

Velo Vision Sample Article

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If you have any problems or suggestions about the magazine in general, or this PDF article in particular, please email me at

peter@velovision.co.uk

I hope you enjoy the read.

Peter Eland
Editor and Publisher, Velo Vision

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VELO VISION AND VELO-VISION We weren't first with the name. Velo-Vision (note the hyphen) is a progressive HPV-friendly bike shop in Körten, near Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany, who also make their own recumbents. Velo Vision magazine is working in friendly harmony with Velo-Vision in Germany.

Velo Vision is printed on paper produced from sustainable forests to Nordic Swan standards.



COVER PHOTOGRAPH:
Town bikes on test: see page 16.
Photo by Richard Loke.

OPPOSITE: Sunset casts a long shadow from the Hurricane SL.
Photo by Peter Eland.

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GOING TO TOWN

For a magazine which is all about transport cycling, a comprehensive look at town bikes was well overdue. So I'm particularly grateful to reader and now reviewer Paul Robison from Cambridge for the considerable efforts he (and others) put into compiling this issue's mega-test.

Utility cycling on a very different level is described in Lou Parson's piece about binners and their bikes. A nice reminder, perhaps, that while some of us can afford to agonize over which of five quality machines might best suit our needs, many cyclists just make use of whatever bike they can lay their hands on.

And why not? So long as the tyres have some air, and it goes when you pedal, almost any bike has a magic-carpet effect: it vastly extends range of movement and load-carrying capacity compared to walking. Ongoing cost is minimal, and mobility opens up all sorts of opportunities.

There's a reason Norman Tebbit's famous exhortation to the unemployed "Get on your bike and look for work" has resonated down the years. If you're looking for a tool for self-reliance and a chance to take yourself places – get on your bike.

Peter Eland

CHECK IN WITH A CELLO

Flying with a bike is tricky enough – with a trailer it’s worse. But BOB trailer-toting cycle travellers can now combine the two into a robust flightcase, using the clever Cello...

BACKGROUND

As Cass Gilbert explained last issue, it often makes sense to carry touring luggage in a trailer rather than in panniers, especially as the terrain gets rougher. And the most popular touring trailers are the one-wheeled BOB YAK (unsuspended) and IBEX (with suspension).

But how do you get bike and trailer to your tour start-point undamaged by baggage handlers?

The Cello from Wandertec in the USA offers an appealing solution. The idea is that you tow the trailer to the airport (or train station, etc) with the Cello in the big yellow Yak Sac, along with your other gear. Just the side-panels and a few other bits are already mounted on the trailer, to save time later.

Then, find a quiet corner and pack the bike securely into the Cello, which uses the trailer as a base and adds resilient side-walls and fabric top. In this form it can travel by air, train or bus with peace of mind that the bike is well protected inside. Caster wheels make it easy to move without lifting.

The Cello can also be a compact way to carry bike and trailer on a car roof rack. You could also entrust a bike-in-Cello to a shipping courier with some confidence.

Finally, at the destination, unpack it all, and you can either carry the whole thing with you, folded up on the BOB, or to save some weight on tour, ship it ahead to a convenient pick-up point before your journey home.

The appeal of this concept is that it makes the traveller self-contained and independent, with no need to scavenge packaging, to ‘chance it’ at the check-in, or to store or ship a huge bike box at the other end.

In the USA the price is just under US\$400. Prices for Europe are not



ABOVE: With Cello parts in place, the YAK is perfectly useable, although the side-plates do slightly restrict the tying-on points available. They can also make you feel a bit of a rolling Cello advertising billboard. Here it is taking the box from my neighbour’s new TV over to the office, where it will be reused to pack Velo Visions for shipment.

LEFT: Even with a 20"-wheeled towing bike there’s still plenty of clearance below the caster wheels

LEFT: Ready to tow. Side panels are attached via cord loops. The rear bracket bolts on to the IBEX; on the YAK you need to drill a bolt hole (though it held fine with just the clamp bolts for the photos). The aluminium plate with caster wheels simply bolts on through the mesh base.



