



Handcrafted in the U.S.A., Ellsworth bicycles is the result of passionate pursuit of perfection by founder Tony Ellsworth...and his passion shows through in how he goes about designing, building and testing (*ahem* riding) his bikes.

Accompanying that passion are a few strong opinions about design, manufacturing processes and environmental efforts...like why the fabrication of most of today's carbon bikes is *bad, bad, bad*; and what he's doing to improve it for future Ellsworth carbon bicycles.

For someone who owns a bicycle company, he doesn't personally have a lot of bikes, but fortunately, he's got a lot of great thoughts. This is a long one, so grab some coffee, blow off work and see how Tony Ellsworth rolls...

BIKERUMOR: In our recent interview with Pua Sawicki, who rides your frames, she hinted that you have something new coming out...can you give us some hints?

TONY ELLSWORTH: Nah, it's bad karma to talk about it until I've done it. I hope to be able to exceed her and your expectations.

BIKERUMOR: How many bikes do you personally own and describe your current favorite bike?

TONY: I'm a monogamous bike guy. When dating, I found that despite the encouragement of peers to date many, many at a time, as many as I could, one in each color shape and size, etc. I was always only able to date one gal at a time. I found the satisfaction of being in a relationship and learning to be excellent at communicating and relating to that one person to be far more satisfying than variety for variety's sake. Therefore, my current bike habits reflect this. While I have ridden many miles on each Ellsworth model, I try to spend a season on each frame to personally tweak and perfect the character of the bike to my personal standards of bike efficiency and handling.

I do have favorites, however. For years, the Truth was my favorite. It's the bike I always found myself wanting to ride. I was also thrilled with the Epiphany, especially on longer rides, multi-day tours, etc., it was just a relaxed and pleasurable bike to ride day in and day out, without sacrificing climbing performance or descending stability. I've always felt that when the bike is right for you, it's easier to adapt yourself to the terrain.



All that said, last summer, I got my first Evolve 29". Her name is Roxy and she's one of our Project Pink frames. She's a reminder to preserve things I love. I really, really love the blend of that bike. The Evolve really fits my riding style. I'm not a big air guy, I love to roll over technical terrain. I like to ride almost everything and I hate to get off my bike while riding. And the Evolve does this super, super well for me. There are times I miss the agility of the Truth and sometimes I miss the long travel of the Epiphany, but mostly I just love to ride the Evolve. So my current bike selection is: Pink Small Evolve and a Small Scant for the road. I have a Jones for my new One 29 single speed as well, but it's not available yet. So yea, I'm pretty lean on bikes.

BIKERUMOR: How often do you get to ride?

TONY: I find I'm a social rider lately. When I schedule to ride with a buddy, I'll get to ride for sure. Sometimes just going alone, I blow off ride days for work. But generally, I do a legit ride 2-3 times per week. It's even more if I count riding to school with my 9 year old son, who has recently discovered that his mountain bike makes him FREE! I am thrilled at the confidence and health that a kid can gain by riding 20 minutes to school each day.



Tony's children reap the benefits of their father's work with some sweet rides (Editor: except that Judy SL fork, it's probably older than his son).

BIKERUMOR: What upcoming bike technology are you most excited about?

TONY: I continue to be amazed at how small tweaks can yield benefits on existing designs. Studies in subtle manipulations of aluminum tubes and aluminum alloys are showing significant gains in stiffness, fatigue life and reduced weight. This is all great stuff for a bike. In general, the "best new technology" can be nothing more than a distraction from ongoing craftsmanship of slowly and surely perfecting a great design.

The best example of this is the Instant Center Tracking, open Four Bar Link design I invented in 1997. Today, that is the only full suspension design patented internationally. It continues to be the state of the art and a bench mark for all the "upcoming bike technology" that we all get so excited about. I think a steady commitment to sound principals of design and physical science and the packaging of those principals in the bike frame is exciting.

I get pretty bored of the new flavor of the month with regard to bike design, which still may or may not be a significant "upcoming technology".

