

# CYFAC VINTAGE

*This touring machine knows more than just one trick*

*by Patrick O'Grady*

The mechanic who assembled the Cyfac Vintage for me called it “the world’s fastest touring bike” as he rolled it out. This was something of a back-handed compliment. See, the bike arrived wearing a Nitto M-12 front rack, a Tubus Vega rear rack, SKS fenders, and Ortlieb panniers — plus a 10-speed Campagnolo drivetrain better suited to an age-group racer than to an aged reviewer. A Record crankset with 53/39 chainrings?

I stopped rocking that combo back in 2009, and today I have no qualms about a triple setup, especially if the bike is loaded and the road includes hills, as is often the case in Colorado.

On the back end, I want at least an 11-28 cassette, and I’ve been known to go bigger as I add weight, having learned through painful experience to distrust any bailout cog with fewer teeth than I have. My Soma Saga has a low end of 24 x 32, and I’m not ashamed to say I’ve used it, often while weeping inconsolably.

The Vintage, to my dismay, sported a 12-25. And while my trusty old DBR (Diamondback Racing) Prevail TT road-racing bike’s cassette likewise tops out at 25 teeth, it also has a 50/34 compact crankset, and I wouldn’t dream of asking it to bear any burden other than me, a couple of water bottles, and some glorious memories.

And those wheels! A pair of Campy Khamsins, with 20 radially laced spokes up front and 27 behind — recommended by the manufacturer for racing “on smooth road or track surfaces only” — wearing a pair of 700C x 25 Continental SuperSport Plus tires, when nothing in my personal fleet rolls on anything skinnier than 700C x 28.

Plus the Vintage’s sloping top tube



lets, bottle mounts, dynamo mounts, pump peg, chain hanger, etc.”

This latitude extends to building up your dream bike, he added: “We can do it as a road setup with regular calipers, a rando’ setup with V-brakes, cantilevers, or discs, even a track setup. We can also do a Rohloff edition. We do our builds a la carte so the customer can really get whatever they want.”

What I got, to be frank, I would not have chosen. At

54cm, the frame was a touch small for me, though it was a pretty little thing, all sparkly blue and shiny silver, with a stylized tricolor on the downtube and the legend “Fait a la main a La Fuye — France” (Made by hand in La Fuye — France) on the seat tube. The 170mm Record cranks were similarly undersized, and with its 6-degree, 10cm FSA OS 150 stem, the Vintage had more drop from saddle to stem than my chiropractor supports.

But we go to review with the bikes we have, not the bikes we wish we had. And occasionally the results are, shall we say, unexpected? Setting questions of proper fit aside, I felt quite at ease on the Vintage.

The sizing issue may have been mitigated in part by the handlebar I mentioned earlier, an FSA Wing Pro Compact in 42cm with a shallow 125mm drop and short 80mm reach. The Campy Centaur

levers rode high on the bars, too, which helped, as did the tall 6.5-inch head tube.

By the way, this was my first Campy group since the late 1980s, when I bought a used Team Crest Pinarello Prologo for the purpose of getting flogged in New Mexican time trials. I have no complaints. The Ergopower levers were easy on the hands, and the Record derailleurs and crankset meshed just fine with the limited range of gearing they were assigned. No Campy CX cantilevers, alas, just a pair of Avid Shorty 6s. They squealed a bit, but hey — if a canti’ isn’t squealing, you’re probably not braking.

The lugged Columbus Life frame was stiffer than a life sentence on Devil’s Island. On or off the saddle, I had the sense that every ounce of my effort went straight toward propelling the Vintage forward. But it also exhibited that merciful quality of steel, the ability to iron out the wrinkles in an indifferently maintained road.

I’m no great shakes in corners or on descents, but ridden unloaded the Vintage inspired confidence. Lose the racks and you’d have yourself one snappy little road bike here. I was sorely tempted to get into trouble with it, diving into sharp bends and down steep pitches, but eventually settled down because I didn’t have a fat wad of uncommitted cash lying around the office in case exuberance led to contusions of grandeur.

When lightly loaded for a minimalist bike overnight — an Ortlieb Ultimate 5 Classic handlebar bag and Arkel Tail Rider rack trunk containing a phone, wallet, camera, snacks, cool-weather cycling garb, off-the-bike clothes, mini pump, tubes, tools, and toothbrush — the Vintage was unfazed. The 39 x 25 made more frequent appearances on steep pitches, but the quality of the ride remained impeccable.

