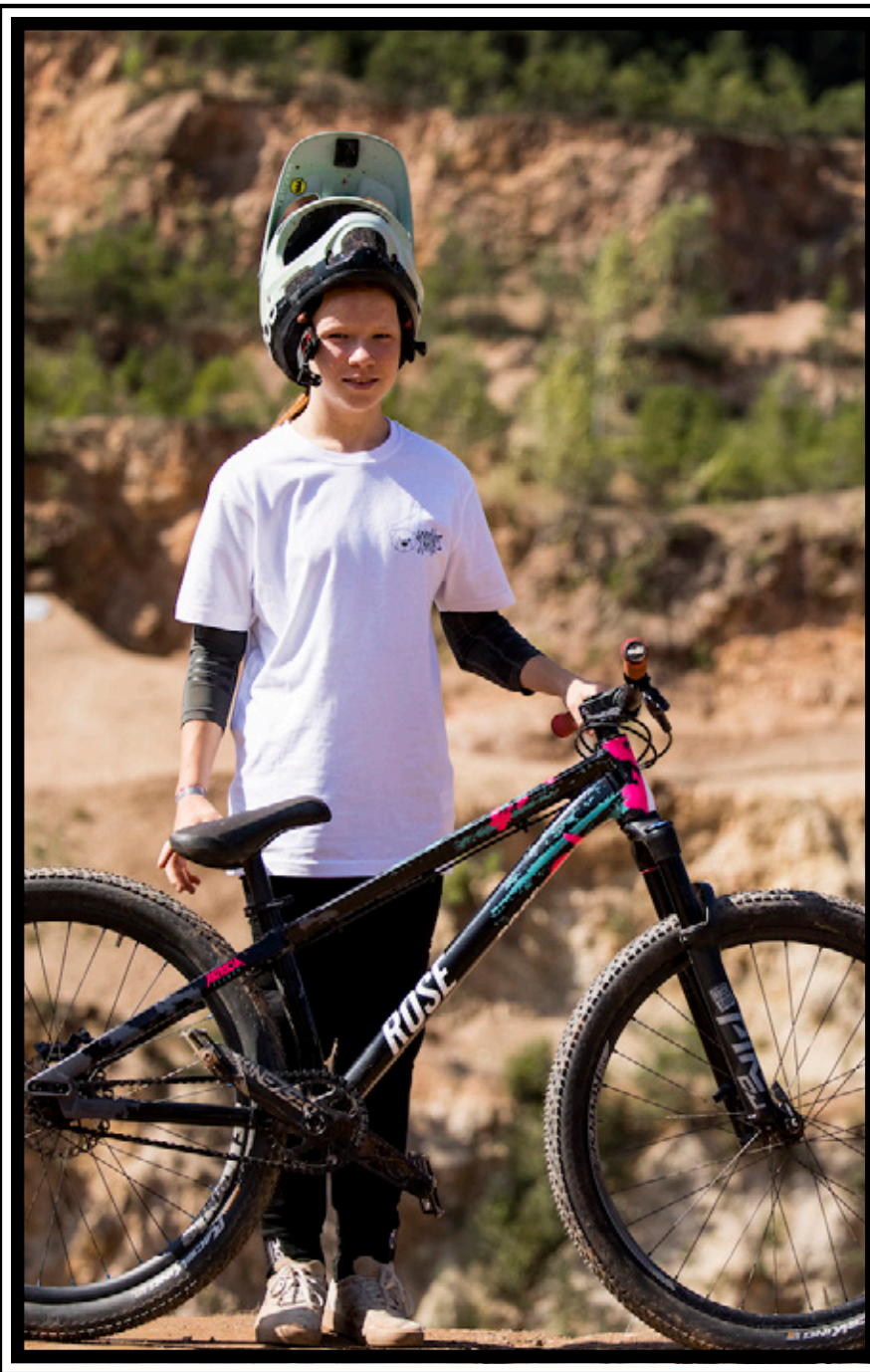




#kid #arno #suzhou #china
#girl #16years #patriciadruwen
#cedrictassan #solo #kyrgyzstan



