



ABOVE Jeff Provan relaxes at his favourite St Kilda café, Harpers Kitchen.

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FREEDOM MACHINE

ADDICTION FINDS A POSITIVE TWIST
IN CYCLING ENTHUSIAST JEFF PROVAN.

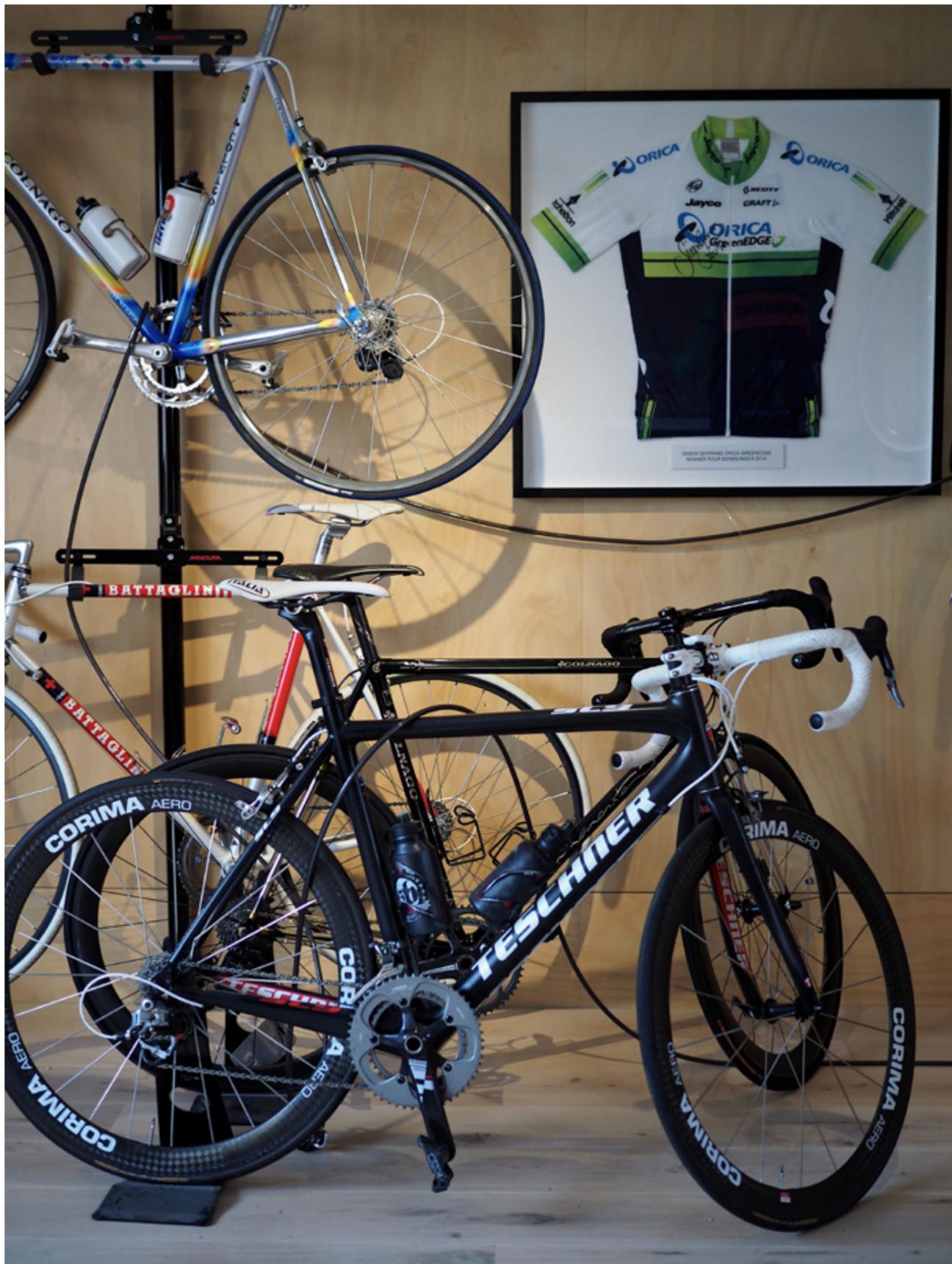
Cycling is a beautiful sport. It's the kind of activity that can capture anyone's imagination given the right hook. There's a rush to it; a happy feeling that never goes away. Sometimes it's soft, trundling along with you as you cruise around on a sunny day. Other times it's heart pounding, hitting you in the face after a hard race – cold sweat becoming cool release. It fills you up. Which is probably why, at about 40-years-old, Jeff Provan found himself addicted. He tells me it has something to do with the feeling of liberty, "When you're a kid you know how good it is; the ability to go wherever you like. Most people, when you see them get back on the bike, you see that same enthusiasm and attraction to what it is. It can be physical exercise, meditation, relaxation ... it's a real freedom machine."

A co-founder of one of Melbourne's most well respected design and construction firms, Neometro, Provan has discovered his passion merges with his work in a very positive way. In every project he finds himself putting a "strong emphasis" on how Neometro caters for bikes inside and outside a building. "There's a whole lot of things you're able

to bring to the table because of your interest in cycling," explains Jeff. "You know how cycling works in your own home so it's easy to consider how it might work for someone in an apartment, and how important that is."

The social quality is another draw that's hard to pass up. A solo ride can be great, cathartic even. But there's a lot to be said for the not so lost art of the group ride. Jeff finds that cycling has a way of reaching across all cross-sections of life and opening up a whole new world. "It unlocks a lot of new friendships and a lot of new doors. It's become a very accessible sport for most people, you can own the most basic bike or the most sophisticated bike ... everyone's on the same level."

Although his preferred areas to ride around Victoria are Mornington, Mount Martha, Kinglake and the hills of the Dandenong Ranges, Jeff is also lucky enough to take an international cycling trip every year. This year it was Italy in the culturally rich countryside of Lake Como, as well as the Italian Alps – both of which featured a wide variety of the cyclist's best friend: cafes.



ABOVE Newly built custom joinery secures, and displays, Provan's bicycle collection.



TOP A small selection of Jeff's colourful assortment of vintage cycling caps.
BOTTOM Jeff Provan snapped during his successful attempt to become 2012 SKCC Road Champion M16+.



Back home Jeff favours Harper's Kitchen in St Kilda, which just happens to be owned by his daughter – though that isn't the only reason he goes there. As a member of St Kilda Racing Club Jeff likes to frequent the area and Harper's Kitchen is in the heart of their territory. A part of the club since its formation and once even its president, Jeff feels a deep sense of loyalty to everyone involved. As it stands, its one of the strongest clubs in Melbourne with nearly "1000 members, 300 of which are women."

Jeff's vehicle of choice is a gorgeous Italian steel racing bike, though he has a titanium cross bike that he uses "to get around town". With about 18 in his collection at home, in a garage dedicated to his hobby, he's spoilt for choice. Newly installed purpose-built racks line the walls and show off the merchandise – which also includes "a mountain bike, a road bike, a fair few racing bikes, some old steel bikes and a commuter."

To complete the aesthetic Jeff has a pretty stellar assortment of cycling caps from the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Attracted to the designs, the first one that comes to his mind is an "outrageous" cap from team Mapei. Another is an easily identifiable, orange accented Moteni cap. Jeff laughs a little and admits it's all a bit obsessive, but he also can't help but note that he sees it in other people when they take up cycling as well. "We all feel the same passion and desire about it."

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