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Sam Patterson, a SRAM alumni, has joined forces with FSA to promote a unique crankset for commuter bikes.

Taichung Special

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Heard In Taichung

Shhh! Shimano Secrets.

What Shimano plans to do for upcoming seasons is always a topic of conversation and speculation. So what's the component-producing powerhouse up to next season? While Shimano isn't officially part of Taichung Bike Week, we've gleaned some info we think is reliable from a variety of conversations. Word on the street is that Shimano's 105 gruppo is "fantastic." That comment



Gore's Lois Mabon fiddles with the fishes at her Ride-On display

comes from a product manager who's seen it. And what OEM suppliers like to hear is

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'The Most Important Time'

Taichung Bike Week Kicks Off Monday



Taichung Bike Week attendees check the exhibitor directory.

Hundreds of product managers are expected to attend Taichung Bike Week, an informal series of presentations where parts and components brands can pitch their 2011 offerings.

"This is the most important time period and meeting spot in Asia for the development of 2011 product," said Chris Speyer, vice president of Raleigh America.

Vendors are spread among

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Weather Gives Warm Welcome to Ride On

The Taichung sun shone on the opening day of Ride On Taiwan on Saturday, providing a warm start for the long-running event that marries product presentations with test rides.

Attendance was also on a warming trend this year, according to some exhibitors.

"There were more than 50 people in the room at the first meetings. Last year, there were only 20 or 25 people, and never more than 30," said Maurizio Bellin of FSA. "This event is built for OEMs and for product managers. I think we're a good opportunity for them."

Ride On limits participation to a handful of mostly non-



Hayes' Len Cabalter with the Black Flag tubeless wheelset.

competing brands and product segments. The event continues through Dec. 12 at the Freshfields Resort on the western

edge of the city.

Ride On this year has new

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Photos by Doug McClellan

Taichung Bike Week . . .

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three downtown Taichung hotels: the Splendor, Tempus and Evergreen, with another group at the Freshfields resort on the western edge of town. A free shuttle bus links all venues.

Dozens of Taichung-area bicycle factories have scheduled visits during the week as well.

Some exhibitors say they have booked many more ap-

pointments this year than in previous years.

"We're probably about 75 percent full," said Mike Kalmbach of ProNet, who represents Selle Italia. "Last year we were about 50 percent full."

Other members of the "First in Performance" group, which includes Campagnolo, Continental and SKS, also are see-

ing increases, organizer Erik Kimble said.

"Definitely there are twice as many appointments as compared to First In Performance last year," he said.

After several years of disorganized organic growth, two participants—Steve Fenton, owner of Pro-Lite in Taichung, and Katerina Rejchrtova, general manager of WTB Europe—worked with the city of Taichung this year to better unify planning.

Taichung Mayor Jason Hu will host a dinner for Taichung Bike Week participants on Tuesday at the Splendor Hotel.

Despite speculation that Taichung Bike Week is harming the established Taipei Cycle show in March, that apparently is far from the case.

A participant in both events said the Taipei show is oversubscribed by some 1,000 booths, and is considering moving part of the show back to its old venue near the Taipei 101 tower.



Left: Campagnolo's Tom Kattus is silhouetted against a presentation to Taiwan retailers. Above: Not speaking Chinese doesn't stop Mike Kalmbach from pitching Selle Italia.

Ride-On . . .

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organizers, Jonny Moletta and Luca Conte of Jonny Mole Design, an Italian advertising agency that represents FSA and other European bicycle brands.

Moletta said nearly 400 product managers had signed up for presentations from Ride On companies, double last year's number.

"This morning we had two full rooms," said Len Cabalera of the Hayes Bicycle Group. "There were not a lot of North Americans or Canadians, but a lot of internationals, including Australia and New Zealand," he said.

Hayes has participated in every Ride On since it started in

Europe nearly 10 years ago.

"This is a great event," he said.

For 2011, Hayes is focusing on some of its other brands, Cabalera said. Sun Ringle, for instance, will be coming out with the Black Flag pro wheelsets which feature Stanz NoTubes tubeless systems. Sun Ringle will offer only complete wheels that will retail in the \$600 to \$700 range.

Hayes is also relaunching several components in the Answer line of stems, bars, grips and other components. And—not to neglect its mainstay Hayes brake line—Cabalera said the company will be

introducing a significant new brake technology for 2011 but is keeping the details under wraps for now.



Photos by Doug McClellan

FSA owner Douglas Chiang, nursing a cycling injury.

