



FAT CHANCE

10th ANNIVERSARY

Mountain biking's first collector's item

Every person who took his first look at the latest Chris Chance creation asked the same question: "Has it really been that long?" Yes, it has.

The '92 tenth anniversary mountain bike is a celebratory effort to mark the first decade of East Coast fat-tiredom.

In fact, Chris Chance, who already had his frame shop manufacturing road bike frames, built his first mountain bike to compete in a road race. As Chance explains it, "Once a year there was a race up Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. It's the tallest mountain in the East, and after each race there was always this unofficial race back down. One year a friend of mine wanted to compete, so we made our very first mountain bike for him to race. That was in August of '82 and after that the transition to making mountain bikes began."

Without a doubt, the Fat City Tenth Anniversary bike, of which only 200 will be made, is one of the most beautifully crafted we have seen. At the same time, its appearance is one of the more understated. It's ironic that the same company that recently brought us the crazy fluorescent color schemes of the Yo Eddy Team bike would resort to such a conservative shell for the one model that marks the first decade of Massachusetts mountain bike production. In fact, the Fat Chance legacy is one of the most conservative, classically oriented in the industry. They may have resorted to wild color schemes on some of their bikes, but the bike designs themselves never got caught up in the image wars. Long top tubes, slack angles and quality construction have always been the standout features of any Fat City mountain bike. Oversized tubes, alternative materials and elevated chainstays were left to the other guys.

"We're pretty awed that we've stayed in business this long," Chance relates as he talks about the idea behind the tenth anniversary model. "Mountain bikes have come a long way over the years, but we're still just doing our thing in steel."

Stiff steel: The MBA wrecking crew isn't crazy about super-light bikes due to flex and handling problems. Luckily, the 23-lb. Tenth Anniversary bike didn't feel like a door hinge in the rough stuff, and the gray compound Specialized Ground Control tires helped the bike stick to the ground at speed. ►

NOT YOUR TYPICAL STEEL

Our 18.5-inch test bike weighed in at an astonishingly low 23 pounds. When it came time to pick the bike's tubing, Chris went to longtime Fat City supplier True Temper for some of their heat-treated OX III tubing. Owing to the bike's historic status, Chris was after something special, and he got True Temper to draw up a set of custom spec'd tubes for the project.

Fat City keeps their frame measuring system simple. Four different sizes are available: small, small-medium, medium and medium-large. We had a medium-

sized frame. The bike had a super-roomy 23-inch top tube, 41.25-inch wheelbase, 11.75-inch bottom bracket height and 16.8-inch chainstays.

The silver and purple frame enjoys some of the smallest and cleanest welds we have seen. The two water bottle braze-ons are all the frame offers; this bike was not meant to be loaded with panniers! The fork is a lightened version of that found on the race-oriented Yo Eddy model, but it still has the teardrop gussets on the backside for increased strength. Other nice design features are



the asymmetrical chainstays which provide increased chainring clearance. The Tenth has very good front and rear wheel clearance. By far the nicest features found on the frame are the rear dropouts, which are machined from 17-4 hardened stainless steel. Beautifully sculpted, they look scary in terms of durability, but Chance reassured us that "they are monstrously strong." We also liked to see the top tube cable guides mounted as far forward and back as possible. This positioning minimizes excess cable housing and, up front, provides maximum knee clearance. The frame's



detail work is very impressive.

The last item of note is the frame's head badge. Laser-cut from titanium, the badge is anodized with special celebratory graphics and has the bike's serial number laser-etched in. Our test bike was the fourth of the 200 to be made.

◀ *Such a shame: With only 200 being made, the Fat Chance Tenth Anniversary bike was hard to go out and get dirty. Due to its lightweight construction, Chris Chance feels that no one over 180 lb. should ride the bike if they want it to last. With each frameset costing \$1400, maybe it should just be hung on a wall!*

SPECIFICATIONS

Model: Tenth Anniversary Fat Chance

Manufacturer: Fat City Cycles, P.O. Box 218, Somerville, MA 02143; (617) 625-4922.

Sizes available: Small-medium, medium, large
Finishes available: Silver/purple.

Suggested retail price: \$1450 (frameset only)

COMPONENTS

Shifters: Campagnolo Record OR (top mount)

Front derailleur: Campagnolo Record OR

Rear derailleur: Campagnolo Record OR

Front brake: Campagnolo Record OR (cantilever)

Rear brake: Campagnolo Record OR (cantilever)

Crank: Campagnolo Record OR 42/30/20 175mm.

