



LLEWELLYN Custom Bicycles

Bespoke Bicycles, Handcrafted in Australia

Autumn 2009

OK, it has been a while.

A long time since the last news letter, eh?

Lots has happened.

Some of it good.

Some of it super.

Some of it exceptional...

...like getting married!



Mary Ann has settled into life in Australia {why would you live anywhere else?} and works in the Brisbane CBD, riding her nice Dave Kirk made frame to work.

But other than that, I have no certifiable excuse for not having produced a newsletter for so long. Enough of this, onwards!

For a few years a small group of talented and creative bespoke bicycle builders have been chatting amongst themselves about the niche business of hand making frames in the digital era. We exist outside the box of industry quantity-over-quality/profit-output-for-the-shareholders. Rather we're talented independents, expressing ourselves with our weekly output from the bench; in different materials: carbon, aluminium, titanium, and that exceptional material—steel.

The talk amongst this group was about mentoring new builders, providing an information database, and a go-to [place](#) for frame builders to ask a group of experienced builders for guidance and information on proven methods for both workshop skills and the business of running the show as a full time occupation. [The Frame Builder's Collective](#) is born:



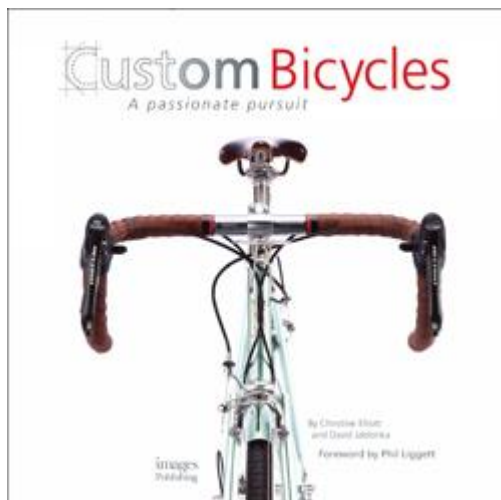
The Framebuilders' Collective's vision includes -

- Support and promote ethical professional framebuilder practices.
- Mentor and preserve proven framebuilding techniques and business practices.
- Pursue continued development and supply of quality raw materials used by professional framebuilders.
- Define our craft.
- Guidance for bicycle framebuilders entering the framebuilding trade.
- Act as a resource for dissemination of information and resources bringing positive attention to the profession of Framebuilding.

My peers wanted me on board as a founding member and I am very happy to be part of this. It is in its early days but as time passes there is much to do and will be done.

I think it is worth a visit [here](#) to have a read through the TFC founder's comments and where they come from.

This book belongs on your dining room table:



Late in 2007 I was contacted by Christine Elliott and David Jablonka about a book they were creating about custom bespoke bicycles. We got chatting and I told them about the North American Hand Built Show. So the short story is, they visited Don Walkers 2008 [NAHBS](#), we met, and they also chatted to a lot of cool hard working deserving builders that were at the show and others from around the globe. Time rolled on. Recently the www world has seen movement with the book:

“Custom Bicycles: A Passionate Pursuit”

– Christine Elliott and David Jablonka
Hardback, 240 pp., and illustrated profusely.

I have received my first copy in the post this week. It is chock full of good stuff and pics of many thriving talented artisans/engineers around the world who are working outside the mainstream industry. The easiest way to get your mitts on this nice book is here:

<http://www.imagespublishinggroup.com/index.cfm?siteaction=details&id=1139&masterid=33&ISBN=9781864703139>

Have a Captain Cook at some special pages here:

www.pezcyclingnews.com/?pg=fullstory&id=6959

Workshop News

As you all know, at the Caneby street cave

it's Steel

it's lugs

you know I am right

and let the others get on with the [Madness](#)

As I construct Llewellyn [Custodians](#) thoughts rattle around in my cranium. I file and shape and cook up these lugs and feed the silver into shorelines—these lugs I source from my creative peers—cool lugs, but the need for me to add my details to the lugs that I use on a regular basis has arrived...or rather I feel has overwhelmed me. I'm sketching and drawing. When the shavings settle and I have some 3D drawings ready I will give the Gladdies a preview tasting of the new Llewellyn Custodian lugs!