That said, I think the 1.5" or tapered 1.5-1.125" head tubes are silly on any bike not needing a 7" single crown fork. The head tubes are significantly heavier then the reinforced 1.125" variety with a deep cup headset in it. However, the 1.5" head tube on a 7" or 8" rear travel trail bike is pretty cool.

The 15mm QR axle is promising, not that it's necessarily a replacement for a good 20mm axle system, but that it does make a more rigid axle platform available for Trail bikes, and it will stiffen the forks. So this is also a cool thing.

These are the things that stand out most for me today, while I sit here contemplating that question—the first thing was, what is claimed to be "upcoming new groundbreaking..." and what actually is. There's a lot to be said for the subtle improvements of a great product, rather than the abandonment of what was claimed to be great three years ago, for some new great thing. Beware of the winds of change, sometimes it's just a storm, and when the storm passes, we're right back to where we were before the storm. I like to refine and improve quantifiably, through research and testing year over year. This philosophy speaks for itself when a long term Ellsworth Owner gets a new Ellsworth and says, "Who'd a thunk it could get any better." That's a direct quote from my extremely eloquent friend,

Alton Burkhalter, when he got his new Truth in 2005, after riding a Truth since 2002. He said it again in 2007 when he got his new Epiphany and last year when he got his new Evolve... So there's something to be said for established technology being refined, and perfected, year in year out.

Great stuff, like Hobie Cat sail boats, Porsche 911's, Winchester Rifles, Makita Power Tools, Nikon Cameras, North Face Parkas, and Patagonia Fleecees. It's the steady development and refinement of legitimate physical laws and the implementation of new materials and technology that are proven through research and development that yields some of the best technical products in the world. for fulfilling the full measure of their creation. I like to think of Ellsworth Handcrafted Bicycles as that kind of product.



BIKERUMOR: What's your favorite time of day to ride and why?

TONY: Afternoon/Evening. Get up, dig into the day, get a bunch done because you know your're going to be pedaling by 3:00 or 4:00... and then you get home and it's just perfect to relax knowing you got some good healthy activity that day and got a lot done.

I also like to night ride. Because the trails are all new at night. Especially if it's a trail you have done many many times during the day.

Honestly, is there any time of day that isn't good for a ride?

BIKERUMOR: Where is your favorite place to ride and why?

TONY: Ah, I can't tell you the trail. It's a secret. But it's a great climb, with technical rock switchbacks that challenge me, and enough of them that the heart rate just doesn't get time to come down, and it's always a challenge. It's fairly narrow and pristine, and you can run your hand along building size boulders as you climb, feeling the energy of the stone cheering you on. At the right time of day, as you descend through the California Oaks, an owl will fly down and use you to flush out squirrels and catch his breakfast. The view from the top is epic! On a clear day, you can see Mexico and Catalina Island. After a winter rain storm, you may have a view of snow capped Southern California Mountains bordering the Mohave Desert. I love the technical challenge and the aesthetic reward of that local ride. Thank god it cannot be shuttled.

On the road, I live on one of the most popular north county San Diego road rides, Highland Valley Road. It's a segway into the back country of San Diego, Julian, The Anza Borrego Desert. In fact, the final stage of the 2009 Tour of California goes right by our building in the hills of North County San Diego! We're having a party and inviting all local Ellsworth owners to hang out and watch the race come by Ellsworthia! Great riding year round! I can leave my house and do a century of climbing and descending on quiet country roads up and over the pine forests of the Mt. Laguna Area and then down into the desert. Since the fires, that landscape has changed, but it's still great riding and a great place to ride close to home.

I like to ride local. It's good.



When I don't ride local, I love the old growth forests, and redwoods of Northern California and the Pacific Northwest. I think I prefer that over the deserts of Southern Utah and Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. Though the scenery in Sedona, Moab, Colorado, is amazing, and I never tire of it. I really, really love the trees.



