



Adventure Cycling leader and cartographer Tom Robertson and the Cannondale T700 he rode across the country on the Southern Tier Route.

What Works

The 2001 Touring Bike Buyer's Guide

Twenty-five years ago, this organization was launched by the largest cross-country migration of bicyclists America had ever seen, an event known as Bikecentennial, celebrating the nation's bicentennial. The ongoing legacy of Bikecentennial is, of course, the Adventure Cycling Association, plus more routes, better maps, and the fine selection of bikes available for touring today.

It's a great pleasure to be presenting this touring bike buyer's guide in the silver anniversary year of Adventure Cycling. This year, rather than focusing primarily on what the industry is offering touring cyclists, we decided to ask the folks who are out there touring what works for them.

We've also included a table with a reasonably complete listing of the currently available traditional touring bikes. Because you can't have a buyer's guide without a table, can you?

The breadth of experience of the touring cyclists who contributed to this guide is impressive. We hope you enjoy it.

Road touring

There are lots of ways to tour, but Adventure Cycling cut its teeth on offering self-contained touring, which combines the open road with camping. One fellow who's done his share of self-contained touring is Adventure Cycling cartographer, and trip leader, Tom Robertson (featured on the cover of this magazine.)

"On the trips I have led, there are always a wide variety of bikes; folks will ride on anything and everything," said Robertson. "But when folks call me and ask my opinion about what type of bike they should get for road touring, I tell them that the best option is a touring bike. I have a Cannondale, and it is the best bike that I've ever had for the money (\$700 in 1995). I probably have 30,000 miles on it and have never really had any problems."

In addition to the current Cannondale T800 model, the other widely available touring bike is the Trek 520.

"The 520 and T800 are solid touring bikes that are sold for a reasonable price (\$999 and \$1192 respectively) and have a proven record," said Robertson.

By Tom Shaddox

Near this same price point is the Bruce Gordon BLT (\$1485), a bike and a marque that has an almost cult-like following among serious tourists. And adding nice choices to the marketplace are the Bianchi San Remo (\$1199), which has a Campy drive train, and the Terry Classic (\$1400).

If you're young, and just starting out in bicycle touring, you can, for around \$600, buy a much nicer bike than your parents rode across the country in '76. Your choices include the Novara Randonee (\$750), Raleigh R300 (\$649.99), Fuji Touring (\$849), and new this year, the Diamondback Interval (\$599.99).

Or perhaps you're at the point of your life where it's time to cash out a few stock options.

"In the past I advocated touring on less expensive models," said Robertson. "The bikes spend a lot more time in the elements, parked outside many nights in the rain, hail, sleet and snow. And there's always the chance of the bike being stolen.

"But since I've gotten older, I've come to accept that a more expensive model, if you can afford it, would be nice to have. After all, you spend between 4 and 10 hours on the bike every day, and you want your trip to be about enjoying your surroundings."

So if you have those stocks to burn, you might want to take a look at the Cannondale T2000 (\$1520), CoMotion Americano (\$2745), or Bruce Gordon Rock 'n Road (\$2385).

And then there are custom touring bikes.

Martha Retallick, author of "Discovering America," relates, "I've toured in all 50 of the United States. The bike I used was a custom Nobilette, now more than 20 years old. My reason for going the custom route was back then it was difficult to find a stock frame in sizes below 50 cm."

If any of your physical dimensions are out toward the edge of the bell curve, there are many bikes available in just your size from custom frame-building

operations scattered across the country, including the Independent Fabrication Independence and the Waterford Adventure Cycle.

For another take on bikes for road touring, we talked to Marty Basch, who has toured through the American Southwest and Mexico, ridden from Maine to Alaska, crossed Norway, Sweden and Finland, and this past year, rode from Maine to Georgia on a foliage trek, writing two wonderful

books, "Against the Wind" and "Above the Circle," along the way.

"Gear schmear. I ride sturdy mountain bikes, not paying much attention to details," says Basch. "On both my last two rides (one on-road, one off-road) I used a Trek 6500. Mountain bikes have the versatility to go anywhere, and tire selection and bar ends make the best of that versatility."

Marty is straightforward in admitting that a front suspension mountain bike is serviceable, but not optimum, for road touring.

