



SUN EZ TADPOLE SX

By Jerilyn Quesnel

The golden sun was gently setting on the wind swept ocean as I basked in its warmth. The seagulls and pelicans flying above were squawking amongst themselves, as if they knew my secret. In that moment, I was overwhelmed with the freedom and joy I felt as I sat motionless upon my three wheeled savior. A sense of freedom I believed long gone was reawakened. I was trying to hold back the tears but the intense emotions so long withheld were set loose. My brown eyes swelled as the warm tears ran down my face and I did not care who saw me. If they asked why I was crying, I would tell them a story that would move them to change their life. I would tell them that my new freedom was given to me by a simple, little tricycle. I would tell them the joy in my heart came from realizing that I just finished my first twenty mile ride on it and how I knew it was just the beginning of an exciting new life to come...

Being athletically active and playful for most of my 40 plus years resulted in a plethora of orthopedic injuries. Gratefully, none of them are crippling, but they can be quite painful. Cycling had been on the 'too much pain' list for a long time and both my mountain and road bikes were collecting dust. The desire to ride forced me to look for a less painful mode of cycling. While I was surfing the

web, I happened across a recumbent trike. I had never seen anything like it before and it looked fairly painless. I scoured the web to learn more. Within two weeks I had one in the back of my car.

One afternoon while I was riding my new 'no pain, lots of gain' trike, I saw another recumbent rider coming towards me. I did not know what to do. I was in shock. I thought I was the only person in my area with such a strange ride. We both stopped and talked for a few minutes. I could not believe my luck. Who was this recumbent rider? It was John Axen, a writer for Recumbent & Tandem Rider Magazine (RTR). Not only did I now know someone else who is 'bent', but I was ecstatic to get to talk to an authority. I learned about all types of recumbent bikes, safe bike trails, group rides, and tons of additional information that fed my enthusiasm for riding my new trike.

I am thrilled to be immersed in cycling again. The experience is so much better this time since there is no pain. I just get to have a lot of fun. My enthusiasm gave me the opportunity ride a new tadpole trike (EZ-Tadpole SX) designed by EasyRacers and built by Sun Bicycles. The guys at RTR asked me if I wanted to put some miles on it for a review. Of course I said 'yes' and we set a date for a ride.

We met on the appointed day, and as the trike was unloaded off the truck, the first thing I noticed was how good it looked. The TIG welded steel frame with its clean welds, powder coated in a beautiful metallic yellow, was adorned with contrasting black anodized alloy wheels and components. The black alloy handlebars and Promax brake levers completed a great-looking package. The adjustable Cool Back seat and foam saddle give the rider a wide range positions. The Quad QMD-6 mechanical disc brakes were the icing on the cake! The trike presented itself as a much more costly machine than it is. Are they sure this is just an entry level trike? The EZ-tadpole is quite the "looker", but looks can be deceiving! Only the ride will tell!

John Axen started the set-up procedure for me, which I thought would take at least half an hour. After a quick adjustment of the boom and some changes to the seat angle I was ready to roll, only five minutes after unloading it from the truck! In a matter of minutes, the EZ-3 tadpole can adapt to riders, short or tall without a single tool or shop manual! This flexibility and ease would be great for those days when you want to let others ride your recumbent trike. There have been so many times I have been out and about and wanted to let someone try my own trike and couldn't because it can't be

adjusted easily. The EZ Tadpole's handlebars are adjustable both in length and angle. Considering the amount of repair work for carpal tunnel and broken bones that the surgeons have performed on my arms and hands, being able to adjust where my hands are going to sit for the next three or four hours sounds great.

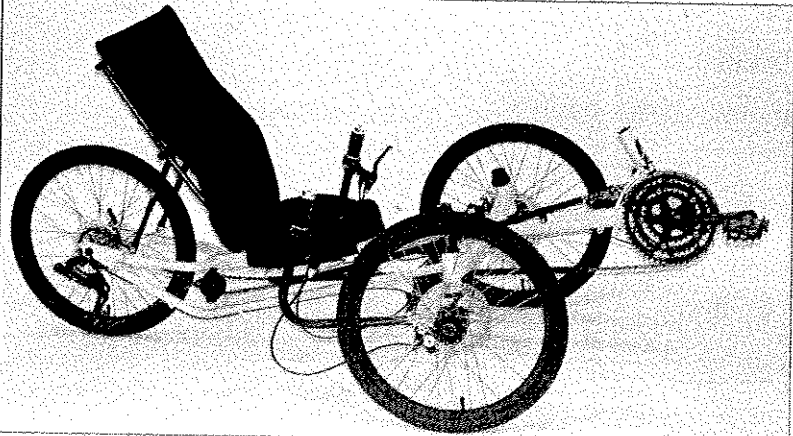
As I jumped on, I was very surprised at how comfortable it was. Most folks will find the covered soft foam feels quite firm but forgiving. It took me a little while to learn how to properly get into a tadpole trike and any attempts at 'laity-like' behavior are quickly thwarted. If your quads are weak, you are just going to have to drop yourself in. But since the EZ-tadpole seat is a full 13 inches off the ground, it was a lot easier to get on and off compared to most other recumbent trikes. It was amazing how much of a break the additional seat height gave my knees and hips as I made less than graceful entries.