Patterson Drives Ahead with FSA

Sam Patterson has his eye on urban commuters. And he's betting that a new crankset he designed will intrigue product managers looking to give 2011 commuter bikes a new look.

Patterson is no stranger to the industry. He helped put SRAM on the map with his work designing Grip Shift and other key SRAM components. He spent 14 years at the company before leaving in 2000.

Back in the mid-1980s, Patterson had been working on exotic fuel injection systems at a boutique R&D lab in San Diego. He met SRAM's Stan Day while skiing at Park City. Day had gone to school with Patterson's brother.

Patterson, tired of sucking in gasoline and diesel fumes, began kicking around product ideas with Day and eventually they came up with Grip Shift for road bikes. Day, a triathlete, wanted to shift from the drops without reaching for downtube shift levers.

The 55-year-old mechanical engineer has now teamed up with FSA to introduce the Metropolis Patterson Transmission (PT), a new internal two-speed planetary-gearred crankset. It seems Patterson has harbored a long-simmering dislike for front derailleurs. And this crankset eliminates them.

From a manufacturers' standpoint, installing the Metro PT is a snap on the assembly line. It's compatible with most conven-

tional frame designs. Forget installing and setting front derailleurs. No need for a chain guard to protect pant legs from grease.



Sam Patterson and the Metropolis transmission

Shifts are lightening fast. And you can shift under load at will.

It has a 1.6-to-1 gear ratio with drive gears of 28T and 43T. Use any rear cassette you like or internal-gear hubs. It's a cast aluminum crankset with an eye-catching, brushed alloy silver finish. If there's a downside, the unit weighs 1,780 grams, but Patterson said it can be trimmed to about 1,500 grams.

As for pricing, Patterson said his first year's goal is to produce a modest volume at a high enough price to keep him in business. Year two, as demand ramps up, pricing will come down. This was Patterson's first public unveiling of the system.

Douglas Chiang, FSA's managing director, said he's optimistic about the new addition to FSA's Metropolis group, a line of city-style handlebars, stems, seatposts and cranksets. Patterson has a multi-year agreement with Chiang.

Judging from the number of people test riding the Metro at Saturday's Ride On event at the Freshfields Resort and Conference Center, Chiang and Patterson have reason to be optimistic.

At one point, a European product manager interrupted a conversation to ask whether the system could be used with a belt drive. Patterson assured him that with some minor modifications, a belt-drive option would pose few problems.

The Metropolis PT was installed on a sleek Giant city bike. It looked great. A test ride confirmed Patterson's boasts. It shifts instantly and there's no balking when shifting under load. If there was a disconcerting moment it was the three-speed shifter. I initially kept searching for that third shift, but there was none. After a few minutes, it wasn't an issue.

Patterson said the system should appeal, at first, to the European commuting market. "It's a functional replacement for a front derailleur, the internal shifting is fast and works under load, it never derails and will fit any bike with downtube cable routing and fixed chain stays," he said.

—Marc Sani

Who's Where

Here's a guide to the brands and distributors at the various Taichung Bike Week hotels. A free shuttle bus connects all venues beginning at 8 a.m.

The Tempus

3T	Oval
A&J Ent.	Prologo
Campagnolo	Race Face
Clix	RST
Colmax	Selle Italia
Columbus	SKS
Continental	Speedlifter
Controltech	Syntace
Deda	Tange Seiki
Formula	Tioga
Fulcrum	TranzX
Funn	VP
JD	Wellgo
KMC	WTB
Kore	X-Fusion
Marwi	Xpedo
Marzocchi	Zipp

The Splendor

A-Rim	Pro-Lite
Alex Global	Profile Design
Alfred Thun	Reynolds
Alligator (Liu Yih)	Rotor
Am. Classic	Rystar
American Cycle	Shieny
Bellwether	Stevens
Chen Whua	Sugino
Alligator	Sunny Wheel
Cionlli	Syntek
Duro (Hwa Fong)	Taya
Fallbrook	Titec
First Bicycle	Uni Victor
Ison	Velimpex
Joy	Vuelta (Kemco)
Kemco	WM Trading
Kunshan Giant	Woodman (Ten on Ten)
Light Metal	WTB
Mach 1	X pace
Primo	Yaban Chain

Evergreen Laurel Hotel

Blanchi	Rigida
Ezpro (DK City)	Sapim
Pletscher	Schwalbe

Freshfields (Ride On)

Crank Brothers	Hutchinson
Fizik	Magura
Fox	Manitou
FSA	Mavic
Gore Ride-On Hayes	Sun Ringle
	Vittoria

U.S. May Raise Duties on Bicycle Parts

WASHINGTON, D.C.—An attorney for the Bicycle Product Suppliers Association says that duty suspension on some parts will expire Dec. 31 and will not be extended for 2010. Impact on pricing is uncertain since few in Taiwan are aware as yet of the issue.

