

INTO THE RIDE #29

Rack It Up! by Randy Schlitter



It may surprise you to learn that this very well made bike carrier system is reasonably priced, unbelievably adaptable, modular in design, and to top it off, built with handicap labor in the good old USA. I met Gail Skinner of Renniks Bicycle Totes at the Chicago bike show this April. The quality of the rack and the clever design impressed me immediately, so when he said the price I was truly impressed with the value. Mind you this is not a cheapie rack, and even though you can find many racks in this price range, you will find even less with the design and quality. We are stocking the 202 which comes with two fork mounts. Add in two wheel mounts and you have a top shelf system that will firmly hold your bent during transport. The entire rack mounts into the cargo hold of your SUV, van, or truck bed with a simple flip of the toggle lever.



Just flip the lever and the rack is firmly clamped into the cargo bay of a van or bed of a truck.

The bars that tie it all together are solid aluminum extrusions that slide together and all fitting forks and wheel mounts also slide onto these heavy duty extruded rails. This is the clever part of the design, no limit to how you can combine space and place bikes and wheels. In my regular sized truck I can carry 4 bikes with the wheels, and actually have room for 2 more. I use two crossing rails and slide the two fore and aft rails into each other. This ties the whole system together into an easy to load and unload set up.



If you need to take up less space the fork mounts turn a few degrees to allow handlebar overlaps, plus the mounts are canted about 9 degrees to keep the bike vertical. Clever guy that Gail.

The 202 rack comes in a small box, ships UPS, and is easy to assemble. Two Allen wrenches are provided, and in a matter of minutes you are ready to clamp the unit in place. Most users will set it up to have the front of the bikes at the rear, this makes it easy to load and unload. My first use of the rack I placed the bikes facing forward, to leave room for a cooler and tool box. Getting the bikes in and out wasn't as bad as I thought, provided you step up into the truck bed to work the QR's.



While Gail and I installed the rack in my truck he discovered yet another way to use the system. The shorter crossing bars are the same extrusion as the main crossing bar. This means you can slide wheel mounts onto them and place the wheels 90 degrees to the bikes. Discovering an idea like that just goes to show the "Lego" nature of this tote. Because it is so well made and easy to reconfigure I plan on using it both in the truck bed and inside the SUV we use to tow bike and plane trailers to the shows. Not having to worry about drilling any holes or marring the vehicle is a big asset to using the totes. Having them made to the same level of quality as the bikes you haul makes it that much more appropriate. Since recumbents are long and short wheel based, this means the fork mount location needs to be aft of the tailgate enough to allow for crank clearance. If you want to haul your bikes facing forward, like in my case, a second crossing bar is needed. Gail is making a special length of fore and aft bars to accommodate this concept, thus lower cost and no need for a toggle clamp on the second crossing bar. I enjoy the flexibility the system so much that switching from a truck bed, to a van proves only a few minutes of slide and adjust. If you need a 202 Bike Tote* we have them in stock with the two wheel mounts for \$275 plus shipping. Call or order online at www.Shoprans.com. I am sure you will be happy with this product.

* Check out the full line of Renniks Bike Totes at www.biketotote.com

Until next time stay safe, and stay into the ride! -RJS

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