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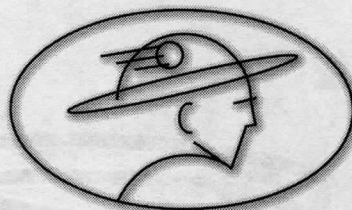
**New From ATP
the 1997
"METRO"**

VR-30
VR•30

Editorial License

By Robert J. Bryant

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THE METRO BIKE: A RECUMBENT FOR THE NEXT CENTURY AND BOB RANTS

The recumbent design formerly known as CLWB (Compact Long Wheel Base) has the potential to become the biggest selling recumbent style of all time. It could become what cyclists think of when they hear the word RECUMBENT. Here are the reasons why this may happen: They are easy to use, easy to own, simple, requires little education to ride and is about the same size of a standard bike (the wheelbase is longer, however, with the smaller diameter wheels, the overall length is about the same). Even the most technoweenie P-38 or Easy Racer owners will enjoy one of these bikes for short hops, family rides or for trips where a compact package is necessary (like the Interbike Trade show). The addition of the Nexus 7 drivetrain is so timely as it offers minimized maintenance, no derailleurs and no index adjustments. Every recumbent manufacturer should have a Nexus equipped bike if only for the sole purpose of getting into the 1997 Shimano Nexus display (at Interbike). Heck, the optional Nexus front hub brake even does away with those pain in the hiney cantilever brakes.

The design formerly known as CLWB uses the best of the user-friendly LWB, along with a smaller diameter wheelset borrowed from SWB recumbent models. The key to the "compact" design seems to be the use of the 16" front wheel so the mainframe angles up and back making the seat raise for taller riders while offering step-through user-friendliness. Imagine the simplicity of a standard type of recumbent with a similar size to a wedgie (upright). SWB/MWB recumbents or "Short" bikes will be know as the sporty upgrade and LWB recumbents or "Long" bikes will be the world tourists.

So, who's design is this? I'm sure that we can find design aspects dating back to the turn of the century. The historical Velocar had two 20" wheels and has a lot of similarities to many of today's models. The CLWB is a cumulation of recumbent bicycle technology dating back many years. We'll start with modern recumbent history. In the late 1970's, Randy Schlitter designed the Rans Stratus, the first recumbent that we know of where the seat adjusts at a downward angle for shorter riders. This is a unique innovation that is found on several recumbents of today, including the BikeE and the new Vision VR30. Randy Schlitter also designed the Rans Nimbus which raised the seat to shorten the wheelbase and make the bike more user-friendly.

The modern history of the recumbent design formerly known as CLWB dates back to the early 1980's when a southern California shop teacher, Ed Roeters, started tinkering with reconfigured BMX bikes outfitted with dual 20" inch wheels and a higher seat. These CLWB mod-

els that were sold as kits, plans and complete bikes under the Alternative Bikestyles moniker. The next innovation came with the introduction of the ReBike which had added a 16" front wheel to the design. Next came the BikeE which dialed-in the concept even further, while offering a high quality bicycle. Gardner Martin unveiled the EZ-1 shortly after. This was a design concept that he had been working on for years. The most recent chapter in the CLWB saga is the Vision VR30. This model has a round steel tube, suspension, a taller Vision seat, and a Nexus drivetrain (or 21 spd. 3x7 equipped), thus dialing the concept even further. Just as we're ready go to press, Rans says that they are tweaking the Tailwind design with new handlebars (reducing the tiller effect) a new lower price, though retaining dual 20" wheels.

All involved in this design quest are right on target. The mainstream bike industry and Shimano with its Nexus line are going after the comfort-bicycle market as dictated by the bicycle buying public. The industry has yet to recognize the recumbent as being part of this new classification, but we can squeeze in the door and eventually even lead the way. They haven't experienced comfort until they've tried one of our bikes.

This mainstream classification started out with the beach cruisers, and has become a lot more in the past year. At the show we saw terms such as "Metro Bikes" (a classification name coined by Breezer for the Ignaz X Nexus 7 equipped cruiser and ATP Vision simultaneously), SUBS (Sport Utility Bikes, Gary Fisher coined the term for his hybrid bikes), Sport or Super Cruisers (by Steve Ready of Interbike) and "Compact," which is a simpler and less confusing version of CLWB.

