel of the bike) to rotate as the rear wheel of the bike rotates. The gyroscopic inertia of wheels turning is what keeps you upright and rollers are the best option for improving pedaling technique. The resistance of rollers is determined by the diameter of the 3 rollers. Larger rollers equal less resistance and smaller rollers equal more resistance. Changing

gears allows resistance to be varied. Generally, rollers do not have enough resistance for strength / endurance efforts but some versions (Tacx EcoTrack) are able to have a subsidiary magnetic resistance unit attached.

Pros: Good for pedaling technique and cadence. The need to balance promotes smooth technique. Don't chew up rear tyres.

Cons: Not enough resistance for serious strength / endurance efforts but that can be

overcome with mag unit add ons.

The need to balance puts some people off but the difficulty is overstated. You can't consider yourself the real deal as a bike rider unless you can ride rollers. I can teach anyone to ride rollers in less than 10 minutes. If they have a bit of nous and their degree of structural function is halfway okay, they will be riding 'no hands' in 20 minutes. If new to rollers, use them in a hall or set them up in a doorway so that when on the bike your shoulders are level with the door jams. That way if you overbalance, you only fall a few inches to the side.

Wind Trainers:

These are a bit of a favourite of mine because wind trainers have a realistic feel to them. Just as on the road, doubling your speed means quadrupling power output. Wind trainers use a rotating fan to create resistance with a small flywheel to smooth out the feel of the pedal stroke through the dead spot. Their downside is noise. Serious efforts on a wind trainer won't impair your hearing, but they're not the best way to endear yourself to sleeping family members or neighbours. If noise isn't a problem, wind trainers are a relatively inexpensive and realistic training tool. Changing resistance is effected by changing gears.

Pros: Cheap and realistic. Don't chew up rear tyres.

Cons: Noisy and not enough resistance for strength / endurance efforts

Magnetic (Mag) Resistance Trainers:

Mag trainers use opposing pole magnets to generate resistance and a small flywheel to smooth out the feel of the trainer. Mag trainers are capable of serious resistance which in theory means they are ideal for strength / endurance efforts. In practice they can be problematic because of limited flywheel mass. Assume a rider is 80kg with a 8kg bike. That is 88kg of momentum rolling down the road which helps smooth out the dead spot in the pedal stroke. On a mag trainer, the momentum is limited to that generated by the flywheel and the rear wheel. If you do the sums, this rarely works out at more than 18 – 20 kg of momentum. What this means is that in really intense efforts, mag trainers aren't smooth at all. That said, they will keep 90% of people happy more than 90% of the time. Mag trainers come in two basic varieties; roller drive and rim drive. Roller drive mag trainers are the majority and have single roller driven mag unit and flywheel. Rim drive trainers have 2 spring loaded arms that bear on the braking surface of the rim, one of which generates resistance. Rim drive mag trainers won't wear out your rear tyre but are very jerky at high loads. Roller drive units will be hard on your rear tyre but are less jerky at high resistance levels.

Pros: Quiet and wide range of resistance. Many have handlebar mounted controls for changing resistance.

Cons: Resistance is linear; twice the speed requires twice the effort. Tend to be jerky under high loads, particularly rim drive versions. Roller drive versions are hard on rear tyres.

Fluid trainers:

These are the techno cousins of wind trainers and the resistance unit is generally an impeller in a closed unit spinning within a viscous medium, usually oil. They have the same realistic feel as wind trainers but are much quieter. Generally, the range of resistance is wider than that of a wind trainer and some have controls that allow very high resistance levels. In the early days of fluid trainers, the heat generated by the impeller within the viscous medium tended to cause pressure seals to pop and spew hot oil out over your carpet. Thankfully this is a thing of the past and fluid trainers are simple and reliable.

Pros: Quiet and realistic. Tend not to be as jerky as mag units at high resistance levels.

Cons: Relatively expensive compared to similarly featured mag trainers but generally worth the extra.

