

101 TIPS that don't **SUCK**

(MORE BIG CHEWY CHUNKS OF HELPFUL STUFF)

Mountain BIKE

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**THE BEST
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**TUNE YOUR
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**GOOD, LOUD
MUSIC [p.20]**

**FISHER'S NEW
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PLUS: 10 THINGS THAT DO SUCK

DUMB AND DUMBER

I was waiting in the start-box line at the Big Bear National, keeping to myself and trying to focus on my practice run when I felt a tap on my shoulder. "Are you Zap?" the kid asked. "Yeah," I said, trying not to lose my focus.

"You know, I like your magazine a lot, but I think you're stupid."

"Thanks," I replied as I put my goggles on and moved my bike along.

My focus was lost. Instead of thinking about what lines to take I spent my run thinking about what the kid said. He was right. I was stupid.

Here I was 39 years old and I still don't know what a capital gains tax is. I didn't even realize that the Schwinn ad with the figure-eight chain lying on its side is actually the sign for infinity. (Even after Matt explained it to me I still didn't get the ad.) And for some silly reason I still believe in racing and that only good things come from it. Stupid, huh?



REECE VOGEL

After documenting my own idiocy, I began thinking about other things that are stupid. You know, like...

Tandems. In their heart of hearts, tandem gods like Sherwood Gibson, Scot Nicol and Rob Templin would disagree, but the sad fact is that it's true. Two-at-a-time pedaling—how dumb can you get? Even though I've seen Gibson get air at Mammoth with his stoker on board, tandems are stupid because no matter how good a team is, the two-wheeled cruise ships limit the experience.

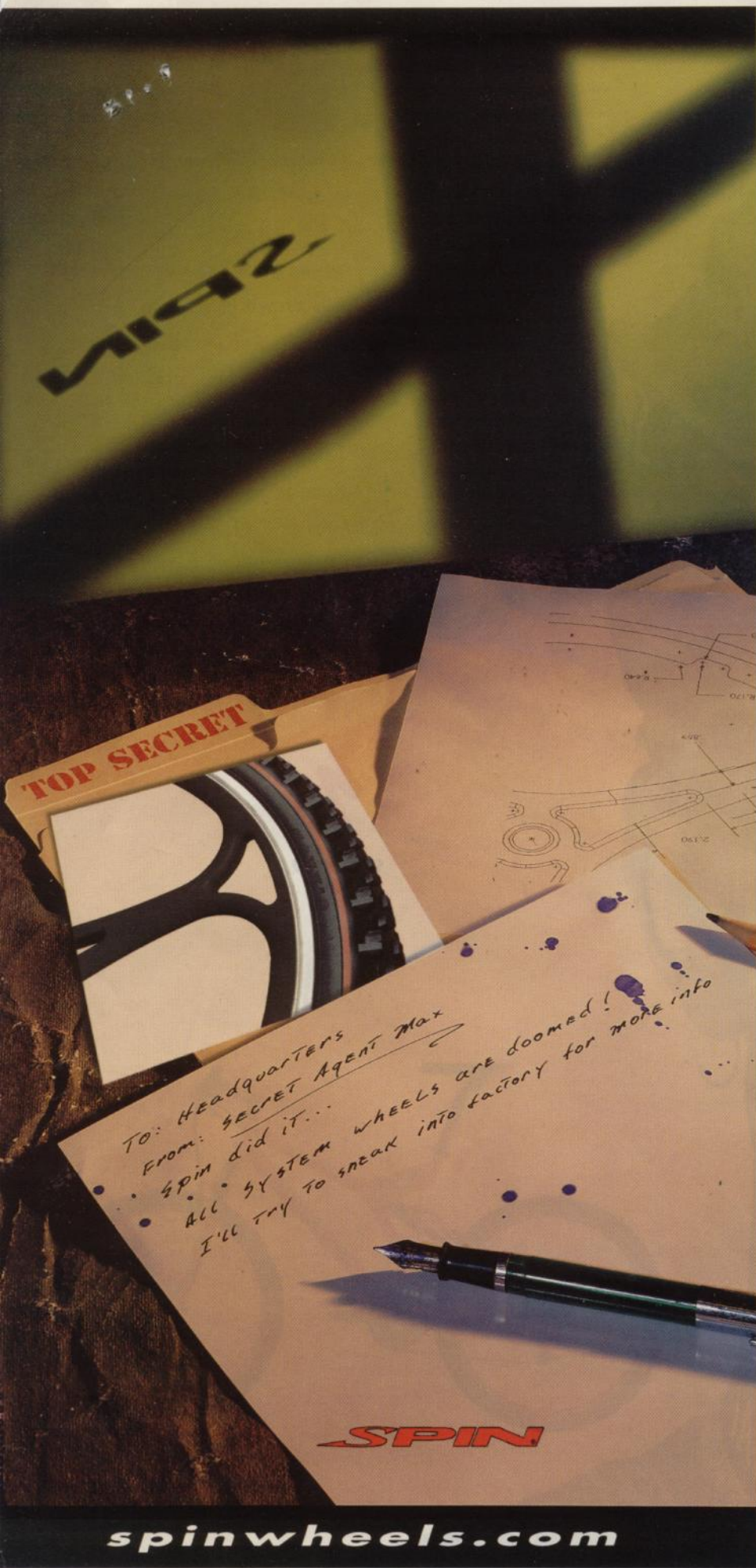
Singlespeeds. These are stupid not so much because they're intrinsically more difficult to ride off-road than a geared bike—which, like tandems, only limits the off-road experience—but more so because of the artificial and enlarged sense of "realness" that too many singlespeed geeks wear on their shoulder. Singlespeeds are no more pure to the sport than a Volvo XC wagon loaded