We need to carefully consider these new classifications where recumbents are concerned and plan our future accordingly. When I became involved with recumbents back in 1987, there were SWB (short wheelbase) and LWB (long wheelbase) recumbents. One manufacturers also used the MWB (medium wheelbase) term to describe a longer version of the SWB. Several years ago, in a spur of the moment decision and after working the night shift, I invented the term Compact Long Wheel Base (CLWB). The idea was that the ReBike and BikeE were not LWB bikes, because they are NOT long, which is still my argument today. Many folks on the internet HPV list agreed that we should do away with the CLWB term. I wholeheartedly agree. But are they LWB recumbents? I think we have one more chance to reclassify recumbents definitions before we're on the fast track. Aligning with mainstream cycling terms would be optimum.

In closing, the popularity of this new type of recumbent bicycle can only lead to improved recumbent sales overall. Imagine Nexus Metro

bikes in the varied styles of your favorite recumbent marque. Riders may be satisfied to stay with the Metro style bike, or move on to a livelier short recumbent for sport riding or to a long bike for that cross country tour. We'll have them hooked. I'm excited!

RCN 1997 BUYERS GUIDE

Be sure to contact us ASAP if you are interested in having your bike/shop/products featured in the upcoming RCN 1997 Buyers' Guide, RCN#38, Feb/Mar 1997. Info packs will go out to RCN advertisers in early November.

1997 RCN MINI SURVEY

We plan to use the compilation of this information in our 1997 RCN Buyers Guide. Please return your choices to RCN by January 1, 1997. They should be based upon commercially available models that are available in North America (85% of RCN readers are in the USA).

1. Readers Choice for BEST SWB/MWB 'Bent':
2. Readers Choice for BEST CLWB Recumbent (BikeE, EZ-1, etc.):
3. Readers Choice for BEST Recumbent Trike:
4. Readers Choice for BEST Above Seat Steering:
5. Readers Choice for BEST Under Seat Steering:
6. Readers Choice Recumbent To Watch in 1997:
7. Readers Choice Best Recumbent Manufacturer:
8. Readers Choice Best Recumbent Craftsmanship:
9. Readers Choice Best Recumbent Design:
10. Readers Choice Best Recumbent Personality:
11. Should we do away with the "MWB" term (medium wheelbase)? Yes or No.
12. Should we do away with the "CLWB" term (compact long wheelbase)? Yes or No.
13. Should we classify the CLWB models (BikeE, EZ-1, etc.) as LWB? Yes or No.
14. Please select your choice of Printing/paper styles for RCN in 1997:

A. Six issues with a glossy black and white cover on every issue with electrobright paper (RCN#25) inside (36-44 pages).

B. Six issues with book white (RCN#34/35) with electrobright pages (RCN#24/25) (40-48 pages)

C. Six issues with glossy cover on buyers guide, white paper/pages in regular issues (40 page issues-our current format).

15. Have you had trouble with RCN 4th class bulk mailings?

Please send your response via email to DrRecumbnt@aol.com in a letter form or you can call them into our voice mail at ph#206-630-7200, press # to skip the long lead in. Read question number and your answer.

Viva Recumbency!

Robert J. Bryant

1996 Interbike Trade Show Report

by Robert J. Bryant

Whew! I just got back from my marathon trip to LA. Seven days of fun that included three long days at the trade-show, a day test riding at People Movers, and the Big Bent Bash charity event, auction and ride at People Movers on September 21st. This was the highlight of the trip.

Interbike is the largest bike show in North America. This year it was larger than ever before, filling nearly five halls. Many RCN Crew members were concerned about seeing everything, so we banded together with a plan. We'd meet once during the day to trade scoops, rumors and take notes about where we needed to go and within three days our mission was accomplished.

Every Interbike show has several trends and... attempts at trends... and attempts by the corporate guys to influence trends. This year was no different. There was lots of swag and style with the grunge-like-party animal booths of the likes of Bontrager. There was loud music, beer, old furniture, chain-link fence and an old Chevy Biscayne wagon with bike racks. The karma was detected the moment you set foot in the large hall. The mountain bike crowd seems to be even more fixated on motorcycles at this year's show. The downhill bikes are starting to look like motocross racers. There were Nexus equipped Harley bikes, wannabes, low-riders and cruisers were prevalent, again. Though it now seems that Shimano is heavily promoting and subsidizing the Nexus comfort cruiser thing. Along with this whole scenario came the "babes on bikes." Everything from streaked and dyed red hair at the Schwinn booth (working overtime to lose the good guy image), to a belly dancer, to the skin-tight-shrink-wrapped plastic miniskirts, Lycra bodysuits to bikinis with stiletto heels. There were many notable show personalities in attendance. There was the glamorous lady racer Olympic Cyclist Paula Pezzo. According to *Bicycling Magazine*, at least one person asked to touch her Olympic gold medal. Another was the king of swag himself, Gary Fisher, decked out with triangular glasses with orange lenses, a goatee and a suit made from what looked to be somebody's missing velour couch. All kidding aside, Fisher bikes were some of my favorite wedgies from the midwest corporate kings. Cruising the halls of Interbike was none other than Fast Freddy Markham and Gardner Martin who were busy promoting their upcoming Easy Racer Gold Rush 1997 speed records attempt campaign.

