

Keep it Wheel

Cyclist, commuter, pavement pounder, mud thumper, bicycle enthusiast – call them what you will. Riders encompass many styles and come in all sorts of flavors. Take your pick. **by** JENNA KASHOU



WHAT IT IS?

WHERE CAN YOU DO IT?

BMX

Bicycle motocross (or BMX for short) races take place around a dirt track with berms, jumps and other technical features, but BMX riders are more commonly known for freestyle riding. BMX bikes have 20" wheels and a harder, small frame that might be confused for a kid's bike.

The Rock Bike Park (7900 Crystal Ridge Rd., Franklin, mke.rockbikepark.com) boasts an Olympic-spec BMX track, the second-largest in the country.

BIKE POLO

Don't be fooled. Bike polo is a full-contact sport, more like hockey than the country club polo you might imagine (though the mallets are similar). Players wear padding and their steeds are built to take a beating, with special braking for sprinting and maneuvering.

Join the world-renowned Milwaukee Bike Polo Club at the Washington Park courts (1859 N. 40th St., milwaukeebikepolo.com).

CYCLOCROSS

Cyclocross races take place over mixed terrain (muddy hills or wooded trails), with riders forced to dismount and carry their bikes through portions of the route. Sloppy conditions and crazy fans are par for the course. A cyclocross bike is usually lightweight (like a road bike), but has tougher tires to overcome the obstacles.

The Wisconsin Cyclocross Series (facebook.com/wcacyclocross) consists of 16 races in the fall/winter that attract amateurs and pros of all ages.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain bikes have thick, heavily treaded tires and high-suspension forks for cross-country trail riding. Riders can up the X-Games factor and veer into downhill or gravity mountain biking with steeper inclines on the trails, more rock obstacles, higher-suspension forks and a lot of prayer.

We suggest starting out at more moderate trails like the John Muir (N9097 County Road H, Whitewater, dnr.wi.gov).

TRACK RACING

Aficionados here mount fixed-gear bikes – aka fixies – with (look, Ma!) no brakes to sprint around steeply banked oval tracks. It also gives you a chance to say "velodrome," which sounds like something out of the new *Star Wars* flick, but is actually the name of the tracks.

Washington Park Velodrome (1821 Washington Rd., Kenosha; kenoshavelodrome.com), the country's oldest, is a 333-meter asphalt track open May through September.

ROAD RACING

A criterium, or "crit," is the term used for a road race on a short course, consisting of many laps with a mass (read: the whole field) start. The atmosphere is often jovial as the route usually consists of closed-off city streets, and the neighbors come out to cheer on the racers.

The Tour of America's Dairyland (tourofamericasdairyland.com) is the country's largest competitive pro/amateur road cycling event.

FAT BIKE

Fat Bikes are the newest trend in biking and perform best on white mud (aka snow). The fat tires (up to 5 inches) allow you to ride anywhere and through anything, on city streets and trails. Their popularity in winter is fairly obvious, but trekking on to beaches (where allowed) has made them a year-round favorite.

Anywhere you darn well please (again, with permission).

BUBLR BY THE NUMBERS

A breakdown of Milwaukee's bike-share program as it enters its sophomore season.

by AIMEE ROBINSON

340 ONLINE BUBLR LOCATION SUGGESTIONS

seventy BIKES IN THE MKE FLEET

57 SPONSORS

BIKE STATIONS

10 Stations at launch

30 Anticipated by summer's end

CUSTOMERS FROM **709** UNIQUE ZIP CODES

1,630 Total Bublrr riders made **5,158** total Bublrr trips in 2014

11,371 pounds of carbon offset

Estimated calories burned: **478,000**



\$3 FOR 30-MINUTE

\$15 PER MONTH FEE

11,965 ESTIMATED MILE TRIP

All-weather Riders

Neither snow nor rain nor freezing temperatures can keep these Milwaukeeans out of the saddle.