Last summer, I loaded up the truck with bikes and kids, and we took a MTB “Workation”, I worked, and rode bikes with the family in many places, by far, the favorite was the Northern California Redwoods. I’m broken hearted that there is so little of that forest left. And touched deeply by how valuable the lessons are in the forest about sustainability, family, longevity, weathering the storms and growing straight and tall– The trees speak Volumes if we listen. The more time I spend in the Ancient Forests the more I feel these “ancients” have answers for us today, if we can only listen. (Click on the thumbnail at left to enlarge and get a sense of the scale of the Redwoods. This tree has withstood disease and forest fires and continues to thrive.)

BIKERUMOR: Do you race? If so, what’s your favorite event?

TONY: Yes, A little. Certainly less then I used to. I’m an endurance athlete, I’ll always love epic point to point races, stage races and endurance racing. I love the Granny Gear 24 hour events—so much fun, so well run, with such a great vibe during the events. 24 hours of Moab, though not my favorite course, is a don’t miss event.

BIKERUMOR: What do you consider your single greatest achievement for Ellsworth thus far?

TONY: The level of customer satisfaction. Our customers are thrilled with the product performance and ownership experience, but also about what they are part of. I’m thrilled to be able to have a company that can also serve as a platform to share things that have always been so important to me. Efficiency, environmental stewardship, Social responsibility. Turns out that a lot of folks that love bikes and the outdoors, share these things with me, and thus, we use bikes as a catalyst to enjoy what we love, practice the stewardship that’s important to us, and espouse the social responsibility that brings meaning to our lives and the lives of others. That’s customer satisfaction on so many levels. That’s the thing I’m most proud of being able to do with Ellsworth Bikes.

I’m also proud of our level of technical commitment to legitimate the performance of our products. Logical, rather than market driven material management and our energy efficient suspension designs.

No matter where I go or who I talk to, the legitimacy of the brand, and the renowned acceptance that Ellsworth doesn’t compromise in the execution of building the finest bike frames in the world, is something that facilitates a good night’s sleep. I like that.



BIKERUMOR: What do you consider your biggest goal for Ellsworth in the future?

TONY: To grow the brand into the commuter segment, and the road segment, and become a more robust brand. One that is recognized as a leader in more than just Mountain Bikes. A brand that has a stronger product base, and thus able to make a difference in a bigger way. Becoming BIG in dollars is less important than becoming BIG in the impact we make, and the message we bring to the table. I love to design things that work. I love to design things that simply work better. I want to be able to bring that design passion and ability to more products and more people. I look forward to doing that with environmental stewardship, and sustainable business practices. I look forward to being able to teach and consult others on how to do that as well. This is my biggest goal for Ellsworth Bicycles.

BIKERUMOR: There are a number of namesakes that have sold their brands (Fisher, Bontrager, etc.). Do you think those brands retain the spirit of their founders once they're owned by bigger companies, or have they lost their soul?

TONY: All I have to do is turn around and look at the staff I have here at Ellsworth today to know this company has a deep soulful commitment to what we do here and the products we make, and the experience of each of our customers, and the message we share while we do it. I know Ellsworth has it's spirit, and it's bigger than just it's founder. I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment on another of the sports founder's spirit. I do think the strength of the spirit of a brand is manifested in it's customers. I think the product's integrity with the original design intent of the founder is what keeps the "spirit" of the founder alive. I think it's unrealistic to expect Gary and Keith to have much influence now on the design intent of the products that bare their names. But, the answer to that question lies in the eyes and hearts of the owners of the products.

BIKERUMOR: What do you think will happen to the Ellsworth brand when you're ready to retire from the day-to-day?

