

I love my bike. I'll probably love my next one even more.

What could my bike possibly do better? I don't know. It's close to 4 years old, obviously not the latest & greatest technology, but it still consistently blows me away, how well it rides, how reliable it's been, how few flats I've had over the years. And on mornings like today, it has that "Twist the throttle and just go faster" feeling. OK, I do have to admit that I upgraded the wheels last year to the latest & greatest Bontrager D3 carbons, but other than that, it's nearly the exact same bike it was when I bought it.

But it's getting close to upgrade time. When I got my current ride, a Madone 6.9 with Dura Ace Di2 electronic shifting, I had the same feeling then, about how a new bike could possibly ride better than my prior Madone 5.9 SSL. But it sure did! Livelier, better at descending, even seemed more comfortable.

And I'm sure my new bike, likely a 7-Series Trek Madone with either mechanical or electronic DuraAce 11-speed group, is going to blow me away just like the last one.

What brings all this up? Probably the customer who came in, towards the end of the day, with a 1973-vintage Masi, great condition, paint job almost entirely intact. Got me thinking about how awesome my first racing bikes were, back in the day. And then we came down to the reason the bike was in the shop. It needed a few oddball Campy-specific parts that aren't generally available anymore, and the discussion had to be had regarding keeping things as original as possible, using the dreadfully-awful stock derailleur cables and housings, or drastically improve the shifting using modern cabling. But modernizing it would defeat the point of owning a classic old bike.

And that point is? I've got a classic old bike, my 1972 Cinelli that I raced on, back in the day. A poster child for the "steel is real" crowd, and those who feel that nothing invented after lugged frame construction is worth two cents. And what do I call that bike? "The Iron Pig." Because it's heavy and feels as responsive as a Prius hauling concrete up a steep grade.

If it was a classic car, the difference in performance would be a source of discussion, maybe humor. But it's a bike, and I'm the engine, and that makes it a whole different story. There's no quick tune-up to make my engine faster, and no spare parts either. I've got to keep the original factory equipment running as long as possible. The only option I've got is to get a faster chassis with great wheels, and thankfully, every three or four years they've made enough improvement in them that it makes sense to upgrade. Even though my current ride is so nice.

The alternative? Ignorance is bliss. Be happy with what you've got, 'cuz it's been so good. That would be fine if everyone around me wasn't getting faster (it's certainly not me getting slower!), and if I didn't know, from trying them, that \$\$\$ will buy me a better, faster ride.

But it's going to be a tough one for me, because I really can't see my current Trek Madone serving duty as a "rain" or "utility" bike. It's too nice. My 2003 Trek 5900? Different story, The differences are so significant that it makes sense to take it out in the elements and, basically, ride it like a rental. I can't see my 2010 Madone in that role. But, I've been wrong before. Every 4 years or so.

--Mike--