

PACE RC-100

*The town of Yorkshire
makes more than
just good pudding*



It should come as no surprise to anyone that Europe has finally produced a well-crafted, high-performance mountain bike. With their long tradition of competitive cycling and legendary status as frame builders, the Europeans (commonly thought to include the French, English, Germans, Italians, Dutch and Spanish) have always had it in them to figure out the phenomenon of mountain biking. All that was required was for them to learn to transcend

◀ *Take it out and play: The Pace RC-100 was a good all-around bike. Faster riders liked the frame's stiff feel and consistent handling over bumpy terrain. The Magura brakes were consistent stoppers, though some wanted lighter modulation.*



PACE RC-100

their road background for the calling of off-road cycling. Though everyone thought it would be the Italians who would be celebrated as the first to do it right in the dirt, it is in fact the British who get the nod. We've been aware of Pace mountain bikes for about two years. At last year's bike show in Milan, Italy, we ran into the chaps who ran Pace and we asked for a test bike. One year later, a U.S. Customs officer called the *MBA* offices to tell us that a big package had arrived from England. It was about time.

Once we ripped into the box, everything we had seen and heard about the Pace mountain bike was proven correct—the Pace RC-100 was a very trick bicycle. It looked like nothing we had ever tested before. Suddenly Tim Gould was not the only off-road weapon that Britain had to offer. The wrecking crew was poised to take on the finest mountain bike that Maggie Thatcher, Arthur Scargill, Lady Di and the team of Duncan MacDonald and Adrian Carter could provide.

TAKING A EUROPEAN VACATION

The Pace RC-100 gets immediate stares at the square tubing that makes up the frame. Pace designed the frame themselves using a CAD system, and with custom-drawn 7000-series aluminum they have achieved what they feel are the optimum shapes and wall thicknesses to withstand the punishment of racing. The front triangle uses both square and rectangular tubing, and to help reduce weight the main tubes (front triangle) have been externally butted while the rear has the butting extruded in. Pace says that since the tube is flat-faced, they can position the butt differentially on each face of the same tube to cope with particular requirements in terms of load and resilience. To further explain their choice of tubing, Adrian Carter points to "a design maxim that says that for tubes of equal weights and diameters, a square tube is 30 percent stiffer if the load is presented perpendicular to the faces. So we have designed a tube which is of a section and wall thickness [the wall thickness is different on the side faces to the top] equal in weight to a round tube, but both stronger and stiffer."

Pace sent us a 19-inch test bike (measures as an effective 20-inch frame) that had a steep set of angles: 72-degree head and 74-degree seat. A 12-inch bottom bracket was mated to a 16.25-inch chainstay with a 23.5-inch top tube and a 42.25-inch wheelbase. The bike weighed in at 27 pounds. Craftsmanship is first-rate and, except for the mid-mounted top tube cable guide, everything about the frame was well designed. An offset rear triangle design is used to attain a better chain line, and there is a grease fitting at both the bottom bracket and the head tube.

AS NOVEL AS THE SEX PISTOLS

Undoubtedly one of the trickiest ideas found on the Pace is the non-adjustable



A trek through the moors: Built for the English racing scene, the Pace would be competitive anywhere. It's a well designed, sturdy mountain bike that enjoys many unique features not found on bikes in America.



They drive on the wrong side of the road, too: The chaps from Yorkshire decided to mount the Magura hydraulic brakes on the backside of the Reynolds 531 chromoly forks for better braking power. The forks were stiff and provided secure steering through the rough stuff.



British novelty: The Pace RC-100 sets itself apart from most other bikes in many ways: externally butted square and rectangular alloy tubes, and a trick steering system that requires no headset locknut. The stem and steerer tube are one piece and any adjustment is made by loosening the fork crown.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model: RC-100.
Manufacturer: Pace Design: The Old Blacksmith's Workshop, Denholme Rd., Leeming, Oxenhope, West Yorkshire, UK. B022 9NP. 0535-44788.
Sizes available: 18", 20", 22".
Weight: 27 lb.
Finishes available: Gray.
Suggested retail price: \$2500 (U.S.)

COMPONENTS
Front derailleur: Campagnolo Centaur.
Rear derailleur: Campagnolo Centaur.
Front brake: Magura hydraulic.
Rear brake: Magura hydraulic.
Crank: Bullseye.
Freewheel: Campagnolo.

FRAME
Tubing: 7000-series aluminum.
Head angle: 72°.
Seat angle: 74°.
Top tube length: 23.5".
Chainstay length: 16.25".
Braze-ons: Two water bottle mounts.

