

INTO THE RIDE #107

## Three Slants on Comfortable: The Alterra Geometry

by Randy Schlitter



Testing bikes can be a very fun and rewarding experience, especially when you are building prototypes to test particular concepts. What often happens is spin-off concepts, and that was the case in developing the Dynamik. As we massaged the final geometry, we pushed the slant on the seat tube both ways. We found going steeper and steeper soon required changes to the seat. This was something we wanted to avoid, and chilled the idea of a steeper geometry CF, at least for a while. In the meantime I was happy to test this steeper seat tube set up, trying different seat shapes, and fine-tuning the frame geometry. It took three years before we finally decided to add a third CF geometry. The move has been a good one. The Alterra has been catching on because it offers so many traditional aspects of cycling along with our special twist on comfort. It truly is a performance comfort bike that allows some interesting advantages as described below.

### Current offerings of the Alterra geometry

- Alterra
- Alterra 29

This is a capable mountain bike. Rider reviews of both the 26 and 29 versions speak not only of being on par with conventional MTB's, but having the added advantages of lower center of gravity and longer wheel base. The lower CG adds to the ground-hugging handling, and the longer wheel base enhances downhill. The chance of an endo is reduced; riders report more confidence and speedier descents. My personal 29er has seen the aggressive trail rides in Colorado, where it performed flawlessly. I was impressed with the big wheels, and their ability to absorb shock. My rig had the straight fork, which I like, since it is 4 pounds less in climbs.

We have a test track out behind the factory. The track has challenges even for standard mountain bikes. At the 2011 RANS Rally we saw some impressive riding during the time trails on both standard mountain bikes and the 26 and 29 Alterra. On our double hair-pin turn there was less tapping by the CF riders than the standard MTB's. Not a totally conclusive study, but observations show the potential of this bike.

### **Links to Reviews:**

<http://www.intotheride.com/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=476>

<http://www.bentrideronline.com/messageboard/showthread.php?t=77967>



*Alterra*



*Alterra 29*

## **Alterra 700X**

My 29er often sports a set of cycle cross wheels. The smaller tires instantly turn the bike into a good road machine with a high tolerance for gravel and poorly maintained roads. The 700X is purposely built for this mission and does it well. The frame is lighter, but plenty rugged, and well beyond a typical road bike in strength. Bombing around on this bike is carefree and confident. It is perhaps one of the handiest CrankForwards we build. It can commute, tour, go off-road, and road ride. I could just about park my Alterra Road if I set up a 700X with drops, light wheels, and canti brakes. A nice addition would be a step-thru version. We are currently testing just such a bike. Look for this in our 2013 line-up.



## Mini

The design goal behind the Mini was to create a compact bike with as much of a big bike ride as possible, and have it fit in the back of our planes. To date not a single Mini has been purchased by any of our aircraft owners, but never fear - it is popular among those who understand it. Being compact means it is easy to transport on busses, elevators, up stairs, in trunks of cars, or just about anywhere you could imagine stuffing a bike. Fully deployed it is a great ride of surprising efficiency. It excels in climb, and although many wish for more gear down-hill, it can do a respectable average speed. It is a perfect fit for inter city cruising and hybrid commuting.\* Set it up with Big Apples and it will float over loose sand, and on pavement it will ride like it is suspended.



*\*Hybrid Commuting is where you drive to your desired riding spot so you can save gas, and then ride, thereby avoiding downtown parking hassles and fees.*

## **Summary**

Our three geometries offer a wide range of riding styles. Going from the most laid back Fusion to the more upright Alterra, with the Dynamik neatly between, you can select a bike that best suits your body style and riding mission. The more sensitive you are to hand, neck, and back issues, the more laid back you want to be. For someone more inclined to performance with a small trade-off in comfort, the steeper geometries do well. And if you just cannot decide, but really love the idea of a great-feeling seat and minimum pressure on the hands, the Dynamik offers a ride of little compromise. Whichever one you choose, a RANS CF will bring back the joy of cycling, and have enough zoom factors to keep you coming back for more. Thanks for stopping by and until next time, ride safe and as always...stay into the ride!

*INTO THE RIDE*