Virtual Reality Trainers:

VR trainers are the choice for those who are dedicated indoor trainer users or for those who find indoor training boring. To give an overview of one that I am familiar with, the Tacx Fortius; mount your bike to the frame which consists of a computer driven mag resistance unit and motor. The front wheel is removed and the front fork is attached to a steering frame. Put your HR monitor strap on, fit the cadence lead and hop on your bike. On screen you will be pedaling through your choice of virtual worlds, with or

without competitors. You can choose Mtb courses, road courses or a velodrome. You can choose distance, competitors (if programmed) ability, wind direction and speed and so on. On screen you will see your power output, cadence, speed, heart rate and the gradient of any hill or descent that you are on as well as distance to finish, distance competitors are ahead or behind and more. Resistance levels will change automatically depending on the gradient of the course and when you change gears. Make sure that you steer around corners and be careful not to clip another rider's wheel or you will have virtual crash and land on your virtual head and give a virtual yelp of pain.

If you are coasting down a hill, the computer monitors your speed and if necessary, the motor kicks in to propel you at a realistic speed for that gradient of virtual descent. This means that you may need to use your brakes if there is a corner at the bottom. At the end of your ride, all the statistics of the ride are available; max power, average power, max HR, average HR, average speed, elapsed time etc, etc. These can be stored if you wish and compared to other rides on the same course. Additionally, real life film can be loaded and you can ride the Tour of Flanders, idyllic Pyrenean mountains and other routes with resistance changes as the course profiles change.

Pros: Quiet, laden with features and about as much fun as you can have indoors on a bike. Tend not to chew tyres as much as normal mag units.

Cons: At the expensive end for indoor trainers.

Scientific Trainers:

These tend to have all or even more features than the VR trainers but without the VR imagery. These are the trainers for dedicated riders who want to get the best out of themselves and their available training time. They are based on mag resistance units generally but many have enough computer power to have a realistic feel and they tend not to wear out rear tyres as fast as more basic mag trainers. Many VR trainers can also fit into the scientific trainer category. A screen mounts to your handlebars and displays power, cadence, HR and a plethora of other info. Resistance can be varied by pressing up or down arrows on the computer. Optionally, resistance can be set at a fixed level meaning that in any given minute, you will have to complete the programmed amount of work. If your cadence drops, then resistance per pedal stroke increases. If your cadence rises, then resistance per pedal stroke lessens.

These types of trainers have all the bells and whistles you could possibly want to get the best out of yourself indoors. The best that I have seen is the Tacx Cosmos, though there are other brands and models that are good.

Pros: Quiet and realistic and offer a lot of features.

Cons: To get the best out of these, you need to educate yourself about training methods and principles or be prepared to. Nearly as expensive as VR trainers.

Beer reviews from Singapore

While in Singapore and being shown all the Belgian bars, I only drank beers that I hadn't previously tried. Here is a sample.

Rodenbach Grand Cru: This is an acquired taste as all lambic beers are. Lambic beers are made with medieval methods and use wild yeasts in fermentation that yield a tart, winery taste. The Grand Cru, like non vintage Champagne is a mix of old and young beers to maintain a consistent taste from year to year. Very refreshing on a hot, humid day, but probably not a regular drink. Alcohol is 7.5% Rating: Category 2

Judas: A standard Belgian amber ale that is well named as I felt a little betrayed after drinking it, in that it didn't live up to the billing given by the beer sommelier who recommended it. 7.6% alcohol. Rating Category 2

Boucanier and Kasteel: I have grouped these two together as they are VERY similar, though not from the same manufacturer. Kasteel is an abbey beer while Boucanier (Buccaneer) is not. Both are dark, sweetish beers, with little carbonation that are redolent of roasted honey. There is zero hop bitterness as the brew recipes are old enough to predate the addition of hops to beers. Both are smooth, mellow and flavoursome and it comes as quite a surprise to find that they are 11% alcohol. The beer equivalent of liqueur Muscat. Rating: Category 1

Food reviews from Singapore

At the hawker stalls \$3 Sg (\$2.50 Aud) buys dead animal, rice or noodles and vegetables. Not haute cuisine. but substantial and wholesome in the main. An extra \$1Sg gets you into a hole in the wall restaurant with table service, crockery and stainless steel cutlery. Little wonder that some abodes don't have kitchens. There are thousands of stalls and restaurants and most food is eaten 'out'.

