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OPPOSITE The tools of the trade. Custom bicycle makers opt to design and build simultaneously, much as a tailor cuts your suit to fit.

ON P. 2 Cyclists put Jaegher bikes through their paces.



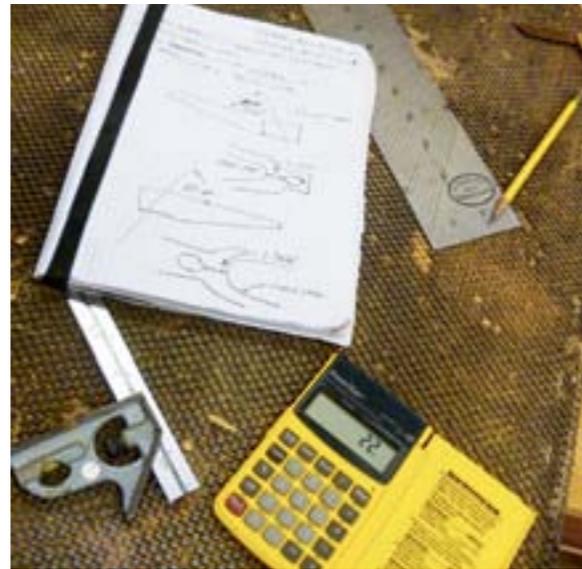
ART & INDUSTRY

When industrial designer Michael Downes formed Art & Industry as an umbrella company in 2010, under which could develop concepts that were not part of his day job, it could have been called a hobby, but it is a hobby that has spawned one of the most unique and hard-working bike designs out there. Today, Michael and his team, in collaboration with shipwright Jeff Saylor, design and build wooden cargo bikes. 'I wanted to build a cargo bike and was inspired by the likes of Renovo, who make wooden frames,' he says. 'Jeff is an experienced boat builder with access to all the equipment I could want, and so it seemed like the perfect fit. That, and the fact that I can't weld or braze for shit!'

Michael has been into cycling since his mid-twenties, when he was a bicycle courier in his native London. An extended stint as a bike mechanic, followed by a period studying at industrial design at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, landed him an internship at Giant in 2000. While at Giant, Michael designed the Simple cruiser, which to his astonishment, Giant put into production. He still rides his Simple today. Wood (plywood, and now bamboo) is his material of choice for the imaginatively titled No. 2 cable-steered cargo bike, the second model in this vein, which wowed the crowds at the Oregon Manifest exhibition. Since then, Michael has continued to push innovations in the utility-bike sector.

When asked why he believes there has been a resurgence in custom bikes such as his, he points out that the custom frame-building revolution is a reflection of the craft movement in other sectors, citing the massive microbrewing trend, in Portland especially, as well as in food and music. 'We are', he says, 'entering the age of the maker.'

ESTABLISHED: 2010
 LOCATION: 'People's Republic of Portland', Oregon, USA
 BIKE TYPE MADE: Bakfiets-style cargo bicycle
 SPECIALITIES: 'Exploring the intersection of bicycles and boats with particular reference to composite wood structures'
 FAVOURITE RIDER: 'That would be me ...'
 FAVOURITE BICYCLE: Dursley Pedersen
 FAVOURITE OBJECT: 'That little plastic widget you use to seal the bread bag: simple, reliable, unremarkable – a perfect product'





