

INTO THE RIDE #30

The Amazing Chopper Bar

by Randy Schlitter



Our new 3-way bar has an ergonomic fit for almost anyone riding a variety of long wheelbase bents.

In the constant search for the perfect handlebar my travels lead me to the cave of the Bar-maker. Inside the cave I met this wise old creature who listened to my recount of my painful journey (I had heard the Bar-maker would only listen to the experienced, and I hoped my confession of many attempts would suffice). After silence fell upon the dull stones he stood and asked me a single question, “how many ways should a handlebar adjust in order to fit everyone?” I smiled and realized the wisdom of the question and answered “Three”. He then said “Well, then make it so.” I stood there feeling a bit odd that such a simple question could re-direct my perspective, but the Bar-maker only smiled and waited for me to leave. After a long uncomfortable moment I caught on and said a quiet thanks and left. On the long ride back to civilization (caves are never near your backyard), I pictured all sorts of ways to configure an adjustable handlebar, from an invention that would make Rube G. proud to a mere handful of parts. By the time I entered the shop I had a pretty good idea of what is now known as the 3-Way bar (some prefer to call it the Amazing Chopper Bar). In a few minutes I had actually bent out a working prototype. I excitedly mounted them for the first ride. I used a stock Stratus, the look alone pulled me back to the “B” bar days, when the Stratus sported a chopper style bar, that many still love and swear by as the best bar ever. As I began riding it also brought back fond memories, this bike was a dream to ride. My setting had my elbows slightly bent, just above the knees, and very little tiller. I was having so much fun on the first setting, I was thinking of stopping there, but since the bar can be adjusted in 3 ways, why not try a few other adjustments? I cranked in a little more height, just to bring the grips over the knee high point, I found that adding or taking away elbow bend also reduced and added to tiller. The rotation of the grips was interesting, finding the angle where your hand felt most natural was completely different for other riders. I was not too surprised at this, since you can effect this adjustment on our current bars simply by rotating the bars in the top loader. The 3-way bar has plenty of stiffness in the vertical mode, but yet soft enough not to transmit the road shocks. And almost stiff enough to pull on, at least moderately, for sprinting.

The 3 ways this bar will adjust:

1. Rotates at the stem. This allows the bar to change in tiller, a more vertical angle, in line with the head-tube reduces tiller, and increase arm reach, lean it back for reach and more tiller.
2. Each grip tube can move in and out, increasing or decreasing reach with little to no change to tiller if parallel to fork rake. Take note, that means you can reduce tiller and increase reach, something many riders need.
3. The grip tubes rotate, this allows you to gain knee clearance and your best wrist position, it also allows you to change the reach rotating the grip tubes more horizontal will decrease tiller. It also widens your grips, and dampens motion. In some cases of a long wheelbase bent, that is overly reactive; this can be used to dampen such handling

Having a bar with so much adjustment would be challenging without a way to accurately set it up. The solution was to etch a scale onto the grip tubes. The scale is shown below (production bars will be black with laser etched scales), the lengthwise lines are used to reference the rotational location of the grips, and the small cross wise lines indicate the insertion depth. It is very easy to read and understand this scale, so setting up each side of the bar exactly as the other is fast. I have thought about the need for asymmetrical settings; now it is possible. People vary in leg and arm length from side to side, and this may just be the ticket for those with appreciable differences.



Etched into the bars is a scale to show insert depth and rotation.



Tiller and reach change with rotation at the stem



Adjust reach another way by moving the grip tube in or out.



Adjust wrist feel by rotating grip tubes

Applications:

In our lineup alone, I believe all long wheel and compact wheelbase bikes can use this bar. Some variations in stems may need to be worked out, and over the next few weeks we will do just that. Even other brands of long or compact wheelbase bikes can benefit from this new handlebar. Look to [ShopRANS](#) in the near future for a posting showing the full depth we are to carry this bar. The 3-way bars are coming; we expect stock to arrive in about 2 to 3 months.

Being the proud inventor of the 3-way bar I felt the need to once again venture out to the Bar-maker. Finding the cave the second time proved more difficult and did not do anything to ease my nervousness, as I eventually approached. The Bar-maker looked over my newly hewn invention and made a few muffled grunts and hmphffs, and finally said “I was thinking there was 4 adjustments...” I released a small groan and quietly rolled out of the cave without a further whimper. The long ride

home once again produced a cascade of ideas, but the joy of using the new bar soon overtook this thinking and I settled into getting into the ride...



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

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