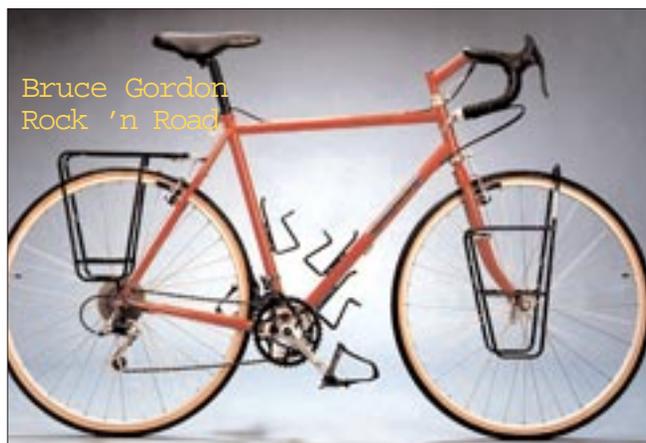
Some say that in another 25 years, road tourists will exclusively ride recumbents.

"My father would want me to mention recumbents," offered Tom Robertson. "He had a nice road-touring bike that he toured on until he got an Easy Racer Gold Rush. He says that now he will tour on nothing else."

And why not? As Adventure Cyclist editor Daniel D'Ambrosio put it so well in the April 1996 "recumbent issue," it's like touring while "sitting in the big chair."

If you're a virtual bicycle tourist, as well as an actual one, you probably know Alex Wetmore, webmaster of the touring discussion list on the Internet (www.phred.org/~alex/bikes) and another convert to recumbent touring.

"Weight distribution is as important on recumbents as it is on an upright bicycle,"



seat racks include the Trek R200 and the BikeE AT and RX.

More traditional touring recumbents, that is, in as much as traditional and recumbent belong in the same sentence, include the Rans Stratus and the Easy Racer Tour Easy, offering a smooth riding long wheelbase, racks front and rear for loads, and histories of successful tours almost as old as Adventure Cycling itself.

So is there a recumbent in your future?

"I really like my recumbent for touring," says Wetmore. "I feel like it makes it easier for me to see what is going on around me, and my main joy of touring is seeing the world."

Light touring

As mentioned, Adventure Cycling started out solidly in the self-contained touring realm. Now, 25 years later, look at this year's list of tours offered by the organization. If every Adventure Cycling tour fills up, there will be 168 participants on self-contained tours, and 900 participants on van-supported tours!

So is the light touring bike different from the self-contained touring bike? It depends. If your touring future includes both van-supported or "credit card" tours and self-contained, camping tours, the consensus is to stick with traditional touring bikes like those already mentioned. They give far better service when used in a part-time light touring role than a light bike will give when used for a loaded tour.

However, if you know you don't care to ever pack camping and cooking gear on your travels, you might want to consider a light touring bike. Traditionally, dedicated light tourists chose sport touring bikes, but over the last decade, the industry has replaced the sport touring bike with "event" bikes, i.e., racing bikes with triple cranks.

Bikecentennial Trans-Am '76 veteran Lawrence Walker has gone on to a career in bike touring, operating Coyote Bicycling Tours, and has some insight into the question of buying a light touring bike.

"In my pre-touring mailing to Coyote participants, I say that van-supported touring is not like a series of club rides, where

says Wetmore. "A lot of weight on your rear rack and short chainstays will unweight the front wheel and screw up the handling."

At this point, a diamond frame rider might wonder where one would put gear on a recumbent except on a rear rack.

"I equipped my Rans Rocket with an under-seat rack, and I put as much weight in my underseat panniers as possible," said Wetmore.