BONDI BEACH CRUISERS

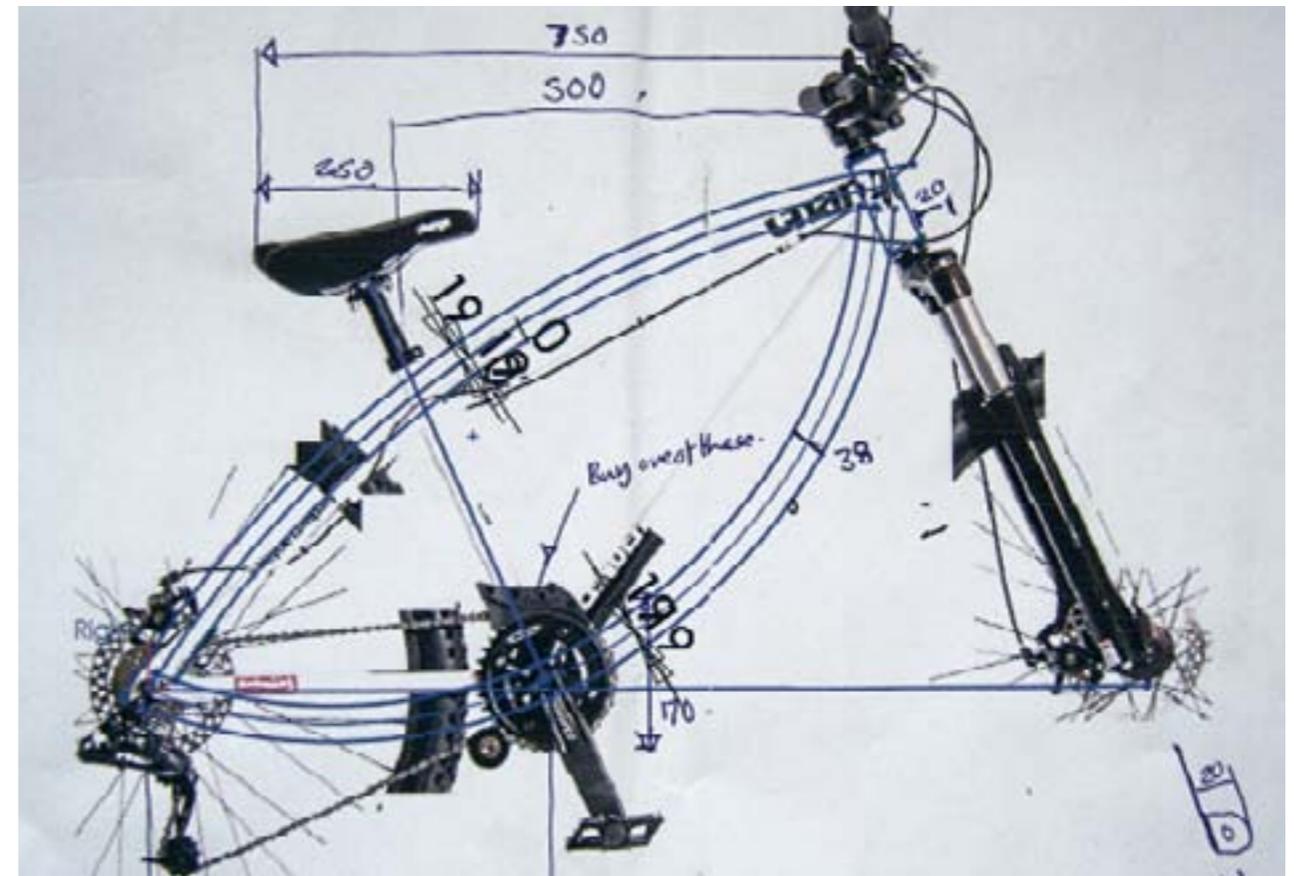
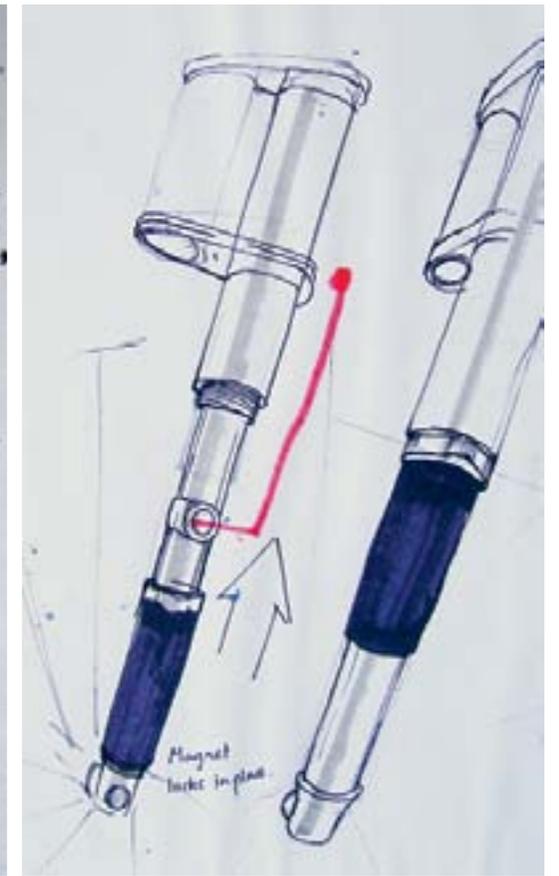
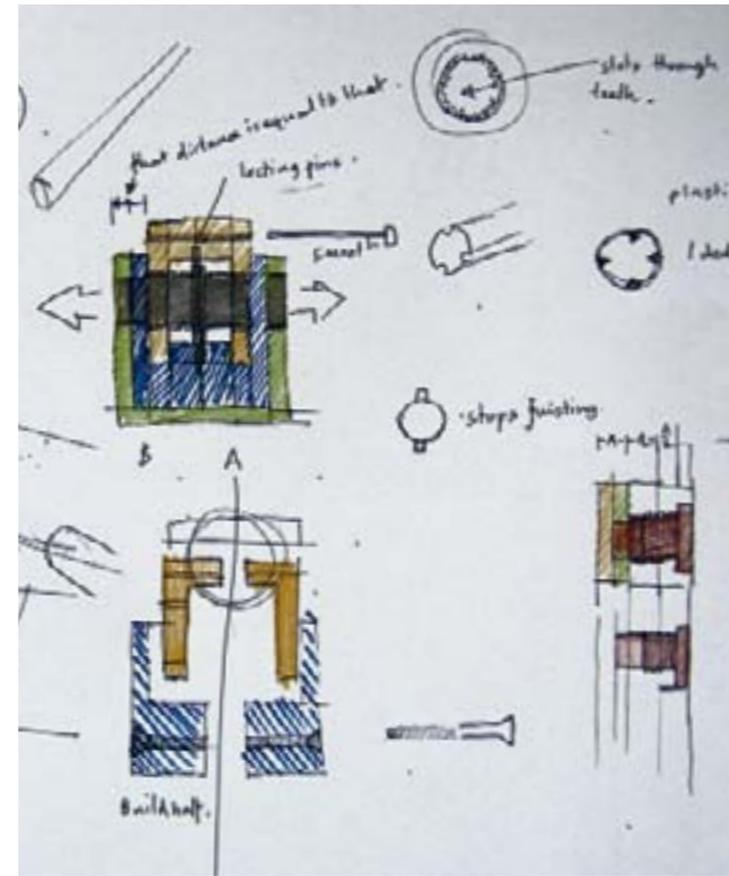
This relatively new bicycle maker entered the Australian market in 2011, with a laid-back pedal-powered cruiser aimed squarely at the beautiful young surfing crowd of Bondi Beach. It was the brainchild of Belinda Miller and Resa Pratoni, who together have spent years scouring garage sales, auctions and the Internet for vintage bicycles to restore and ride. 'After restoring a few bikes and receiving a lot of positive feedback,' says Resa, 'we set out to design our own bikes, and Bondi Beach Cruisers was born.'