True, this was not much of a load — just three and a half pounds on the bars and four and a half on the rack. But when I swapped the Tail Rider for a pair of Arkel B-26 panniers containing a few more creature comforts — jeans, a long-sleeved shirt, a netbook and char-

## Specifications: Cyfac Vintage

**Specifications:** Cyfac Vintage (blue & silver)  
**Price:** \$3,500 (frame and fork)  
**Sizes available:** Custom geometry. Stock sizes: 48cm (650); XS (50cm); S (52cm); M (54cm); L (56cm); XL (58cm)  
**Size tested:** M (54cm)  
**Weight:** 24.7 pounds (with Nitto M-12 and Tubus Vega rack and rear SKS fender, but without pedals)

### TEST BIKE MEASUREMENTS

**Seat tube:** 52cm, center to center  
**Top tube:** 53cm, center to center  
**Head tube angle:** 72.5°  
**Seat tube angle:** 73°  
**Chainstays:** 16 1/2 inches  
**Bottom bracket drop:** 2 3/4 inches  
**Crank spindle height above ground:** 10 7/16 inches  
**Fork rake:** 1 21/32 inches (41.9mm)  
**Wheelbase:** 39 1/2 inches  
**Standover height:** 31 3/8 inches  
**Frame:** Columbus Life triple butted manganese, chrome, nickel, molybdenum and niobium with steel lugs; cantilever bosses; eyelets for fenders and rack; two bottle-cage mounts; front-derailleur braze-on; chain hanger; additional cable-routing braze-ons at lower head tube lug.  
**Fork:** Steel with fender eyelets and low-rider mounts  
**Rims:** Campagnolo Khamsin, 20 spokes (front), 27 spokes (rear)  
**Hubs:** Aluminum with sealed bearings  
**Tires:** Continental SuperSport Plus, 700x25  
**Crank/bottom bracket:** Campagnolo Record Ultra Torque System, 170mm, 53/39 130mm BCD chainrings  
**Front derailleur:** Campagnolo Record, 10 speed

**Rear derailleur:** Campagnolo Record Titanium, 10 speed  
**Shift/brake levers:** Campagnolo Centaur  
**Brakes:** Avid Shorty 6 cantilevers  
**Pedals:** None  
**Seat post:** FSA SL-280  
**Stem:** FSA OS 150, 100mm  
**Handlebar:** FSA Wing Pro Compact, 42cm, 125mm drop and 80mm reach  
**Headset:** Campagnolo  
**Saddle:** Brooks B-17 Standard  
**Fenders:** SKS  
**Front rack:** Nitto M-12  
**Rear rack:** Tubus Vega  
**Handlebar bag:** Ortlieb Ultimate 5 Classic (not used)  
**Pannier:** One Ortlieb Back-Roller Classic (not used)  
**Cassette:** Campagnolo 12-13-14-15-16-17-19-21-23-25 10-speed  
**Chain:** C-10  
**Bottle cage:** Zéfal  
**Gearing in inches:**

	53	39
12	116.5	85.7
13	107.5	79.1
14	99.9	73.5
15	93.2	68.6
16	87.4	64.3
17	82.2	60.5
19	73.6	54.1
21	66.6	49.0
23	60.8	44.7
25	55.9	41.2

**Contact:** Cyfac International, cyfac.fr (U.S. distributor, Velo Europa Imports: velo.europa.com, 610-896-0388).

ger, more spare tubes and parts, a better multitool, adding up to about 14 pounds — the Vintage accepted it all with Gallic élan. I never even felt compelled to swap the wheels for something more traditional, or the tires for something a bit thicker, though there’s plenty of room for fatter rubber fore and aft.

The 16.5-inch chainstays and comparatively small bags left plenty of clearance between heels and panniers, and the additional rear-end weight wasn’t enough to make me feel as though I was about to pop a wheelie on steep pitches.

Pedaling up one of my favorite rolling climbs, reaching for the 25 a little more often, I briefly considered bolting on a low-rider rack and going full tourist on the Vintage, with bags front and rear —

tent, sleeping bag, cooking gear — the works.

And then crunch! I shifted the chain right past that 25 and into the spokes, coming to an abrupt and wobbly halt.

The rear Khamsin withstood this unprovoked assault with aplomb, so I guess I should retract my earlier quip about weirdo wheels. Sakalowsky told me they were bomb-proof, and he wasn’t kidding.

