

Bicycle Retailer

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A N D I N D U S T R Y N E W S

Yo soy un aficionado, says Alexey Carbajal-zada, a town local, pointing his cellphone at the racers as they ride by. That's Spanish for "I'm a cycling fan." He shows me his bike computer: It reads 42 kilometers, and he explains that's the distance he had ridden just that day on his black, nondescript road bike specc'd with downtube shifters, flat handlebars and Shimano Alivio derailleur. Though dated, it's in better shape — and has more recognizable parts — than similar bikes I've seen since arriving.

We're in a small rural community called Lopez Peña in the Pinar del Río province in Cuba. It's the second day of a five-day stage race called the Titan Tropic. And we're both waiting next to a rest stop where racers chug down bottled water, refill their packs or water containers, and grab a piece of *turrón de mani*, the local energy bar made from ground peanuts, before taking off.

Bicycle Retailer was invited along with a handful of American press to see the race held for the second year last December. So here I was, riding in a press bus with Cuban, Spanish and one American journalist, taking in the sights and sounds of the long-forbidden and isolated island. On our way to Lopez Peña on the main four-lane highway, horses pull two-wheeled carts, rickety cruisers and city bikes roll by, as well as old '50s Chevrolets

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A Titan challenge

Spanish race promoter sets new course in Cuba.

By Lynette Carpiet



Racers ride along a trail in the Viñales Valley, which offered riders a more challenging route of singletrack and technical sections.

BRAIN e-bike survey

The retailers are willing, but the sales are weak

More shops are embracing e-bikes. Now if they could just sell some of them ...

By Doug McClellan

A healthy 80 percent of North American bike retailers say they sell electric bikes or are considering it, according to a new *Bicycle Retailer* survey of IBDs and e-IBDs.

And although many retailers among the other 20 percent retain strong philosophical objections to e-bikes, most stores that don't stock them say they are acting out

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Huffy CEO: Mass and IBD channels can work together

Cooperation could help both overcome 'systemic and difficult' challenges facing the industry, Bill Smith says.

By Steve Frothingham

TEMPE, Ariz. — In an appearance that one industry leader called "a watershed moment," Huffy Corp.'s CEO spoke at January's IBD Summit and called for cooperation between the IBD and mass-market channels to combat consumer trends too large for either side

of the business to handle alone.

Huffy's Bill Smith said that regardless of where consumers choose to buy bikes, the market has been flat for too long, especially considering population growth. Bicycle sellers compete against an ever-expanding array

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Engineered Design

Dish and Duer denim balances fashion and on-bike function

By Val Vanderpool

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — For fashion industry veteran Gary Lenett, not being able to find something to wear is more than just an inconvenience. The challenge of finding a pair of jeans to wear on the bike that looked good and performed well nagged at him for months — and the problem was especially irk-



Canadian performance apparel maker Dish and Duer is headquartered in a 6,000-square-foot facility in Vancouver's Gastown neighborhood where 24 employees work. Owner Gary Lenett (second from left) started the brand in 2013.

some because Lenett's specialty is denim.

For most of his 28-year career, Lenett worked in denim manufacturing, cutting his teeth in the 1990s making fabric for Levi Strauss at a factory in Vancouver. Lenett's factory would later become the largest domestic denim manufacturer in North America, supplying numerous brands with denim products for 15 years.

"But I did start to lose passion for it and put the energy into downsizing my life," Lenett said. "My wife called it a midlife crisis — it wasn't — but I gave up my car and started riding my bike everywhere. I wanted to simplify."

Lenett loved riding his bike to meetings around Vancouver but was frustrated because he couldn't find anything to wear.

"Nothing really worked, including Levi's commuter



Dish performance jeans for women are available in three fits and several washes. The Dish Skinny in midnight retails for \$119.

line," he said. "I won't wear a synthetic pant and put a sport jacket over it to go to a meeting. Denim is what I know, and I thought I could do better."