Did I mention that I run over everything? This is another reason why the clearance of the trike is quite helpful. For those of us who are enjoying the scenery and ignoring the debris from the last rains, it is good to know that we have enough clearance to roll over a few sticks and rocks.

Now for the quick zip around the parking lot before the ride out. I quickly observed how stable and sturdy the trike felt. No squeaks, rattles or parts rubbing on me. Did I say rubbing? Yes, that nasty chain is running through a pair of PVC tubes, keeping my legs from being "greased"! I could make tight turns and had no problems getting through narrow areas since the trike is only 36 inches wide with a 40 inch wheelbase. I definitely felt the 49 lbs of weight, but decided not to pass judgment until I got it out on the ride. We were ready to pull out for our ride uphill to Ojai, Ca, and downhill back to Ventura. Now was my chance to see how much effort I needed to donate to the climb uphill.

As we pulled out into the bike lane and began to gain speed I was quite aware the weight of the bike. But as we started to climb, I was surprised that the weight became less of an issue. The two-piece well-padded seat helped a lot by giving me extra leverage for pedaling. I thought

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the extra leverage made up for the weight.

The target market trike for this trike is probably not planning to ride up anything much steeper than where we rode and most likely would not mind the few extra pounds. I was actually looking forward to the added weight for a faster downhill.

Weaving back and forth between rocks and branches on the trail provided even more insight. The narrow trike easily moved between and around debris, poles, fences, cars and the like. A trike on the narrow side really helps when you need to maneuver around obstacles or go through a doorway. The EZ Tadpole is quite predictable in terms of handling and I definitely felt as if I was in complete control.

As we all rode along I thought about all the great bags and panniers you can attach to a rear luggage rack. There was plenty of space to store everything you might need for a trip around town or a long ride along the beach.

After we had been riding for a little over an hour, I began to appreciate the Cool Back seat and foam saddle. It supported me well, allowed good ventilation, and provided a strong platform to push against as the hills got a steeper. One point of advice is to make sure you have the proper amount of tension on the adjustment straps of the Cool Back. If you don't have enough tension the seat back tends to sag and you will feel the pressure of the straps.

As we continued uphill, I was thinking what a nice ride this bike is for the price. When I heard it was an entry-level bike, I expected trouble if I pushed it too hard. The trike had a nice mix of quality components that performed very well for every experiment I tried. I really liked the smooth SRAM and Shimano drive train components. The trike was so quiet I could even hear the leaves rustling in the trees!

Having never used GripShift before, I found the SRAM shifters to be quite convenient and easy to use. I shifted the wrong direction a few times until I became accustomed to them. Since I was out for a good time, it really did not matter much and the trike did not punish me for it either. I have broken my wrist and hands more times than I care to remember and thought that the Grip Shift might present an issue, but was surprised to find

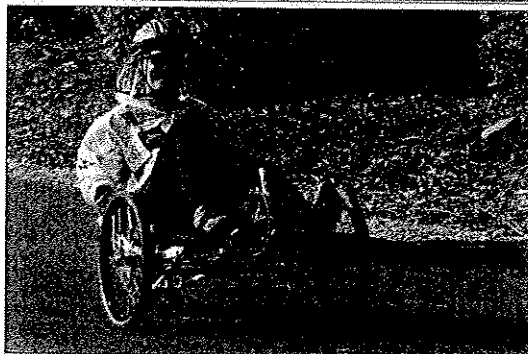
that they moved so easily and accurately that using them presented no trouble or pain. Newer riders will love the confidence this drivetrain provides. Nobody wants to get off and fix their bike every time they make a little mistake like cross chaining. The trike was incredibly forgiving in that department.

