

WILD NEW BICYCLE DESIGN – THE ROUNDTAIL

posted by Tyler (Editor) - April 9, 2011 - 8am EDT



Avid cyclist and inventor Lou Tortola has just unveiled his Roundtail bicycle concept.

Born from hearing stories of too many cyclists complaining of back pain or other ailments, the idea is simple: remove the straight-to-the-tailbone seatstay design and replace it with something that'll soak up more of the road's bumps.

The design was tested to prove the concept and is said to retain the lateral stiffness while providing plenty of vertical compliance and, possibly, improved aerodynamics.

Now, cynics will have a field day, but we're always excited to see new concepts brought to life, that's how progress happens, and I actually think there's a

market for this. See why, and read the full press release, after the break. Want to see it in person? Head to the San Diego Custom Bicycle Show this weekend...

Tortola says he has plans to push the concept into commuter and mountain bikes, too, and build some in carbon fiber...all by Interbike in September. Ambitious to be sure, but I think the commuter segment might actually be a really good one for this design. First, the comfort aspect should be a strong appeal. Second, the rings could easily be covered with a lightweight fabric or shield to act as a skirt-guard. Third, they provide quite a large platform for mounting racks, though they would have to be offset toward the rear quite a bit for heel clearance. Personally, I doubt ever seeing the UCI approve the design, but that shouldn't stop anyone from dreaming...

PRESS RELEASE:

INTRODUCING THE ROUNDTAIL

An avid cyclist, Lou put in over 5000k (3000+ miles) on his road bike last year. He noticed that many cyclists were stopping riding, due to injuries and discomfort on long rides.

One day, he had an epiphany. What if "straight to your bum" seat stays were replaced with shock-absorbing rings?

He quickly went home and drew up a prototype on his computer, immediately knowing that he was on to something significant.

Armed with years of experience in metals and fabrication, Tortola produced tooling to create rings to test his concept, made sample rings, contacted custom bike builder Paul Taylor, and the Tortola ROUNDTAIL was born.

"Being somewhat of a traditionalist, I am typically skeptical when it comes to new bicycle designs, but the ROUNDTAIL works really well. The bike is stiff, lively and comfortable. What more could you ask for?" – Joe Parkin, Paved Magazine

RIGOROUS TESTING AND CERTIFICATION

The beautifully made frame was then sent to Microbac Laboratories, Inc., of Boulder, CO and tested in accordance with ASTM F2711-08, for Horizontal Loading Durability Fatigue, Vertical Loading Durability Fatigue, and Impact Strength resulting in a "pass" for this product specification requirement.

OFF-THE-CHARTS RESULTS!

Finite Element Analysis shows that the ROUNDTAIL design provides ten times the vertical flex, and over sixty times the shock absorption of a traditional frame. The unique shape of the rings is expected to provide aerodynamic advantages, and is ideal for promoting the corporate sponsors that cycling teams so greatly depend on.

Be sure to look for the Tortola ROUNDTAIL in the Taylor Bicycles Booth at the San Diego Custom Bicycle Show this weekend, and for Titanium, Carbon, Mountain and Hybrid versions available by the Interbike Show in September.

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