JENNA KASHOU



Mauriah Kraker is all smiles as she cruises along a frigid Lake Michigan.

Mauriah Kraker has had many return addresses in the past 10 years. The dancer/choreographer spent the past decade living in far-flung outposts like New York, Taiwan and Thailand. Through all those moves, one constant has seen her through: biking. Now back in her native Milwaukee, Kraker rides (or walks) just about everywhere.

"Walking and biking a city allows me to feel a city's pulse," she says, "in a way cars do not."

Andrew Temperly's mind is on the same track. For the past 18 years, he's set out from his Bay View home to commute to and from work. The store manager of Erik's Bike and Board Shop in Whitefish Bay insists he would be pedaling year-round even if he wasn't employed at a bike shop; he rides for the thrill of it.

"Winter riding is a blast," Temperly says. "You get the challenge of the weather and the street conditions, so it's like mountain biking in that respect."

Temperly has a "do-all" Specialized bike that he outfits with studded tires for icy conditions, but the rest remains the same.

For his winter commute, he sports a balaclava hood that goes under his helmet and protects his head and face, leaving only his eyes uncovered. Winter-specific riding Specialized shoes are covered with a neoprene bootie on very cold days, and a breathable soft-shell fleece blocks the wind. He'll also sport Chrome knickers atop a pair of long underwear and slides his hands into a pair of Bar Mitts, thick mittens that attach to the handlebars.

He does admit dressing and undressing can be a chore, but he wouldn't trade it for a heated seat on the bus. He can't stand waiting around and insists his commute is always quicker by bike. "Winter can be so oppressive," Temperly says. "Riding helps break down cabin fever."

Kraker also admits she's not a fan of the cold and slush. But if she wasn't forcing herself to get on the bike, she fears she would hibernate until spring makes an appearance. Of course, just like the rest of us battling the ele-

ments, sporting the right gear makes all the difference.

"It may be 16 degrees. But with no wind, it can still be a great bike ride," Kraker says. She swears by a fleece liner that zips into her Bern helmet. As for the body, a lighter wind- and waterproof Lululemon jacket with a removable

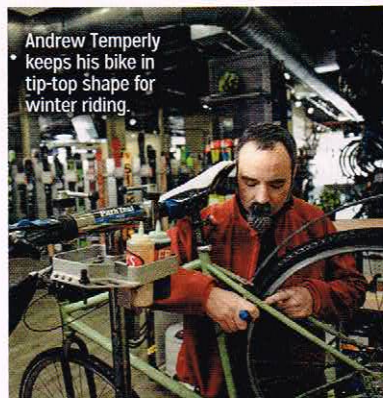
"Riding a single speed builds an enormous amount of body heat," Kraker says. "If I dress too warmly, I will arrive to my destination sweaty, then immediately become cold. Wearing fewer, lighter layers is really key to happy winter biking."

Staying visible on city streets is paramount. For that, Kraker outfits her ride with two lights that can switch from blinking to steady depending on her surroundings. She'll also wear an LED headlamp on top of her helmet to ensure motorists can spot her.

Both cyclists agree that most of the clothing can be found in the closet of a hardy Wisconsinite. As for the mindset, Temperly has become so accustomed to riding in the elements that he doesn't think much of it.

He urges newbies to make a weeklong effort to try winter riding. He knows it becomes easier with each ride.

"Once you get the clothing figured out, staying warm isn't an issue," he says. ■



Andrew Temperly keeps his bike in tip-top shape for winter riding.

fleece liner works wonders. Sorel snow boots and fashion glasses or old ski goggles complete her armor. She layers Craft cycling mittens under a pair of her grandma's hand-knit wool mittens and sports SmartWool socks to keep her digits toasty.

HEAR MORE ABOUT THE STORY ON WUWM'S "LAKE EFFECT" APRIL 1 AT 10 A.M. NO FOOLING!

episode of "Around the Corner with John McGivern" that did not see historian John Gurda on his bike was "Walker's Point." Get it? Walker? He walked.