

BEST IN SHOW 2007

Showtime!

So what's new in the bike world? Chris Juden visited Germany's Eurobike in September and Dan Joyce visited London's Cycle Show in October



Eurobike long since earned the status implied by its name and is now challenging America's Interbike for the title of 'Globalbike'. And according to some who should know, you no longer need to visit Vegas to see all that's worth seeing, even in the 'made in USA' world of mountain bikes. In 2007 the premier European bike show ballooned beyond the eight huge halls of Friedrichshafen Messe, also occupying the adjacent Zeppelin hangar. But given two-and-a-half days I was able to get around most of it, and below you'll find a few words about some of the things that caught my eye.

In case you'd like to see it for yourself,

in 2008 Eurobike will open on September 4th with public access on Sunday 7th. It's easy to get there by 'plane or train, but Friedrichshafen is not a big city, so accommodation becomes scarce and expensive when the show is in town. See www.eurobike-exhibition.de for more information.

25 YEARS OF DEORE XT

So... Shimano are reintroducing thumb-shifters, large flange hubs and wide-profile cantilever brakes? Not so. It's the silver anniversary of the groupset that launched more than a million mountain bikes, and Shimano celebrated by assembling the

Main photo: courtesy of www.eurobike-exhibition.de



original Deore XT components onto a classic Tom Ritchey frame.

NEW XT



This 'shadow' design of low-profile mech is one of the options in the new XT groupset being rolled out during this year.

MORE NOSTALGIA

With few technical novelties to stimulate demand for the latest bike models, some manufacturers are taking inspiration from the past for and marketing classic designs like this fine roadster from Umberto of Milan.



EVERYTHING ENCLOSED

Flevobike struck gold (Eurobike award for innovation) by enclosing all the dirty bits within the box-beam frame sections



of their clean, green recumbent pedalling machine. A specially modified Rohloff hub provides an intermediate gearbox, coaxial with the rear suspension pivot and transferring chain drive from the right side to the left. A two-legged fork rather spoils the asymmetry, but a monoblade is in development. See www.flevobike.nl

CANNONDALE PUT IT RIGHT



More one-sided thinking from Cannondale, but not so 'lefty', apparently



Of more immediate interest is this neat arrangement for mounting the disk brake, carrier and propstand on a production Cannondale trekking bike. Other manufacturers please take note.

MECH SUPPORT

Rather than offer a replaceable gear hanger on their 'Liteville' frame, Syntace make it harder to bend the derailleur back in the first place with this bolt-on 'Rockguard'. See www.syntace.com



BRAKE OR BELL?

Whatever you'd rather do to avert collision, here's one component that has both options covered! See www.tekro.com



LUGGAGE FOR LIFESTYLES



With this line-up of 'bags for life', Basil of the Netherlands (www.basil.nl) acknowledge the link between women, cycling and shopping and show that panniers don't need to be dull. A flap protects your legwear from the usual attachment hooks, and looks just like a purse pocket when zippered shut.

Integrating the practical use of a bike with modern lifestyles seemed to be something of a theme in 2007, as shown by the following couple of pictures:



Here Ortlieb also use printed patterns to enliven a limited run of luggage.

This handlebar-handbag from Zwei



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won a Eurobike silver award. It comes in five colours and three sizes, but each bag is really two sizes and several guises, as it extends to make a shopping bag and comes with a clever belt for use as a shoulder or messenger bag. See www.iam2.com and be amazed by what one bag can do!

STEALTH JACKET



It takes something very special in the clothing line to get a Eurobike design award. Scottish firm Endura had that something, with the first ever cycling top that's not only soft, stretchy and body-hugging, but also fully waterproof. Is it a jersey or a jacket? We'll let you know in a future issue, but it could be both! See www.endura.co.uk

BYE-BYE BULB, RIP HID...

Those who've resisted the temptation to buy one of those amazingly bright but temperamental metal-halide (HID) lamps, and were rather hoping that light emitting diodes (LEDs) would soon get that good, can now reward their patience with something like this brilliant 'Betty' from Lupine of Germany. See www.lupine.de.



Major improvements in the efficiency of white LEDs were made during 2007. The latest emitters can now yield up to 90 lumens of light per electrical watt. That's three times the efficiency of the best halogen bulbs and 50% better than a HID lamp. Since LEDs also last a great deal longer than either of the above, and unlike them can be efficiently dimmed for further economy or to avoid causing dazzle, the

road and trail ahead belongs to LEDs.

This is the year in which cycle lighting systems literally stole the limelight from gears and brakes. Power sources are also improving, with the more energy-rich Li-ion technology tending to replace Ni-MH, as it already has in phones and cameras.

The 'only for export' note, by the way, is a symptom of legislation's inability to keep pace with technology, not only in UK but also Germany, where batteries are not deemed suitable for vehicle lighting. (Everyone knows these lamps *will* be used on German roads all the same.)

LIGHTER GENERATORS



Shimano have trimmed a few grams from their top hub generator model (DH-3N72) and given it a few splashes of black paint.



And Schmidt's new SON20R model for small-wheeled bikes is the lightest ever at 390g. The 'R' means the flanges are strengthened for radial spoking. It's also interesting to note that it can be used (and be even more efficient) in a larger wheel – if you have an LED lamp. See www.nabendynamo.de

CZECH THE WEIGHT



At only 8.95kg would-you-believe-it, the Virus RX1 is a whippet hardtail for whippet riders. With a scandium-aluminium frame and 8cm of front travel from its German Answer multi-link fork: cross-country racing is clearly this mountain bike's game.

