



IN GOOD HANDS



Emphasizing grace and craft over technology and marketing, the North American Handmade Bicycle Show enters its second year.

THINK OF IT AS THE ANTI-INTERBIKE. There are no half-naked girls, no swarms of dealers toting swag bags full of stickers and posters signed by half-naked girls, no uniformly gaudy displays of next year's entire line of cookie-cutter bikes sourced in China and, maybe most tellingly, no hype. And unlike Interbike, there is not much in the way of aluminum, or carbon fiber. There's some, for sure. But the stars of this show are steel tubes and intricately thinned and carved lugs, and an emphasis on care and craft and style. Mark Norstad of Paragon Machine Works, himself an exhibitor at the show, summed up the beauty as well as the paradox of many of the bikes on display: "Lugged frames are heavier, weaker and take much more labor than TIG welded frames. However, I do have a certain admiration for the workmanship that goes into one

of them. Seeing these frames is kind like of like watching a steam locomotive or a sailing ship: completely obsolete compared to what is available through other technologies, but they're so cool..."

It's the North American Handmade Bicycle Show, a quiet affair masterminded the year before last by framebuilder Don Walker as a means for the folks who still build bikes the old fashioned way—by themselves, in very limited numbers—to get together in one place and show the world what they are doing. In 2005, the show debuted modestly in Houston, Texas, a small event with 23 exhibitors, and about 770 people stopping by to view their work. This spring, it moved to San Jose, grew to 86 exhibitors, and featured examples of bikebuilding that completely blurred the lines between art, craft, and fanaticism. Walk-through traffic quadrupled, with 2648 show attendees over the course of three days. The following pages highlight some of the more sublime examples of this craftsmanship, as well as the heads and hands that created them.

photography by morgan meredith

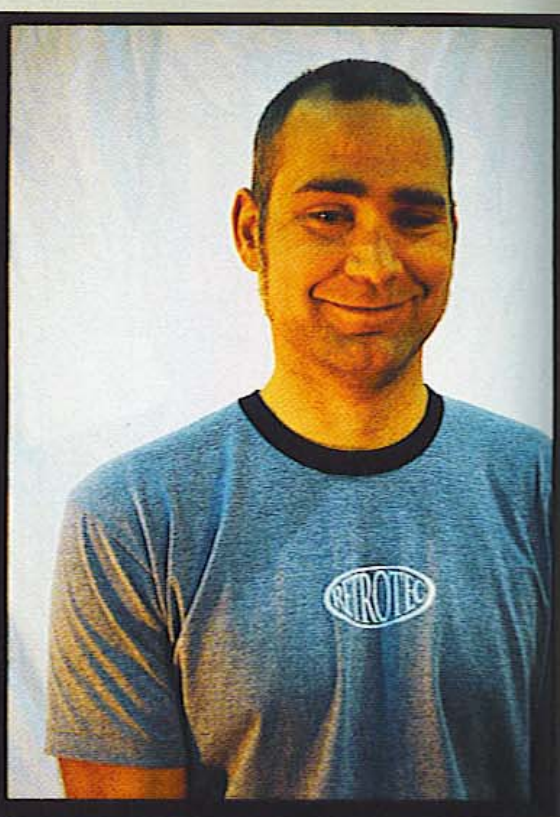
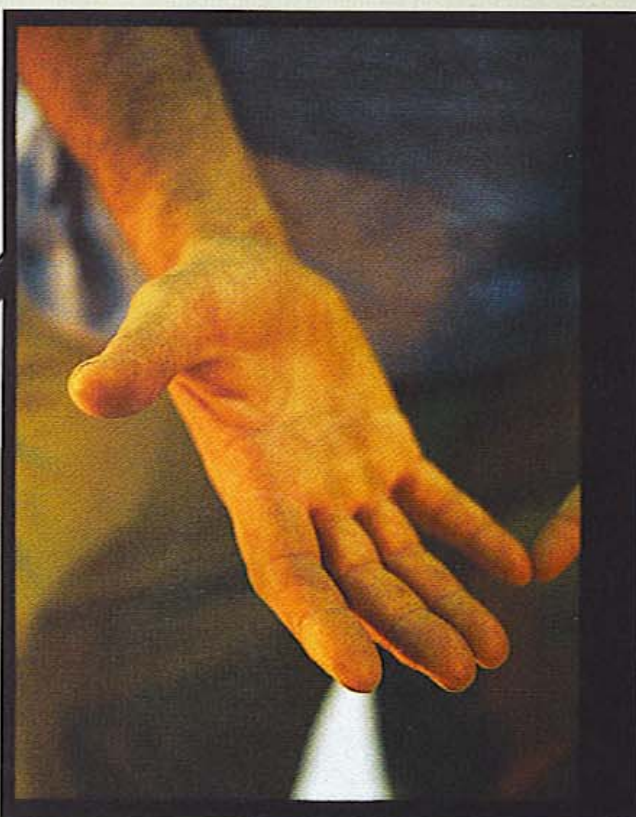


"Fourteen years. I never thought I'd hear myself say that."

JEREMY SYCIP/Sycip Designs/Santa Rosa, CA. Looking younger than his 35 years, Jeremy Sycip has nevertheless spent some heavy time behind the torch. After apprenticing with Paul Sadoff, and attending the United Bicycle Institute's framebuilding school, he went into business with his brother, Jay. They blend classic techniques with modern materials, working with steel, titanium, aluminum and carbon fiber, and finish everything with a dedicated and careful style that is uniquely their own. Now, Sycip employs five people, has a dedicated powdercoat facility in-house, and spits out between two and three hundred frames a year, with Jeremy handling the torchwork on every frame.



CURTIS INGLIS/Retrotec cycles/Napa, CA. 37-year old Inglis has singlehandedly resurrected the Retrotec brand. It's only fitting, since he got his framebuilding start working for Bob Seals making the original Retrotecs 13 years ago. "Retrotecs were why I got into bikes in the first place," he says. Currently building about 50 frames a year, with prices starting at \$1100, Inglis brazes gracefully arced and precisely curved, steel-tubed homages to cruiser-dom to life as rideable, raceable modern bikes. They just happen to look like old cruisers.



"I can't stand it when they don't fit right. I can't stand it when they don't work right. I can't stand it when they don't look right. It's all equally important."