RECUMBENTS

In his annual trade show talk, "Trends in the bike Industry," Jay Townley said that with the aging of the baby boomers the time for recumbents has come. ATP and Rans reported an increased awareness and more booth activity than in years past. With the trend toward comfort from Gary Fishers SUB's (Sport Utility Bikes) to the Shimano Nexus/cruiser thing, the decade of the comfortable bicycle has arrived. Whether or not recumbents are included remains to be seen.

ATP VISION had a stylish double booth with new graphics, a Double Vision, R-42 LWB



The Vision VR-30 "Metro" recumbent. The above bike is a prototype. The handlebars and stem have changed for the production version—courtesy of ATP Vision

USS with an ATP Primo 16" front wheel, R-45 SWB USS with custom paint and Zzipper fairing and a BIG surprise in the brand-new ATP VR30 Metro compact bike. The Metro has a 20" (406mm) rear wheel and a 16" x 1-3/8" front that will use the ATP/Primo tire. The frame has the same steel main tube as the R-40/42, a custom telescoping ASS handlebar/stem combo and it comes in red or metallic blue. The VR-30 has a sliding seat that is similar to the standard Vision seat, but has a higher back and a fixed recline angle. The "Metro" comes as a 7-speed with the popular Shimano Nexus-7 (est. \$800 retail) and an upgrade version with a Sachs 3x7 equipped 21 speed (est. \$850 retail). The coolest thing about the Metro is its rear suspension and its capability to fold back under the bike. This compact machine is the newest entry into this popular recumbent category that seems to be taking the bicycle industry by storm. This could be the recumbent folder that we've all been waiting for. The folded dimensions are 58" x 24" x 10" as the suspension folds, the stem/bar removes and seat quick releases just like the other Vision models. The VR-30 Metro was most definitely the BEST new recumbent of the show.

Visions will be getting some spec-changes for next year that include updated Shimano drivetrains as well as new paint colors. All Visions will be available in red or metallic blue. The R-44 is available in green too. The R-45 and R-85 are custom painted to order. The R-40 will also retain its \$995 price point. Look for cosmetic refinements on the frame that include improved cable routing and wedge cuts on the head tube side-brace plates.

The 21 pound dual 650C wheeled Vision Sabre was not at the show, though it is listed in

Vision VR-30 Metro Spec

Featuring a suspension frame, this nimble about town machine is easy and fun to ride. The VR30 is available with 7 speed Shimano Nexus internal gearing (like a 13-32 cassette) or a 21 speed Sachs 3x7 derailleur system (12-28 7spd.cassette). An ideal "spur-of-the-moment" bike, the VR30 folds for easy storage in your car, closet, or just about anywhere.

- 2" TIG welded steel mainframe
- MMC Suspension System (Various elastomers available)
- Collapsible for transport or storage
- Alloy 170mm crank w/52-tooth ring
- Shimano Sealed Cartridge Bottom Bracket
- KMC UG50 Chain
- Alloy front brake
- 1-1/8" threadless head set
- Alloy front hub, quick release
- Alloy rear rim 20" (406)
- Alloy front rim, 16" (349)
- 29.5 pounds
- Available in Red or Metallic Blue
- \$800 (Nexus 7)
- \$850 (21 spd.)

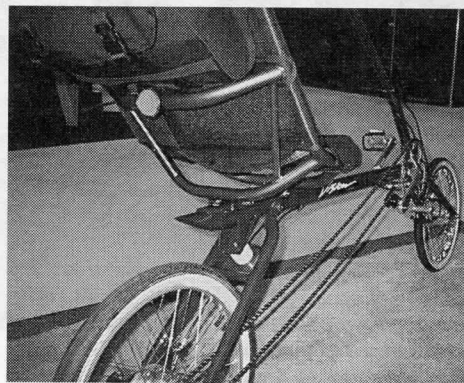
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The VR-30 caused quite a stir in the Vision booth (Note: updated stem and bars)