Brock Landry with Venable LPP notified BPSA members that some parts will revert to their general classification under the Harmonized Tariff Schedules. Here is a summary of the parts affected:

- Child carriers, chain tension adjustors, chain covers, air horns, wide-angle reflectors, toe clips, head sets, seat posts and mechanical grips with an internal diameter of 2.223 centimeters.
- Sets of steel tubing cut to exact length with each set having the number of tubes needed for the assembly of a frame and fork.
- Certain bicycle wheel rims, crank-gear and parts, bicycle speedometers, unicycles and some types of brakes.

Some of these items have been entering the U.S. duty free while

others come in under reduced percentages. All duties will revert to the published schedule, Landry said.

"Having the tariff on tubing return to six percent was expected, so it isn't a surprise," said Denise Sutphin, co-owner of United Bicycle Institute, which imports Kaisei tubing from Japan.

"Because we work with a small Japanese company we couldn't order more tubing to take advantage of the free tariff. They just don't work that way," she added. "Plus, currency issues between the dollar and the yen have a larger impact on our business right now than tariffs."

Congress could renew the duty suspensions, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. Alex Boian, director of OIA's trade policy, said the bicycle provisions are among hundreds of duty suspensions set to expire. To qualify for duty relief, importers must demonstrate products have no impact on domestic manufacturers.

Heard in Taichung . . .

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that 105 may come in at a lower price than 2010. Will Shimano offer its highly touted Di2 system as part of an ultra-sweet Ultegra group? Possible, we're told. The company's Pro line of components, and its tri-bar in particular, gets electronic shifting capability. And tri folk do love to spend money. Mountain bike components get some razzle-dazzle as well. Look for cooling fins on Shimano disk brakes and a three-ply rotor that promises to run ultra-cool under heavy braking. Alivio gets a 9-speed cassette and was described as "super-tech looking."

Mavic Musings. Rumors continue to bubble up over Mavic's future, now that its parent company has loudly announced that it's willing to sell the iconic brand. Asking price: some 100 million euros, or about \$148 million, or so we're told. Only a handful of companies in the bike industry have the financial muscle to buy it, and few want it. Vittoria Group gets mentioned from time to time as a potential buyer. After all, putting tires on rims sounds good. But when asked, Vittoria executives duck the question. Others say Asian buyers may want it—and have the cash to buy it. There are lots of dollars stashed in China looking for a better rate of return, and it's easier and cheaper to buy a brand like Mavic than build one. Move production to Asia and a buyer could save a lot of money. The French, of course, would go ballistic. But, then, Mavic owner (and seller) Amer Group is a Finnish company. Still, it's a global world and the French will get over it.

More Spec for Campy? Speaking of iconic brands, Campy is aggressively seeking some OE spec with its Athena and Chorus gruppos. Folks at SRAM and Shimano aren't tossing and turning at night over lost sales, but Campy is out there pitching at a price

that makes it attractive for some to add a little Italian pizzazz to what's an increasingly homogenous carbon fiber road-bike culture. There's so much carbon fiber rolling on two wheels today that seeing more Campy spec would add some excitement to the segment.

An American in Taiwan. Erik Kimble owns Colmax International, a key Taiwanese distributor for the island nation's dealers—some 3,500 by one count. He also has a small operation in China. Kimble handles brands like Park Tool, Campy, Selle Italia, Continental, SKS, Kool Stop, Finish Line and others. Kimble, who speaks fluent Chinese, hosted upwards of 700 dealers Sunday at the Tempus Hotel, offering them a chance to look over 2010

products and meet with key company representatives.

Growing up in the Midwest, Kimble said cryptology fascinated him. And Chinese characters seemed like an unbreakable code. He studied Chinese in college, lived in China, and finally settled in Taiwan.

Kimble got into the bike business by chance. As a tri-athlete in Taiwan, he and his fellow competitors had

a tough time getting high-end European accessories. Someone suggested that he import them. He did and in 1993 launched his company. Kimble recently upgraded his computer system, but has never visited QBP, the leader in the distribution business, so he plans to drop in soon to see Steve Flagg's operation. Kimble's wife, meanwhile, plans to drop into the Mall of America.

—Marc Sani



Erik Kimble

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