

HILTON TAYLOR

THIS ISSUE WE'VE GOT HILTON TAYLOR FROM REVOLUTION BIKES IN THE HAWKE'S BAY AS OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER. HILTON IS RELATIVELY NEW TO THE INDUSTRY, HAVING RECENTLY TAKEN OVER LOCAL RETAILER, REVOLUTION BIKES. HE'S BEEN AROUND THE MOUNTAIN BIKE SCENE IN VARIOUS VOLUNTEER ROLES BUILDING TRACKS AND MANAGING RACES FOR YEARS THOUGH...

WHAT ARE YOUR BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS?

I grew up on an orchard a little bit out of town so bikes were the best way to get around. Mountain bikes made it way more of an adventure. I think I'm one of the first 'mtb kids' - I was too young to race BMX in the 80s and way too young to have raced motocross like the older guys we rode with. I didn't come from any other type of riding and the mainstream mountain bikes were very new on the market. In my mid twenties I got really involved in the club scene and ended up as the chairman and then treasurer of the Hawkes Bay MTB Club. That was when the club changed from being a race club to a trail provider, and then the membership grew and grew. I wanted to stage better events so I became a UCI Commissaire and traveled around helping at races all over the country to see how the other guys did it. By trade I am a carpenter-project manager-estimator; I enjoyed it but was there to pay the bills. I once heard someone say "find something in life that you are so passionate about that you would do it all day for free and then find a way to make it pay".

HOW LONG IN THE BIKE INDUSTRY?

I am a real newbie to the full time side - only 10 months in retail. I've been around the edges for about ten years though.

FIRST JOB TO DO WITH BIKES?

Bikes aren't a job for me; I am just living the dream.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER JOBS YOU'VE HAD IN THE INDUSTRY?

I helped out in my local bike store a little bit and sold dozens of bikes to friends over the years. I did a bit of guiding and drove the DH shuttle service van for six years. I have built jump parks and consulted on bike park design. After I had kids I designed and built trail building tools at nights because I couldn't spend the time in the forest anymore but still wanted to help out. I'm not sure if any of those count as "in the industry".

PRESENT ROLE IN INDUSTRY?

I own and operate Revolution Bikes in Havelock North with heaps of help from my wife Billie Sue and also Ben the shop wrench. So I pay the bills and sweep the floors plus work on all the public holidays - the rent is not on holiday you know.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT MTB/CYCLING?

It's always been the adventure and the speed, or at least the sensation of speed. It's exercise but you just need to keep going back for more torture. I also love the camaraderie between riders who are good friends on the trails but will never meet your mum or babysit your kids.

YOUR FIRST MOUNTAIN BIKE?

It was steel; it had 18 speed suntour gears and pimping it out meant adding more weight to it. It was an Avanti Montari. (Yes, they have been making them since before most of my clients were born)

FAVOURITE SORT OF RIDING?

Going down of course, but in a trail bike kind of way now. I just love the Super-D format of racing, I always was a sprinter. My favourite memories are of bush bashing, hikeabike missions in the Hawkes Bay ranges.

WHAT/WHERE ARE YOUR FIVE FAVOURITE TRAILS OR RIDES?

I have to say Eskdale MTB park, but it's too had to keep up with the new trails all the time. There is no point in having a favourite one



because next month there will be a new trail better than the last. Te Mata peak is right out the door of my house and the shop so it's pretty high up there. Even if I have to share it with walkers and sheep. G Rock in Rotorua is always on my list when up there. A-line in Whistler, it just teaches you how to jump bigger than you should (I know this is on everyone's list). Lastly, Mainline in Aropauanui Downhill Park (north of Napier) next to the old King of Down track. It's only short and it needs more work but I always have fun on it.

PRESENT STABLE OF BIKES?

A Merida One Forty trail bike, a Merida One Twenty 2011 test bike, a Kona UTE commuter (fits both the kids and makes a statement) and I still have the first new bike I ever purchased - an old chromoly Aggressor, but now it's a single speed cargo bike I built for trail work and never used. It's now got black boards on the side and is great for putting out the signs in the morning.

BIGGEST PERK OF THE JOB?

Product testing the latest and greatest of course, and passing on the passion to new or returning riders.

FAVOURITE BIKE EVER OWNED AND WHY?

The latest one or the next one, because most bikes really are getting better every year.

EVER REGRET SELLING A PARTICULAR BIKE?

One, but the bike wasn't that good, it's just that I hadn't already replaced it when I sold it so I had no bike for about six months. It was the worst six months of my life. Let that be a lesson to you: buy the new bike first and then get rid of the old one; Visa will love you for it.

BIGGEST CHANGES YOU'VE SEEN DURING YOUR TIME IN THE INDUSTRY?

Urban or pathway bikes are the way forward, not just sports and kids bikes.

WHAT COULD THE INDUSTRY DO WITHOUT AND WHAT WOULD IMPROVE IT?

It's not so much the bike industry, but local and central government need to stop trying to make biking to work or school easier and just make driving a shit-load harder. If it cost \$5 a minute to park outside your work you would find a way to ride there wouldn't you? Or imagine if there was no parking on the streets in the CBD. That would make heaps of room for a real bike lane. Copenhagenise, man. Rant over.