#ARNO #KID #MTB #SUZHOU
#CHINA



#DIRT #GIRL #16YEARSOLD
#PATRICIADRUWEN
#GERMANY



#CEDRIC #SOLORIDE
#KYRGYZSTAN



#ISSUE37

#FEB2023

#RIDER #ARNO

#COVER #NICOLASGALMICHE





TRAIL STORIES

LIVE TRAIL LIFE

*WE ALL CREATE TRAIL STORIES. EACH ONE UNIQUE
AND WRITTEN IN DIRT. WE SPIN TALES OF SPEED,
RIDE THE TWISTS OF THE TRAIL, WE FORGE
FRIENDSHIPS AND MOMENTS THAT LAST FOREVER.*

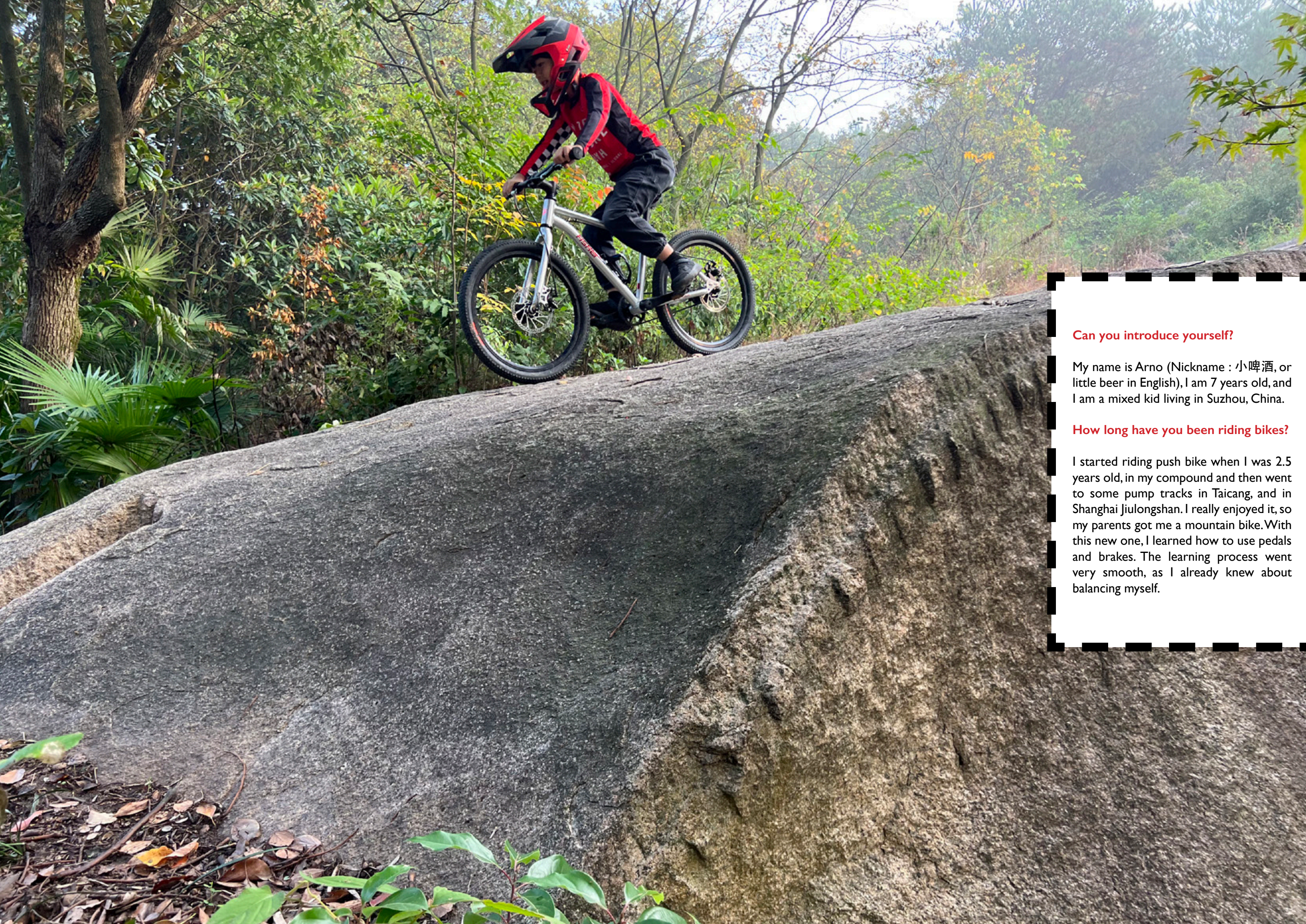
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SHREDDING WITH LITTLE BEER IN SUZHOU

