

SPECIFICATIONS

BRIDGESTONE

	XO-3
FRAME	Ishiwata CrMo; triple-butted
FORK	CrMo; pressed crown
HEADSET	Halta Vesta
F.DERAILLEUR	Shimano Exage ES
R.DERAILLEUR	Shimano Exage ES
SHIFTERS	Shimano Deore DX, top-mount
CRANKS	Sugino XS; 50x40x30
BOTTOM BRACKET	Tioga BB-301, bolt type
PEDALS	SR MTP-170, steel and plastic
REAR COGS	(cassette) Shimano 7-speed 13-15-17-19-21-24-28
CHAIN	Shimano Hyperglide
HUBS	Shimano 500 LX
RIMS	Araya CV-7 32H, silver
TIRE	Ritchey Tom Slick 26" x 1.4"
TUBE	Normal weight, Presta valve
SPOKE	Stainless 14 ga.
BRAKES/LEVERS	Dia-Compe XCE cantilever; SS-4 lever
SADDLE	Avocet Touring, vinyl
SEATPOST	Katloy #242; 300mm
HANDLEBAR	Hsin Lung-built Bridgestone Moustache Handlebars
STEM	Hsin Lung HS
GRIPS	Ritchey with padded tape
WEIGHT	12.2 kg (52 cm)



PRICE:

DEALER:

XO-3: STRANGE-LOOKING, BUT GOOD

THE FRAME REMAINS THE SAME

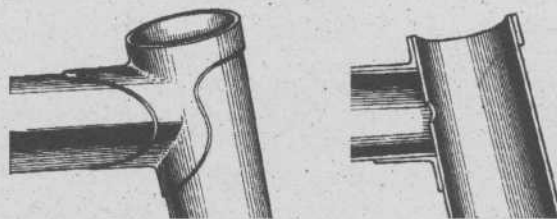
The XO-3 has the same Japanese-built butted chrome-moly frame and fork that we give to our XO-2 (and both bikes have the same great ride as our top-of-the-line XO-1). You won't find a better-riding, more versatile, better-designed frameset in our line.

Like the XO-1, the XO-3 has Moustache Handlebars—but they aren't the same edition. Since the XO-3 has top-mount shifters and mountain bike-style brakes, the diameter and hand-grip of the XO-3's Moustache bars are sized to accommodate grips, mountain bike levers and top-mount shifters. (Translation: The outer bar diameter is 22.2mm rather than the XO-1's 23.8mm.)

MOUSTACHES, DUMMIES & COMFORT

The combination of Moustache Handlebars and "dummy" levers mounted on the inside of the curves makes the XO-3 look different. Mostly, it's the handlebars. Even though this design has been around a century and is popular in Japan and Europe, it's scarce in America, where fear of the unknown kicks in hard.

If the unusual shape of the Moustache bars makes you uncomfortable, then seeing them with the "dummy levers" on the inner, forward curves will make you queasy. But try them out, and you'll find that the dummy hoods are great to rest upon and that they give you a stable, aerodynamic grip for fast riding. You'll spend maybe 30 percent of your riding time holding on to them—they're that comfortable. Anybody who tries the XO-3's bar and grip will find that comparatively, a standard, straight-bar, single-grip arrangement is extremely confining. The XO-3's handlebar/shifter combination is more comfortable and far more versatile than a flat bar or a flat bar with "bar ends," those bolt-on horns people put on when they finally admit that flat bars are so limiting. (For best results with the Moustache bars, make sure the XO-3's shifters are mounted on the side, so that lever travel is nearly vertical.)



For all the intriguing parts on the XO-3, the frame, as always, is the heart of the bike. This lightweight frame is built in Japan from thin-gauge butted Ishiwata tubing. Brazed, lugged joints are a clean, stalwart, time-honored method of linking tubes.

WHEELS: WHY 26 INCHES ARE BEST

Most "hybrid" bikes come with 700C wheels, which are about 50mm, or two inches, taller than 26-inch wheels. For most riding, the 26-inch dimension makes more sense. The smaller diameter is inherently lighter than the larger, and it is also inherently stronger (imagine trying to twist a small and a large rim into a figure-8). Also, there is a much better selection of medium-to-large-width tires for 26-inch wheels.

The XO-3 comes with a 26 x 1.4-inch Tom (Ritchey) Slick and fits tires from 1.25 to 1.9 inches. What helps determine the upper end of this rubber range is fork-crown clearance. Where virtually all "hybrids" have space-cheating uni-crown-type forks, the XO-3's Bridgestone-built fork uses a nicely sculpted crown, which provides extra tire clearance and even leaves room for fenders.

AN UNQUALIFIED ENDORSEMENT

Or at least it's an unusual endorsement: The XO-3 is such a light, solid, well-built, great-handling bike that our product manager says if he were unfairly fired tomorrow (and consequently had it out for Bridgestone), he'd still recommend this bike to his best friend.