ForeWord Reviews

HEALTH & FITNESS

The Practical Cyclist
Chip Haynes
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Dust off the bike, put some air in the tires, and discover a new world that has been waiting for you. Thats an easy-to-accept invitation from the author, who is a bicycle enthusiast, commuter, and self-described all-around “neighborhood bike guy” from Clearwater, Florida. The text addresses the transition into a two-wheeler mindset in an easy-to-follow format. His writing style is light enough to convince a reluctant reader to take that first spin around the block and do so eagerly and confidently.

“So it comes to this: If you want to feel good, and feel good about yourself, go ride a bike,” Haynes writes. “You dont have to go fast or go far, but you do have to go.”

Is that inviting or what?

This book arrives at a good time. As gasoline prices fluctuate and global warming becomes an issue, consumers are looking more to bicycles for commuting to work and running errands, burning calories, and trimming their weight as they go. The “green” movement, which encourages people to give Mother Nature a rest, is one more reason to find a clean-air alternative to our gas guzzlers. In fact, *Mother Earth News* magazine includes this book on its “Books for Wiser Living” list.

The author is upfront with the reader on what the book is not. It isnt a bike-repair manual, nor is it a fitness text for next-generation professional road racers or a guide for choosing the most fashionable cycle brands. As the title suggests, the book is a roadmap for people who want to ease back into the saddle to fetch a quart of milk, explore the neighborhood, or eliminate bumper-to-bumper lines while getting to that day job.

The advice is sound, too. The author encourages first-time bike commuters to resist the temptation of taking the same route they take with an automobile. “There are many roads that all, eventually, lead to the same place if youre willing to work at it,” he writes. “You want, poetically speaking, to take the road less traveled. It will make all the difference.” And this book will make all the difference for a bicyclist with an open, resourceful mind and a willingness to step outside the box for an adventure on two wheels.

Karl Kunkel