Nonetheless I chose to see the seizure as a sign. “We have passed some enjoyable moments together, you and I,” the Vintage seemed to be saying. “But do not presume to make a donkey of a thoroughbred.”

*C’est la vie*, I thought. It was fun while it lasted. And with a bigger frame,

continued on page 46

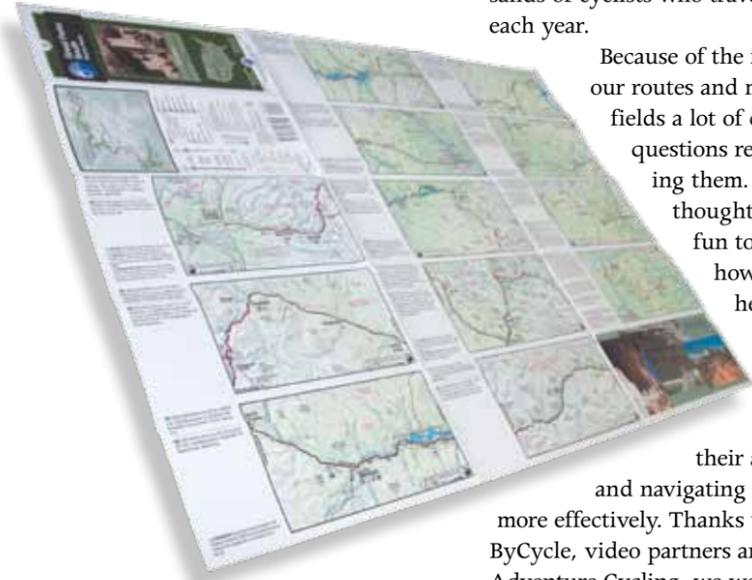
## New Video! How to Read Adventure Cycling Maps

Adventure Cycling creates the best cross-country, loop, inland, and coastal cycling routes available. The maps fea-

diligently to keep the maps updated with in-house research and by incorporating feedback from many of the thousands of cyclists who traverse our routes each year.

Because of the maps' detail, our routes and mapping team fields a lot of calls with questions related to reading them. We've always thought it would be fun to offer a slick how-to video to help cyclists get a jump on utilizing the maps for planning their adventures and navigating the routes more effectively. Thanks to America ByCycle, video partners and friends of Adventure Cycling, we were finally able to produce the piece. What's great is that you can watch, replay, and rewind as needed!

Check it out at [adventurecycling.org/readingourmaps](http://adventurecycling.org/readingourmaps).



ture turn-by-turn directions, detailed navigational instructions, and elevation profiles, plus they are waterproof and sized to fit a handlebar-bag window or jersey pocket. Our cartographers work

continued from page 35

longer cranks, and broader gearing, who knows where we could have gone? If you buy a Vintage and go there, send me a postcard.



I unwound the chain, degreased my hands as best I could in the roadside grass, and headed for home, where another tasty vintage from the Loire Valley — a bottle of 2011 Thierry Delaunay rosé — was chilling in the fridge. It was exactly my size. **AC**

*Patrick O'Grady has written and cartooned about cycling since 1989 for VeloNews, Bicycle Retailer and Industry News, and a variety of other publications. To read more from Patrick, visit [maddogmedia.wordpress.com](http://maddogmedia.wordpress.com).*

continued from page 40

ally, the organization's mission validates the idea that fitness and fun could be combined. I remember Bikecentennial, I had no idea the event was affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association. A web search on Google is how I found Adventure Cycling. Bicycling has shaped my life, enhanced my level of environmental awareness — regardless of my personal involvement, I wanted to make a lifelong commitment to, and support all types of cycling. I wanted to do my part to make cycling more enjoyable, comfortable, accessible, and safe for anyone who wants to get on a bike."