Other recumbents that can take under-

The Bikes

Bike	Sugg. Retail	Lowest gear	Frame	Tire size	Contact
Airborne Carpe Diem	\$1720	24"	3AL/2.5V Titanium	700x32c	Airborne Direct, 1-888-6-LAUNCH; www.airborne.net
Bianchi Volpe	\$950	23.6"	Reynolds 520 DB CrMo	700x32c	Bianchi USA, 1-510-264-1001, www.bianchi.it
Bianchi San Remo	\$1200	31"	Bianchi SL Chromo Lite	700x28c	
BikeE AT recumbent	\$1095	23"	Custom extruded aluminum	F16x1.50", R20x1.75"	
BikeE RX recumbent	\$1395	19"	Custom extruded aluminum	F15 R20 x1.95	
Bike Friday N.W. Tourist	\$995	23.5"	Bike Friday DB CrMo	20x1.75	Bike Friday, 1-800-777-0258, www.greengear.com
Bruce Gordon BLT	\$1485	18.5"	Custom 4130 DB CrMo	700x38c	Bruce Gordon Cycles, 1-707-762-5601, www.bgcycles.com
Bruce Gordon BLT-X	\$1485	18.5"	Custom 4130 DB CrMo	26x1.5"	
Bruce Gordon Rock 'n Road	\$2385	18.5"	Custom 4130 DB CrMo	700x38c	
B.G. Rock 'n Road Tour-EX	\$2385	18.5"	Custom 4130 DB CrMo	26x1.5"	
Cannondale T800	\$1192	23.8"	CAAD3 Aluminum	700x35c	
Cannondale T2000	\$1520	23.8"	CAAD3 Aluminum	700x35c	
Cannondale Adventure	\$1845	23.8"	CAAD3 Cyclocross HeadShok	700x35c	
Cannondale M400	\$685	17.5"	CAAD2 Mtn. Aluminum	26 x 2.0"	
Cannondale F400	\$867	17.5"	CAAD2 Mtn. HeadShok	26 x 2.0"	
CoMotion Americano	\$2745	20"	Reynolds 725 DB CrMo	700x35c	Co-Motion, 1-541-342-4583, www.co-motion.com
Diamondback Interval	\$600	29"	Comfort Plus DB CrMo	700x38c	Diamondback, 1-800-222-5527, www.diamondback.com
Easy Racers Tour Easy rec.	\$1895	19"	Chrome moly steel	700x35c(R); 20x1.35"(F)	Easy Racers, 1-831-722-9797, www.easyracers.com
Fuji Touring	\$849	25"	Custom butted CrMo	700x30c	Fuji America, 1-800-631-8474, www.fujibike.com
IF Independence	\$2800	27"	Custom Reynolds 853 & 725	700x38c	Independent Fabrication, 1-617-666-3609, www.ifbikes.com
Litespeed Blueridge	\$3075	30"	3Al-2.5V seamless titanium	700x32c	Litespeed, 1-423-238-5530, www.litespeed.com
Moulton APB Land Rover	\$1450	N/A	Triangulated space frame	20 x 1.9"	Pashley Cycles, +44(0)1789 292 263, www.pashley.co.uk
Novara Randonee	\$750	27"	DB CrMo	700x32c	REI, 1-800-426-4840, www.rei.com
Raleigh R300	\$650	32.4"	7005 OS Aluminum	700 x 28c	Raleigh Bicycles, (800) 222-5527, www.raleighusa.com
Rans Rocket recumbent	\$999	26"	4130 CrMo	20x1.75"	Rans Inc., 1-785-625-6346, www.rans.com
Rans Stratus recumbent	\$1599	18.75"	4130 CrMo	F20x1.75", R26x1.5"	
Sakkit Expedition 26	\$3400	18"	Reynolds 525, 531 & 725	Ritchey 26x1.4"	Robert Beckman Designs, (541) 388-5146,
Sakkit Great Divide Tour	\$3400	18"	Reynolds 525, 531 & 725	Ritchey 26x1.7"	www.coinet.com/~beckman
Santana Vision	\$2795	24.4"	Chrome moly steel	26x1.9"	Santana, 1-909-596-7570, www.santanainc.com
Schwinn Mesa GSX	\$599.95	16.8"	7005 Aluminum	26 x 2.10	Schwinn, 1-800-SCHWINN, www.schwinn.com
Specialized CX Comp	\$1080	n/a	Custom aluminum	700x32c	Specialized, 1-800-245-3462, www.specialized.com
Terry Classic	\$1400	25.3"	Double butted CrMo	700x32c	Terry Bicycles, 1-800-289-8379, www.terrybicycles.com
Thorn Nomad	\$1320	17.8"	Reynolds 725 oversized	26x1.5"	St. John St. Cycles, +44(0)1278441500, www.sjscycles.com
Thorn EXP	\$1980	17.8"	Reynolds 725 oversized	26x1.5"	
Trek 520	\$999	25.3"	Trek DB CrMo	700x35c	Trek Bicycles, 1-800-313-8735, www.trekbikes.com
Trek 4500	\$399	19.5"	Alpha Aluminum	Bontrager Jones	
Trek 6500	\$699	17.8"	Alpha ZX Aluminum	Bontrager Jones AC	
Trek R200 recumbent	\$1599	26"	Oversized Alpha™ aluminum	20x1.35"	
Waterford Adventure Cycle	\$2725	28.9"	Custom Reynolds 853	700x30C	

you tend to know the road conditions," says Walker. "Even luxury touring can encounter scrappy roads, poor pavement, construction, and little side trips down gravel roads.

