

There was a time when we took our road bikes everywhere, in all seasons. Our frames and forks came ready with braze-ons for fenders as well as plenty of clearance to accommodate more rubber. We'd swap out wheels, mount fenders, and ride all week to school, train in wet weather, and ramble unpaved lanes and across fields---then we'd pare down, put on our best sew-up skinnies, and head for the weekend races. We had one bike that could really do it all, smartly designed for versatility and as uncompromising on trails as it was at races.

Times have changed and I'm lucky enough to have more than one bike. I love my dedicated race bike but it's not well-suited for paths, gravel roads, or even long easy days at half-speed on fat tires. Over the past few years I've thought a lot about the kind of bike I could ride on my fastest days with friends who love to hammer and climb but would also be right with fenders and a larger tire. Have I taken up a quixotic dream? Am I lost in mere nostalgia? It's hard to describe the relief and the joy I felt when first saw I Hampsten Cycles' Strada Bianca. It felt like comin' home. This was exactly what I was looking for.

Here was a bike designed to express the passions of one of racing's modern greats, Andy Hampsten who had raced and won in unimaginably bad conditions and who'd never settle for a bike that didn't perform. But this was no toss at nostalgia or retro styling. The Strada Bianca is up to date in materials and construction, offering options that could take it down either traditional or contemporary lines of design, all custom, *and* sensibly priced. In steel, titanium, or even aluminum, the Strada Bianca is the go-anywhere, have-it-your-way answer that brings modern cycling back to its best roots: a true road bike that won't keep you from the fast group and yet is designed for comfort and versatility over rough roads and long days in the saddle.

My own HC SB is titanium, wears a threadless carbon fork designed for standard reach (57mm) caliper brakes, and mounts fenders in only a few minutes. I took it to Europe last summer to ride with a fast group over a Tour de France stage, using race wheels and skinny tires. This winter I've been riding with fat tires and fenders on the wet, gravel-strewn roads of the beautiful Finger Lakes of western New York. The only thing still holding me back is me but the bike, the bike is everything I have ever hoped it could be, and honestly better than the bikes I remember as a kid. The design, the performance, and the remarkable versatility without compromise make the Strada Bianca a distinctive and astonishingly fun ride. There aren't many contemporary bikes conceived to perform with so many kinds of cycling in mind. The Strada Bianca may be Hampsten Cycles' most remarkable contribution to date and, as far as I can tell, the future looks bright.

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