TONY: I think retirement precedes death in many cases. I like to retire from tasks I can give up to others as they grow, as often as possible. In doing so, I'm able to do more things, learn more and in most cases, make a bigger difference, with my activities. I intend to actively "work" until I'm taken from this physical existence to another place, where I intend to then actively engage my soul in the work of making a difference in that place too. *(click the thumbnails below to see the Ellsworth manufacturing shop)*



So with that as my guiding belief, I regularly make business decisions that will allow Ellsworth Bicycles to continue to operate in the way it was grown and designed to operate long after I'm gone from this place. I expect that my influence in this business will continue long after I am gone. I have limitations as an executive, which I hope to be able to train my organization to overcome and grow past. But my vision as a designer, leader, and founder is here and those that execute their "jobs" within that vision, are pretty clear on it, and very committed individually. The efforts of their hearts will not end when I'm gone. The vision and soul of Ellsworth is much much more than me, now, and I'm very pleased with that. So I believe those that share my vision will be able to continue the brand with as much spirit and integrity to our brand, products and customer experience as Ellsworth has ever had, or more. Who knows, I might be a giant bottleneck for the talent that staffs this company today!

BIKERUMOR: You've done a lot to make Ellsworth an environmentally responsible company, from installing solar panels to turning lights off during some routine assembly processes to the Project Rainforest bikes. Explain the "lights off" thing...is that an automated assembly process that's done in the dark?

TONY: A highly sophisticated computer numerically controlled mill with pallet changers, tool checkers, can even call the machinist at home if there's a problem or a worn tool. It's a fully capable machining robot that is programmed to make parts in the dark, unattended, while electricity is "off peak" and folks can sleep while it processes the work loaded on it's changeable pallets.

The key to this machine is the brilliant machinist who programs it. The parts are designed and engineered to be strong, light and precise. The machinist must decode how to make it without touching it, his programs and tooling are every bit the design challenge of the part itself.



BIKERUMOR: What "green" effort has made the biggest impact on your bottom line, good or bad?

TONY: I think it's too early to quantify all of the efforts in dollars and cents. The ROI on the solar panels was 5 years

when I installed them, so this year, we should be making a “return” on that investment we made in the solar powered offices and warehouse in Southern California. The Windmill we’re waiting to install, has a 18 month ROI. I’ve done independent analysis on the re-used shipping cartons and packing material. That was a wash, but the “remuneration” comes from doing the right thing, even if it doesn’t save money. My kids pocket the cash from the other recycling that happens on site, so they would say that “pays”. All in all, what I find to be the most EXPENSIVE part of “greening” is the research and know how to implement a “green” idea. The actual financial thing generally works out. It’s the time and learning and research to figure out how to put in a windmill, which one, how it will work, and get it permitted through the county that is the bear. So much “Greening” is simple to do, and costs nothing, or saves a company money. It’s laziness that keeps Corporate America from greening up a bit.



Solar panels adorn the roof of Ellsworth's offices.

I’ve said before, publicly, if you want to copy something Ellsworth does, copy this. I’m even here to help. There’s no patents on “greening up” your company. If you’ve got an idea, or would like to know how, I’d be more than happy to spend my personal time to assist anyone in that endeavor. I enjoy it, and I believe I’ve broken some ice in some respects, and I’d be happy to, no I’d be thrilled and energized to assist another company in implementing some environmental stewardship that is cost effective and simple to do.

Let me say this too: I do some stuff that’s cool with regard to greening business here at Ellsworth, but I’m by no means any better at this than many others. Each person, can make a difference in simple ways in there business. The worst thing is to be overwhelmed by it, and think you can’t do everything, like solar, or wind, or lights out machining, etc. But EVERYONE can do something, and it’s in that incremental movement that true progress is made.

Again, I extend my time and experience to make “greening” make a positive impact on any companies bottom line. Call me 760-788-7500—I’d be happy to help.

BIKERUMOR: Your website has video explaining some of the environmental concerns surrounding carbon fiber frame manufacturing, specifically mentioning China. Is the issue just with those frames made in China and their process, or with carbon frames in general?

TONY: Yes! No, seriously, yes. It’s an issue with all Carbon. However, China has 0 (zero) environmental regulation on Chinese companies. They curiously regulate foreign owned companies in fairly insignificant ways, but turn a blind eye towards a Chinese owned company so in this way allowing the Chinese companies to compete unfairly often with a Taiwanese, or Japanese, or Korean owned industry that is located in China for the cheap labor.