"I strongly prefer a minimum of 28mm wide tires for riders under 200 pounds, and at least 32mm for riders over 200 pounds. With larger tires, you get all sorts of advantages: wheel protection including fewer broken spokes and out-of-true rims, fewer flats, more mileage, more traction, more stability, more comfort.

"Rolling along without wheel and tire problems is the path to touring bliss. So tire clearance limits the bikes a tourist can ideally consider more than things that can be changed, like gears."

Well, since the demise of the sport touring bike, and with the need for tire clearance effectively eliminating the racing bike with a triple from consideration, what is the light tourist to do? Enter the cyclocross bike.

Of interest to the light tourist are the models that are made specifically as cross/touring bikes, with triple cranks, eyelets and braze-ons. Because they can mount wider tires and accept fenders, bikes like the Bianchi Volpe, Specialized CX, and Airborne Carpe Diem would make better light touring companions than event bikes. Lawrence's favorite is the Litespeed Blueridge.

"If I could afford one, I'd have one," he says.

Bicycle Adventure Club tour leader Chuck Shinn is a veteran of 10 van-supported tours in France.

"By far the most popular bike on BAC tours is the Bike Friday (see review on pages 18-19)," says Shinn. "Probably 30% of our trip members use them. Undoubtedly they are so popular because of the ease of traveling with your bike in a suitcase."

Expedition touring

At the other end of the touring spectrum, the expeditionists carry most everything they need, over all road surfaces, in every weather condition, for months at a time. The absolute reliability desirable for touring far, far away from overnight package delivery service calls for a solid draft horse of a bike with wide tires.

Bikes for expeditions were once strictly custom territory, but now there are production bikes made for just this sort of thing. Bruce Gordon makes not one but two: the Bruce Gordon Rock 'n Road Tour EX and the Bruce Gordon BLT-X; as does Thorn: the Thorn EXP and Thorn Nomad. Also available is the Sakkit Expedition 26.

Write when you arrive in Patagonia!

Off-road touring

One of the most exciting developments in bicycle touring these days is the continued growth of off-road touring. This "segment growth," combined with the huge and highly competitive off-road bike market that has every bike company clamoring to make their models stand out, should give the tourist a selection of great bikes. It should, but it doesn't.

This is not to say that the dirt rider is left without adequate mounts for off-road touring. A group calling themselves the "Divide Ride Dogs" has been riding a different section of Adventure Cycling's Great Divide Route for the past several summers, refining their approach each year. The lessons they've learned are applicable to any off-road tour, and pack members Judy Colwell and Paul Smee were good enough to share their experiences.

"The standard traditional idea of a 'touring bike' just isn't a good match for tours like the Great Divide Route," says Smee, "although an expedition touring bike might cope with the Divide ride."

"We ride hardtail mountain bikes," adds Colwell. "The brands of bikes run the gamut of what's available. The percentage of suspension forks the first year was somewhat low, but now, after several years, all of us have bouncy forks."

This brings up a good point. The first generation of off-road touring cyclists used rigid forks and standard front racks. Now, with the near universal application of front suspension, most have begun using either Old Man Mountain front racks or Caradice Limpets. Perhaps front load carrying will move to yet a third generation with racks like the Tubus Swing, which carry the weight above the suspension. Carrying a load is perhaps of greater concern to the off-road rider than her on-road counterpart, because, according to Colwell, when something breaks, it's usually not the bike itself.

"Whether it is by luck or because we take care of our bikes, we've had absolutely minimal mechanical problems over the years," she says. "Generally, the few problems we've experienced involve the extra

equipment for the bike: rack breakage, loose attachment bolts, and pannier attachment rather than the bike itself."

Which is not to say it's never the bike.