PHOTOS: NICOLAS GALMICHE

WORDS: ARNO (小啤酒)



Can you introduce yourself?

My name is Arno (Nickname : 小啤酒, or little beer in English), I am 7 years old, and I am a mixed kid living in Suzhou, China.

How long have you been riding bikes?

I started riding push bike when I was 2.5 years old, in my compound and then went to some pump tracks in Taicang, and in Shanghai Jiulongshan. I really enjoyed it, so my parents got me a mountain bike. With this new one, I learned how to use pedals and brakes. The learning process went very smooth, as I already knew about balancing myself.



What bike do you have now?

My first mountain bike was a steel frame, and was fairly heavy. This made it hard for me to control at low speeds. As I grew up, the bike became too small. Now I have an aluminium 20" frame with disk brakes (I am 1.26m). The light weight makes it very easy to handle and is much more enjoyable than my previous one. I even learned a bit how to jump with it.

Where do you like riding most?

My favorite rides are definitely in the mountains. My dad brought me to the hills in Suzhou, Tian Chi Shan (Or Wu



Feng Shan as some people also call it), and I loved it, especially when it's muddy! What's more fun than getting dirty, and riding through mud puddles?!

In the mountains we can go up and down, but I prefer going down I recently learned how to descend on rocky and sandy terrains, and also how to split braking between front and rear brakes to avoid front wheel slip or OTB on steep descents

I used to go also to Taicang Oyama bike park, which I enjoyed a lot in the past, but with Covid policies, it has become hard to travel through provinces in China. (hopefully this will get better now)



Where would you like to go next ?

Near Suzhou, I would love to go to Zhejiang, to discover more places and mountains through riding. I also really would like to be able to go to Europe and ride in the Alps, as it's beautiful and dangerous

What do you think is most important when choosing a bike for kids ?

Bike weight is of prime importance for us, little riders



What would you like to say to MTBMagAsia readers ?

Thank you for reading my story, I hope you enjoyed it! Looking forward to meeting you on the trails.

I am riding now a Fisher 20" bike. I am 1.26m tall. Here are the specification of the bike:

Frame : Aluminium 6061

Brakes : Tektro (Fisher branded brakes on newer bikes)- Disc brakes with cables

Rotor size : 160mm front and rear

Drive-train : Continental belt

Tire size : 20x1.95

Threaded bottom bracket

Weight : 7.4kg for full bike

Pros :

- Lightweight
- All rounder (City, XC)
- Disk break
- Belt drive, safe for small kids

Cons :

- Belt drive for mountain rides due to lack of gears. This is though personal choice (safety over performance), and gear bikes are now available
- Welding quality. Sufficient for the bike and rider lightweight though.