Let’s not forget before the Olympics, China was still on the top 10 human rights violating countries in the world. They ran tanks over monks in Tibet months before the Olympics and refused to have that event linked to the Olympics in any way. China tops the world in lack of environmental commitments.

So when we talk about a material as toxic as black carbon dust in the air or water supply—who the heck in their right mind would want that being produced in the hundreds of thousands of tons in South China.

Carbon, as a material, just like titanium, Aluminum and steel, it has it's strength and it's weaknesses, from a design standpoint, there isn't any of those materials that are "better" than the other, just characteristics of those materials that have to be managed more or less aggressively to get the desired design result. I call this "Material Management"

You ask a complicated question, where there are really several questions and several answers to each. So let me try and break it down.

1. Carbon fiber production is an environmental concern, if it's processes are not carefully controlled to limit the introduction of carbon dust, and material into the air and water supply.
2. China has a terrible track record for human rights, this is manifest in Carbon factories where safety glasses, breathing apparatus, air filtration, and water (much sanding is done under running water, which is not filtered, but drained into storm drains and into the sea). Chinese Carbon is automatically on the top of my list for lack of environmental stewardship, and social responsibility. The average carbon fiber factory worker sanding those frames, breathing solvents, and dust, etc, works 11 hours a day, and 6 days a week, and makes a little over \$70 a month. Most of the "high end" carbon bike frames from names of Spanish and Italian origin, are made in China.
3. The cost of such a frame is cheap. And the mark-up or margin these companies can make on these frame is healthy. Not that I mind a good profitable sale, but I'd sure feel better about it if the workers had basic safety and health issues resolved in those factories. There is lies the frustration with the current GLUT of carbon on the market all being marketed under these high end brands.
4. Carbon in general? Not bad stuff. But carbon is many many things. If not compacted, and laid correctly, it's a sponge, if too brittle it's a brick. My point: carbon is a material that has to be managed, just like any material.



BIKERUMOR: So, where are the Easton Carbon stays on your Scant road bike made?

TONY: That particular batch, I was told, was made in Van Nuys California. Today, I believe Easton carbon products come from Taiwan. You'll need to confirm with them. There's a guardedness of brands to actually admit where their stuff is made these days. Brands, clearly push the US, Italian, Spanish aspect of the product which is wholly and

completely made in China and Taiwan. Not that it is necessarily bad, but it is disingenuous to not be frank, and responsible about where your product is made, and how you mitigate the negatives of manufacturing in China. Or rationalize selling a mass produced frame for the same price as Ellsworth US hand made, limited production frame. They use the massive margins they make on less expensive Asian, mass-produced products to advertise the brand, making folks believe hype. It also smothers the truth of where and how a legit hand built frame is worth \$2,000 price tag it comes with. I wish every potential frame buyer could know the ins and outs of the design, engineering and testing details that go into every handmade Ellsworth frame. It would increase the sense of value that comes with each frame that's purchased. Ellsworth frames are not expensive. They're a bargain for the craftsmanship, detail, quality, and design engineering that goes into everyone.

BIKERUMOR: Will Ellsworth ever make a carbon frame?

TONY: Yes, I'll make a carbon bike in the future, and use carbon material in existing frames, as the material lends itself to improving the performance of the ICT designed frame. In the future, all Carbon components I manufacture with will come from our own small, carbon fabrication partnership I've made with a "green" carbon manufacturing facility in the south of Taiwan—way south, way small, where me showing up and asking to see the water filtration device, is met with a proud, broad smile, a cup of tea, and an intelligent dialogue of environmental stewardship that the little company was founded on.

There, we use a proprietary compaction technique that assures even and precise finish material properties. Our material is certified; our highly engineered lay patterns and purposeful shapes manifest the low weights and ride qualities you'd expect from an Ellsworth Frame.

It will be made in a "greener" facility, where human rights matter and environmental regulations are adhered to that were voted for and implemented by the people of a democratic government.

