

INTO THE RIDE #71

## A Step-Through Fusion and RAC Cargo System for CrankForwards

by Randy Schlitter

### FUSION ST

The Fusion has been one of our most popular CrankForwards, and this should continue with the addition of step-through model. Styling of the frame is eye-catching, with the top tube taking the max plunge. Step through height is 19", as opposed to the standard Fusion top tube height of 25".

The configuration harmonizes well with the ladies, who immediately understand the advantages and grace of step-through mounting. The bike also appeals to anyone wanting an extremely user-friendly bike with a high dose of unique style. The step-through design is a natural for a CF, further enhancing the already body-smart design.

Based on the Fusion frame geometry, the new frame is only a fraction of a pound heavier. The bike retains all that is fun about a Fusion in handling and performance, with no penalty for having a less trussed frame.

The frame features 7005 aluminum alloy tubing, water bottle holders on the top tube, and of course the seat-post with the inseam gauge. The model is offered in two dazzling colors: a bright metallic red and an ivory metallic. The ST is spec'd with fast and light Jet wheels and Primo Comet 1.5" tires. There is room for up to 1.75" tires with fenders, and 1.95" without.



### RAC (ride and carry)

The bike inspires the commuter and the short-haul shopper, and is a natural for our new RAC cargo system. The bags and rack for the RAC are custom designed for our CF line, and produced in our Hays plant. The system comes in two sizes: large and standard.

The large measures 27 x 9 x 15” and the small 24 x 9 x 15” with cubic volumes of 2.1 and 1.9 cubic feet respectively. All of our current and many past CF offerings should accept the RAC system. The bags feature Lexan shaper panels, with several lighting holes for reduced weight. A maxi and mini bag and rack set adds 11 and 10.75 pounds respectively. Bags weight 4 pounds or less, and racks are 3 to 3.1 pounds typically. It is a worthy weight hit in the form of a very stylish bag set and rugged rack. The tubular frame is designed using alloy aircraft tubing and our special fittings. This construction has been flight-proven on our planes, and is ready for daily street duty.

In case you over buy, the bags contain an extra flap that will extend to cover the items. I have also found it handy for transporting a bike. To haul a bike: place the front wheel in the bag, tighten the flap over the wheel, and you are ready to roll. I was surprised how often I used this feature, so I installed a bike hitch. The hitch is made to clamp the front fork, and no, it does not work to try and ride the bike that is attached to the hitch, at least we have not found anyone with the quick reflexes it would take to stay upright! We half jokingly showed the bike hitch at Interbike, and many thought it to be a very useful option, so it may make it into the offerings in due time.

Other features of the bags include: Side mesh pocket, reflector strips, handles on each end, and wide color selection. Constructed of 9.1 ounce Cordura, the bags are carefully crafted at our Hays Plant to endure many miles of use and abuse.

High rack and frame torsion strength allows carefree loading. The bags seem to hold up to this sort of use, but I prefer to balance the load, rather than feel a slight turn tendency. How much can be loaded? About 50 pounds per side seems reasonable. That is a lot of groceries. The RAC system is not really intended for human cargo, but of course, we have tested it, and set the max loading to 175 pounds. It splits out like this: either 50 pounds in each bag and 75 on top, or a single 175-pound freeloader. We may have an optional top deck and runners, similar to the HammerTruck rack, so expect this system to expand with such options to increase utility.





Installing the RAC is a snap, since it comes fully assembled, only needing attachment to the bike at the seat clamp QR and rear drop out adaptors. You must specify year and model of your RANS CF when ordering, to get the proper rack adaptors. Serial numbers really help here!





1. Install rack adaptors to rack frame.
2. Remove QR nut on seat clamp.
3. Bolt RAC rack adaptors to bike frame at dropouts.
4. Install RAC rack to seat clamp with QR nut.
5. Hang bags at corners over rack.
6. Snap straps and tighten to secure bag.

Taking the bags on or off takes only seconds, using two snap straps. The top corners of each bag slip over the curved corners of the rack.



The rack will be sold less bags and will accept some of the new mega sized panniers being offered by firms such as [www.inertiadesigns.com](http://www.inertiadesigns.com)



1. Blue/purple/blue
2. Silver with gray trim
3. Camouflage /orange/gray
4. Black with red trim
5. Orange/gray/silver
6. Black with yellow trim



The Fusion ST set up with a RAC system will turn heads and enhance your cycling lifestyle. You can have a high-styling heavy hauler that, if you are like me, will become a mainstay bike, and transform the way you think of personal transportation. A good example of this is since early July, Kim and I have been trekking about Hays on our Dynamik Duo testing the maxi sized RAC. It has transformed our riding, from being purely recreational to functional. There is also a certain security and convenience that comes with riding a bike with a huge cargo capacity. No more is there the excuse not to stop and pick something up on an outing. For us the Dynamik Duo has proven to be an excellent way to exercise and get free transportation in the process.

Thanks for stopping by, until next time stay safe and stay into the ride!

*INTO THE RIDE*