

Velo Vision Sample Article

This PDF is a sample of the material in *Velo Vision* Issue 29, March 2008. The contents page is shown right.

To get an idea of our current output, please visit

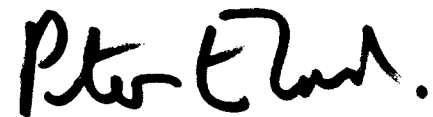
www.velovision.com

where you will find, amongst much else, full subject/author indices, sample articles to download and an online shop where you can subscribe.

If you have any problems or suggestions about the magazine in general, or this PDF article in particular, please email me at

peter@velovision.com

I hope you enjoy the read.



Peter Eland
Editor and Publisher,
Velo Vision

Technical notes

This Acrobat PDF file should display correctly on almost any computer. If you encounter problems the first thing to try is to download the latest version of Acrobat reader from the Adobe website: www.adobe.com

If that fails, please send me an email and I'll try to sort it out.

Small print

I don't much like copy protection and legalese, but a few things need saying:

You are free to print the document out for your personal use, but not for resale or for anyone else. Please do not make it available online without permission.

To protect the copyright of *Velo Vision* and of our contributors, modification of this document, and copying of the contents, may have been disabled.

Words and images remain copyright *Velo Vision* and the original contributors. Please don't reproduce anything without express permission.

Velo Vision is published quarterly by Velo Vision Ltd. Subscription details, news and updates can be found on www.velovision.com

ISSN 1475-4312

Velo Vision Magazine
York Environmental Centre
St Nicholas Fields
York, YO10 3EN, UK
Tel/Fax +44 1904 438 224
(from UK, 01904 438 224)
Email peter@velovision.com
Website www.velovision.com

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Peter Eland
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Sue Archer
PHOTO ASSISTANT: Debz Butterworth
ART DIRECTOR: Brian Holt
WEB PROGRAMMER: Simon Ward
PRINTER: Stephens & George Magazines Ltd

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE:
Issue 30: June 2008
Issue 31: September 2008
Issue 32: December 2008
Issue 33: March 2009

Velo Vision is a member of INK, trade association of the alternative press in the UK. www.ink.uk.com

VELO VISION AND VELO-VISION
We weren't first with the name. *Velo-Vision* (note the hyphen) is a bike shop in Körten, near Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany. *Velo Vision* magazine exists in friendly harmony with *Velo-Vision* in Germany.

Velo Vision is printed on paper produced from sustainable forests to Nordic Swan standards.



COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Riding the Cadenza. Photo: Peter Eland.

OPPOSITE: The weir on the River Ouse at Naburn Lock near York provides a turbulent backdrop. Photo: Peter Eland.

- 4 News**
The amazing Shweeb, a longtail round-up, Sheldon's passing, an 8-speed Brompton, full 2008 events list and much more...
- 8 NAHBS 2008**
Reporting from Portland, Oregon, at the North American Handmade Bicycle Show
- 12 Travel in tandem**
A voyage up South America by upright and recumbent tandem
- 16 Review: Batavus Adagio NuVinci**
We review this flagship Netherlands town bike, complete with revolutionary NuVinci transmission
- 20 Review: Santos SUB**
The SUB Rohloff on test, a custom-configured urban utility bike with a formidable frame
- 24 Review: Dahon Cadenza 2008**
Reviewing this capable full-sized-wheels folding bike, complete with Alfine hub gearing
- 28 Hub gear heaven**
A detailed report on four cutting edge transmissions on review this issue: Shimano Alfine, SRAM i-Motion 9, NuVinci CVT and the Rohloff Speedhub.
- 32 Review: Yuba Mundo**
An affordable, super-rugged workbike from Germany put through its paces.
- 36 Short Reviews**
 - 36** Ledal pedal lights, plus Hebie's Bigfoot two-leg stand and steering damper
 - 38** Arkel's convertible panniers: the Bug rucksack and the Briefcase laptop bag
 - 40** Books: *Annie Londonderry, The Full English*, and *Pedal Powered Planes...* plus a Pitlock update
 - 42** Lights fantastic: the twice-as-bright B&M IQ Fly front light, and SRAM's D7 hub dynamo.
- 44 Readers' bikes**
 - 44** Comfort by Pedersen: A rider in Sydney, Australia is delighted
 - 48** Trikes drive trains in Germany, plus a Ruko update.
- 50 Letters**
Caravanning through the years, Tikit thoughts, Moonsaddle musings and more
- 52 Subscribe to Velo Vision**
How to subscribe, back issues, and details of our distributors worldwide
- 53 Advertisements**
The first place to look for specialist products and services

TOO MUCH TESTING!

