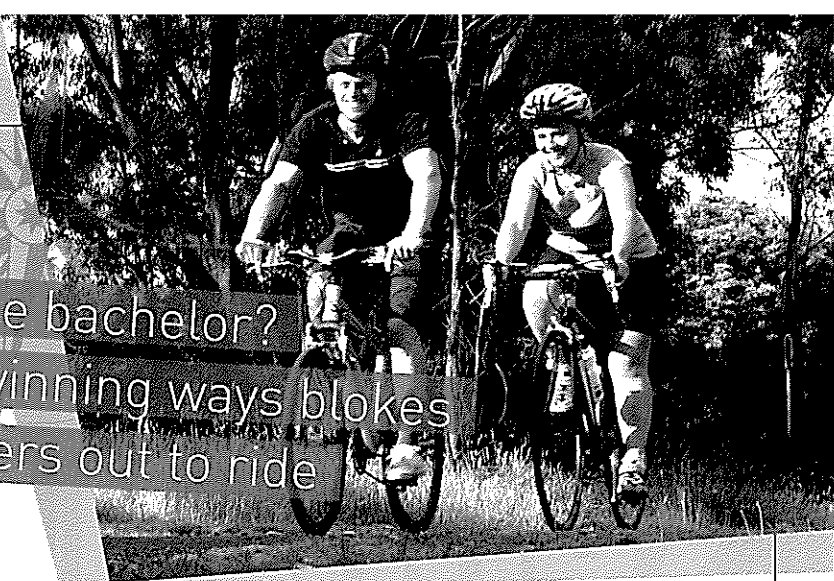


Riding IN THE SAME DIRECTION

Sick of being a bike bachelor?
Simon Vincett uncovers winning ways blokes
can coax their partners out to ride



Until Ride to Work Day 2008, Shanna Evans hadn't ridden since age twelve. Now she and her husband are riding around the world for 12 months.

"When I was a child I never rode much and I was always quite nervous about riding," says Shanna. "In September 2008 my husband got me a bike and encouraged me to ride. I was so scared at first but after a month or so I was loving it."

Buying her a bike can be a recipe for embarrassment – common is the story in the bike shop world of the crestfallen bloke returning a road bike saying "She didn't like it" – but Shanna's husband Sam managed to pull it off. The secret seems to be communicating the right motivation.

"For Sam it's definitely about spending more time together," says Shanna. "When he got me the bike I said, 'I can't ride it', but he got me to ride on the grass while he held me up. Then he said, 'Right, down to the bike path'. He was so encouraging."

Shanna set a goal of participating in Ride to Work Day and started going to the local primary school before work to practise: "I rode it at 6.30 in the morning when no one else was around. I even walked it there and back – I wasn't even confident to ride it on the footpath."

When Ride to Work Day came Shanna was still apprehensive: "I didn't think I could do it and I pushed my bike up some hills, but I did it."

For Christmas Day 2008 Shanna and Sam didn't have any commitments until dinner so they grabbed the chance to go for a ride.

"We caught the train to Carrum and rode home on the EastLink bike path. We started with a swim at the beach and a picnic lunch on the way. I'd never done 45km before but we did it together," says Shanna.

Sam's model of bike riding is a very social one, which he felt was key to encouraging Shanna to ride.

"It's socialising and exercising at the same time," he says. "I find when you're riding along talking you forget that you're riding. Not thinking can help you to get it. Then at the end of a ride you feel like you've achieved something and developed your relationship at the same time."

The Ride to Work and Ride2School programs also use peer support to encourage adults and kids to ride for transport.

Elysia Delaine of Ride to Work reports, "We know 70% of people register through the encouragement of a workplace team. We also know that new riders appreciate the Cycle Angels for mechanical and emotional help on Ride to Work Day and the Bike Buddies to practise and share their commute."

The Ride2School program also places great importance on helping riders help others to ride. For instance, the 1000 Bikes Student Leadership Reward presents final-year primary students who demonstrated riding to school, with a bike that they can ride to high school and to continue their positive influence.

"Students are valuable role models by promoting Ride2School Day and daily riding with class and assembly presentations. Sometimes they are also actively involved in locking and unlocking bike sheds and stamping frequent rider passports. If the students aren't there promoting riding, the push comes solely from the teachers," says Jacinta Moylan of Ride2School.

Both the Ride to Work and Ride2School programs are based on principles of Community Based Social Marketing. The Ride2School website explains, "Techniques that are used by community-based social marketers are carried out at the community level and frequently involve direct personal contact. Personal contact is emphasised because social science research indicates that we are most likely to change our behavior in response to direct appeals from others."

Of course things don't always go smoothly when you're trying to influence someone to do something, and there's always a bit of difference of ability to overcome. It was no different with Sam and Shanna.

