

# Tech Briefs

## 661 Uses Malleable Pads in Its Clothing Line

VALENCIA, CA—Valencia Sports Group has adapted a speed-sensitive, long-cell polymer called d3o to its protective clothing line. The speed-sensitive part is important. Bend the polymer slowly and it's quite flexible, but under impact, like striking it with a hammer, it becomes hard. "The Evo pad series with d3o combines the comfort and flexibility of a light pad with the protection of a hard-shell pad," said Gary McClelland, 661's vice president. Former DuPont scientist Richard Palmer developed the polymer but found little interest in it so he started his own company, d3o, to develop and market the material. 661 is the first cycling company using d3o, though Schoffel, Sessions and Spyder are using it in winter sports protective clothing. 661's \$100 Evo Knee and \$90 Evo Elbow use d3o protection and are cost-competitive with other pads. The company is working on gloves and full-armor suits using the super polymer.



## E-Type Front Derailleur Rescues Suspension

PHOENIX, AZ—Virtual pivots, I-Drive, trailing-links—there's so much happening around the bottom bracket of today's full-suspension bikes, that there is not only little room for front derailleurs to work, but there is no place to mount them. Some bike makers have dedicated stubby tubes that just carry the front derailleur, yet optimum placement may still be problematic, and 29ers have their own set of front derailleur issues. And most builders acknowledge that front derailleur designs are still lagging behind frame design. "We ended up taking Shimano's E-Type front derailleur, which is designed to mount off the bottom bracket, and pulling the bottom bracket mount off we were able to screw the plate directly to our frames," said Chris Cocalis, Pivot Cycles/BH USA president. Pivot Cycles and other companies adapting the E-type front derailleurs say the modification really works.

## MOA Sport and Polar Partner on Bib Shorts

OXNARD, CA—When Italian apparel maker MOA Sport, maker of Nalini clothing, inked a partnership deal with Finnish heart monitor maker Polar, what did you expect, reindeer pasta? Nalini's RodoDendro '08 bib shorts feature an integrated heart-rate monitor. "Basically, the back mesh brace has snaps molded into it that receive the transmitter. The shorts replace the normal chest brace," said Gianluca Caliarì, Albabici's president. Albabici distributes Nalini clothing. MOA Sport worked hard to locate the transmitter so there is no chafing on the cyclist's back. "Carrying the weight on the back is more comfortable than having the weight hang on your chest. It's like carrying it in a back pocket.

And the data transmission is great in that position," he added. Albabici is carrying the RodoDendro 1, which will retail for \$150. Albabici can be reached at (805) 385-3179.



## Mountain Bike Saddles Popular with Roadies

SILVERDALE, WA—Selle Italia's Yutaak saddle with its Vibram rubber inserts, extra rear cushioning, extended side skirt and extra tough non-slip covering, to say nothing of its screaming yellow highlights, yells off-road. Yet when Selle Italia's U.S. agent Mike Kalmbach fielded calls coming into the company's consumer phone number recently, most Yutaak buyers were road riders. "After a few calls I figured road riders' interest was due to the saddle's stylish look. After more and more calls, all from road riders, I started to investigate," said Kalmbach, ProNet's president and distributor of Selle Italia saddles. "It turns out it's the extra padding. Carbon bikes are so stiff that many riders are turning to a thicker padded mountain saddle for comfort," he added. Kalmbach believes road riders' preference for greater padding has been going on for a while, but it took the popularity of the Yutaak with road riders for him to see how strong the trend is.