This is an issue somewhat stuffed full of reviews: perhaps too many. I think we've done justice to everything we've tested, but with a total of four bike tests plus masses of short reviews, it's been something of a logistical challenge.

Everything needs to be ridden as much as possible. Everything needs to be photographed several times: first while still clean, and then in use, preferably when it's sunny, and when I can persuade some of my friends to come out on a bike ride and have their pictures taken for the action shots.

Then, between sending the magazine to print and mailing it out, I'll try to get the review bikes cleaned, disassembled, carefully packed up and sent off. After that there's a few glorious weeks of actually having some spare space at home and in the office before the next batch of test bikes arrive, usually in huge cardboard boxes...

I'm certainly not complaining: I know how lucky I am to get to try all of these interesting bikes. I hope our reviews allow you to share some of the pleasure I take in riding them. And I'll try to scale back a bit for next issue!

Peter Eland



SETTING THE SUB STANDARD

The SUB from Santos Bikes in the Netherlands combines a robust, versatile frame with a specify-it-yourself order process. Does it all add up to a convincing package?

BACKGROUND

Santos are a medium-sized manufacturer in the Netherlands specialising in relatively high-end bikes. They have a good range of 'standard' models, including a tandem which we hope to be reviewing next issue. Any bike in their range can be extensively customised via their online ordering process or via dealers, giving the customer almost complete control of the specification. The ordering system prevents incompatible combinations of parts, and provides a running total of weight and price. Actual supply of the bike is always via dealers, so that proper service backup can be assured.

The SUB (Suburban Utility Bike) is perhaps the most versatile of all their bikes: various builds are possible which set the bike up as a practical commuter, as a tourer, as a stripped-down fast city bike or, like the bike we tested, as a stylish cruiser. Santos tell me that the SUB is also widely used in the Netherlands as a robust base for police and paramedic bikes. The frame is available in two sizes and in many standard colours, and custom paintwork is also possible.

Santos Bikes have a dealer network across Europe and beyond, and have recently extended this to the UK. As we go to press the SUB is among the Santos bikes available from MSG Cycles in Lancing on the south

coast and Ben Hayward Cycles in Cambridge. JD Cycles in Ilkley near Leeds stock the tandem. Further dealers are expected shortly, and the Santos website has the full list. An English-language version of the site should be live by early April.

Prices for the SUB start at € 699 for a frame, with complete derailleur-driven bikes from € 1169 to € 1499. With the Nexus 8 hub gear it costs from € 1299, and with Rohloff from € 2579. Our review bike was additionally fitted with a SON hub dynamo lighting system, Chris King headset, the leather grips, HS33 rather than HS11 brakes and other minor upgrades, bringing the price as tested to somewhere over 3000 Euros.

Notable options not fitted to our bike include the specially-designed

rear carrier racks, built by Tubus in steel or stainless steel tubing, and the Chainglider chaincase. Some items which were fitted to our bike, such as the Fat Frank tyres (instead of Big Apple 50s), Brooks leather grips and the B17 Aged saddle, don't appear on the automated custom pricing process but can be ordered via dealers.

At our request Santos also supplied a straight handlebar and stem which we fitted half-way through the review – you'll note on the pictures that the cable lengths are hence very much too long for this set-up. Blame us for this, not Santos – they'd obviously normally be cut down at the factory to match whichever bars you order.

UK prices were still being finalised as we went to press.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The SUB which turned up at *Velo Vision* was something of a surprise. I'd been expecting a more conventional town bike, with (black) Big Apple tyres, upright but vaguely straight bars, rack and mudguards – the sort of 'suburban utility bicycle' suggested by the bike's name and the manufacturer's website.

But I don't blame Santos at all for sending me the most spectacularly specified SUB they could – ours has wow factor in spades with its uniform cream colouring, striking frame design and radical handlebars.

The most obvious yet ingenious aspect of the bike is the colour, matching the cream walls of the super-wide Fat Frank tyres perfectly. It's a combination that works well: not just the colours, but

also in the way the chunky, oversized aluminium frame complements the 2.35" balloon tyres. Everything else is black except the tan leather saddle and grips, both from Brooks. The whole visual effect is very tidy and 'integrated', and drew admiring comments from all who saw it. Definitely a bike to be seen with.

