

The Godfather of Bicycle Design

# An Interview with Pacific Cycles President George Lin

Text & Photos: Daphne Chen

In Taiwan's bicycle industry, the company that has always stood out the most from the crowd, been best at fixing bugs, offered the most advanced technology, and attracted the biggest throngs of customers is Pacific Cycles. Pacific Cycles' products have won three major international design awards (iF, IDEA, Good Design), and it is the only bicycle company to have done this. To decode Pacific Cycles' successful DNA, one must first understand Pacific Cycles' founder and the godfather of bicycle design in Taiwan, George Lin.

**G**eorge Lin founded Pacific Cycles in 1980, and has now been involved in the cycle industry for more than thirty years. From the successful mass produced of the Birdy in 1995 to the introduction of the iF Gold Award-winning IF Mode in 2009, Lin's professional R&D and design have consistently won the highest praise. Lin rides his own bicycles to and from work every day (50 km daily), and spends two to three hours each

day designing his products. Lin claims that riding and designing bicycles are his two favorite daily activities. Lin's motto is "To create exciting products meeting the need and expectations of enthusiasts."

## A Global Design Workshop

George Lin has always been a devotee of R&D, and is keenly attuned to market and product trends. He develops



▲ George Lin and the iF Gold Award-winning IF Mode.



▲ George Lin is the godfather of bike design in Taiwan.

the most challenging products, insists on meeting the highest quality requirements, and specializes in aesthetically and technically exquisite boutique products. As a result, Lin is a much sought-after partner for international designers. Pacific Cycles does not position itself as a bicycle manufacturer, but rather as a “global design workshop.” According to Lin, while it is very costly to produce molds, and usually more than designers can afford, Pacific Cycles’ strength lies in its R&D and advanced technology, as well as in its ability to mass produce products. But even more importantly, Pacific Cycles is willing to commit its effort and R&D resources to products that may not necessarily have tremendous market potential.

## Able to Create History-making Products

When innovative R&D is mentioned, George Lin is quick to add that real innova-

tion means tackling products that no one has designed before, no one has expected, or no one has been able to succeed at. Pacific Cycles’ ambition is to create history-making products. Because of this, before every exciting design is produced, George

Lin has thought of how to manufacture it, and how to ensure that the product design meets his ideals. He is not at all concerned about things like costs, how much a product will sell for, and how large demand will be. Pacific Cycles has consequently introduced many novel products that no one else had thought of or been able to copy. This is George Lin’s proudest achievement. He relies on his extraordinary business philosophy to accept orders that others don’t want or cannot fill. But thanks to Lin’s reputation among his customers, Pacific Cycles’ production line is always running at full capacity, and he never has to go out and search for orders.

## His Proudest Achievement

George Lin is proudest of his IF Mode folding bike, which was awarded Germany’s iF Gold Award. The IF Mode is based on a “two wheels with a handle” concept, and folds up in a lightning-fast three seconds without

any need for tools. The bike itself features an aerodynamic Z design, and is attractively simple and futuristic. Cables and chains are hidden within the bicycle’s body, giving it a highly clean appearance. There is a built-in highly-efficient Speed Drive double shift system. The IF Mode was used as a prop in a recent German movie about the future, and has been collected by a prominent design museum in New York which plans to exhibit



▲ The 8" CarryMe offers exceptional handling and an exciting sense of speed.



▲ The lightweight Reach folding e-bike has received attention from the US Army.



the bicycle for three years. In addition, Pacific Cycles also introduced an electric folding version of its highly distinctive Reach compact bike this year. This bike weighs less than 19 kg, and is equipped with lithium batteries and a motor that is designed and produced by Pacific Cycles. The US Army has ordered this bike. The 8" CarryMe compact folding bike has accompanied George Lin on trips to many cities around the world, and is

the culmination of Lin's thirty years of design experience. Lin's next project is to apply automobile wheel design principles to scooters, and overturn scooters' conventional upright steering tube design by designing a steering mechanism in between the wheels. It is expected that this will result in a quicker and more agile scooter.

### Investing in Advanced Equipment

Since Pacific Cycles is so attentive to R&D and design, puts so much effort into product mechanisms and processes, imposes such demanding product testing, and is so selective when it comes to products and customers, it comes as no surprise that

it is also very willing to invest in equipment. Pacific Cycles' new plant went into operation in May of this year, and has acquired three advanced American infrared painting ovens. These ovens rely on radiation heating to avoid pre-heating, and have given a considerable boost to production efficiency. The company also has several sets of powder painting and liquid painting equipment, which enables it to respond to demand for small batches of varied products.

According to George Lin, who has always stressed that good products must come before brand recognition, Pacific Cycles has successfully gained a fine international reputation, and the next step is to develop global sales channels.



▲ The newly-completed Pacific Cycles plant is a magnificent facility.



▲ The process of developing a boutique-grade new product requires endless hand modifications.



▲ The batteries developed by Pacific Cycles are extremely compact.



▲ A hand-made IF Mode bike.



▲ Powder painting equipment.



▲ Pacific Cycles has acquired advanced compact and time-saving American infrared painting ovens.