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TRAVEL	DIAMETER	LENGTH	WEIGHT	P/N
125mm	30.9mm	390mm	510g	07540
125mm	31.6mm	390mm	530g	07541
150mm	30.9mm	440mm	552g	07560
150mm	31.6mm	440mm	573g	07561

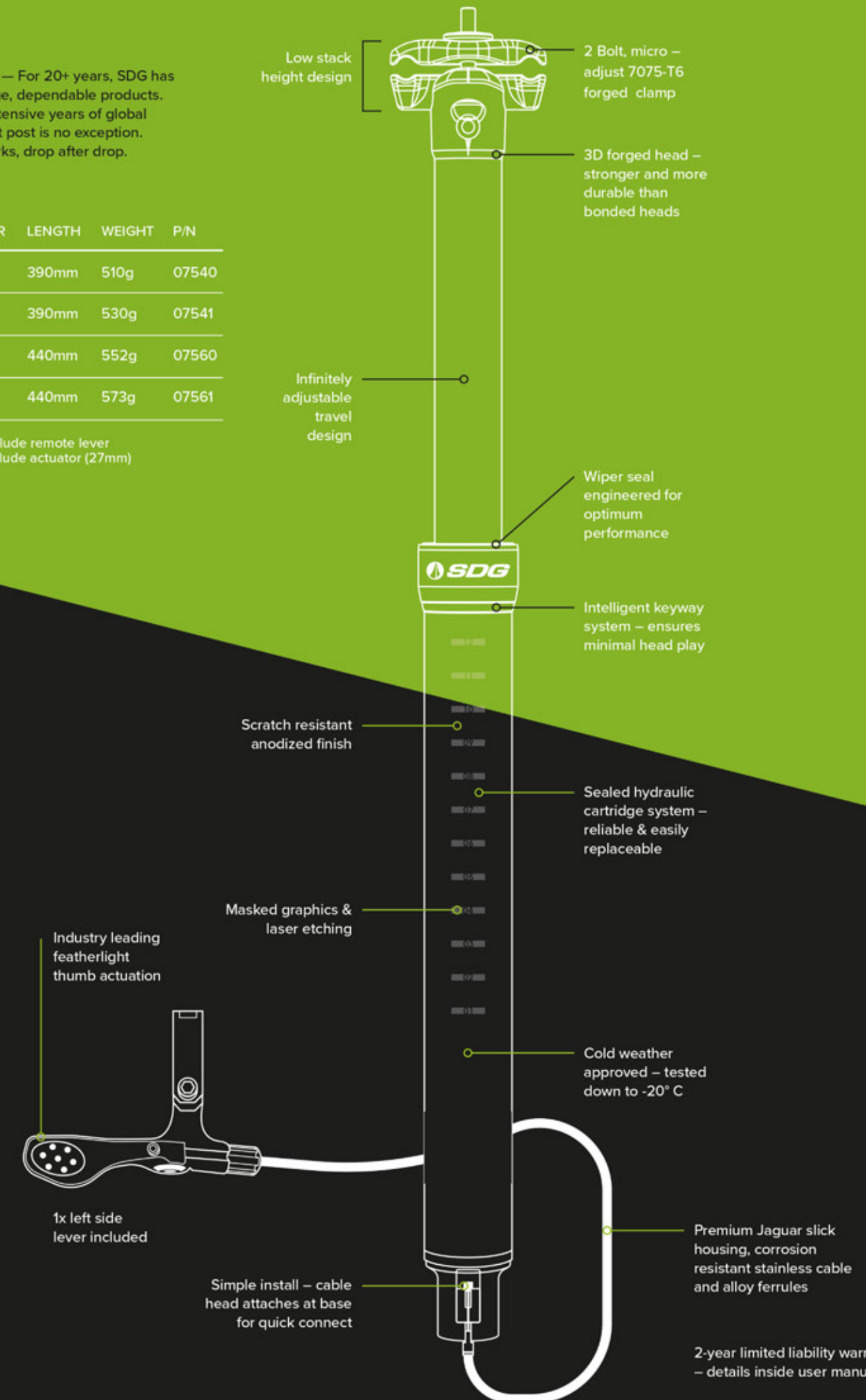
* Weight does not include remote lever
* Length does not include actuator (27mm)

TELLIS WORKS DROP AFTER DROP

Cable actuated
hydraulic dropper.



sdgcomponents.com





Patricia Druwen

PUSHING THE SPORT - THE 16 YEAR OLD GIRL IS READY FOR 2023



PHOTOS: NIKOLAI STARK, THE NINES, CHRISTOPH LAUE, ROSE BIKES, SELINA AUGUSTAT

WORDS: RASOLUTION



Women's mountain biking has progressed tremendously over the last few years, and a young girl from Germany, Patricia Druwen, is at the forefront of that progression.