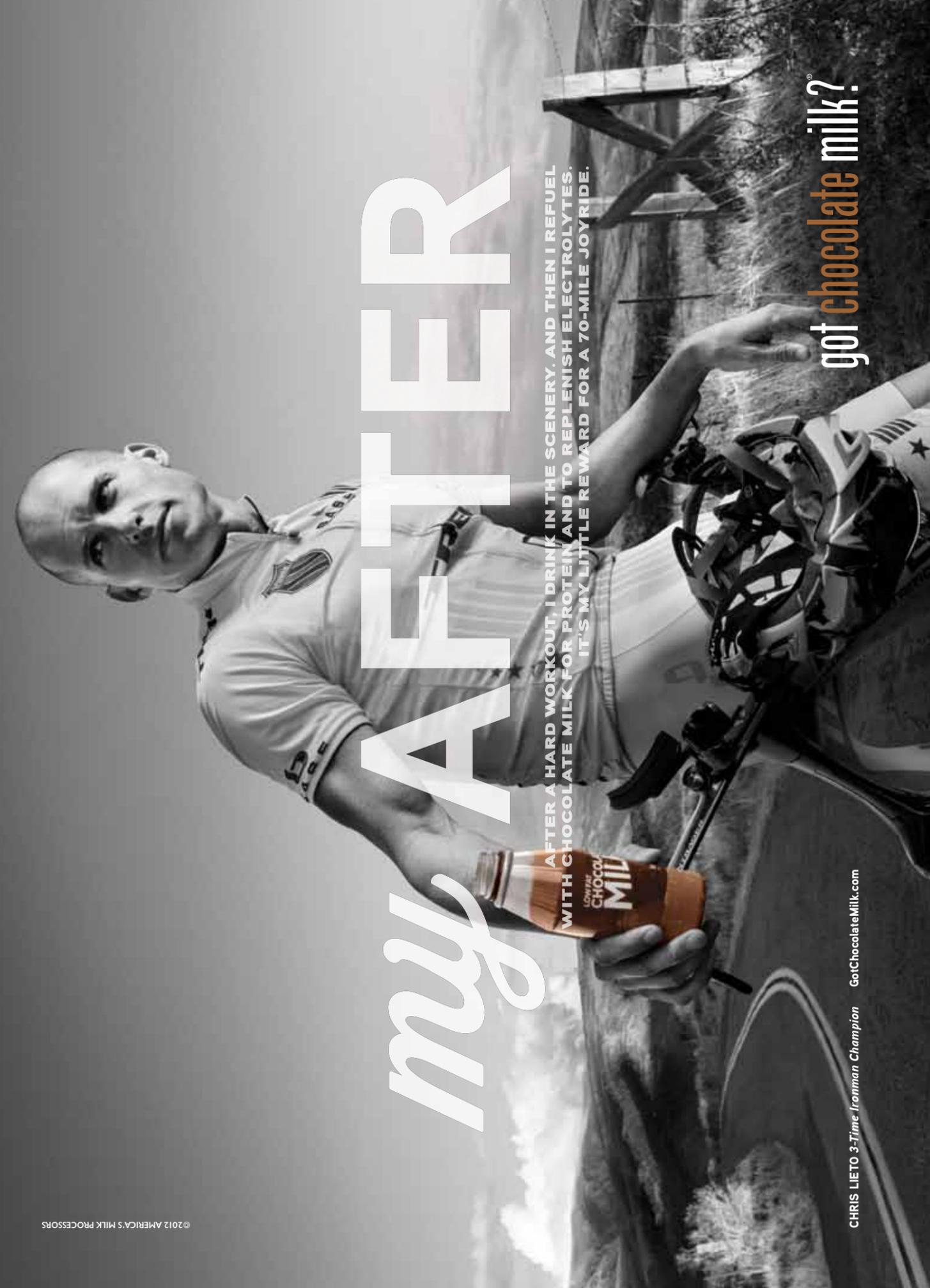
Jon has been a member of Adventure Cycling for eight years, becoming a Life Member in 2009. He has supported Adventure Cycling in a number of ways, most recently as a Holiday Trail Blazer, encouraging others to support our mission by providing a generous match donation. **AC**

**AC**



GREG SIPPLE

**FINAL TOUCHES** With the interior space of Adventure Cycling's headquarter's expansion complete and the staff moved in, attention has turned to the outside. Viewed from the new second floor balcony, a backhoe digs a trench for the foundation of the new courtyard wall.



my AFTER

AFTER A HARD WORKOUT, I DRINK IN THE SCENERY. AND THEN I REFUEL WITH CHOCOLATE MILK FOR PROTEIN AND TO REPLENISH ELECTROLYTES. IT'S MY LITTLE REWARD FOR A 70-MILE JOYRIDE.

got chocolate milk?

CHRIS LIETO 3-Time Ironman Champion GotChocolateMilk.com

© 2012 AMERICA'S MILK PROCESSORS