The frame is made from oversized aluminium, with smooth and even welds providing 'soft' transitions between the tubes. The downtube is quite heavily ovalised, horizontally at the bottom bracket and vertically at the headtube: a sensible arrangement for maximum stiffness. Seatstay and chainstays are all particularly chunky. They're welded onto rear dropouts which provide a disk brake mount, rack/mudguard mounting threads and, in case



FAR LEFT: There's a Tubus-built rear rack option. **LEFT:** With flat bars the Santos has a very different look – and a more sporty and solid feel. **RIGHT:** Over-long cables and the upside-down brake levers are our fault; a factory flat bar install would be much neater.



you ever want to switch back to derailleurs, a removable derailleur hanger. On our Rohloff bike this was neatly cut back.

Instead of having a torque arm, the Rohloff hub uses the 'OEM2' mount – an adaptor plate which hooks around a bolt inserted into the lower disk mount hole. It's a tidy solution, and if you did eventually want to run a disk brake at the rear as well then the 'Speedbone' adaptor from Rohloff makes this possible.

The SUB has fine brakes anyway – Magura HS33 rim brakes are fitted front and rear, with the rear ones tidily tucked under the seatstays and incidentally supporting the Rohloff's shift cable guides. There's no front disk brake mount or front low rider bosses – perhaps not appropriate on an urban bike.

The headset fitted is a rather fine Chris King Perdido – a Santos model with stainless steel bearings is standard, but Chris King's are known as premium parts (and not cheap!). The system used is usually



LEFT: The Rohloff hub uses a plate running to the lower disk brake mount hole as a torque arm. If you ever want to go back to derailleurs, the right-hand dropout has a removable plate which could be replaced with a full derailleur hanger.

BELOW: The hub dynamo powers a 'retro' halogen front light. The mudguard-mounted rear light from Spanninga is battery powered.

referred to as 'integrated': it binds the fork and frame much more smoothly together visually, and the oversized headtube makes joints with oversized frame tubes easier. To be pedantic the SUB actually uses an 'internal' rather than 'integrated' headset: this means the bearing seats are pressed in rather than formed as part of the frame. It's arguably the better system. Anyway, it turned nice and smoothly over the course of the test.

Before we leave the frame note that there are plenty of spare cable stops fitted for alternative gear and brake systems. There's a set of bottle cages on the down tube, a stand mount behind the bottom bracket, and frame lock mounts on the seatstays above the rear brakes. Santos have a custom carrier made by Tubus which fits to the frame via the bolts holding the 'plug' at the end of the top tube. And we mustn't forget the eccentric bottom bracket, which allows easy chain tensioning for hub gears (or singlespeed/fixed hubs, come to that). The SUB has a traditional type which uses pinch bolts to lock the eccentric in place.

Our bike came with super-long

swept-back bars, supported by a tall Satori adjustable stem. This gives a very upright and relaxed riding position which many riders loved, and it certainly goes with the rest of the bike's cruiser specification. But to explore a different riding style on the SUB we also tried it with a rigid stem and relatively short flat bars. These, and the seatpost, were good quality items from Ritchey. The big shiny ding-dong bell on the bars fits with the retro look and is practical in cities, too.

The Brooks B17 Aged saddle and matching leather grips add a finishing touch of luxury and a splash of tan colour which rather matches the cream frame. The 'Aged' version of the classic leather touring saddle is meant to shape itself more quickly than the usual ones to your posterior. For short, urban journeys I found it fine from the start anyway. As with other Brooks saddles you need to remember to cover it if leaving it out in the rain – Santos provided a nice Brooks cover. The grips provide a firm handhold, and the metal ends clamp firmly and are nicely styled.

The wheels are built with black

spokes in black rims, and both Rohloff and Schmidt hub dynamo are the black versions. All very tidy. The wheels seemed well built, and they'll probably have an easy life anyway cushioned by those Fat Franks.

The dynamo hub is connected to Schmidt's own E6 headlight: this is a 3W halogen-bulb model without standlight. It does have a certain retro charm to the styling, but technically it really has been overtaken by the LED revolution: I'd have specified something like the new B&M IQ Fly instead (see review elsewhere in this issue). At the back a Spanninga battery-driven LED rear light fits unobtrusively to the mudguard.

Wide SKS mudguards are fitted, and very neatly. The front has safety-release Secuclips, and a tidy metal loop supports it from the fork crown bolt hole, which the oversized design puts further than usual away from the tyre. Good to see a neat solution rather than a bodge.

A colour-coordinated chain guard keeps your trousers clear of the pretty gold-coloured chain which drives the Rohloff hub via



Shimano Deore cranks and good-quality platform pedals. We'll leave discussion of the Rohloff hub itself to the hub gear feature elsewhere in this issue, where we compare four internal gearing systems in detail, so please do check that out. The Rohloff setup on the SUB worked flawlessly, with good straight cable runs, and provided more than adequate range at both ends for town use – I don't recall ever using top or bottom except when deliberately playing with the gears.

