

DIRTY FINGERS

Mitchell Buck's Hood River Hub

When it comes to bike culture, I'm not sure whether riders have more fun during the punishing, epic rides they subject themselves to, or afterward, telling the tale.

Mitchell Buck, owner of Hood River's quirky local shop, Dirty Fingers Bike Repair, understands this concept. This may be why his shop ride, aptly named Post and Pint, is a combination of riding bikes, drinking beer, and reliving the ride. Once a week, he and his friends have a designated time and place to meet up with other bikers, go for a hot lap through Post Canyon, Hood River's backyard playground trail system, then retell stories about that one ride. The ride when nobody brought extra layers and it started to rain, then someone got lost, and two siblings nearly beat each other up over their last scrap of food. They made it to the car after dark, nearly hypothermic, and one straggler had to walk in because of a broken bike. Buck described that particular ride as a "10-hour death epic," although pointless suffering may be more appropriate.

Buck opened Dirty Fingers in 2007 looking for a distinct quality of life. Although he works long, hard days wrenching on bikes for 10-12 hours, he says he manages to keep things in balance: fix bikes, ride bikes, drink beer, repeat.

One of the beautiful perks of owning your own shop in Hood River is the ability to post a sign on your door – "Out of town for the Oakridge Super D" – close up shop, grab your friends, and head out of town for a memorable weekend of bike racing and pig roasting.

This particular weekend was Buck's 40th birthday, and what better way to celebrate that milestone than by rigging a pig rotisserie up to a stationary

bike and convincing your friends to pedal for six to seven hours, without stopping, to roast the pig. Buck figures that business decisions such as this, along with buying beer once a week for anyone in town who shows up to the Post and Pint, have a way of coming back around. He says that the people who end up coming to Post and Pint might bring their bike in for a full tune-up in January when business is slow.

Hood River is the kind of town where the goodwill circles back around, and since many people who move here never end up leaving, Mitchell's circle of friends and customers continues to expand and grow. ♡