"Well, so far I've killed two back wheels," offers Smee. "Also, while no one has had trouble with pressure cylinder-based shocks, I have a feeling that for the Divide ride, elastomer-based shocks, like the Rockshox Jett or Manitou Magnum, might be a cleverer idea. Let's see — longer stays wouldn't hurt either. And for village blacksmith shop repairability, I'm convinced that steel frames are what you want."

While there are nice bikes on the market that warrant consideration, such as the Sakkit Great Divide Tour, which builder Robert Beckman describes as a "full-on mountain bike for extensive single-track and expedition touring," and, for more modest budgets, the Trek 4500, Cannondale F400 and Schwinn Mesa GSX, you have only to flip through any mountain bike magazine to realize that off-road touring isn't on the industry's radar. Furthermore, new trends, like adding disk brake mounts (complicates rack installation) and deleting rack braze-ons on models above modest price points, are disheartening.

In the off-chance that a bike company's product planner is reading this, here's a short description of desirable features on an off-road touring bike, a niche their company could have all to themselves:

- Chromoly frame, treated against internal corrosion
- Forged dropouts with strong eyelets



- Full braze-ons
- Long stays
- Low maintenance elastomer-based front suspension.

continued on page 20

- 36 or 40 spoke wheels with minimum dish and top-quality hubs, rims and spokes
- Steel racks

Within a few years of the opening of the TransAmerica Trail in 1976, many bike companies had responded by building serious, dedicated road touring bikes. Here's hoping that by this time next year, John Schubert will have road-tested a production off-road touring bike!

One last, very different, but viable, bike to mention in the off-road touring category is the Moulton APB Land Rover. A descendent of the first fully suspended production mountain bike, it features a strong and very

stiff steel frame, low-maintenance suspension, bulletproof wheels, a take-apart joint for travel, integrated above-the-suspension steel racks, and a proven record on the Great Divide Route.

Tandems

Here's news: it is now possible to buy a tandem model from several makers that is not suitable for touring because of tight under-the-brake and between-the-stays clearance, lack of braze-ons and eyelets, carbon forks, and high gearing. But the glass is still 90% full, and there are many fine touring tandems available from several makers. Out of all these bikes, though, the

Santana Vision gets a special mention. While its strong, widely braced and dishless rear wheel, and the ability to fit tires that can handle tandem touring loads over gravel roads or rail trails, are nice, it is factory options, like 48-spoke wheels, bar end controls, drum drag-brake and S&S couplers, that really make this twicer a touring stand-out.

Closing the Deal

Here are some things to check out and talk over with your bike shop before you trade your money for a new touring companion:

Travel Testing the Bike Friday Air Llama

By Richard Drdul

If you've ever been away from home and wished you had your bicycle with you, then a travel bike may be what you need. My wife and I have been in that unfortunate situation too many times.

This year, with trips planned to Tucson, Chicago and the Rocky Mountains, and with our eyes on France for next year, we decided that there was no way we would travel without our bikes again. On previous trips, we had left our bikes behind because we didn't want the hassles of bringing them along. So for our upcoming trips, we decided to buy bicycles designed to fit into suitcases for travel.

After considering all the available choices, we bought a pair of Bike Friday Air Llamas. After several months of travelling with them, we can report that the Air Llamas have met and exceeded our expectations. Although each bike cost a whopping \$3,000, we'd gladly buy them again.

Does that mean you should rush out and buy an Air Llama, or another travel bike? It depends on how often and where you plan to travel, what kind of riding you do, and how much money you want to spend.

The Air Llama

At first glance, the only thing that's different about a Bike Friday compared to a "regular" bike is the 20-inch wheels. Like all Bike Fridays, the Air Llama packs into a suitcase for air travel or shipping. To fit it into a space that small, the wheels have to be small. Fortunately, there are plenty of tire choices in the 20-inch (ISO 406mm) BMX wheel size — more than three dozen different knobby and slick tires were available at last count. The Air Llama is available with knobbies as standard spec, and slicks as an alternative. We chose both; we switch the tires depending on whether we plan to be riding on-road or off-road.

Small wheels are lighter, and accelerate faster, than large wheels. Small wheels also require unusual combinations of drivetrain equipment to obtain a decent gear range. Because the Air Llama is designed for off-road use, it has an Ultegra road crankset instead of a MTB crankset to provide an 18-inch to 95-inch gear range — pretty much what you would expect on any MTB. The rest of the 27-speed drivetrain uses standard XT and XTR components.

