

Giving Bikes Another Look

By Ted Ritter

When it comes to wheeled transportation, bicycles are tough to beat as a basic means for getting from here to there. As illustrated by some of the following photos, bicycles are literally a daily way of life for many people. For others, bikes are something of an obsessive hobby, commanding hours of creative tinkering and modifications in the garage or workshop.

Jim Gregory, www.bikesatwork.com



Who Needs A Truck? *You, too, can move a refrigerator by bike . . . at least with the Model 96 trailer touted by Bikes at Work, Ames, Iowa*

Matt Bergstrom, www.rat-patrol.org



Porter Bike. *No cars are allowed on Mackinac Island at the north end of Lake Michigan. When ferries from the mainland pull up to the dock, porters — riding cruisers with enormous baskets — queue up to carry passengers' bags to the hotels.*

Matt Bergstrom



Special Delivery! *This homemade "tadpole trike" was spotted out in front of a Mexican restaurant on Chicago's Milwaukee Ave.*

Ted Ritter



Shore Thing. *A junked beach cruiser at the Jersey Shore gets a new life pulling a trailer made from an old golf cart with a milk crate affixed to its spine.*

Jim Gregory



Hauling Recyclables. *This creative design is called a "Long Jim."*

Matt Bergstrom



Bike Pallets. *Someone figured out how to haul pallets on a trailer made from an old hand truck in the Warehouse District, West Loop, Chicago.*

And just as surely as there are those who treat their pricey, custom-made racing or mountain bikes as lovingly as a cherished pet, many others seem to regard bicycles, literally (and somewhat sadly), as a disposable commodity. Local police auctions are full of unclaimed bikes waiting for new owners. Other unwanted “handyman specials” (sometimes pieces of them) stand out colorfully at the annual curbside junk collections conducted by many towns or are left at the mercy of the elements and vandals in large cities.

Matt Bergstrom



Snowy Bike. *Literally frozen in time on a winter's day in downtown Chicago.*

Ted Ritter



Just Beachy. *It's a quick ride up to the beach with this old English-made Raleigh spin-off, scooped up for a song at a garage sale in Surf City, NJ.*

Serviceable old bikes, often requiring nothing more than a tune-up or a little cleaning, can be easily found at garage sales for just a few dollars. At one such sale at the Jersey Shore last summer, a woman displayed a standard, black-and-white 1960s Royal Scot for which she was asking \$8.00.

As she closed the deal on her two-wheeler, the seller revealed that she had a few other vintage bikes in her garage. . . all for sale. Contained within and covered with layers of dust dating back to the Carter administration were two clunky but beautiful kids' bikes — selling for far less than the retro-styled copies sold today — and an old Schwinn five-speed in a rarely found color.

Ted Ritter



Bikes on a Fence. *Just one block from the mass transit hub known as Pennsylvania Station in Newark, NJ, bicyclists looking for scarce parking are forced to get creative.*

If it's been a few years since you've owned — or even ridden — a bicycle, don't worry; most people who hop on bikes every day aren't competitors or professionals. Rather, they're simply looking for an easy and economical way to get somewhere — and a safe place to park once arriving.

In addition, biking is an environmentally-friendly (and fun) alternative to using your car to run light errands around town or get some exercise while also rediscovering some of your youthful spirit. □