with mail-order Ti bikes. You want singlespeeds? Try a BMX bike.

Motorcycles. Well, not motorcycles, but the people who write in saying they buy the magazine for mountain bike information and want nothing printed about motorcycles. They're stupid. Let's see, how many mountain bike breakthroughs come to us via the motorcycle? Worse is when they confuse their opinion with that of the world at large and make such statements as "Nobody wants to read about motorcycles." I do.

The ordered mindset of road geeks. Remember when the USCF mandated that you could only race with solid black shorts and white socks? Unfortunately that anal-retentive mentality persists with the road set. Just the other day I got a lesson in what kind of handlebar tape is appropriate for my road bike (stripes are out and you can't mix colors). Then there was the warning that I couldn't

BY Z APATA E SPINOZA



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wear a trade jersey in a Cat 5 road race. Like who's paying attention to some off-the-back clown in the Cat 5s?

Colored treads and sidewall adverts. It arose out of the need to provide visual identification for those bike parts that at speed remain anonymous to the buying public. It began with colored pedals, spread to colored sidewalls, then to colored treads. (Anyone remember McCaw tires?) Now we have a variety of high-end racing treads that look like escapees from the circus. Even worse is the billboard treatment that some tires are getting by using huge type. Kinda makes you miss those ugly black sidewalls, doesn't it?

Editors. Especially those who think they know what's stupid and what's not.

Self-aggrandizement. First everyone needed their own pager. And then every teen-ager brimming with notions of self-importance had to have their own cell phone. Now you apparently can't go through life without your own web page.

Ignorant journalism. There's no finer example than when the *New York Times* holds up disco diva Deborah Harry and her band Blondie as some sort of punk rock icon. Anyone ever stage dive to "Heart of Glass"?

Baggy shorts. It's not that they're inherently stupid—well actually they are—but worse is the preposterous notion that riding with them (like riding a singlespeed) somehow makes you more "core" since you look less like a road geek. Baggy shorts are as much a "uniform" as any ensemble of team Lycra. Only baggies serve no benefit beyond making you warmer and getting stuck on the nose of your saddle.

The kid who called me stupid. Hey, I got no problem with you speaking your mind, but next time, could you give me a reason or two behind your opinion? It's stupid to waste an entire DH run guessing. ■

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