The Air Llama saddle is supported on a titanium beam, which flexes to absorb bumps. At the front end of the bike, the fork incorporates an Action-Tec headset shock similar to that used on Cannondale bicycles. It's inconspicuous, simple, and works well, providing over two inches of damped travel.

Packing

The whole point of a Bike Friday is that it can be packed into a suitcase. As with all Bike Fridays, the Air Llama can also be "folded" quickly and carried in a travel bag. The quick "fold" is one of the best features of the bike. We've used it to travel with the bikes on trains and on buses, and as an alternative to leaving the bikes locked where they could be stolen. We were able to fit both Air Llamas into the trunk of a borrowed Honda Accord, with plenty of room left over.

The Air Llama doesn't actually fold like most other folding bikes do. Although the main part of the frame folds in half at a hinge located above the bottom bracket, the titanium beam and the handlebars unbolt from the frame rather than fold. The whole "folding" exercise takes less than five minutes. Everything packs into a travel bag approximately 36 x 30 x 12 inches in size, which can be slung over the shoulder. Although a bagged bike is bulky and weighs about 27 pounds, it's no problem to carry it a few hundred

yards through a train station or into a building.

Getting the bike into a suitcase requires more disassembly than folding. The wheels come off, the beam and seatpost are removed, the handlebars break in half, the fork is detached from the steerer tube, and the right crank and pedals are removed.

Despite all this disassembly, by the second time I tried it, I was able to pack the bike into its suitcase in less than 30 minutes. Before we got the bikes, I was skeptical when I heard similar claims from others, but it's true. It's not a tight fit, either. There are plenty of nooks and crannies around the bike to jam shoes, socks, and other items.

Reassembling the Air Llama takes about 30 minutes as well. It's not rocket science, but I wouldn't recommend it for people who aren't mechanically inclined.

The Ride

The ride quality of the Air Llama is so good that if I could have only one bike, this would be it. In most conditions, the han-



dling is indistinguishable from a regular bicycle, to the point that I forgot I was riding a travel bike.

The titanium beam does an amazing job of soaking up road vibration and small

Low gears. The number one modification to new touring bikes is fitting a lower lowest gear, although this often doesn't happen until after the first tour! Price the bike to leave the shop with the gears you want. If you have no idea what low gear you want, here's a suggestion: no higher than the ratio of a 24 T (tooth) chainwheel and a 30T rear cog, or a 28T chainwheel and a 34T cog. (Smaller chainwheels and bigger cogs lower the gear ratio.) Even lower is even better. Now, with some bikes, a useful low gear will be stock. Others will need a simple component change that the shop might do free. Worst case — a bike might

bumps. Riding over a washboard fire road, I felt nothing through the saddle. As on any bike with rear suspension, I do bob a bit as I pedal, but I find that the bobbing is minimized with a smooth pedal stroke. The suspension fork responds well to all but the biggest bumps.

The only time I noticed a difference between the Air Llama and a regular bicycle was when I encountered large obstacles and big bumps on off-road trails. The 20-inch front wheel is more likely to bump up against a big rock or a tree root than ride over it like the 26-inch wheel on a regular mountain bike would. The 20-inch wheels also drop into holes more easily, which is why it's nice to have suspension. However, because the rear suspension isn't damped, there's a pretty healthy rebound! I've learned to get off the saddle for big hits, or the beam will launch me into the air.

New Travel Opportunities

Travel bikes have greatly expanded our travel possibilities. Now that we can travel with our bikes wherever we want, we're planning trips to places we might otherwise not have visited, and we're staying longer. For example, we're planning to spend a week or so in Washington, DC next year. On rainy days, we'll hit the museums and other sights, and on sunny days we'll be riding our Air Llamas along the C&O tow-path or the W&OD pathway.

If I were to sum up in one word the advantage of a travel bike, I would say "flexibility." I can ride it for a week on an organized tour, I can go mountain biking anywhere in the world with it, I can sight-see on it, and I can ride to the store down the street on it.

We've also discovered that one of the pleasures of owning a travel bike like the Air Llama is flying on airplanes. When we check the bikes in at an airport, I love the feeling that we're scamming the airline (see "Travels with Willie" on pages 36-37). No extra baggage charges for us! I also love being able to unpack both bikes and hit the

need a different crankset, derailleurs, and cassette. Best find out before you buy it.

