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The Competition Bicycle: The Craftsmanship Of Speed



Synopsis

The Competition Bicycle will inspire cyclists and design lovers alike. The evocative, detail-rich photographs display the history of the bicycle, from racing high-wheelers to modern racing bikes with carbon-fiber disc wheels. Exceptional handcrafted machines ridden by great champions illustrate milestones in the mechanics and craftsmanship of bicycle design. This volume also features iconic bicycles that played an important role in the history of the sport, from the bicycle that sent Eddy Merckx over the finish line in his last world championship win, to those of tandem teams who tackled the hour record, motor-paced track racers that exceeded 80 mph on the wooden boards, to California's mountain-bike pioneers. Historic images complement the stunning new photography that illustrates each machine in exquisite detail while celebrating the evolution of the sport, object, and machine. The Competition Bicycle is sure to be treasured by all who appreciate magnificent masterpieces of vintage and contemporary design.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a picture book history of racing bicycles, starting with high wheel track racers from the late 1800s through to modern hour record track bikes. In between are all sorts of racing bikes, including road, track, tandem, and even a "newspaper courier racing" bike. The authors did their best to find the actual bikes ridden by great cyclists like Fausto Coppi, Gino Bartali, Eddy Merckx, Greg Lemond, Sean Kelly, and others. The photographs are beautiful, usually focusing in on innovative or just plain strange takes on derailleurs, brakes, chainrings, cranks, etc. I got this book on a Tuesday, let it sit until the weekend, and then couldn't put it down. Usually, with picture books, I pretty much

ignore the text, but I got hooked on the text here, looking for explanations of how this or that worked, why it was designed as it was, and so on. If anything, I'd liked to have seen more of that. The 75 year anniversary Campagnolo picture book did a little better job of that, but of course they had a different job -- celebrating and explaining all the Campagnolo innovations. There are 34 bikes in all. Here are some highlights:- Frank Bartell's Willy Appelhans Six-Day from 1935- Rene Vietto's Barralumin aluminum framed Tour de France bike from 1948- Bruce Waddell's Cinelli Supercorsa from 1965- Merckx's De Rosa (branded Eddy Merckx) from 1974- Francesco Moser's bizarre hour record bike from 1984- Andy Hampsten's Landshark (branded Huffy) from 1988. In the back of the book are geometries and dimensions for each of the bikes. There's nothing from Jacques Anquetil, Bernard Hinault, Miguel Indurain, Graham Obree, or Lance Armstrong. The newest bike in the book is Tony Rominger's 1994 hour record bike, so Armstrong may just be considered too recent. All in all, a beautiful book. If anything, I just wanted it to be bigger and more complete.

Although the profiles start off with one big wheeled Penny Farthing, this book is very much about the competitive road racer, with one Mountain bike thrown in. The photos are atypical high quality images expected in a coffee table book, as is the size and format. An interesting aspect of these bikes is that each bike profiled was hand-built, and for the most part the bikes are all in original condition with a few that look as if they were frame up restorations. Also, just about every bike profiled is an original machine with an actual competition history. As stated in the closing line of the preface "These are the actual bikes on which great champions and other competitors surged towards the finish line". My son and I read this book the second it came in the mail - we are always impressed by how little the bike frame has changed since its first conception. It is almost impossible to tell the difference in the bikes profiled in this book from 1894 to modern variations. An interesting aspect of the book is the Specifications pages near the end that show each bike frame's angles and variations, as this was about the only way to truly tell that there were differences in the frames. I am always interested in the variations of the technical components and mechanisms found on bicycles and how something often appears years ago and then because it is so ahead of its time fades out of production before reappearing as the new look. There is quite a bit of that to find in these bikes just as there is quite a bit of items that are well put to rest and retirement. It is also interesting to see items that go and come a few times like tapered cotter bolts holding crank arms to BB hangers. If I had to point to the one item in this book that is my favorite bicycle component it would have to be the design and sizes of the front cranks. There are some truly large cranks on some of these bikes, as well as some beautifully designed ones.

An updated version including the last 10 + years would deserve the 5 stars. Still the book has nice pictures of bikes that made history and mark important moments in the development of the race bike as we know it.

My wife gave me this book for Father's Day and it's great. I have a lot of bike picture books and this is a great addition to the collection. It was done in a way I didn't expect and I like it. The price is great, the pictures excellent, detailed pics are well chosen, and there is some good history writing. Gracias, mi amor.

Great gift for a bike-nazi or just his friend and a common interest in art with mechanical form and function. Great sculpture art and inspiring rides. Bike Fetish.

This book was a gift to our son. He reports that he thinks this is a great book. My only complaint is that the book arrived with the cover crinkled in one corner.

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