See www.4ever.cz and write the czech for 89,999 crowns (£2,331).

COSMIC CARBONE



The unique advantage claimed for the carbon spokes in Mavic's latest wheelset is that they don't just work in tension, like wire spokes, but also in compression – like the wooden spokes in a cartwheel! It's a sound notion. When you sit on a bike the rim flattens and the bottom-most spokes lose a lot of their tension. If you simultaneously push the wheel sideways, some spokes may go completely slack and drop out of the equation – until with fewer spokes supporting it the wheel collapses into the classic potato crisp shape.

Spokes that can also push back enable the wheel to take heavier knocks before that happens, and these carbon spokes are stout enough, apparently, to do a bit of pushing. The push-pull rim and hub fixings are radial only, so the front wheel can be symmetrically carbon, whilst the rear wheel is carbon on the left, as shown, with tangential wire on the right to take the torque. See www.mavic.com for more.

NINE-SPEED INTERNAL



My first sight of Sram's nine-speed hub gear. I hope they'll let us test it one day.

HAYSTACK NEEDLE

Yay, I found a touring bike. It looks a good one too. Better, I know the brand is sold in London by Bikefix – www.bikefix.co.uk





Eyeing London

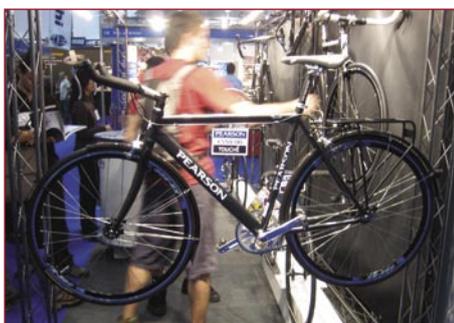
London has its own cycling culture. Arriving from the provinces with a folding bike was like gate-crashing a fakenger festival. Everywhere you looked: fixed-wheels, 3/4-length trousers and a too-cool-for-school disregard for red lights.

Part of that impression may have come from the Rapha party the night before the Cycle Show, where along with couriers, courier-lookalikes, and roadies, I had a look at Rapha's nice (and expensive!) new kit, listening to French hurdy-gurdy music.

Cycle itself was much smaller than Eurobike. Being in Britain, it perhaps showed the cycling landscape where America and Europe meet. To me, it felt very 'London' – perhaps due to the aforesaid preponderance of fixed-gear and singlespeed bikes. Trend-spotting is tricky as you tend to find what you look for. That said, there were more town bikes and hybrids this year (some with mudguards, even!); more women-specific bikes; more toddlers' balance bikes; more LED lights; and strong sense that retro is still cool.

A PRACTICAL FIXIE

Unlike the fixed-gear bikes on some stands, this incarnation of Pearson's Touché swapped the fashion of 'clean lines' for the practicality of mudguards, a rear rack and *two* TT-style brake levers. It'd be a much better commuter in the winter



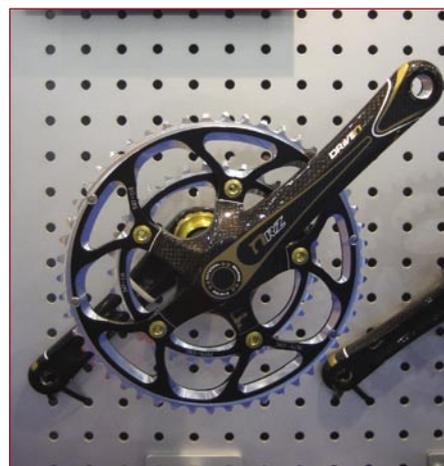
wet, although clearance is tight over the front tyre. See www.pearsoncycles.co.uk

SHIMANO'S ALFINE



Shimano's new Alfine hub is essentially an upgraded version of the Nexus 8. It's meant for town bikes and sporty hybrids, and was on lots at Cycle. But its disc rotor mounts mean that people are also putting it on mountain bikes.

NEW RIVAL FOR DURA-ACE



First it was Sram launching a road groupset to cut a piece from the Shimano/Campag pie. Now it's SunRace, whose Shimano-compatible Driven gruppo, with carbon everything, should be out by February. See www.sunrace.com

GAZELLE COME TO TOWN



Gazelle brought a host of practical Dutch town bikes over the North Sea for the show. What's interesting is not so much the bikes but the fact that they were in the UK. Let's

hope they picked up some dealer accounts so that sensible roadsters can regain a foothold outside of York and Oxford. See www.gazelle.nl/uk.html

RALEIGH'S ROADSTER



Drums might be better than discs on a town bike, but Raleigh's £600 Pioneer Elite (with an Alfine hub) perhaps shows the tide is at last turning in town bikes' favour.

MAKE MINE 29



Specialized put the mainstream seal on 29ers by including theirs in their traditional Stumpjumper line-up. Despite this, UK bikers haven't embraced big wheels as eagerly as the Americans. Are we small minded over here – or just smaller?

WHO LOVES YA, BABY?



The Danish Triobike is a child/load-carrier trike that separates a bit like a Rollfiets wheelchair tandem to give a bike (spare front wheel carried underneath) and a push-along buggy. The buggy can fit a seat designed for babies as young as 3 weeks. It costs around £2200. More at www.triobike.com