

what's the hubbub?

If you think you can't make a living out of fitting people for custom-made bicycles that cost upwards of \$3,000, think again. Diane Lees has built a long career doing so, with the last ten years spent as the owner of HubBub Custom Bicycles in Chesterland. Lees has quite a following in the area, with cycling enthusiasts looking to the shop for bikes that suit their size and riding style. "Fitting's the hot thing in bikes right now, but we've been doing it for years," she says.

The shop has a laid back aura, with an Adirondack-style décor in honor of Lees' partner, Brian Jenks, who lived in Upstate New York before being recruited by Lees to join her Chesterland team in 1998. Together, Jenks and Lees have made HubBub a destination rather than just a place to stop out of necessity. Patrons come not only for custom bikes but to relax amid cedar paneling at High Peaks Coffee and to take yoga classes taught by Lees and two other certified instructors.

The main focus of HubBub, though, is bicycling. There are no production bikes here, only ready-to-ride demos. Lees works with custom manufacturers in the United States to create the right bike for each of her clients. "The HubBub philosophy is that no one is average," she says. The first question that's asked of customers is what they want to do with their bike. Some say they like to ride downhill fast; others plan to ride long-distance or even cross-country. A cycling simulator helps to determine an individual's cycling style. A person's frame is also taken into consideration.

"We take you and design a bike around you," Lees says. "A custom-made bike performs a certain way and responds a



certain way." Not surprisingly, custom-made bicycles are also designed to last.

Lees has noticed that more women are being fitted for custom bikes these days. "They're not just considering themselves worthy of better products, they're actually buying them," she says. HubBub concentrates on providing products that are designed specifically for women.

As you might imagine, Lees is passionate about cycling. "It's a lifestyle thing for Brian and me," she says. "We were riding about 1,500 miles a year, but the time to ride is also the time we're busy, so we don't get to do it as much now." Nevertheless, Lees wants other enthusiasts to have opportunities to enjoy local cycling experiences. Last year, she coordinated the Ponte Vino Giro (PVG) Tour, which included a ride through the countryside and covered bridges of Ashtabula County and meals and wine tastings at two area vineyards. The PVG Tour takes place this year October 5 - 7. (For more information on this event, see page 39.)

Recently, the League of American Bicyclists voted HubBub the #1 bike shop in the Great Lakes region and the 18th best shop in the country. Reasons cited included great customer service, the welcoming attitude of the staff and its support for local bicycling activities. □

Visit www.hubbub.com or call 440.729.2499.