Lanterne Rouge

Just a few reminders:

The positional tweak deal stays on. If we have positioned you 12 months ago or more and you have a new bike or need a tweak, there is a flat \$100- labour fee until the end of September.

Sincere Thanks to: (they now what for)
Dave Ojerholm, Mike Foster, Jean-Francois Torelle, Paul Kelly, Jayson Austin

See you in August.

Here is the next installment from the upcoming book of anecdotes.

3. Malcolm George

I first met Malcolm when he wandered into the shop one Friday to buy a bike. He explained that his wife was a gym junkie and eternally on his case about his training regime of Bourbon and cigarettes. He knew that he had to do something to improve his health, but hated the gym and had tried running and didn't like it either. The week before he had hired a bike for the day and loved it. The personal trainer he had recently acquired had sent him to us, telling him that for a thousand dollars (this was the late '80's) he should be able to get a bike, Look pedals, shoes and a helmet. We decided on a \$700 bike and some shoes and then I handed him over to my wife to talk about cycling clothes.

An hour and \$1800 later, he left looking like a European pro wheeling a cheap bike. He had bought the top of the line Giro helmet, the best knicks, jersey, shoes, winter jacket, gloves, arm and leg warmers, etc in the shop. I asked Margaret how that had come about and she said that he had an eye for quality and wanted only the best. That was Friday.

On Monday morning Malcolm was back. He walked in and said "Now sell me a real bike".

I asked what was wrong with the one he'd bought on Friday. He replied nothing, that he'd enjoyed riding over the weekend and thought he would stick at this cycling caper. So now he wanted a real bike.

I knew that he knew nothing about cycling and had no idea what that would cost him, so I asked "What do you consider a real bike?"

"I want one like the pro's ride"

"So you are prepared to spend five thousand bucks then?"

"Is that what it would cost?" he replied.

I'm thinking "That's stopped him; he thought bikes were toys and has no conception of what they really cost".

He produced a cheque book and asked for a pen. He wrote a cheque and handed it to me saying "Well, you had better give me a better one than the pro's ride then."

I looked down at the cheque and saw a six followed by three zeros; \$6,000-. A little stunned I said "Ok, what would you like?"

With a slightly exasperated tone he said "How would I know?"

I've only been in this sport for two days. You're the expert. If you think it's a good bike I'm sure that I will love it! Let me know when it's ready."

I put a bit of thought into this bike and put Malcolm onto an Italian steel frame and the first Dura Ace STI group that I ever saw. I put him on the lightest rims of the day with light gauge bladed spokes and alloy nipples when such things were still a rarity. The seat was a titanium railed Campagnolo 'pneumatic' seat and the stem a Cinelli Record. All absolutely top of the line for the time. And I still couldn't spend his six grand and gave him some change.

Mal became a regular and instigated our Friday night drink that has become a tradition. Every Friday evening he would come by for a chat with a six pack of quality beer. This caught on and a lot more six packs started to walk in the door attached to bike riders on Friday evenings. On a busy Friday night we'll get 20 plus; on a quiet night, 3 or 4. When late and I

call last drinks, sometimes the boys (and girls) are having too good a time to do something sensible like listen to me and leave. I must be the only bike shop proprietor who has given a customer the keys and alarm code and told them to drop the keys at my place on their way home.

Not long after Mal picked up the 'superbike', he went to France on a business trip. When he returned he brought back a genuine maillot jaune. Apparently there is one in every size for every stage and the Tour organisation auction off the left overs after the race. Unfortunately my mother-in-law found that a hot iron and Coolmax don't mix and that was the end of the yellow jersey. Mal vowed to get me another one. Months later he returned from Europe with a genuine, framed Bernard Hinault yellow jersey and showed it to me. It had cost him 14,000 Francs. I admired it and he said "It's yours, the shop needs more ambience".