Patricia had a great 2022 season with solid results in iconic events while landing tricks that no other girl has: winning the coveted FMB World Title. For 2023 Patricia plans to defend her title, ride new disciplines, and compete at Crankworx for the first time.



Patricia was born in Bergisch Gladbach, Germany, in 2007. During her childhood, gymnastics became her passion. Later, curiosity got to her, and she started using her gymnastic skills on her street bike. Three years ago, in January 2020, Patricia got her first dirt jump bike, which she fell in love with immediately.

In an incredibly short period, thanks to her talent and devotion on the bike, Patricia secured the title 'Queen of Gnar' at one of the most renowned freeride events, the Audi Nines. She has also made a name for herself in the slopestyle world, with several podium spots, including being one of the first-ever female riders in Red Bull District Ride, where she earned 3rd in the Best Trick contest. With all these results, Patricia finished the 2022 season as the current FMB World Tour and Swiss National Series leader and the FMB Best Trick award in her category.



#GIVESYOUWINGS

Having joined the global program of ROSE Bikes and SRAM/RockShox and partnering up with Title, Troy Lee Designs, and Industry Nine, Patricia is more than ready to tackle the 2023 season and defend her FMB World Tour lead.

Early this year she pushed the limits at La Poma with incredible trick combinations like 360 triple bar spins or backflip double bar spins will help her achieve this goal.



“Patricia is an awesome rider! The first time I saw her was on Instagram and I was impressed with the style she has and the tricks that she is doing. When I first met her, she was riding the most technical trails with such ease and control. I’ve never met a girl with such motivation, she always wants to learn new tricks and go bigger! I am really stoked for her!” – Erik Fedko.

Besides slopestyle competitions, she will compete at Crankworx Speed & Style and participate in big bike events like The Nines again.

Stay tuned for a great season and even more progression in women's mountain biking.







PHOTOS: CÉDRIC TASSAN

WORDS: CÉDRIC TASSAN

KIRGHIZISTAN



ALONE ON A MOUNTAIN BIKE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KYRGYZSTAN

Geopolitical linchpin of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is one of the world's few remaining countries where it is still possible to adventure into the unknown, well off the beaten tracks of mass tourism. Without doubt the mountainous profile and a lack of tourist itineraries should enable the country to retain its "undiscovered" image for some time to come, offering the intrepid traveller a unique human, physical and geographical experience.

I have on my smart-phone's memory amassed

a heap of notes on many different countries, including several Central Asian countries, but absolutely nothing on Kyrgyzstan. Once I'd checked that the country's COVID restrictions would not prevent me from travelling there, I book my plane tickets in a huge rush of blood to the head. I fly in less than 3 weeks. I soon get the impression that I have been a little hasty as I know zilch about the country, and I even have no idea as to which areas of the country are suitable to ride. I get in touch with a guy, Fred Horny, he knows the area well and with his legendary enthusiasm he gives me the name of a French guy called Stéphane who runs a local tourist agency, www.kirghizie.fr. I contact him immediately; this guy is passionate about

the country and knows it like the back of his hand and he opens his Kyrgyz address book for me! What a stroke of luck. As my time is limited, I cannot afford to waste precious time travelling between areas to ride. There's absolutely no information on MTB cycling, and so taking a stab, I decide to start my ride from a valley that stands out from the vibrant red aerial photos.

3 flights into my journey and I arrive in Osh. My driver, Abdoukadyr is waiting for me, and we seem to hit it off immediately. He whisks me off to a small eatery where we have a bite. His suggestion that we pick up a spare wheel for the car before heading

off gives me an insight as to the state of the roads to come. We drive for 4 hours into the vast Alay Mountain range where many mountains top out at over 16,400 feet. This is where my ride is to start, to the north of the Alay mountains, my objective is to ride south across the whole range and finish in the Pamir.