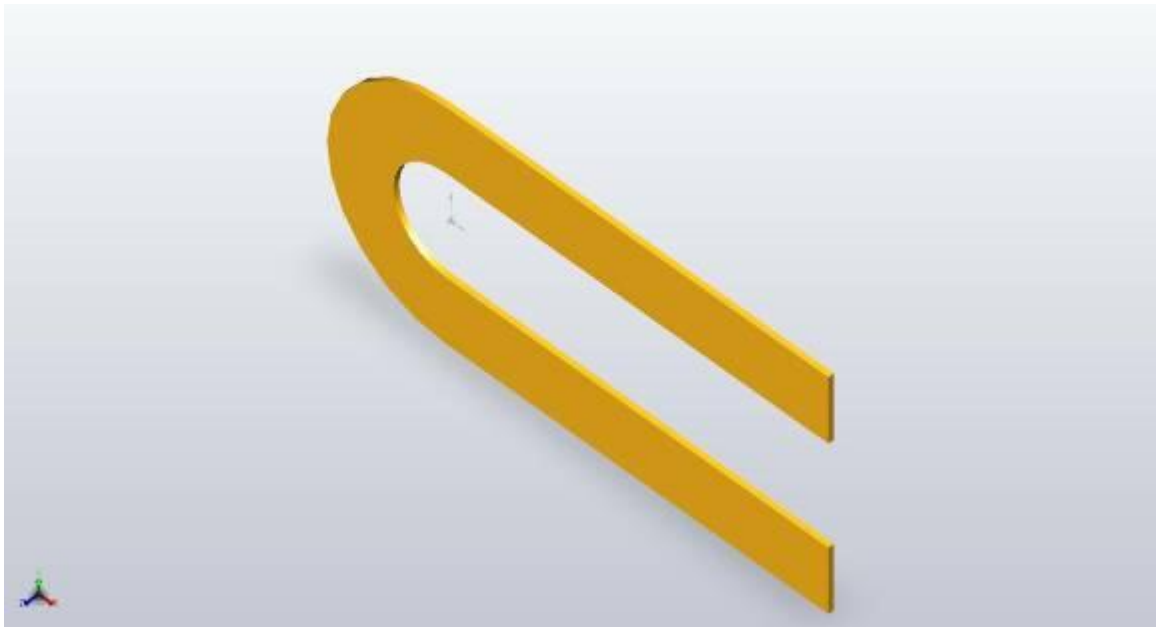
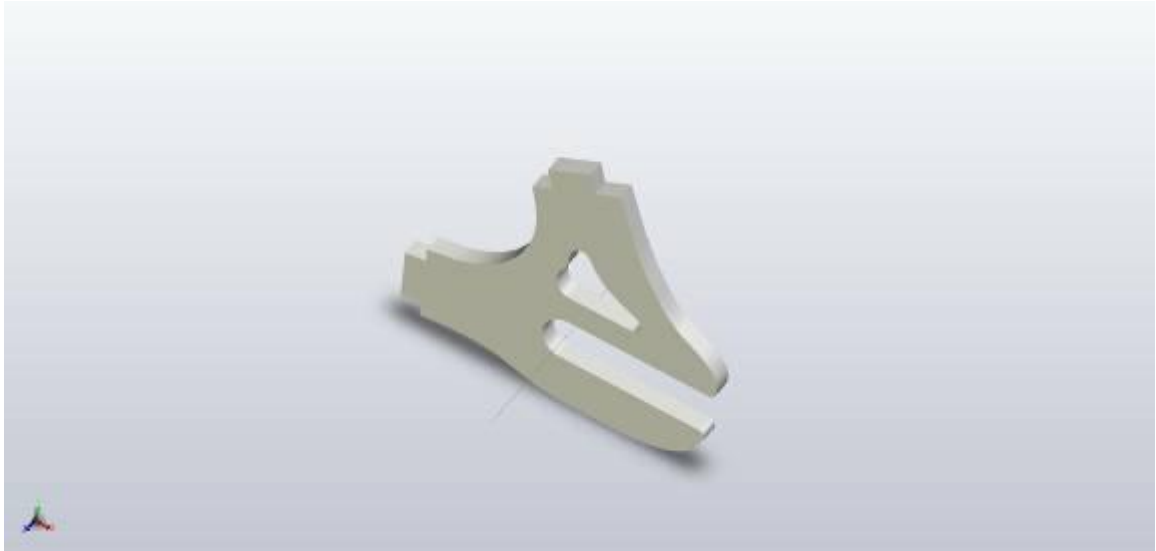
Another new project that has emerged from my Cave as it rattles to the sound of Radio National is my new track tips. Even in this era of relentless coffee shop rides with bikes laden with two types of scientifically sports drink, there are still some real race bikes out there being raced—Track Bikes.

I enjoy the purity of the build process of the track bikes I create each year.