One thing Lenett learned during his storied career is that the best products often come from someone wanting to make something for themselves. So he teamed up with another fashion industry veteran to start a new company in 2013 and launch a performance denim line under the Dish brand, a junior jeans label he owned but took off the market several years earlier.

"I decided to use the Dish label and bring it back as a performance denim brand. It really helped us get started," Lenett said. "Girls remembered the brand and that gave us a quick entree because we had that brand recognition."

Lenett added the Duer men's brand about a year and a half later. A play on the word "doer," the jeans and pants in the line are everything Lenett was looking for when he launched the company.

"Both Dish and Duer make pants that you can wear throughout the day — on the bike, to meetings or on a date," he said. "The goal is not to have to change pants for every activity. There's the fashion quotient, but the performance aspect also makes the pants very comfortable."

To achieve this, Lenett developed L2X, a performance denim with four-way stretch that's custom made with a blend of fibers that are 30 percent lighter and stronger than those used in a traditional pair of jeans. The fabric also integrates Coolmax technology to evaporate moisture and provide temperature control, while



Duer men's performance denim and No Sweat Pants are available in a variety of washes and colors. The jeans start at \$129.

a silver ion microbial protector, Silvadur, neutralizes bacteria.

Lenett also created N2X, the No Sweat Pant, which uses a combination of cotton, spandex and Tencel, an organically anti-bacterial fiber that's cooler than linen and softer than silk. A touch of polyester lends durability to the fabric, which Lenett said delivers the aesthetic of a chino trouser and the comfort of loungewear with the resilience of athletic apparel.

Because Lenett had closed his own Vancouver factory and wanted to keep price points affordable, Dish and Duer apparel is manufactured in a small facility in Lahore, Pakistan, that is dedicated solely to the brand.

"They only make our jeans. We employ only salaried employees, not paid for piecework like so many in

the fashion industry," Lenett said. "We're very proud of that, and of the fact that we own the entire process from design to manufacturing."

Dish and Duer's head offices are located in Vancouver's Gastown neighborhood. All design and pattern making is done on-site. Lenett added a 1,000-square-foot flagship store in the front portion of the 6,000-square-foot facilities in early 2016.

After noticing customers coming out of the dressing rooms doing squats and side kicks while wearing Dish and Duer jeans at a pop-up store, Lenett decided



Dish and Duer owner Gary Lenett opened a 1,000-square-foot flagship store in Vancouver in 2016. Plans are in the works to open stores in Los Angeles and New York this year.

to build a Performance Denim Playground inside the flagship store.

"It's kind of like a demo area. You can climb on monkey bars that go throughout, there are swings and foam gym mats on the floor," Lenett said. "It's gone really well because customers can really try out the product."

Lenett said he doesn't sell fast fashion or trends. Instead he prefers to make long-lasting garments that suit the needs of the consumer, and the best way to get that feedback is to start with the customer. Lenett works in the store on weekends so he can really hear what customers are saying.

"We just launched a pant that came out of me working at the guerrilla level with the consumer — the consumer who can't wear jeans to work and needs more of a dress pant. It's got great stretch so if you're a prosecutor or other professional you can still cycle to work," he said.

Dish and Duer jeans, pants and outerwear are available on the company's website, at its flagship store and through about 150 specialty retailers in North America, including REI, Canada's MEC and "better" bike stores that know how to sell apparel. But Lenett also sells through fashion and lifestyle retailers.

"We want to sell right across all channels, and our motto is 'from REI to Nordstrom,'" he said. "We aren't there yet, but Nordstrom is the proof statement of fashion and REI is the proof statement of the technical aspect."

For the first two years, Lenett employed four or five people, but now the company is up to 24 employees and growing as distribution expands into Europe and Asia. Lenett also plans to open Dish and Duer stores in Los Angeles and New York this year.

"We haven't had a very complex distribution strategy up to now. We're still a new company," he said. "But we don't frame our goals in sales dollars and we're not focused on building hundreds of stores. We're focused on making great products that work for urban cycling but also work for people who aren't cyclists." **BRAIN**