

## LET'S GET FAT

PLUS-SIZE TIRES BRING BIKE-OBSSESSED CULTURE TO A NEW FRONTIER / BY TONY GILL

Despite the warm fall weather, a customer was chatting up Juan Patterson, owner of Storm Cycles, about bicycles of the plus-sized persuasion, whose four-inch tires (normal mountain bike tires max out at about two and a half inches) are the tool of choice for people wanting to ride bikes in the snow.

Park City is a mountain bike Mecca—twice-named an IMBA Gold Level Ride Center. So it's no surprise to see this cold-weather outgrowth of the sport take hold. "There's a lot of forward momentum for the sport right now," says Patterson, who notes that fat bike sales and rentals make up a significant portion of his bike shop's winter revenue.

"Lots of people are looking for alternative activities to skiing and snowboarding," says Eric LaPerle, general manager of White Pine Touring. "The bikes have changed over the last few years. As the technology has improved the entry price point has dropped, meaning the sport is more accessible."

White Pine Touring doesn't just sell and rent fat bikes, they lead fat bike tours, many taking riders to the Round Valley trail system, which boasts some outstanding single-track for fat bikes. "Our guides are all local riders who know the best places to take a group on a given day," explains LaPerle.

Local knowledge is especially important as it takes a lot of work to maintain fat bike trails and know when the conditions are prime for riding. After some snowfall, it usually takes a couple days for the trail to get packed down—White Pine employees lead snowshoe groups to help stomp down the trails.

Mountain Trails Foundation is considering investing additional resources into fat bike trails. "It takes a lot of work, but we're looking into it to reduce pressure on multi-use trails as community interest in fat bikes peaks," says Charlie Sturgis, head of Mountain Trails. Sturgis says it's important to know when conditions are suitable for fat biking. When your tires are leaving noticeable ruts, it's time to turn back.



PHOTO CAROLYN HOLLIDAY, MIKE SCHIRT PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF WHITE PINE TOURING

### DREAM MACHINE

Salsa's Beargrease Carbon is at the top of the heap for performance fat bikes. A full carbon frame keeps things stiff, responsive and light, and the Rockshox Bluto fork softens the blow when you encounter unexpected rocks just under the snow. Internal cable routing has the bike looking tidy while tubeless-ready wheels and Jumbo Jim tires deliver the ground-hugging traction you need for the harshest conditions.

**Storm Cycles:** The Salsa Beargrease, \$4,300, 1680 W. Ute Blvd., 435-200-9120

**White Pine Touring:** 1790 Bonanza Dr., 435-649-8710



PHOTO ADAM FINKLE