A year or two goes by and Mal has totally immersed himself in the cycling lifestyle. He has read every book and bought every magazine. He can tell you what Gino Bartali said to Fausto Coppi as they crested the Passo del Gavia in the '51 Giro. In short he is obsessed with cycling and wears a cycling cap with the brim turned up while attending non cycling social functions. His non cycling friends think this is quaint but he is so passionate about cycling that he wins a few converts to the sport. One day he walks in with a magazine showing the famous photo of Merckx crouched over the bars of his orange Molteni bike, grimacing with effort while a spectator and his daughter look on from the background. "I want that bike".

"Well Mal, you can't have it but I am sure that a replica could be made" He ordered it on the spot. It took 15 months to get the frame from Merckx in Belgium. It had the original stickers, no brazed on fittings and was built from Columbus SL; all like the original. Then the hunt was on for an early Campagnolo Super Record group set with the nut and bolt brakes and the early Super Record rear derailleur that didn't have the black parallelogram. I couldn't find a complete group of that era and it took me 3 years to find the parts piecemeal from all over the world. Mal insisted that everything had to be brand new in the original box with the boxes in good condition and with all the paper work propaganda that comes with them. He would give me some money, I would keep looking, some parts would turn up and he would give me more money, and so on. The cranks came from England, the headset from Luxembourg and the rear derailleur from the U.S., the front derailleur from Bob de Kantzow of Stanmore Cycles. You get the picture

In the end, the last remaining problem was that I could source Super Record hubs of 32 hole but only period rims (Fiamme Red Label) of 36 hole. There were no 36 hole hubs of the period that I could find. I had another customer, a judge and all round nice bloke named John Cohen, who I would describe as a Campagnolophile. He had taken an interest in the slow building of the Molteni and I happened to ask him whether he knew where I could get some 36 hole Super Record hubs to suit the rims. "I have a pair" he told me. "No John, you don't understand. They have to be brand

new".

"They are brand new".

"Still in the box with paperwork?" I asked hopefully.

"Still in the box with paperwork"

"Are they for sale"?

"To you....., for this bike....., yes"

"How much do you want for them?"

"Whatever the sticker on the box says. That's what I would have paid for them 20 years ago."

So thanks to John, Mal got his hubs at a 20 year old price and I was able to complete the bike. It was built and paid for. After it sat in the shop for a month or so, I asked Mal when was he going to pick it up?

He replied that he wasn't; that it was staying in our window because the shop needed more ambience.

The Merckx distributor was an acquaintance and had followed the Molteni's slow progress to completion. The annual Bike Show was coming up and he asked if he could borrow the Molteni for his Merckx display at the show. He offered to have a brass plaque made and engraved with "Displayed by the kind permission of Malcolm George".

I mentioned this to Mal who said the distributor could display the bike but that he wanted no recognition for himself.

The bike show comes and Mal visits the Merckx stand and converses with the distributor without revealing that the Molteni is his. The day after the show, he dropped by and said that he had seen a signed poster of Merckx on display alongside his bike.

The poster was of the same photo as had seen in the mag that had inspired him to order the Molteni replica in the first place. If the distributor still wanted to repay him for the loan of the bike, he could do so by getting one of those same posters and having it signed by Merckx.

The distributor readily agreed and some months later the poster arrived with Eddy Merckx' autograph. I gave it to Mal over a Friday night drink still rolled up in the cardboard tube that it had arrived in.

A week or so goes by and Mal comes in for a Friday beer with the poster framed. He handed me the frame and answered my questioning look with "I keep telling you; the shop needs more ambience".

Time brings changes to everyone and Mal's life changed for the worse. His marriage ended and his financial fortunes deteriorated. He gave up cycling and concentrated on bringing up his children. He inherited a run down, home built concrete yacht and the last that I heard from him, he was planning to sail around the Pacific on a shoe string budget. Then my emails to him started to bounce back to me, his mobile phone number was disconnected and I haven't seen him for several years. In my minds eye he is out there somewhere, his boat rocking with the swell and having a leisurely cold drink while watching the tropic sun sink to the horizon beneath a reddening sky.

Our new shop has a bar that we named after him. It is overlooked by a wall on which hangs the Hinault yellow jersey and the framed and signed Merckx poster. He hasn't seen the new shop, but if anyone reading this ever has Mal cross their path; ask him to come by one Friday night for a drink from 'his' bar.