It took about three months to come up with the design and refine the details: a classic beach cruiser style, popular from the 1930s to the 1950s, with simple coaster breaks. Manufacturing began in 2010, and the first beach cruisers went on sale five months later to great public interest. 'Most of the bike industry is very focused on performance and technology,' says Resa. 'That sometimes can scare the average consumer from getting a bike. We need to be accessible to everyone, designing a bike with simplicity and comfort that looks fun to ride is a crucial part of our design.'

Resa believes that his and other makers' bikes will only get more popular, stating that cycling is the natural choice for people looking to find an economical and cool method of transportation. 'I also think that finding a boutique bicycle manufacturer or custom builder is a way to show the rider's personality,' he says. 'Hence the growing popularity in companies like ours.'

ESTABLISHED:	2011
LOCATION:	North Bondi, New South Wales, Australia
BIKE TYPE MADE:	Beach cruisers
SPECIALITIES:	Colours
FAVOURITE RIDER:	Anyone that has a bike
FAVOURITE BICYCLE:	Any vintage beach cruiser
FAVOURITE OBJECT:	Custom cruiser frames





PRIMATE FRAMES

Extreme-sports enthusiast Tarn Mott likes to jump off cliffs with a parachute strapped to his back and kite surf the big waves of the Southern Hemisphere. He is also a mountain-bike junkie, and hard riding is what got him involved in building bicycles in the first place. 'I was making my own rigs and modifying things I wasn't happy with when I met John Bodzefski of Cycle Underground,' he says. 'I commissioned him to build my dream bike at the time, a DH-rig based on a Brooklyn Machine Works race link. One thing led to another, and I became completely immersed in the design. John convinced me to have a go at building a bike myself, and, once bitten, there was no turning back.'

That was in 2002. Tarn worked with Bodzefski for another two years, and eventually established his own marque, Primate Frames, in 2005. Tarn currently builds ten to twelve bikes per year, revelling in coming up with unique and original designs. 'My main aim is to create bicycles with beautiful clean lines, which have a real tactile feel to them,' he says. 'It has taken me many years doing a lot of different things to find what it is that I really love doing, and to acquire the skills base to do it well. If I can continue to grow and learn in this industry, then I'll be happy for years to come.'

ESTABLISHED:	2004
LOCATION:	Balgownie, New South Wales, Australia
BIKE TYPE MADE:	Touring, fixed, road, tandem, folding, BMX, street, suspension, cyclocross, 29er
SPECIALITIES:	'Unique and original designs, bespoke designed and produced fittings and components'
FAVOURITE RIDER:	'Everyday guys who hit the road with no set destination or time frame, and end up riding halfway round the planet'
FAVOURITE BICYCLE:	Brooklyn Machine Works race-link frame, Risse Racing Lassen and Curtis Thumpercross
FAVOURITE OBJECT:	'The coffee roaster I built myself, but my anvil jig would be a close second'

