

## INTO THE RIDE #67

**Get a Grip on It**

by Randy Schlitter



*The testing started with a stock Citi, ending in a hot-rod version, 3.5 pounds lighter, using Mavic wheels, and a carbon saddle. Having only 9 speeds has not been so limiting on a bike easy to stand-ride.*

Handlebars impact the first impression of a bike and can re-ignite an old impression. Recent product testing for a new and up-coming project prompted study of handle bars on some established bikes.

**Hot Rod Citi**

A topic that often pops up in Crankforward discussions is the ability to stand and ride certain models. How useful, and easy it is, and how does the handlebar impact this feature? To explore this query I took a stock Citi and hit the hills. With the B-37 bars and a curved riser facing forward there is plenty of “cockpit” room for me to comfortably and naturally stand-ride the bike. The acid test was to ride 10 miles of hills in top gear on the 9 speed bike (33-11). The pulls up the hills in the standing position were interesting in the fact the body position is identical to placement on a 1-speed mountain bike, where you can stand over and a bit ahead of the pedals and can really leverage your body downward into the crank. I found mashing up the hills and letting the bike toss side-to-side very natural. Watching heart rates and MPH there was almost always an increase in speed and only a slight jump in heart rate. If the hill was long, like say a mile or so, I would ride as far as possible seated, then start the mashing. For the sake of science, I rode for extended periods in the stand position. It produced some interesting results. It is definitely a skill game in the sense of finding that sweet spot where effort to stand is nothing and power is controlled and spinning up. That is why top gearing usually works. If you want to master stand-riding a CF, spend some time doing long pulls.

Comparing my stand-ride technique with the Citi to the Z-pro showed the Citi was better suited, since it has the deeper cockpit. Trips on the Z-Pro through the biggest hills in our region showed stand-riding of minor benefit if you use the gearing.

The other aspect of stand riding is on trails. Taking on steep hills encountered in trail riding is better with the Citi bar set-up. If you learn to not be shy about getting over the pedals you can apply mucho force, to the point of snapping chain, breaking risers or the handlebar itself. This is where lower gears help prevent body and equipment damage. To continue climbing at almost no forward speed, and staying in control of the bike, happens with practice. Traction is maintained by leaning back off the bars. With practice and the right bar set-up, the bike becomes just as apt at attacking the hills as with a standard DF.

## Dynamik Duo

A great side bar to all this testing has been the mods we made to our demo Dynamik Duo tandem. When two people stand ride it is like hitting turbo boost. Getting it down smooth is a challenge since the bike wants to wander a bit. The Dynamik Duo is a very capable errand runner, off-to-lunch machine, rendering our trucks idle. With the addition of a soon-to-be-announced extra-large cargo hauling system, you have the advantage of bringing along an extra engine to bring home the bacon. Running the DD around town is a total blast; the bike is very spirited in climb and holding speed. Downhill gives the distinct impression there is a lot of bike behind you. Add in the easy mount and dismount inherit to all of our CF's and you have a bike to consider for many good reasons.



## Stratus XP Ti B-26 Bar Set-Up

On the bent side of things, on my personal Stratus XP Ti I have been testing the B-26 over the stock B-37. This bar is excellent for turning tight since it takes little-to-none to clear a knee in a turn. The bar also shaves off weight over the stock Stratus XP Ti handlebar. I like the aero advantage, with the hands tucked tight within the leg drag zone. It also gives the bike a clean performance look, and has tested very well with the public who have sampled it. This Tee bar set-up is very close to what was stock on the Classic Stratus a few years back. The main difference is the top loader, allowing different bars to be fitted. Compared to the 3-Way Chopper bar, which gains favor because of the ability to adjust in width, height, and grip rotation, this set-up is limited. For those that need wide bars to stabilize steering, the 3-Way Chopper is king. For those who are wanting to drop some weight and drag, and do not mind a bit more tiller, this set-up is the ticket.



With the wide selection of handlebars it is possible you can tinker forever. That is part fun and frustration, but in most cases well worth it. If you are happy with what you got, stay there, and never mind the temptation to explore. If you are like me, always tinkering and thinking of ways to freshen up a ride, or renew an old love, placing the bars a new way, or replacing them altogether can be one of the most economical ways to get a new feel. Until next month ride safe and stay into the ride!

*INTO THE RIDE*