Riding uphill seems to be a good time to fiddle around with a water bottle, look for snack or fess with your clothes since you are usually moving slowly. Even with all my squirming, the trike just continued directly ahead and did not send me into a tree or oncoming traffic. I'm certain my fellow trail riders appreciated that! I found pedal influenced steering almost non-existent, even though I was pushing quite hard. As I got tired going up the hill, my form went out the window. The trike kindly forgave my sloppy pedaling and just kept going straight.

After we got to Ojai and fed out faces, we look forward to the 16-mile descent. My heart raced with excitement as I anticipated the opportunity to test out the braking and handling. As we started down, I loved how the trike tracked in a fairly straight line while applying the disc brakes. There is more than ample stopping power. Disc brakes are generally on higher end models of bikes. This is yet another reason why this trike felt like it had a lot of quality for the price. Plus, disc brakes just look very "techno".

When I pushed into corners hard and fast, the EZ Tadpole felt like it could tip over. I actually got it on two wheels for a short moment but I have to admit that I pushed it much harder than the typical casual rider ever will. This trike is for enjoying the ride, not participating in the X-games. The steering felt accurate and responsive. I had to use the bike's steering, rather than leaning into turns as I am used to doing on my own steed. Due to the seat being independent from the frame of the EZ Tadpole, there is a bit of flex between the two. Perhaps this isn't much of a problem as this trike is not considered to be performance oriented. This is a good feature for newer and less experienced riders. After a few minutes I actually became unaware of this sense and just enjoyed the ride.

The Kenda Kwest 20" tires were great. They motivated me to finally put similar tires on my own trike. The ride is "cushy"



but with good traction. They also appealed to me because they gave me a sense of security about flats since they looked 'beefier'. The pleasant, soft ride was wonderful as I am so accustomed to feeling every grain of sand, rock, and bump in the road. I really appreciated the 'Cadillac' ride for a change.

As we rode into the parking lot at the end of the ride, I noticed that my feet did not go to sleep as usually happens on other trikes. I attribute that to the slightly higher seat height and lower bottom bracket. It was really nice that no areas of my body got numb or excessively cold on this brisk morning.

While big strong guys may have no problem loading the EZ Tadpoles 49 pounds in the back of a truck, I think a young lady might. I don't think I could press it up there without scratching or denting either the car or me. If you were planning on hauling it around on top of a car, you might need to look at other transportation options.

So in summary, who would want to add this steed to their stable? I know I would. After a hard day at work, riding this trike around would be a pleasure. When I am trying to persuade someone to try out a trike, I could easily set it up for a fun ride. If you know someone who wants to get out in the fresh air, burn off a few calories, or just loosen up the stiff joints, this trike can help. The low price of the EZ Tadpole makes it so much easier to get into the sport. You don't have to mortgage the house to enjoy the thrill of recumbent trikes.

What if you want one for you and one for the significant other to try riding together? The higher priced trikes just aren't an option for many folks, especially when they are not sure that this 'trike thing' is what they really want. Although you give up some handling and speed for this trike, most folks probably are not too interested in that anyway. It's like your cell phone with tons of features. Why pay for it if you're not going to use all

that stuff? The Sun EZ Tadpole has all the necessary bells and whistles and even a few cool extras to satisfy a wide variety of riders. I know, because I spent more than twice its price for my own!

SUN TADPOLE SX

MSRP	\$1150.00
Wheel Base	40" (101.6cm)
Overall Length	65" (165.1cm)
Width	32" (81.3cm)
Seat Height	14" (35.56cm)
Frame	High Tensile Tig Welded Steel
Fork	High Tensile Steel
B.B.	Sealed Cartridge
Crank	170x52/42/30 (steel rings)
Derailleurs (fr)	R. Shimano
	R. SRAM 5.0
Shifters	SRAM 3.9
Freewheel	SRAM 11-32 8sp
Pedals	LU-E12A
Brakes	Quad QMD-6 Mechanical Disc
Brake Lever	Promax Alloy w/Lock
Headset	Sealed Mechanism Steel
Handlebar	Steel
Stem	Alloy Aheadset
F. Hub	Alloy Tadpole
R. Hub	Promax DB-600R
Rim Front	20x1.75 36h Alloy
Rim Rear	20x1.75 36h Alloy
Spokes	14g. Stainless Steel
Tire Front	20x1.50 BW Kenda Kwest
Tire Rear	20x1.50 BW Kenda Kwest
Saddle	Contoured Foam w/Lycra Type Cover
Seat Slide	Steel
Seat Back	Cool Back Adjustable
Weight	49lbs.

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