



BIEGE JONES

Singletrack

Bikes are hard to forget. They have served as a major part of human history and culture. They represent freedom, escape and a lust for living. In 1900 the Denver Post reported that the Mile High City had more bikes per resident than any other city in the United States. For those craving a wild wheel adventure, there has never been a place better than Colorado. Denver and the surrounding areas offer some of the most impressive natural beauty for bikers in the world. There are countless paved and unpaved trails to explore. Coloradans and visitors alike can thrill in taking their bikes on trails with mountains, mesas and even metro views.

The benefits of biking are numerous. There's the aerobic aspect—biking is one of the biggest calorie torches around, burning around 600 calories an hour, depending on

weight. Furthermore, biking helps improve agility, motor skills and coordination, not to mention toning all of the major leg muscles.

When it's time to get geared, there are numerous resources throughout the metro area. Denverites can purchase gear from stores like REI and Dick's Sporting Goods as well as from a multitude of local bike specialty stores like Turin Bikes Ltd. (which also provides tune-ups without an appointment), Wheat Ridge Cyclery (which offers Women's Mountain Biking Group Rides and Women's Maintenance Clinics) and Colorado Bike Service (which offers rentals and supplies for the advanced cyclist). Custom bikes can be created at Pedal Pushers Cyclery on Quebec in Denver while Denver Adventures in Golden offers guided excursions for half and full days.

Bliss on a bike is not an uncom-

mon sentiment in the state. Paul Carter, a resident of Boulder, and owner of Carter Painting, is proud of his two-wheel collection—he owns a Trek Mountain Bike and a Bianchi Road Bike. Carter started his foray into bicycling in 1964, at the age of four. "I started to ride to keep up with the neighborhood kids," he says. But nowadays Carter finds the different benefits of biking alluring. "It's a good way to get and stay in shape. There is usually little impact on joints," he says.

Colorado has many state parks and national forests perfect for riding for reasons of fitness, sightseeing or just relishing the outdoors. The San Juan National Forest in the Southwest part of Colorado offers rugged trails through the San Juan Mountains, while the nearby Rio Grande also offers rides near the San Juan Mountains, and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Additionally, the

WHEEL APPEAL

TOP LEISURE
MOUNTAIN BIKES
(Rated by consumers)
*Prices are approximate

- SPECIALIZED
FSR \$900 - \$2,100
- GT Avalanche \$1,000
- Ibex Ignition 2 \$450
- Iron Horse MK III
\$1,900
- Gary Fisher Cake 3
\$1,300-\$1,600



Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests have numerous trails in the San Juan and Elk Mountains, as well as on the world's largest mesa.

And if you're in the mood for a ride near Denver, both Chatfield and Cherry Creek State Parks offer great trails. The longest trail in the metro area, and one of the oldest, runs beside the Highline Canal. Nearly 60 miles of trails run from Waterton Canyon to Buckley Air Force Base outside of Aurora. One break in the trail, Plum Creek creates a long detour through Chatfield State Park.

John DePalma of Golden Bear Bikes, in Broomfield, says that biking has become so multi-faceted that it's difficult to compartmentalize the sport. Mountain biking now includes downhill, freeride, cross-country and trails or street riding. Cross-Country is the most popular form of mountain biking and typically means, riding from point-to-point or in a loop, including climbing and descending on a variety of terrain. DePalma notes, that the most popular bikes for the serious rider, include, "Scalpel, Trek Fuel EX9 and Lynskey" bikes. And these recreational toys are not for the light of wallet. Some of today's high-performing bikes come with a

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Colorado has designated June as Bike Month

- May 17, 2008 BUENA VISTA BICYCLE FESTIVAL
- May 18, 2008 ASPEN CYCLING CRITERIUM
- May 23-26, 2008 IRON HORSE BICYCLE CLASSIC
- June 1, 2008 ELEPHANT ROCK
- June 15-20, 2008 RIDE THE ROCKIES
- June 27, 2008 BIKE TO WORK DAY

pricetag of around \$2,000. The Trek Fuel X9 is currently sold for around \$1,900 with prices as high as \$3,300. But for many, the price of a two-wheel ecstasy is worth the cost. Finding the right bike can mean the difference between being able to ride daily and wearing out faster than a Lance Armstrong finish in the Tour de France. If you're unsure about buying a bike that is a good fit, try Bicycle Village, with locations all around the Metro Area they offer a thorough online buying guide and clinics on becoming a stellar cyclist.

For DePalma, the best local trails, which are too countless to name, include Matthew Winters, near Morrison, which is a six-mile trail with rocky and steep areas. This is a trail that both beginners and advanced bikers can attempt. The area around this trail is scenic, the crowds are typically light and there are more challenging bits. Green Mountain is for the novice while Dakota Ridge is for the advanced.

The other trail that tops DePalma's hit list is Walker Ranch, just outside of Boulder, which happens to be on Carter's list as well. "Walker, Sourdough, Rattlesnake and Flagstaff are better in the summer," says Carter. The summer-friendly Walker area includes trails encircled with Ponderosa Pines and Douglas Firs, not to mention meadows, small streams and Aspen Groves. Walker Ranch boasts more than 3,778 acres of backcountry. There are more than 12 miles of multiuse trails at Walker Ranch. The Ranch loop is 8.2 miles, and the Meyers Homestead Trail is 2.5 miles, and both are open to mountain bikers.

Whether you prefer paved, urban trails or like to venture off the beaten path, Colorado's scenic landscape is a biking paradise. And for the simplest reason to try a trail and take up biking, Carter, who purchased his first mountain bike in 1983, sums up, "It's challenging and usually fun."

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RIDING THE ROCKIES

For a great general Mountain Biking resource check out bikingindenver.com

For trails in Colorado, trailcentral.com

For guided tours, coloradobc.com or denveradventures.com

For gear, abc-of-mountainbiking.com/shop/

REI (Flagship Store)

1416 Platte St.
Denver, CO 80202
303.756.3100
Multiple locations. For a location near you, visit rei.com

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS

Multiple locations. For a location near you, check out dickssportinggoods.com

TURIN BIKES, LTD.

700 Lincoln St.
Denver, CO 80203
303.837.1857
turinbikes.com

WHEAT RIDGE CYCLERY

7085 W. 38th Ave.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
303.424.3221
ridewrc.com

COLORADO BIKE SERVICE

41149 Highway 6 & 24
Dowd Park Business Center
Eagle-Vail, CO 81620
970.949.4641
coloradobikeservice.com

PEDAL PUSHERS CYCLERY

Lowry Town Center
200 Quebec St.
Denver, CO 80230
303.365.2453
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