In my head I have fleshed out an awesome ride, but it is as we progress into the valley that I begin to have serious doubts as to the feasibility of the whole idea, unbelievably steep slopes, vast scree's of stone, vertical cliffs, that oh so narrow gorge and the mega dust cloud trailing our car. In simple terms, "What the heck am I doing here?" Apart from

the broken track that we drive along, I cannot see any other trails, just huge boulders, cliff faces. Tiredness must be kicking in, it's been 35 hours since I left home, and I have barely slept. We reach the village of Kojo Kelen, it is almost 8 p.m. and my driver drops me off at the valley's only guest house, but I am made to feel very welcome.

The next day, I take my time to emerge, it's cold here in the valley floor and I decide not to leave before the sun has warmed up this part of the world. It begins to dawn on me that I am 4 hours of off-road driving from the nearest big town, and I sincerely hope that I haven't forgotten anything. I spend the first

morning soaking up this new environment where I am already at 7,220 ft above sea level, I must acclimatise slowly. The first locals I happen across are amazed to see a bike in such a place and I stop to admire the magnificent cliffs that rise up in front of me. This is high mountain country and I immediately pick up and shoulder my bike. Once at the top, the view is spectacular, paradise. Well, let's forget the angelic bit, I am more of a tortoise, as I make very little progress, between stopping to take shots, or to catch my breath. Time is moving on and the weather begins to worsen. I reach a pass at almost 9,900 ft and the storm breaks behind me. I don't hang around and immediately start the descent, it's a good





trail and I am off.

The first raindrops catch up with me as I ride past a hut at the edge of a field, I see a farmer, about 300 yards away, he is using a donkey to plough his potato field. I stop and, to catch his eye, make big hand signals to ask if I can shelter in his hut, the reply is immediate and positive, the farmer joins me a few minutes later. It's very cramped, barely 150 sq. ft, there's a rug covering half of the clay floor.

A few cooking utensils hang from nails in the beams. Akilbek opens the door of his hut, this is his home. I realise that my rudimentary Russian will serve no purpose, but the ten

or so Kirghiz words learnt from my driver might spare my blushes from speaking in grunts and other onomatopoeia for the rest of the week! He tries on my glasses and helmet, and we break into a fit of laughing, but once the storm has passed I bid adieu to my new friend and shoot down an awesome trail down to the valley floor. At last, I am in the mood, everything seems clearer to me, and my confidence begins to grow.

The following day, I decide to explore another valley that crosses mine and I am already feeling better and climb a well-marked path at a good speed. It's here that I meet Mamat Isa, all alone on his mountain,

he's cutting a field of grass. No mechanically powered farm implements here, it's the old-fashioned way, with a scythe! He offers me a drink of Koumis, fermented mare's milk. It would be rude to refuse, and I even dare to drink directly from the bottle. If my stomach reacts badly to this beverage, it's the end of my trip! But at the same time it's all part of the adventure. I am surprised, the milk is cool and pleasant to drink. I continue my way until the valley comes to a dead end. To the right, deep gorges, opposite a steep slope with no way out and to my left, glaciers and mountains topping out at almost 16,400 feet. And that's when I met Aptisalam sitting on a rocky promontory guarding his flock in a, nothing short of, breath-taking setting.



I offer to share a few of my biscuits with him, my only food for lunch. He accepts, we chat, and he invites me to his home. We go down to his house where I meet his family. His wife is warming up some milk in a pan over a warm wood fire. She's shy like their daughter, but they invite me into their hut and I am given the best seat. We eat bread, cheese and milk. I leave them and start the long and exhilarating descent back down to the valley. I've got my bearings, and I am feeling on form. I head back down for a last warm night in this valley that has adopted me.