Ellsworth carbon will be high tech, "rare earth" carbon, not just some mix of chopped up prepreg, fiberglass and some carbon fiber, shoved in a mold and compressed with nylon sleeves... Hey, look inside 10 carbon frames and see if you can find that plastic sleeve they just leave in there—that's cool, right, glad wrap and baggies in your sexy carbon frame?

1. Material management.
2. Environmental responsibility.
3. Social Responsibility and Human rights.

When Ellsworth introduces the carbon frames—know that's in each and everyone of them.

An even more interesting question is, would you make carbon fiber frames if the market didn't demand it? Do you think carbon fiber makes better bike frames? We'll have to pick that up in a future interview, I've been typing answers for two hours, and my wife is waiting dinner on me.

Carbon bikes are a necessity only because Trek and Lance showed the world 7 consecutive Tour wins on a carbon frame. Prior to that, they broke a lot, couldn't be repaired, and either flexed too much, or road like bricks. Lots of R&D have helped work out the bugs of carbon frames, but the bottom line is materials, all of them, MUST be managed for their optimum characteristics, and managed to mitigate and design around the negatives, or weaknesses of the material. All of it. It's just so annoying to see the marketing muscle and exploitation of Chinese labor make enough money to convince the buying public Carbon is the ONLY material worth dreaming of on your bike frame. Just silliness... Don't take this as Tony Ellsworth saying Carbon's not good stuff. It's just Tony Ellsworth saying, "hey, it's not the material, it's what's done with the material that matters."



BIKERUMOR: Your Project Rainforest donates \$50 per bike sold to reforestation and anti-deforestation efforts...how many PRG bike have you sold?

TONY: We have not even formally introduced the program yet. We kind of leaked it at Interbike, where our Project Pink Social Responsibility program has been so well received and in full swing. Not surprisingly, we've sold a lot of these (a lot for us, about 30 of them last month). Folks love the Rainforests, and the color is super cool. The frog is super cool too. A dear friend and awesome artist, who must remain unmentioned due to a non-compete he's bound by, drew it for the love of the idea of the project. That kind of unselfish contribution is what Social Responsibility is all about.

BIKERUMOR: Where do the donations go and how do you monitor the effectiveness of those donations?

TONY: Sustainable Travel International's Conservation Carbon reforestation project portfolio supports reforestation initiatives in Africa and Asia. This high quality, high impact portfolio is independently verified by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (www.climate-standards.org) to offer multiple benefits: restore native species, protect threatened forests, support biodiversity conservation and generate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. \$50 generates reductions in 4.17 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions which is equivalent to offsetting almost 70% of the annual greenhouse gas emissions from a passenger vehicle.



Half of it goes to Sustainable Travel International, and the other half is accrued for specific programs that directly work to find other uses, or opportunities to prevent deforestation directly by using or acquiring land and setting it aside for cycling rather than cutting it down. Two projects are currently in negotiation we'll be focusing attention on both of them as we get closer to the realization of the projects. One is an individual who has negotiated with a municipality in Central America to do cycling tours and camps in the local Rain Forest, rather than clsh and burn it for a golf course and yet another time share... That's one I'm enthused about. And the deal isn't done yet, so it has to remain underwraps until it is. The other is a beautiful second growth forest in the middle of a developing city. The

owner of the property wants to log it, and build a development. We hope to participate in utilizing the property in a way that will set aside the forest in perpetuity for wilderness trail access and recreation. These projects are private, and connected to our cyclign community, and that's where the other half of the money from Rain Forest Green bikes will go.

Again, non of this has been formalized with regular stock of the RFG color, and promoted yet. We hope to have this underway full force in the next 30-90 days or so. I personally grew up in the Pacific Northwest. I grew up running and playing in the forests. I'm so saddened by how that Pacific Northwest has been logged, or "managed" to literally death. The erosion problems and now lack of forestation in the pacific northwest is heartbreaking. Not to mention the legitimate climate change issues with global deforestation. I'm thrilled to have so many folks interested in participating in the Rain Forest Green Project.