Freewheel: Campagnolo Record OR 11-23+

FRAME

Tubing: True Temper OX3 Chromoly

Head angle: 71°

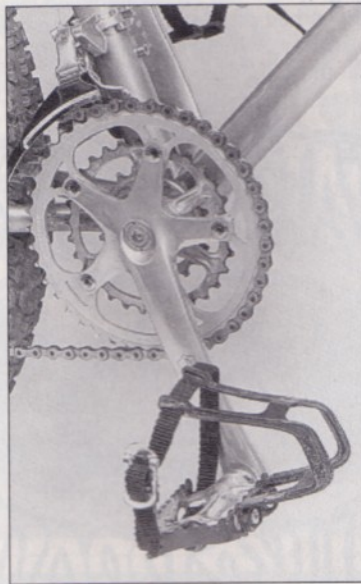
Seat angle: 72°

Top tube length: 23"

Chainstay length: 16.8"

Braze-ons: 2 water bottle mounts.

Weight: 23 lb.



◀ *Just like Tinker: Our test bike was fitted with a final production Campagnolo Record OR Gruppo. The lightweight, finely polished parts helped keep the bike's weight down and added an air of elegance to the overall package. Except for a cranky front thumb-shifter, performance of the Italian parts rated very high.*

Lighter than they look: The Tenth Anniversary forks look similar to those found on the Yo Eddy, but they are, in fact, almost a quarter-pound lighter. Teardrop gussets on the backside of the fork blades help increase strength. The top tube-mounted cable guides are mounted as far forward as possible to provide maximum knee clearance while minimizing excess cable housing. ▶



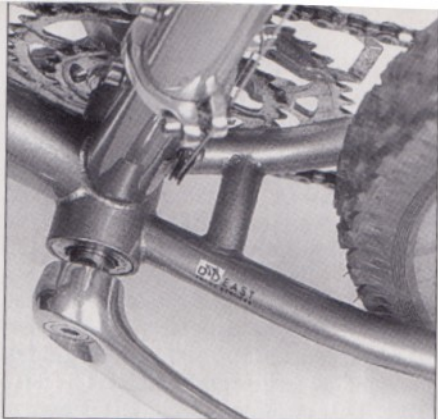
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THE COMPLETE BIKE

Though the Fats are available as a frameset only, our test bike was fitted with the latest Campagnolo Record OR gruppo. These were the final parts for the '92 season, and they definitely added an elegant nature to the bike. When it came time to jump on the pedals, test riders immediately noticed an improvement in the Italian gruppo over earlier efforts. The brakes were efficient and powerful and the rear cogs provided reliable shifts. The only thing we had problems with was the front shifter, which required extra effort on the thumb's part



Find the welds: As is the Fat Chance tradition, craftsmanship is first-rate and is exemplified by some of the prettiest welds in the industry. Asymmetrical chainstays help maximize chainring clearance.

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to get the cable moving. There are two things that we would like to see done with the shifters—less cable pull required to make the shifts (the current shift stroke is too long and requires too much effort) and variable placement of the shifters (which would allow adjustability to suit different hand sizes and handlebar setups).

Wheel sets were made up of Campagnolo Syntax rims, which are gaining a good reputation for their strength-to-weight ratio, and Specialized's latest gray compound Ground Control tires. Like the white Onza Porcupines which preceded

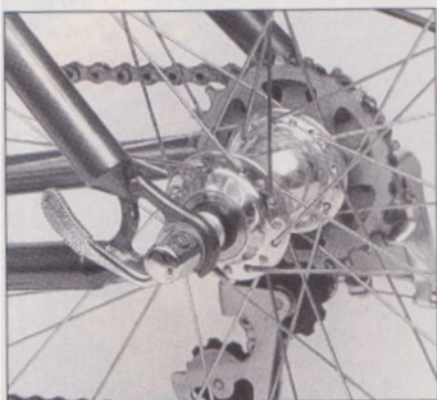
them, the new Ground Controls have a softer compound rubber.

THE COMPLETE RIDE

Did we ever say that sub-25-pound bikes are a handful to ride? Yes, but that was before we rode the Tenth Anniversary. Ironically, it was a West Coast pioneer's 23-pound steel bike that last instilled a sense of fear in us on a rough, fast descent. Not so with Chris Chance's celebratory model. Not surprisingly, the bike felt light and nimble, but most importantly, never uncertain. Without a doubt the biggest dilemma facing the Tenth Anniversary is that it would make a fine race bike—but it's a collectible!

Though the bike invites itself to be ridden hard, and Chris Chance would like

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Not so insignificant: It's been quite a while since groups of people gathered to look at a rear dropout. Those found on the Tenth Anniversary bike are worth waiting in line just to catch a glimpse. The combination of the bullet-capped chain and seatstays, and the machined dropout, makes for a truly unique and visually stimulating feature.

nothing better than to have it ridden hard, he does make the point that riders weighing over 180 pounds will want to keep the bike as a wall fixture. It's pretty, it's a piece of history, it loves singletrack, but it wasn't made to last as an all-out Moab masher for the masses. Remember, only 200 of these are being made. □