"Sometimes Sam got a bit frustrated," says Shanna, "especially going downhill. He couldn't understand why I had the brakes on and had to go slowly. He's a lot faster than me but over time I've found I can keep up. There have been ups and downs and we do have different abilities but there have been some fantastic rides. And there are fantastic rides yet to come."

Shanna has now moved on to riding a road bike after developing an interest in triathlon.

"Shanna is more passionate about riding now than I am," reports Sam.

Shanna explains, "Now we are taking 12 months to ride through parts of Asia, Europe and North America. We'd been talking about travelling anyway, so we thought we could combine the travel with our new love of bike riding."

Sam is certain encourage your partner to ride with you is the way to go.

"Personally I think everybody should ride with their partners. I reckon more relationships would stay together. We're different people with different lives and riding points you in the same direction."

SAME DIRECTION

Try this at home

A recent *Ride On* survey found that for 41% of men, the person they most wanted to get riding was their partner. So guys, try these tested techniques at home.

LISTEN TO WHAT YOUR PARTNER WANTS

"If it's a gift, make sure you listen to the information you have been given and make sure that the bike suits what is wanted out of it. Remember colour is important."

Damian Lack of Flemington Cycles.

TALK ABOUT TOGETHER TIME

"Personally I think everybody should ride with their partners. I reckon more relationships would stay together. We're different people with different lives and riding points you in the same direction." **Sam Evans**, 28, of Bayswater.

THINK OF THE HEALTH BENEFITS

"I have a few friends who are carrying weight and it is one of the best, low-impact fitness routines available. I lost 16kg by cycling to work and rebalancing my diet. People identify with that issue." **Gregor Rogers**, 38, of Mentone.

USE BRIBERY

"I got my wife riding to the markets and into the city – always promise coffee and cake at the end."

Steve McCourt, 49, of Port Melbourne.

CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENT

"A bike computer is great because it gives the rider a record and a goal to work for. You will find that the distances the rider will travel will steadily become greater because there is a challenge to it." **Damian Lack** of Flemington Cycles.

Sandie Downes, 65, of Seaford, Victoria, advises "Find a goal. For example, join the Bicycle Queensland Ride."

GET INVOLVED IN SOMETHING BIG

Phillip Wotten, 49 of Pascoe Vale South, suggests Ride to Work Day is a great motivator: "Meet for breakfast on the ride to work."

"Join in on the rides like Around the Bay. They may seem daunting but once you are out there you will have a ball. If you want a little more competition riding, join your local cycling club and ride with like-minded people – it adds to the pleasure." **Damian Lack** of Flemington Cycles.

SAVE MONEY

"If you get the train to work [in Melbourne] zone 1 costs \$6 a day and over a year it costs over \$1200. So you can afford to buy a bike and all the gear and it will pay for itself in less than a year." **Doug Cameron**, 33, of Toorak.



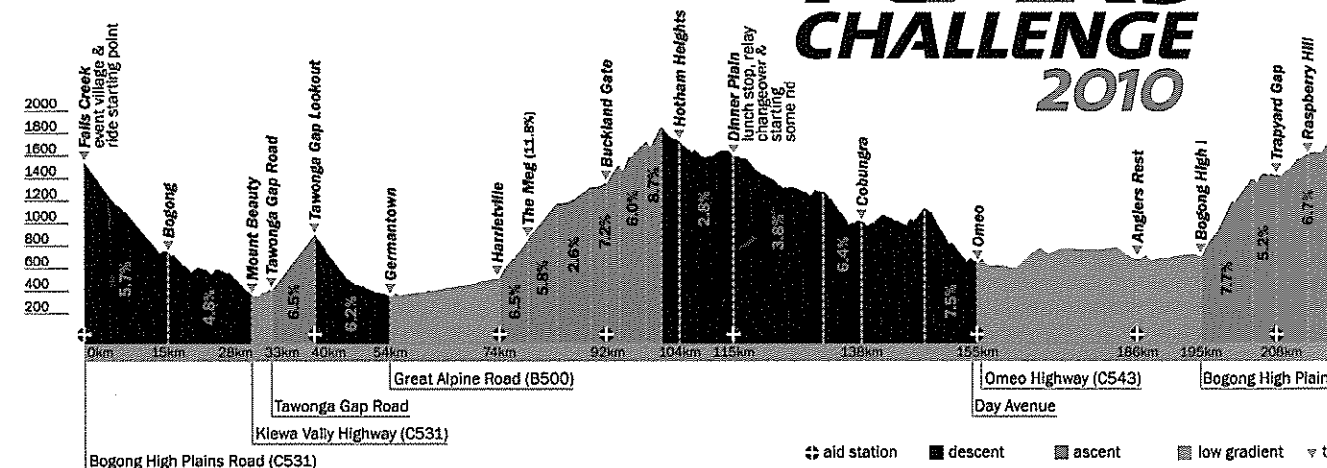
Members can find more on choosing the right bike and gear and when to get it, with Damian Lack of Flemington Cycles in the Ride On library in Blink.

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