BIKERUMOR: Speaking of "green" efforts, you've also unveiled a new bike, the Glimpse, that helps people get onto an Ellsworth for less "green" by offering a one-spec package with no options. It comes with SLX and Ellsworth wheels and has 5" of travel. Framewise, what's different between the Glimpse and the Truth (4") or Epiphany (5.25")? What sizes will be available? What type of rider are they built for?

TONY: Small, Medium and Large—or 15", 17" and 19". (Photo above from MTObikes.com on Flickr)

It's a lightweight race/trail bike. Not at all unlike the Epiphany in it's target use and customer market. While it's 5.15" of travel, it's light, and efficient. The design premise behind any Mountain Bike I make is to make it efficient, increase comfort and reduce rider fatigue, and increase traction and control. The Glimpse will do that beautifully, and will be a bench mark performer, just like the other ICT equipped Ellsworth.

This Ellsworth though, is focused on being available at a price more people can afford. \$3,300 will buy you a US Material, US machined Rockers, and US suspension component equipped (Fox) all assembled in one location where all the parts of the complete bike come from. Price wise, with the components and such all coming from Asia, building the bike and boxing it in Asia is the only way to reduce the price, without reducing the technology and performance.

The big savings is bulk assembly, building, boxing and shipping—in quantity. It's actually pretty clever and I'm proud of how much Made in the USA we've been able to retain in the Asian assembled project. The tubing is our Ellsworth

Proprietary swaged, tapered and shaped tube set, made from our US based xxx3 Aluminum Drawn seamless tubing, 20% stronger than the Aircraft Grade 6061 we've used for years. The rockers, a critical part of the precision of the four bar links suspension, are machined in our machine facility in the Pacific Northwest. The suspension components are genuine Fox, custom tuned for the Ellsworth pedal efficient ICT suspension.



The idea was to make this bike to increase the volume of what Ellsworth can sell, not decrease the performance. This makes Ellsworth available to more people, and that should help us increase our ability to do what we love, making great bikes by hand for the select customers who appreciate that and are willing to pay for it. Yet, increase the volume of our purchasing of components and such so we can enhance this value to the folks in the world who want the US made frames. While satisfying those who may not appreciate that aspect of Ellsworth, but do appreciate the technology, quality and design of the Ellsworth bikes.

This took me years to get my head around. I'm idealistic, and if I had it my way, I'd make everything in Washington. So much of the parts, and components are now made in Asia, that to hit the price points of my competitors who contract build in Asia, I have to temper my idealism, and broaden my acceptance of ways to bring Ellsworth performance to the people at a price that keeps me competitive with the "other guys". I can't singlehandedly defy the purchasing

habits and sourcing practices of the consumers and component manufacturers. The Glimpse is a project that I've worked hard on, to maintain all that I love about designing and creating great bikes at a price that more people can afford.

BIKERUMOR: They're not showing on your website yet...when will the Glimpse be available?

TONY: We're taking orders now for a limited production run of Glimpses we expect to be able to deliver in May. People can place orders with us directly to be delivered to the dealer of their choice. Because the frames are made with US materials, in a small high end facility, the bikes will be delivered on a first come first served basis. We have numerous Ellsworth dealers who have pre ordered the bikes, and will have stock in the dealerships in May. It's been fun seeing the excitement of the dealers and customers at the price of the bike.

BIKERUMOR: Your slogan is "Those who ride know" and the intimation is that once you ride an Ellsworth, one would know what you're talking about when you say things like your ICT (Instant Center Tracking) and custom built wheels are the best. So, how does one go about testing an Ellsworth? Do you have a demo program or tour? Do dealers typically have a demo bike?

TONY: Any of our Dealers on the website generally have some demo bikes. We also have a calendar of events that we'll attend during the year, where folks could take the Ellsworth Challenge.

Other than that, most Ellsworth owners are more than happy to let you take a ride on theirs—NOT! I'd love to figure out a way to logistically do a satisfaction or your money back program; we just don't have anyone not like their Ellsworth. I wish everyone could get a chance to ride the Ellsworth that suits them on their favorite trails. It literally redefines the sport for a lot of people. They can clean what they couldn't before, ride further with less fatigue and cover the terrain faster with more control. I've been told we'd be out of business if the product wasn't so good, because we just don't advertise or market very effectively. Which is probably true, word of mouth is still our number one sales tool.



