

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

