

SHARKSPLAINING THE BOOM

There has probably never been a better time to ride a bike!

However, finding a bike and accessories has been tough, and it is going to get “weird.” We have been getting a lot of questions about what the heck is going on in the cycling world.

- Why is there a bicycle and accessory shortage?
- How long will this last?
- What is the best way to find a great bike or get my bike fixed up?
- How can Big Shark help you get hooked up?

WHY A BOOM AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

We love to see more people getting out to ride and we also think it is great that some folks who have been riding older equipment are going to have the pleasure of experiencing just how far bikes have progressed in recent years. COVID has made all the inhabitants of Earth ride more, at the same time.

The supply chain for bikes and equipment is strained and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. A combination of a pandemic shutting and slowing down factories for 2-3 months and 50-100% more demand than an average year are the culprits. The cycling industry does not have the capacity to pull a lever and produce enough stuff to meet the high level of demand of 2020 and the demand for 2021. We have some of our sales reps telling us to expect product shortages into 2022. Yipes.

The other issue is shipping. We truly hate that there is no brand that has invested in domestic manufacturing that can provide all sorts of bicycle types and price points. The US is fantastic at high technology and at highly crafted bikes, but we rely on a global marketplace for almost everything else. There is an ongoing under supply of shipping containers and no alternative way to get bikes into the US. Bicycle brands are seeing big delays on containers, getting the containers on the way to the US, and in their distribution once they arrive. Weeks and months are being added to lead times on top of the scarcity of materials. A lot of brands were in the middle of shifting production away from China due to the imposition of tariffs, so production was already disrupted. Both the tariffs and the increase in shipping costs are driving prices on almost everything in the cycling world up. Boo.

What is the best way to find a great bike or get mine fixed?

With this in mind, we want to provide some guidance to help you get what you want as soon as possible in this new era where delayed gratification could be the norm for some time. **If you want to skip the read, the summary is that we highly recommend planning (and ordering) as far in advance as possible.** People who wait until spring 2021, are likely to find their options limited. People who order this fall, should be in good shape come spring. This is not a sales tactic, it is simply how business will be (and yes, this makes us crabby sharks.) In some instances, the bicycle that you decide is THE ONE will not exist next year, so being open to some alternative brands or price points is inevitable.

Here are some more nerdy thoughts on how this effects the ‘mass production’ bicycle brands we sell:

If you are interested in a Cervelo, Cannondale, Giant, Yeti, Santa Cruz, Electra, Salsa, Marin, State, Haro, Masi, Sun, Fyxation, Batch, Diamondback, GT, or Raleigh or other production bike that is currently not available, your quickest avenue to getting one is pre-ordering. Why?

- There is no open stock. Our suppliers, literally, do not have product in warehouses. There are hundreds of thousands of bicycles coming into the US. Production has ramped up, but they are ALL already on order. Big Shark has placed thousands of bicycles on order, and it is possible that we can assign one for you before it hits our stores.
- Pre-ordering guarantees that your name is on a unit and that you are "in queue". If it is not on order in your name, that means it can just as easily be ordered in someone else's name.
- Bike inventory is going to be tight for a while, potentially a year or more. Why? It is hard to grow factory capacity during a pandemic. Even in ideal times, factory lead times are many months, not weeks. For new orders placed by our brands, Shimano (which is on most bikes) has a one year lead time.
- It is the only way to guarantee that you will be on the bike you want when spring weather comes in 2021. Many bikes slated to ship in fall/winter this year will sell out before they even arrive in warehouses. That means it could be June before more arrive and those could sell out before they come in. When does this sequence stop? When supply builds to the point where it exceeds demand. When does that happen? We have no idea. We are currently seeing lead times into next winter.
- You only have to put down a deposit now to get a bike rolling; you don't need to pay the balance until you pick-up the bike.
- People who plan ahead for 2021 will get rewarded. Those who do not, may be frustrated.

Specialty Bikes and Custom Builds:

Specialty bike builders, which include Moots, Rock Lobster, and Colnago, are working as hard as they can to keep bikes moving. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, they are not able to produce bikes as quickly as they were a year ago and they have deeper than average order queues right now. The waiting list on parts is like the waiting list on complete bicycles. It really is a first-in/first-out scenario.

- Lead times are likely to get longer before they get shorter.
- If you order in March, it will likely be July or August before you get your bike.
- Most bikes that are going into production now are 2021 models. It is possible that model year will take hiatus (other than color) for the next few years.
- Ordering now gives you a better chance of getting all the parts you want/need well before you actually want to use the bike.
- Planning and thinking ahead is never a bad approach to things like this and that is more important than ever now.

Bikes are a sum of about 26 parts that may come from a dozen or more manufacturers. All it takes is one important part to not be available and a bike is not rideable. We are doing everything we can to track down parts and get bikes on the road ASAP, but neither us nor our bike manufacturers can resolve out of stock issues from companies like Shimano. Only Shimano can do that. If you focus on making

sure you are on a great bike for 2021 now, you will be rewarded with exactly what you want and not run nearly the chance of being disappointed with current inventory levels come spring.

CONTACT US TO TALK ABOUT GETTING A BIKE

We are getting a LOT of bicycles into stock, despite the tough realities we outlined. Here how and why!

- We have pre-ordered almost our entire 2021 inventory this past summer. Side note, we NEVER do this, despite being Sharks, we are not that aggressive.
- We have ordered multiple containers of bicycles factory direct from several of our brands, primarily in accessible price ranges.
- We have expanded our selection and placed large orders (for us) from over 20 different bicycle brands.
- We DO have information on when many of the bicycle models we sell will be available, so we can set expectations.

TRAINERS AND SMART TRAINER SALES ARE BOOMING TOO!

Trainer season will be here sooner than most of us want. Please note that it will not be a surprise if the trainer industry has trouble keeping up with demand again this year. As with bikes, we highly recommend pre-ordering a trainer this year. While we know that you can buy almost anything on-line, our price will be the same as if you buy direct from the manufacturer and we really appreciate the business. We are happy to have items drop-shipped if you prefer to not come into the shop and we also are happy to compare options with you. Contact us to talk trainers and get your order in for a TACX, Wahoo, Kurt Kinetic, CycleOps, or other trainer.

We can help you understand the various training applications and with your in-home installation. It's fun, socially distant, great training, and continuously improving.

THANK YOU

Finally, a big "thank you" to those people who have ordered bikes and equipment from us during one of the more unusual years in memory. What was looking like a very slow sales year for the bike industry in March turned into one of the most brisk for general cycling retailers. For specialty retailers like us, things are looking a lot better now than they did in the early spring. As we've noted before, you are the "lifeline" for our company (and our families) during this time and we appreciate your faith in what we do. We always hope that working with us helps you ride better!

The Big Shark Crew