BIKERUMOR: What's the lightest you've seen a Truth built up?

TONY: Pua Sawicki's (above) is pretty light at sub-22 pounds. Matt Barringer, owner of I.E. Bikes in Murrieta, California has some secret sauce in his builds where he consistently builds them under twenty one pounds. We've had them at the show one year at 20.5 pounds. There's no question the bikes can be built light. You know though, the efficiency of the suspension saves as much as 2.2kg equivalent by not sucking up the energy that would normally be propelling you forward. There are lighter frames, but at what cost? Single pivot, sculpted Chinese Carbon fiber MTB's with air/air shocks are lighter. Maybe by as much as a pound. Light weight is important, but it doesn't trump suspension performance that provides less rider fatigue, and better traction and control which allows for higher sustained speed and less energy lost to re-accelerating after braking for stuff that you'd be able to pedal through on a no-compromise full suspension bike.

BKERUMOR: Last question: What's the sickest, craziest, gnarliest thing you've seen one of your riders do on your bikes?

TONY: Oh, painful. The videos are full of Tyler Clausen on his Dare, Josh Bender (video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXRRicuT9h4>) on his Dare or Moment or Von Williams doing trials style kick drops over boulder strewn cliffs. There's no shortage of talented and amazing riders using the Dare, Rogue or Moment to do mind bending things. Although, I think things like the tandem riders who raced the Tour of the Rockies on the Witness ranks right up there with the best of the gnarly things. Or Pua making podium in the PRO MENS solo category on her Truth. Not to take anything away from Pua's strength as a rider regardless of her sex, but seriously, her performances where she podiums with the guys is "sick".

Ranking right up there too is Jared Fisher, owner of Escaped Adventures Tours, Moab Cyclery and Las Vegas Cyclery. Jared just raced his 8" travel, 35+ lb Rogue with a Monster T and 24 x 3" tires in the solo division at the 24 hours of Old Pueblo.

Or Johnny Hymas, manager of Moab Cyclery, who rides the "Stacker" trail without ever touching down off the back side of Amasa Pass on his Moment.

Man, I could just go on and on. I've often wished I could download and replay the things I've seen on my bike. But of course, when it gets the sickest, there's never any cameras rolling.

From my own exploits, there was the one time I rode in dress pants and dress shoes behind Evil Dave and in front of Dangerous Dan on my own Dare down the back side of Mt. Woodson at dusk, without lights and then poached some closed single track in the dark to get to the shuttle. That was Sick, Crazy and Gnarly... I hit stuff too big for me, simply because I could follow Evil Dave's line and I knew Dangerous Dan would run straight over me if I slowed down or stopped. The dress pants, button down shirt and leather soled shoes made it pure nuts! We were just so desperate to get that ride in before dark.

Cycling is Great. Thanks for that trip down memory lane right there. I love bikes.

Then there was the time we were shooting video with Thor Wixom for the trade show video. Thor was leaning out of the back of our minivan shooting the two of us leaning hard into the sharp corners of banner grade and dropping down east of Julian to the Borrego Desert. I was accelerating into the corners faster than the van could get out of my way and then overheated the brakes as I grabbed a handful of campy record brakes to keep from rear ending the minivan and Thor's Digital Camera. The result was overheating the tube and a front blow out at speed on that twisty mountain road. Thor kept rolling as I cleared the other riders and then laid the bike down bearing both buttocks as the lycra on the chamois wore right through in about 5 seconds. My little girl saw the video and was afraid to ride her bike for like 6 months. "Daddy, you have GOT to be more careful with yourself".

Man, bikes are fun. Life is good. We all need to ride our bikes more and I'm confident in the next life, all those "movies in the mind" will be able to be played back and shared in Hi Def!

BIKERUMOR: Tony, thanks for a great interview, and I can't wait to get on one of your bikes at Sea Otter!