THE RIDE

This section almost needs to be written in two halves: first with the swept-back cruiser bars, and again for the bike with straight bars. It was like two different bikes...

With the original wide bars the bike really is relaxed: you're bolt upright, hands comfortably by your sides, and almost all of your weight is on the saddle. The steering, with all that leverage, is extremely light and easy to control. Extended all that way from the stem, the bars are of course quite flexible, but that doesn't matter, as there's basically no weight on them. It's a nice change to use the gears and brakes without the additional strain of supporting weight on your hands at the same time – very pleasant.

The Fat Frank tyre on the back wheel comes into its own with this upright riding position, with the lion's share of the weight on it. All that air gives a smooth ride with no danger of pinch flats. I didn't use the SUB much in the wet, but the tyres have retained their cream colour pretty well so far.

It's only when you move to the flat handlebars and rigid stem that you can start to really push the SUB performance-wise. With a more leaned-over position (and the saddle angle adjusted to match) the bike is immediately more sporty. The impression is that the connection of bars and stem to the rest of the bike is now solid, something that'll stand up to some force without give.

Acceleration is transformed – before, in the upright position, you trade your balance off against the pushes from alternate legs: you can't really anchor yourself on the

bars. In contrast the flat bars let you heave away: despite the inertia of the Fat Franks you can get moving quite snappily. Climbing hard up the steepest hill I could find, the frame felt solid and stable. It works well with the fat tyres I think: there's no give in the frame, so you need it in the tyres for comfort.

The Brooks grips had been fine on the swept-back bars: there's so little hand pressure that the circular shape doesn't matter at all, and they

drive was smooth with no rattle against the chainguard. This did the job, keeping my trousers clean. The ruthlessly practical might bemoan it not being a fully-enclosed type like the Chainglider, but go with it: it's all about the style.

Overall the SUB was a fun ride, both in the attention it generated and in the ride itself. Not a rattle occurred throughout the time we had the bike, and as ever, that always helps me feel good about the quality.



do so look the part. But with the flat bars and more weight on them, I'd prefer to swap them for something more contoured like Ergon grips (a SUB option).

The Magura brakes are excellent – smooth and progressive, and powerful with little finger pressure. I know from using them on my own town bikes that they're also very low maintenance indeed.

We'll deal with the Rohloff transmission aspects of the ride elsewhere in this issue, but the chain

CONCLUSIONS

The SUB we tested is a hugely appealing bike – arguably over-specified as a cruiser with its Rohloff hub unless you live somewhere hilly, but as a stylish and very well built bike it's both eye-catching and a pleasure to ride.

Yet the SUB's potential is perhaps just as great in some of the other possible configurations. The very robust and rigid frame, with chain tensioning built in via the eccentric bottom bracket, makes it

a promising platform on which to specify a bike for high-performance commuting or touring – and in those contexts the Rohloff makes absolute sense. Choose the 'Tubus and Chainglider' option and you have a capable low-maintenance all-rounder, and the attention to fit and finish evident in our bike would bode well for its longevity.

While at around € 3000/£2000 the SUB we tested is by no means a cheap bike, if you forego the Rohloff hub the prices are not so unreasonable. The frame is one of the most rigid and solid around, without being hugely heavy, and this will be particularly appealing for more powerful riders. The ability to customise the bike to your requirements and have it (well) built is also a definite benefit, even for mechanically adept cyclists. Few frames are as well suited to hub gearing. And then there's the visual appeal...

The SUB does face some competition. A similar premium custom build programme is also offered in the UK by Koga (their Signature range), and by a number of other European companies, but as far as I'm aware none of them offer a comparable frame. The price of a SUB could also get you a traditional custom-built steel frame: you then get to specify every aspect of the geometry, but you're unlikely to get a comparably rigid, compact oversized-tubing frame.

Overall, I was impressed by the SUB's quality and I very much like the flexibility of the custom ordering system. It's a robust bike that you could press into almost any sort of service except perhaps racing, and in its primary purpose as a stylish urban all-rounder it's hard to fault.

Peter Eland

AVAILABILITY

Manufacturer: Santos Bikes – www.santosbikes.com
UK dealers:
MSG Bikes, Lancing: Tel 01903 752308 or see www.msgbikes.com
Ben Hayward Cycles, Cambridge: Tel 01223 352294 or see www.benhaywardcycles.com