It's D-day for me, I must leave my nest and

the hospitable home of Matmatjakyp and his daughter Magina who has looked after me well. I load up my stuff and attach my sleeping bag to the bike, strap on my bags and, with a touch of sadness I ride away from this beautiful valley. I know that the next part of my journey will be difficult, but while I'm on my bike I'll be alright, it's only when I must dismount and shoulder it that things will get difficult as I'll have about 60 pounds on my back. And today's programme includes 2 passes at over 9,800 feet. I reach the first, after a relatively easy climb of 3,000 feet. I drop down into a new, and seemingly untamed, valley. I come across a young boy who has been sent to meet me, he tells me that he knows who I am and this

evening I will sleep in his father's home! I look around me, but we are in the middle of nowhere. I had in fact made contact the previous day with a person in the next valley to organise the rest of my journey, but I had hardly imagined that someone would be sent to meet me at least 5 hours by foot from the nearest village! He takes me to the yurt where he and his mum live in the summer. They cook me a delicious omelette and I fall asleep in their warm home while a storm breaks far away. I set off again on the bike, but to be honest I don't feel great. I have another 1,000 feet to climb, it should be a cinch, but I feel ill and don't know how to describe it. I can't go any further, my breath is fast. Initially I stop every 100 footsteps,





but that tempo rapidly drops to every 10. It's finally the weather that pulls me together as it is too threatening to hang around here for long. It takes me over 3 hours to reach the pass, a snail's pace. Once over the top and it's a long descent to the next village. I get the impression that I have changed countries and am dropping down into a valley in Pakistan. I get my energy back. I feel that I am regaining control of my journey. I arrive in the next village, just a few houses scattered amid a plain of pebbles. I look for Begali's house, he's my host today and we need to organise my bivouac for tomorrow evening. He warms up some water on a wood fire for me to shower with and cooks up a meal of potatoes, tomatoes, and morsels of mutton.

We spend the evening going over our plans for the following day, food, tent, mattresses, donkeys and a horse. We leave the village at 11 o'clock the following morning. Everything is loaded on the 2 donkeys, except for me as I'm loaded on to the horse, it is my very first time on horseback! It's some baptism of fire as we are due to climb 5,250 feet, the equivalent of 6 hours in a saddle, up into the high mountains. To start, the track is wide, but I quickly learn that horses are easily frightened when the first lorry passes us; I somehow avoid being dumped on the ground. I think I prefer wilder spaces. We quit this magical valley and start

our ascent to just over 13,000 feet, where we stop to set up camp for the night. The sun has just dropped below the horizon and it's bitterly cold. Begali prepares a hearty stew, we pitch the tent, that would be more suited to a beach in Bali than here! We don't have any mattresses, but we huddle up to eat our meal in the tent and we quickly fall into a deep sleep. I wake to find everything frozen outside, it's 6.30 and today is the biggest day of my trip where nothing untoward wants to happen to me as I will be alone at over 13,000 feet above sea level. Men rarely come up here. I set off in the cold, wearing layers of clothing. The climb is gruelling, the rocks, the slope and in the shade. Once over the pass, at more than 14,400 feet, I am at

last in the sun and a magical landscape of lakes, glaciers, peaks, and plains opens out before me. To the south, I am struck by the extent of what I must tackle, the adventure is there, and I am here. This immense valley, of which I can only see the first few miles, will take me to Pamir. I attack the descent, carefully through the fields of shale. The stone here is so sharp that a calf muscle, a d  railleur, or a tyre, can, though ill luck, or inattention, be easily shredded. I must be careful without tiring myself, but I want to ride too. Fully, concentrated, I continue to plan my trajectory, as if in a minefield, as if every yard was of ultimate importance. I cut across the combs, descend through the mountain pastures, tracing every inch of my

route, there is no path to follow. Further on, the route is carved into the flanks of the mountain, I just need to ride, avoid crashing and breaking anything. Technical passage after technical passage, they follow one another, I ride beside a vertiginous gorge and then, at last, reach a flat and wide valley that marks the end of the hostile terrain. But there's still another 15    miles to go and a river to cross, which is, being alone, what I fear the most as the river will be extremely dangerous. I cross the first ford, the current is very strong, I manage to keep hold of the bike. I get out of the water, frozen. I find the trail again and head towards the Pamir that suddenly reveals itself after a bend in the valley. It's a mega slap in the face! Not

only do I realise that my journey is coming to an end, but this is also a completely new landscape, flat, as far as the eye can see, and denuded of any mountains above 16,400 feet.

