

HOT TUBES

BRODIE

In 1984, Paul Brodie was working in a bike shop in Vancouver, B.C., when a Ritchey mountain bike showed up, a special order for one of the shop's customers. "It was a red Ritchey Team Comp with matching Bullmoose bars," Brodie remembers, "and I couldn't believe how beautiful it was. That bike was my inspiration." In short order, he talked his way into a job building bikes for Rocky Mountain

Cycles, a local manufacturer, even though he had never built a frame before. But Brodie was a quick study—he had more than ten years' experience as a machinist—and within six weeks he had built jigs and produced his first rideable frame.

Brodie's early bikes were basically copies of the Ritchey design, but after about a year he began to develop his own style. "A friend of mine mentioned sloping top tubes and it really appealed to me," he says. "I envisioned the seat tube extension and long head tube, and from that concept I made a frame." The virtues of the design were apparent on the first ride: the low top tube increased crotch clearance, and the nearly parallel top and down tubes produced a softer ride without sacrificing lateral stiffness, he says. "With the longer head tube, you can ride a smaller frame, which exposes more seatpost," adds Brodie. "This allows

the seatpost to flex more, and gives a little extra suspension in the seat."

Brodie started his own bike company in 1986. His operation now includes fillet brazer Mike Truelove and painter Art Tyler, while Brodie himself has taken up TIG welding, another self-taught skill. Jane Brodie, Paul's wife, helps troubleshoot the shop, which apparently runs quite smoothly—the team turns out about 50 frames a month.

Brodie has also ventured into accessories, including a CO₂ holder that stows under the water bottle cage (Fat Tracks, December 1989), clamp-on bar extensions, and the much-imitated Brodie Brake Booster. Still, his main interest is in making bikes like the pictured Romax model with composite Gatorblade fork. "I feel fortunate to be involved with the bicycle industry," observes Brodie. "Cycling saves

fossil fuels, and it's a good way to use human energy. I think that's a very positive thing." For more information on Brodie bicycles, contact The Bicycle Group, 1122 Fir St., Blaine, WA 98230; 206-332-5384.