For some time the available supply of track tips for bespoke builders have some little details that just fell short of my ideals. I wanted longer rear tip slots, allowing for a greater range of gear changes before changing both rear sprocket and chainwheel. Not important for road [fixies](#), but a nice feature for track bikes. The thing that bugged me the most about the available tips was the lack of material to allow me to finish the dropout tabs to sweet points along the stay and fork blades, especially when cutting the tapered stay tubes or fork blades to maximise the diameter for stiffness. And I needed two styles of front tips for curved and straight bladed forks to cope with the angles of cut-down seat tube/sloping top tube frames. Not that that the existing tips did not do their job or function, but to my mind's aesthetic they could be improved.

So I cranked up my cranium, did some sketches, cut up some 5mm plate on the mill, then hack saw and lots of elbow work with the files. I knocked up a prototype set of track tips with new stainless steel wheel bite facets and built a frame with them, all went well.

Back to the 3DCAD and tap tap tapped for a while on the keyboard for a full set of drawings:



Then off to a visit to the local LASER cutting firm, some discussion on tolerances {I pushed them on this} and a few days later, I return to collect my swag. Enough tips to keep me going for the next five years.



All is sweet

Leo's new Campy Record fixie was the first frame to get the new tips {Joe is painting Leo's bike at this time, pics later}.

Setting up the tip so the slot is truly vertical in the Llewellyn patented Tip Fixture toolie thingie:



Flux washed off the front tip after brass brazing



Filing and shaping. Better to have lots of material to remove than not enough to get the sweet shape



Front fork blades ready for the stainless steel wheel bite facets to be silver brazed to the tips.



The special Llewellyn facet brazing thingie, made from titanium {so the silver does not stick}



A bit more filing and the result is sexy smooth points along the fork blade.

The main thrust of the project is realised.



No bog filler here before Joe makes his magic with the spray gun

Repeat with the rear tips





The results have pleased me.

A lot of time and resources were spent on this track tip project but I have to do these things to be satisfied.

More News

Dazza will be away later this year. No Dazza here in August, September, early October.

Dazza is arranging for email correspondence while away.

I took up the offer of a 7 week mechancio trip with the Aussie U23 men's team in Europe, finishing off with the World Championships in Switzerland. I have **no plans** for taking up full time "*On the Road with the team again*" work but it is nice to be doing a stint in Europe again. (I did a 5 week gig in 2007) I enjoy the work and I know the ropes and I always enjoy working at the buzz of the World Road Championships. This trip will be #6 Worlds for me.

After the worlds there is this very promising hand made bike show in France

<http://www.francebikeshow.com/index-en.htm>



"the show is being held in an exceptional, even unique site : the oldest fort in France, built at the end of the 16th century on a small plateau overlooking the Isère River and with a magnificent view of Mont Blanc. It was classified as a historic monument in 1990 and ceded to the nearby village of Baraux who has been slowly but steadily restoring the buildings. The interior of the main hall where most of the stands will be located is magnificent but limited in size"

Is it nice to see a little sanity in contrast to the main stream Las Vegas consumption style bikes shows. {insert nauseous feelings}

Mary Ann and I are planning on going to the show, making it part of our short holiday plans after my national team duties are over. I'm not sure if I will exhibit, as there is not much time to prepare show frames before I leave in August. Customer frames come first.

We are also planning on catching up with another founding member of the TFC, Dario Pegoretti, while we are in Italy. He is just a few hours down the road from the team's base of operations.

There was a great interview with Dario in an issue of Rouleur magazine. Here are a couple of his quotes that ring my bells

“Watch the pros on TV the way they pedal. Probably I am an old man, but this is my opinion. I think it is more important to have a good position and learn to ride the bike correctly, than to have the latest carbon frame.”

“There is a reason to build a frame a certain shape, not just a question to follow the market-not just for money. I think it is stupid just to follow the market... It is more fun to make the market’ It is really hard of course”

-Dario Pegoretti

My last word is

Skip the coffee shop easy option

Get the maps out,

Pick out a hard Sunday route,

Make it a challenging ride

Maybe even take your fixie

You train for these days!

Get to bed uber early

Get up in the dark and go

Ride, see the sun come up

As the first early rays of sun appear, sit up, ride no hands and relax

And say

“This is nice”

“this is the life”

“this is why I do this”

Don’t stop, but for bottle filling and peeing, eat what’s in your pockets

Run the engine hard on some climbs

Get home

Tired

With aches

And feel good about having earned that next feed

And enjoy the glorious nap after

Take care and have fun

Cheers Dazza



David on his Llewellyn on the Stelvio.