Handlebars. The second most common modification on touring bikes is raising the handlebars. What bliss to leave the shop with a bike whose handlebars are as high as you like — and can still be adjusted up a little higher than that. On a bike with a threaded headset and expander-wedge handlebar stem, the stem has an inch or so of adjustability. On a bike with a threadless headset, the stem height can be changed by its position relative to the washer stack, provided this space was left when the steerer was cut. If you need more height than these

road an hour after we arrive. It's a great way to work the jetlag out of our systems.

This Bike Is For You If...

The Air Llama isn't for everyone. First of all, it's not for anyone who doesn't want to spend \$3,000 on a bicycle. It's also not for cross-country tourists, gonzo mountain bikers, Cat 1 road racers or commuters looking for a quicker way to get to the train station.

There are a wide variety of travel bikes available from Bike Friday and from other manufacturers to suit those people. The person who suits an Air Llama is someone who travels frequently, has basic bicycle mechanic skills, will ride off-road as often as on the road, and appreciates the ride of a quality bicycle.

If you're interested in a travel bike, but not the Air Llama, there are plenty of other options. Some travel bikes are designed for front and rear panniers. Others are designed for racing. For those who want maximum comfort, there are even recumbent travel bikes. Some travel bikes fold, like the Bike Fridays, and some use S&S couplers to break into pieces for packing. Cyclists on a budget should consider Bike Friday's New World Tourist and Pocket Llama, both of which cost as little as \$1,000, or should consider buying a used travel bike. Other folding travel bikes available in North America include bicycles from Gaerlan Custom Cycles, Peregrine Cycle Works and Burley Design Co-op.

Regardless of which travel bike you choose, I have no doubt that you will quickly find you can't travel without it ●

adjustments allow, you'll need to fit a different stem. If you've picked out a bike with a straight bar, go ahead and fit some bar ends. (Special mention: the Newk company even makes some with drops.) If you can't get the body positions/hand positions dialed in quite right, try a different bar and/or bar ends.

Racks. It's a nice extra if a rack comes with the bike, provided it's a rack you like, and it works with your panniers. If you have to add the rack, even if you won't need it immediately, it's best to leave the shop with a suitable rack properly mounted on the bike. With the vast array of different seat-stay styles, braze-on locations, brake arms, pulleys and cable mounts, disk brake mounts, and drop outs on today's bikes, it's entirely possible that a bike that looks like it should accept a rack really won't.

Wheels. After flat tires, broken spokes are the mechanical problem most commonly faced by tourists. If the shop you're dealing with has a really good wheelwright on staff, inquire about having this artist hand-tune your factory wheels. Oh, and those high-tech wheels with the funny hubs, rims, and spoke patterns? Well, unless the tour you are on is the Tour de France, leave them at home.

Extras. Here's something to consider: it's possible to pick out a modestly priced machine, then add clipless pedals, front and rear racks, bar ends, and a better saddle — and find out that for the new bottom line you could have bought a better bike that came with those things as standard equipment. Take a holistic approach.

Time to Hit the Road

It's our sincere wish that those using this touring bike buyer's guide to find a new bike for touring will wind up with a magic carpet that will transport them on many future adventures. But like Lance Armstrong said, "It's not about the bike."

Here's hoping there's lots of stunning scenery, interesting people and great food on your tours to come. ●

(I'd like to thank editor Daniel D'Ambrosio for this opportunity, the many cycle tourists who contributed their wisdom and experience for the article, mentors John Forrester, Frank Berto, John Ford and John Schubert, and Al Gore for the invention of the internet, without which this buyer's guide would have never happened. -T.S.)

