

Hangin' On

By Andy Hollinger



It's November. That means one weekend its 80 and the next its 40 at noon. It is racing season, though. In the DFW area there was Road, Track and Cross racing all on one weekend. What ever happened to our month (or two) off?

Cross or CX racing – it is technically Cyclocross racing and NOT a cross between Mountain Bike and Road Bike racing. But it is, kinda. There is precious little pavement, there must be hazards and obstacles and you will need the cleats on those shoes. You will run.

There is something else. Seemingly I've lived my life around roadies and road events. I've been told that Mountain Bikers are happy, if not joyous during the race. Many, if not most, of the Cross racers I know are roadies – at road races, the name of the game is race-face, but, when I see them on the CX course, they're ... well, they seem ... actually happy. You can tell they're having fun.

On the road, you can kill yourself for hours all the while thinking that the guys on the Baton Death March didn't have it so bad. You arrive home, dehydrated, salt-stiff and smelly and if your spouse asks ... You will answer ... "Yeah, it was fun." Cross seems to be a different sort of fun. You know, fun – fun.

That is not to say it's not serious competition and physically demanding. It is. Let me say this ... it is both demanding and skillful in spades. I am sure that actually carrying the

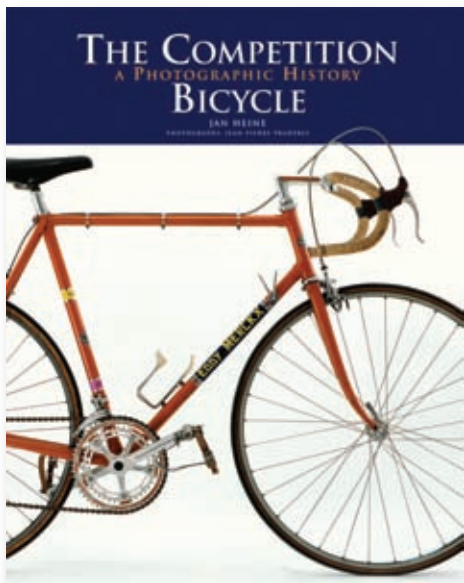
bike up those steps or across the wood chips (in Texas of course - depending on the weekend – dusty or muddy) and hopping barricades with your bike on your shoulder hurts like ... well, hurts bad. Watching them hop back on their bikes after the hazard had you cheering their clipping back in. Weeeee!

This sport certainly meets your sweat and strain requirements, though. You can hear their lungs work as they run by you. For the masters, guys I've ridden with for years, you could swear there were knees creaking as well. But, Sunday, there was an air about them as if it were boys and girls prancing in the sun. 100+ of them all together on a hill on the east side of Dallas having fun with their bikes.

The frames are heftier, the tires wider, the brakes more powerful, but the bike is just the rugby playing cousin to our sleek, skinny road machines. Was it Chris W and his Colnago? It's really a hoot to watch. Need a break ... find a Cross, CX or Cyclocross race and either watch it before you join or jump right in.



Book Review: The Competition Bicycle by Jan Heine By TRP Staff



Living in Texas you know that hail is both a year-round hazard and that it always comes at 3AM. This is especially true if you have three dogs living with you. In past times the wood shake roof would worry me during these hail storms and the dogs didn't bother me. Now that USAA has given me an armor plated steel roof, I don't worry about the roof, but the noise bothers the dogs meaning that I won't sleep till well after it's over. Didn't matter last week

when it was over – I wasn't going to sleep again that night.

I had just received my pre-publication copy of The Competition Bicycle by Jan Heine soon to be published by Vintage Bicycle Press in Seattle. It's one of those oversized coffee-table books full of beautiful glossy pictures. This one, however, is addictive. Yes, the pictures are

beautiful and inspiring. But that's not the real secret here. It's an addictive book about 34 specific bicycles that tell the story of two wheeled racing from the late 19th Century till the end of the 20th.

I started just to flip through in order to pass the time till I could go back to sleep. You can't just look at these pictures. You devour them. Because the pictures have captured you, the text must be read to really understand what you're looking at. Well, sort of. You don't have to be told about Eddy's bike or Greg Lemond's bike or the one that carried Andy Hampsten to the top of the Gavia Pass. How about close ups and the story behind John Marino's bike and its Race Across America or Francisco Moser's famous Hour Record bike? (There's even a close up of Shimano AX components!)

To those of a certain age, these are the stories of immortals. To those younger – these are the foundations for today's great bikes. (Yes there were bikes before carbon.) The book carried me till it was time to shower and go to work. I was an emotional night and morning. This book brought these bikes to me in a way few books do.

On the way to the shower, I stopped and looked over to my steel stallion – My 1986 Cinelli Supercorsa (a slightly younger version is included in the book) – it's pearl paint, Cinelli bar, stem and seat, Campy Delta brakes and the large flange Campy tubular wheels are still beautiful and compelling. This bike, not ridden for a decade but still loved is a shrine to my cycling passion. This is the nature of The Competition Bicycle.

If you have ever owned a beautiful bike from this era, raced before the millennium, can remember Binda toe straps or just love beautiful bikes of the 20th Century – buy, devour, love and cherish this book.