The V-Rex24 was displayed at Interbike.
Photo courtesy of Rans



The VR-30 from the rear

METRO TEST RIDE

by Robert J. Bryant

The ATP Vision guys were nice enough to come to our local Low Down and Laid Back Recumbent cruise in early October to give us a "Metro" preview. The test bike was the Interbike show model and is equipped with a Shimano Nexus seven speed hub matched with a 52-tooth single front chainring, a rear Nexus roller brake and a side-pull front brake. The gear inch range is about 32-80, which seemed like an optimum gearing selection for urban riding and bike trail cruising. The Nexus shifts as well as the best index systems, clicks quickly and quietly into each new gear and there are NO indexing adjustments or derailleurs to contend with. This drivetrain offers seven different gear ranges that cover all but the most extreme granny low hill climbing gears and those who like to pedal at much above 20 mph. The Nexus is very easy to use. Enthusiasts may opt for the more complete range of the 21 speed Sachs 3x7 equipped model, though the Nexus seemed like it was designed specifically for the VR-30.

About twenty riders and families arrived on a chilly overcast fall morning, many came just to get a first glimpse of the Metro. In the thirty minutes prior to my blasting of the Air Zound horn (signaling the five minute mark to the beginning of the ride) a dozen or so people were able to try the Metro. It has a fairly simple elastomer-sprung swing-arm suspension. The swing-arm also folds back under the bike for storage. This particular version was equipped with the very springiest elastomer (there are three different elastomers for riders of different weights) used to demonstrate the form and function of the suspension for the trade-show goers. The velvety-smooth feel of the suspension is incredible. One ride is all it will take to spoil you for good. ATP's Greg Bower pleaded with RCN circulation manager, Marilyn Bryant, to ride it off a really big curb in the parking lot. Marilyn just may be the toughest recumbent critic here at RCN, though she really liked the Metro, "The Metro is very user-friendly. It tracks and steers easily, has a great seat and suspension. The round main tube really adds to the Metro's good looks."

Look for Vision VR-30 Metro to come off the line in early January. You can order one right now and insure your place in line as this is going to be one popular ride. This new bike will undoubtedly be a revelation for lovers of the compact recumbent style.

FEATURES AT A GLANCE

- User friendly Nexus 7 speed (or 3x7 21 spd.)
- Very smooth suspended rear end
- 16" X 1-3/8" 90 psi Vision front tire.
- 20" X 1.5 406mm (BMX size) rear tire
- Vision seat with higher back
- Telescoping stem/riser (stem clamp allows use of custom handlebars)
- Lower priced than the BikeE, EZ-1 or Tailwind
- Round tube steel frame
- Watch for an AngleTech VR-30 with Sachs Elan 12 spd. hub.

their dealer catalog, "coming in 1998...or sooner." Rumor has it that a limited run of very pricey Sabres may be available sooner than 1998.

The **BikeE** Crew had a new island display with several variations to the popular BikeE theme. New for '97 are a Performance package that includes a 16" x 1-3/8" ATP/Primo front tire on an aero-rim with (count 'em) twelve spokes on the front matched with a 20" x 1-3/8" Primo rear on a 36 hole aero-rim for the rear. The kit also includes road caliper brakes. The show bike was fitted with Sachs side-pull brakes. The performance option will retail for about \$100. A "Heavy Duty" option will also be available next year. This includes the stock front wheel and tire matched with a HD 20" rim, 36 spokes and a 20" x 1.95 V-Monster tire. Seven foot-tall BikeE sales guy Doug Oxsen will be emphasizing the XL BikeE model this year. This includes a longer frame and wider handlebars. Six foot plus riders should definitely consider the BikeE XL.

The **Rans** Crew had a small but stylish booth with the "Speed Comes Pain Goes" pitch on the backdrop. Inside the booth was a gorgeous Shark Skin (grey with pearl over the top) V-Rex24 and

a Marshmallow-Pearl White Screamer and the very cool Rans Zero-G suspended cruiser up on a wind trainer. Rans dealers and candidates were invited to have their pictures taken on the Screamer. Speaking of the Screamer, it survived the midnight unofficial Interbike tour of Anaheim with the MTB crowd. For all of you bent-heads who feel the need for a wedgie now and again, the Zero-G has a wide base seat that takes a lot of the pressure off. The seat is mounted farther back on the bike almost giving it a semi-recumbent status (but not quite). The Zero-G has a swing-arm suspension and an Offroad suspension stem. Rumor has it that AngleTech has built a few 21 speed Zero-G's using a Sachs 3x7. For 1997, all Rans recumbents come equipped with the new 3" foam base, rider's choice of high/low back seat and a Ritchey Q.R. skewer (better cam action) and Rans nut-plate under the seat that locks the seat in place. Rans also has new seat bags for 1997. The Rans bikes have the best in-house paint of any recumbent at the show.

Rans didn't have any new models at the show, but we do expect some refinements to be