When I arrive in Sary Mogol, Umar my contact is expecting me. With incredible kindness, he guides me through this dusty village. It's scorching hot, in the space of just a few miles, I have gone from the freshness of the mountains to the heat of the desert. It is 4 p.m. and I have only had 4 biscuits to eat since yesterday evening. At last, I get to eat a real meal that I wash down with a bottle of Coca-Cola! Once done, we load





my bike on to Umar's 4wd pick-up and head to the base camp at the foot of Lenin Peak. As we arrive at the edge of a constellation of lakes, the hanging glaciers are caught in the last rays of the sun. As night falls so the temperature drops sharply. I meet up with Meder, my Kyrgyz photographer. We get to know each other, it's a great opportunity to work together. When he empties his bag, I am stunned by the amount of junk food that he has brought with him, bottles of Coca-Cola and a bag full of chocolate bars, plus other stuff too. The next day, we head towards the ridge of Petrov Peak, a mountain frequently used by climbers to acclimatise. There is no question of going to the summit as you need ropes, crampons,

and ice axes, but I'd like to at least get to 13,800 feet before it becomes an exercise in mountaineering. The view from this ridge is nothing short of exceptional. We spend all afternoon there. On the way back, we get to the base camp just as a storm breaks.

We wake up to a beautiful day and the Lenin peak taunts us. We head to camp I! I set off on the trail, the bike strapped to my back. I leave some things at the base camp which means that I "only" have to shoulder about 55 lbs including the bike, it's far more reasonable. I'm on form and meet some French people and, unbelievable as it might seem, I even meet a follower of mine on

Instagram! Crazy!

At Traveller's Pass, we break through 13,100 feet and set foot in the long valley that has been forged by tonnes of ice from the Pamir glacier. The stony descent on the other side of the pass is a joy on the bike, though well exposed at times. The very steepest slopes must be traversed on the bike, or a fatal fall is a certainty. The people I meet here, and even the mountaineers heading to the Lenin Peak are amazed to see a bike at these heights. I ride across a fantastic landscape, pumped up by the magnetic energy flowing in this place. I finally make it to camp I by the end of the day, the temperature has dropped drastically. The welcome at Tien Shan Travel is brilliant,



a hot shower and an excellent meal. I fall into a deep sleep, the wind beating the tent all night. The high altitude causes me to drop in and out of periods of apnoea; I wake tired. Meder is completely out of it and feels unable to accompany me any further. I leave alone with one, perhaps crazy, idea in my head, see if I can make it to the summit at 16,900 feet. I lift the bike on to my back and begin to climb, slowly. The landscape appears frozen as the high summits are so close that they block the valley. At around 15,750 feet, I decide to stop my ascent as I am already beginning to toil and feel the dizzying effects of being at such high altitude. I carry my bike up steeply eroding slopes. I'm exhausted. On lifting my head I see that above me it is

even steeper. I am not even sure that I will be able to ride the area above me as there is a straight rocky bar where you must climb straight up. And by this evening I need to be back down to the valley bottom, as it's my last day. I throw in the towel; I think that I would need a complete day to make it to the top. I don't have enough time and I am exhausted but at the same time happy to have accomplished all that I have. I turn back and throw myself into an awesome free-ride to camp I. There, I meet up with Meder and we drop down into the Pamir plain. This is where a mountain bike really comes into its own, flying down a mountain slope at full pelt. I spend the rest of my day waiting for Meder in a landscape that I will never grow

tired of.

Once at base camp, I take my time and recover a little. My friend Umar arrives, bang on time, as usual. We cross the Pamir plain under a threatening sky. From the 4WD's radio resonates some traditional, but rather sad music as if the country does not want me to leave, and at the same time I don't want to leave either. This country has given me so much, I have met so many beautiful people, seen such magnificent landscapes, completely disconnected from my life in the West.



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