ABOVE: The Cello kit arrives in this neat bag, which is later reused to protect packed bike parts

yet set. You’ll also need to buy the trailer separately if you don’t already have one. The Cello comes with all the bits necessary to fit both YAK (unsuspended) and IBEX (suspended) trailers from BOB, including ‘28’s and older-model YAKs. It should fit most solo bikes.

THE BUILD

The Cello arrives in a heavy fabric case, looking like an overgrown laptop or perhaps a presentation stand. It weighs around 9kg. Inside are the main components: resilient plastic hinged side-panels, hefty machined aluminium brackets with plastic fittings, and the fabric top cover with a series of plastic tube cross-members, all linked with tensioning string. It all looks to be solidly and well constructed.

Unfortunately, there’s no space here for a blow-by-blow account of fitting the Cello – see the pictures instead. Generally, the process is straightforward if you follow the 17 pages of instructions methodically, and the few unclear sections are now being addressed as they rewrite the user manual. The new version should be ready by the time this issue appears.

The initial fitting will take a



Ready to start assembling the bike into the Cello.

View from below. There’s space for extra luggage to be stashed within the Yak base, or to be cable-tied to the trailer’s yoke or bike frame, although the makers recommend that most of your gear travels separately in the yellow BOB ‘Yak Sac’.



mechanically-inclined person several hours. Once all the pieces are in place and adjusted, and the trailer is in ‘towing’ configuration, then packing a bike would, I’d say, take about half an hour. Reassembly at the other end takes about the same time or a little less.

Complete, the package seems really very robust. We resisted the temptation to give it a good kicking as a test (the owner of the bike would not have been impressed) but applying pressure in various directions had no ill effects. It rolls around well (on anything except grass!), and the casters give it an obvious implied ‘this side up’ which should also help promote considerate handling.

1 First, the YAK’s rear wheel is removed, and replaced with this little plastic number.

2 The bike’s wheels are also removed, and the hubs fitted with thick foam axle protectors.

3 Next, the front bracket with top cover attached is locked in place in the trailer yoke.

4 The bike can now be fitted and clamped to front and rear brackets. These adjust in angle to fit the bike’s wheelbase. The rear bracket holds our bike high enough off the YAK base that the rear derailleur is held clear. A strap is provided to snug longer-cage derailleurs safely up against the bike’s chainstay.

5 Stem, bars and seatpost are removed, and stowed along with the wheels alongside the frame, using the various bags as padding. At this point we realised that we should have read the instructions more carefully and removed luggage rack and mudguards...

6 View from the back, with rack and mudguards now stowed inside. Note how the two axle protectors are pressing neatly against each of the side-panels.

7 The top cover is fitted by tensioning the strings, which pulls the plastic caps in, locking the plastic tubes into the side panels. The tensioned strings also have a triangulation effect, stiffening the structure.

8 All done, and the ‘flight case’ can be easily rolled around using the two pull-handles.

CONCLUSIONS

The Cello is a clever idea, and well executed. The process isn’t all that fast, but you do end up with a very well-protected and compact package.

Reduced weight would be nice, of course, to make it more appealing to carry with you rather than requiring onwards shipping or storage. But the weight is probably necessary for the protection it offers, and if you do need to ship or store it, it’s MUCH smaller than a full bike box.

If you’re already ‘sold’ on trailers for touring luggage, the Cello could save quite a lot of shipping hassle. If you’re more a pannier person, but are put off travelling because

of the danger to your bike that it involves, perhaps now is the time to make the switch...

Peter Eland

Action photos: Peter Eland
Build photos and assistance: Tom Riley

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Manufacturer in the USA: Wandertec Tel +1 928 226 0294 or see www.wandertec.com
Distribution in Europe: Phone number etc is being finalised as we go to press. E-mail sales@wandertec.com for more details, or check the main website as above (you can already order from there to any destination worldwide).

