



FUJI TOURING: KEEPING IT SIMPLE

BY CHARLES PELKEY

→ I hate to admit how long it's been since my first major bike tour. In what turned out to be a futile effort to impress a girl (a long, stupid, and somewhat embarrassing story), I swung my leg over the top tube of a \$175 Centurian Sport in Denver on May 18, 1980. I didn't have bike shorts. I was riding in tennis shoes. I'd never even heard of toe clips. Nonetheless, by day's end, I had ridden 118 miles, which was just about five times farther than I'd ever ridden in a single day before.

The next day, I repeated. And, over the next three weeks or so, I kept getting on that cheap bike and riding anywhere from five miles (a terrible day!) to 193 (God bless you, tailwinds!) until I ended up in Boston, and then southern Maine.

It was a grand adventure. It was totally spontaneous. It was spectacularly fun. But above all, it introduced me to a beautiful way to travel and the many variations of the sport I grew to love. Why mention it now, though? Well, because that trip also proved to me one of the most important things I've ever learned about cycling. Despite what they say, you don't need a lot of money to enjoy yourself.

That's the first thing that sprang to mind when I took the 2014 Fuji Touring model out for an admittedly much shorter ride in the countryside

of southeastern Wyoming.

No, I am not comparing the Fuji Touring to that low-dollar rig I rode across the country oh so many years ago, but with an eye to the bottom line, the principle still applies.

By my calculation (well, actually, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' calculation), after nearly 34 years of inflation, that \$175 is still only worth about \$495.97 in 2014 dollars, so the Fuji Touring's recommended price of \$889 comes in at almost twice that. The beauty is that you end up with more than 10 times the bike.

As I've mentioned before, these days I prefer to take quiet back roads that, more often than not, are unpaved. Using back roads out of Laramie, Wyoming, on that first ride, I took the Fuji down to the stretch of dirt leading to our family's cabin in Colorado. Stutter bumps (aka washboards) abound toward the end of the summer after a season of steady use. The bike handled things beautifully as I hauled two fully loaded panniers through that late afternoon ride. I would have welcomed a full suspension bike on those roads, but the stock 32 mm tires did a nice job of softening up the rough ride.

Over ensuing rides — both in town and out — the Fuji comfortably lived up to expectations. It is a purely utilitarian ride, nicely designed to haul a load and to do so affordably. It handled snow and

icy roads better than I did, in fact. It's a fundamentally good bike.

The Fuji Touring is really a study in good design coupled with efficient manufacturing and sensible and affordable specs. The nine-speed 11-34 cogset, when coupled with a 48/36/26 triple up front, offers more than enough range to get you up and over the steepest of roads. The beefy Vera Terra rims and Vera CityWide tires are more than strong enough to handle a fully loaded touring bike and

SPECIFICATIONS

FUJI TOURING

Price: \$889

Size Tested: XXL (64cm)

Other sizes available: XS/S (49cm), M (54cm), L (56cm) and XL (58cm)

Weight: 26.3 lbs.

TEST BIKE MEASUREMENTS

1. Seat tube: (center to top): 64cm

2. Top tube: 58.87cm

3. Head tube: 16.5cm

4. Seat tube angle: 73°

5. Head tube angle: 72°

6. Chainstay: 44cm

7. Wheelbase: 105.9cm

8. Bottom Bracket height: 26.85cm

9. Standover height: 86.5cm

10. Stem Length: 110mm

11. Crank Length: 175mm

12. Frame: Custom Elios 2 tubing with forged dropouts and spoke holder integrated into non-drive side chain stay

13. Color: Gunmetal

14. Fork: Elios 2 tubing, lowrider mounts

15. Crankset: Shimano Deore, 48/36/26T with sealed bearing bottom bracket

16. Cassette: Shimano Deore, 11-34T, 9-speed

17. Pedals: None

18. Front Derailleur: Shimano Altus

19. Rear Derailleur: Shimano Deore, 9-speed

20. Shifters: MicroShift, Bar end, index shifting, 9-speed



- 21. Chain:** KMC X9 w/ MissingLink, 9-speed
- 22. Wheels:** Vera Terra DPM18 rims 32h, alloy hubs, black spokes
- 23. Tires:** Vera CityWide, 700 x 32c, 30 tpi
- 24. Brakes:** Tektro, linear pull, alloy with alloy road levers
- 25. Headset:** FSA, 1 1/8", caged bearings
- 26. Handlebar:** Oval Concepts 307, 6061 alloy, 31.8mm with Oval Concepts 300 with padded suede tape
- 27. Stem:** Oval Concepts 313, 6061 3D-forged alloy, 31.8mm, 12°
- 28. Saddle:** Oval Concepts P300 with steel rails
- 29. Seat Post:** Oval Concepts 300, 3D-forged 6061 alloy, 27.2mm, double-bolt micro-adjust
- 30. Other:** Rear portaging rack

GEARING IN INCHES

	26	36	48
11	63.8	88.4	117.8
13	54.0	74.8	99.7
15	46.8	64.8	86.4
17	41.3	57.2	76.2
19	36.9	51.2	68.2
21	33.4	46.3	61.7
23	30.5	42.3	56.3
26	27.0	37.4	49.8
30	23.4	32.4	43.2
34	20.6	28.6	38.1

Contact: Fuji, (800) 631-8474, fujibikes.com/bike/details/touring

THE STEEL TIG-WELDED FRAME IS TOUGH ENOUGH TO HANDLE WHAT YOU CAN THROW AT IT, AND IT'S CLEARLY BUILT TO LAST.



heavier-than-in-the-past 55-year-old journalist turned lawyer. The geometry of the Touring's frame is simple and straightforward. Its 73-degree seat tube, 72-degree headtube, and 105.9cm wheelbase are spot on for what this bike needs to do.

The steel TIG-welded frame is tough enough to handle what you can throw at it, and it's clearly built to last.

No. This is not a racing bike. Of course, my guess is that since you're reading this magazine, you're probably not in the market for one either.

If you're in the hunt for a bike that you could enter into cycling's version of a concours d'elegance show, this ain't it either. There is no elaborate lug work. There are no handcrafted leather accessories. This bike was not made by a little Italian craftsman, huddled in a tiny shop beneath the bleachers of a storied velodrome.

There are no bells. There are no whistles. Beyond the included rear "portaging" rack (which is as solid as they come) and a nice little spare spoke braze on (which would actually do better on the drive-side stay), this is a straightforward, steel touring bike designed by people who know what they're doing.

What you do get for that \$889 is a bike that can take you anywhere and offer you the joys and adventures of riding a fully laden bicycle across long distances at a price that most of us can afford.

If you are in the market for a reasonably priced, nicely spec'd, utilitarian bicycle that you could conceivably — budget and schedule permitting — ride around the planet with minimal problems cropping up along the way, the Fuji Touring *must* be a prime candidate for your consideration.

Sometimes the bottom line is ... well, just that: the bottom line. **AG**

Charles Pelkey has held a number of editorial positions at VeloNews including Senior Editor of VeloNews.com. Pelkey earned a JD degree from the University of Wyoming College of Law and lives in Laramie, Wyoming, with Diana, his wife of 25 years, and their two children.