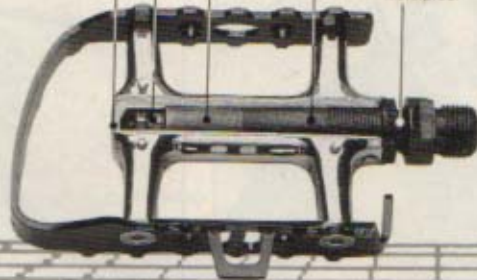
NOTE: The MOUNTAIN BIKE ACTION test crew rides its test bikes under controlled circumstances, on private property and with respect for the environment. No wilderness or environmentally sensitive areas are used.



TOP MECHANISM & PERFORMANCE

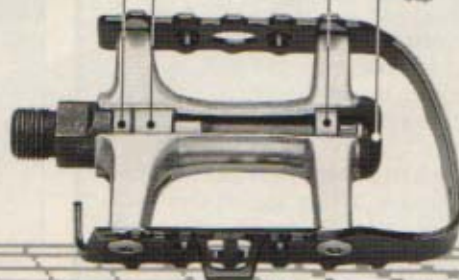
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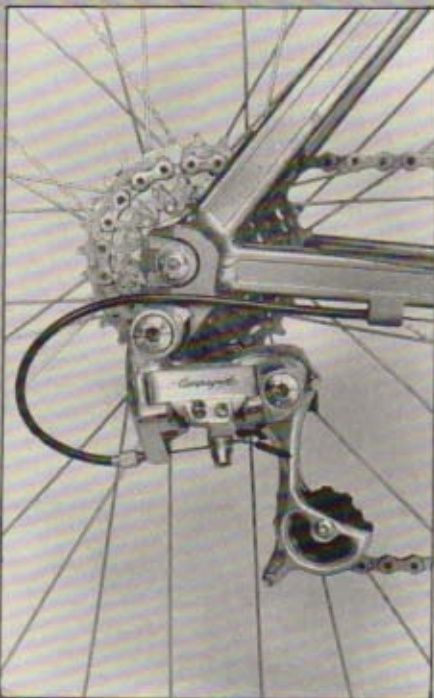
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headset. The RC-100's one-piece stem and steerer is kept in place by the pinch bolts on the fork crown. The stem can still be lowered and raised (Pace makes available different-length steerers), but it's done by loosening the crown and adjusting via a small nut located underneath the fork crown. It sounds complicated, but the intention behind the design is to rid the bike of headset play, make it adjustable in the field (using tools that would usually be carried: 5mm Allen key and a 10mm wrench) and lighter than the standard system.



Continental divide: Pace outfitted our test bike with a Campagnolo gruppo and will be offering a choice between the Italian parts and a SunTour group for '91. The Campy drive train worked much more consistently than the gruppo we tested two months ago.

Another neat idea is the rear-mounted front brakes. The Pace is the first production bike we've seen to be fitted with Magura hydraulic brakes. On the RC-100 they are mounted behind the single-butted, 1.125-inch Reynolds chromoly forks to increase braking power. These Magura brakes did not have a quick-release (only their retro-fit models do), so releasing all the tires' air or quickly dismantling one brake caliper is necessary. The latter is made exceptionally easy since it's all one piece and there is no toe-in adjustment to be made. The crankset is a modified Bullseye unit using a cartridge bearing instead of the standard ball bearings in the 95mm-wide bottom bracket.

OUT ON THE MOORS

The RC-100's ride was as good as any race-bred bike made in the colonies. Our test bike was outfitted with a Campagnolo gruppo which worked significantly better than

PACE RC-100

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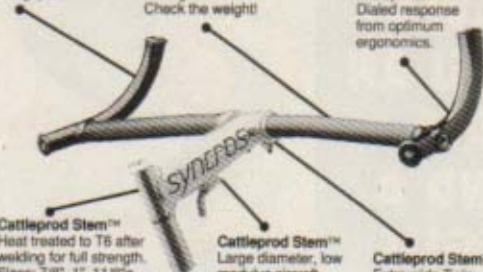
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the unit we tested a few months ago (*MBA*, Sept. '90). Though we still encountered the occasional mis-shift with the hand-held Bullet shifters, the shifts were consistently made when desired. While the Magura brakes are renowned for their ability to stop a mountain bike on a dime, some riders complained of their heavy modulation when only trying to slow down the bike. A long, twisty singletrack produced pumped-up and weary forearms from riding the brakes and applying them in a routine on/off manner. Although the bike had a rigid ride to it, it was not as stiff as a Klein, which also meant that it gave a bit smoother ride through the rough stuff. The steep angles made it a quick handler, but the long top tube and short stem made sure it never got scary up front. For a bike that's never visited America, it is a first-class NORBA-style race bike.

Due to its foreign manufacture, the RC-100 might not be the easiest bike to attain, but Pace is working on finding a domestic distributor. They told us that the bike will be available with either the Campy or a Sun-Tour gruppo. A complete Japanese setup would save a lot of weight over the European parts, though the bike would certainly lose its international flavor. The Pace RC-100 proves that Britain, already strong with rider talent, is now ready to take the lead in mountain bike technology as well. □

PACE RC-100

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