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More Builders

- **Angletech** 1-800-793-3038, www.angletechcycles.com Recumbents
- **ATP-Vision Recumbent** 1-877-433-4273, www.visionrecumbents.com Recumbents
- **Bicycles by Haluzak** 1-707-544-6243, www.haluzak.com Recumbents
- **Bilenky Cycle Works** 1-215-329-4744, www.bilenky.com Touring bikes, tandems, travel bikes
- **Borthwick Framesets** 1-641-236-0968, www.sandsmachine.com/bp_borth.htm, Mostly tandems, also touring bikes
- **Boulder Bikes** 1-303-823-5021, www.boulderbikes.com Recumbents, tandems, mtn. bikes, road/touring bikes
- **Brompton Folding Bicycles** 1-800-783-3447, www.bromptonbike.com Folding bikes
- **Burley Design Cooperative** 1-800-423-8445, www.burley.com Tandems, recumbents
- **Croll Cycles** 1-800-944-BIKE, www.crollcycles.net Cyclocross, road and mountain bikes
- **Davidson Cycles** 1-800-292-5374, www.davidsonbicycles.com Sport touring, touring, tandem and mountain bikes
- **Da Vinci Designs** 1-800-873-3214, www.teamspirit.net Tandems
- **Ibis Cycles** 1-800-283-0943, www.ibiscycles.com Mountain and road bikes
- **KHS Inc.** 1-310-632-7173, www.khsbicycles.com Road and mountain bikes, tandems
- **Lightning Cycle Dynamics** 1-805-736-0700, www.lightningbikes.com Recumbents
- **Linear Manufacturing Inc.** 1-319-252-1637, www.showcase.netins.net/web/linear/ Aluminum recumbents
- **Longbikes** 1-877-826-3367, www.tandembike.com Tandems and recumbents
- **Meridian Bicycle Works** 1-541-317-1522, www.meridianbike.com Tandems
- **Montague Corp.** 1-800-736-5348, www.montagueco.com Folding bikes
- **Outback Bicycles** 1-301-309-1950, www.outbackbikes.com Road and mountain bikes
- **Rocky Mountain Bicycle Co.** 1-800-663-2512, www.rocky-mountain.com Mountain, road and cross bikes
- **Rivendell Bicycle Works** 1-925-933-7304, www.rivendellbicycles.com Touring bikes
- **Rodriguez Custom Bicycles** 1-206-527-4822, www.rodcycle.com Touring, tandem, and mountain bikes
- **S&B Recumbent** 1-310-762-2243, www.s-brecumbents.com Recumbents
- **Salsa Cycles** 1-952-229-5043, www.salsacycles.com Touring and road bikes
- **Serotta Competition Bicycles** 1-800-338-0998, www.serotta.com Road and mountain bikes
- **Seven Cycles** 1-617-923-7757, www.sevencycles.com Titanium and steel touring bikes, tandems, mountain bikes
- **Softride Inc.** 1-800-557-6387, www.softride.com Beam suspension bikes
- **Steelman Cycles** 1-650-364-3939, www.steelmancycles.com ●

Marketing Touring Bikes:

Could We Interest You in a Greg Siple Andes?

If you look at the marketing efforts by bicycle companies, it's hard to not conclude that the industry is run by former racers who are wistful about the old days before they blew out their knees. The advertising budgets are reserved for their company's speed machines. The companies have sponsorship agreements with professional racing teams, and sometimes even have the best racers on the company payroll. The bikes are hawked with action shots from last season, and the fantasy is "buy the bike and this could be you." The reality is that won't ever be you, no matter what bike you buy, unless of course you're young, and have the right genes.

Contrast this with touring. You really can go to the same places, and ride the same rides, that you read about here in *Adventure Cyclist*. You bought a Lance-replica because your dream is to race in the Tour? Dream it will stay, my friend. You bought a touring bike because your dream is to tour across Australia? Hey, it could hap-

pen, and buying the bike is a practical step in turning that dream into a reality. See, it's much easier to rationalize the purchase of a new bike for touring! With this lower threshold of rationalization, it stands to reason that cyclists should be even more susceptible to creative, exciting touring bike marketing than they are to racing bike marketing.

So what are the old racers that run the bike companies to do? Just follow the same formula, guys. Trek names the Greg LeMond racing bikes after places where LeMond had major turning points in his career: Buenos Aires, Zurich and Alpe d'Huez. How about a Trek line of similarly named Greg Siple touring bikes: Ports-mouth, Andes and Missoula?

Cannondale has off-road racer Alison Sydore, triathlete Simon Lessing and road man Mario Cipollini on the payroll, so maybe they could add tourist John Rakowski. Just think, Bob The 40+ Touring Cyclist could tell his riding buddies on the local MS150 that his bike is an exact replica of one his hero Rakowski rode through Asia Minor!

-T.S.

