

## Velo Vision Sample Article

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If you have any problems or suggestions about the magazine in general, or this PDF article in particular, please email me at

[peter@velovision.co.uk](mailto:peter@velovision.co.uk)

I hope you enjoy the read.

Peter Eland  
Editor and Publisher, Velo Vision

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### Small print

I don't much like copy protection and legalese, but a few things need saying:

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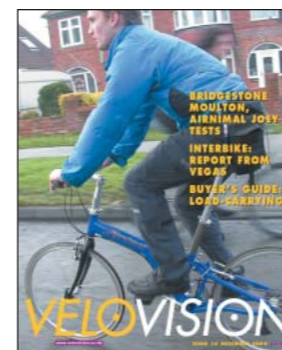
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VELO VISION AND VELO-VISION We weren't first with the name. Velo-Vision (note the hyphen) is a progressive HPV-friendly bike shop in Körten, near Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany, who also make their own recumbents. Velo Vision magazine is working in friendly harmony with Velo-Vision in Germany.

Velo Vision is printed on paper produced from sustainable forests to Nordic Swan standards.



**Cover photograph:** Airnimal's Joey is an invigorating ride: see page 30.

**Opposite:** Every year York's River Ouse floods. It's fun for cyclists when it's just a few inches deep over the riverside bike path: just don't drop the camera! *All photos by Peter Eland.*

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### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Some fast readers finish their *Velo Vision* the day it arrives – but our new Back Page should put a stop to that! Flip to just inside the back cover to discover some fiendish puzzles and amusements which will, we hope, provide a cycling-related diversion from festivities. Contributions from readers, especially crosswords, for next issue would be most welcome. Feel free to photocopy this page – and of course the order form on page 56 – if you don't want to mark the magazine.

It only remains to wish all readers a merry Christmas break, safe cycling and a great 2005!

*Peter Eland*

PS The new *Cycle and Recycle* 2005 calendars have been getting a great reception from readers who have received them so far, and make ideal gifts. We'll make every effort to get orders placed in December to you before Christmas. More details on our website, or see page 56 of this issue.

The Airnimal Chameleon has long been a favourite performance travel bike – we tested it in Issue 7 – and now the company's come up with a new model at half the price: the Joey.



in-between size, but one for which there are a good number of decent tyres available. Ours was equipped with lightweight rims and narrow 90psi Kenda tyres.

Gearing is a 52T single ring to a 11-28 cassette, giving ratios of around 44" to 113". The chainring is adorned each side with a protector plate, and the way the stays on the rear triangle swoop out, they should ward trousers away from most of the rest of the chain run.

Overall weight is a very creditable 11.2kg, including the mudguards which arrived halfway through the test. A quick-release set is also available from Airnimal, as are two models of rear carrier rack, low-rider front racks and also several flavours of bag and suitcase.

**THE FOLD**

The Joey compacts in three stages: first is simply to fold the pedals and use the stem QR to rotate the handlebars, leaving a flattish package to go against a wall.

For car-boot folding (trains would be ambitious) remove the front wheel, undo the rear triangle and swing it under so that the rear wheel wedges nicely in between the front brake blocks. Then drop both stages of the seatpost to lock it all together. Finally, remove the stem and tuck it through a gap in the spokes to fit neatly against the side.

One minor irritation (or safety feature, perhaps) is the need to unscrew both the rear triangle and front wheel 'quick releases', as well as using the lever. Despite this, it folds in 30 seconds or less. The folded package stands somewhat precariously upright, and you just have the front wheel to carry loose. Note also that if you fit the front mudguard you'll need to swing the front forks round so they're reversed, and it sticks out in a rather vulnerable fashion. Perhaps best leave it off if you fold the bike regularly. Airnimal do offer quick-release mudguards, too.

Finally, given a little longer to remove both wheels and pedals the Joey fits into a standard suitcase, a big bonus for air travellers in particular.



**THE RIDE**

As you'll have just read in the Moulton review, the Joey is very much a faster rider's sort of bike in comparison. The lightweight, narrow tyres and help, I'm sure, to give the feeling of prompt acceleration, as does a stiff frame and bars you can really heave on.

The front end really does feel particularly rigid despite its quick-release, and this is a mixed blessing. With the straight bars and already putting some strain on the wrists, this is the area I'd expect fatigue on longer rides. Bar ends would go a long way to alleviating it, mind...

The riding position also helps: it's relatively upright (at least compared to a racing bike) and the bars are a good inch or two higher than on the Moulton, for example. I guess this fits in with the urban theme: good for seeing over traffic.

Airnimal's more expensive models put an elastomer rear suspension unit in between the rear triangle and the frame: the Joey bolts them solidly together. I didn't find this

any sort of problem, and rising out of the saddle over particularly rough bits soon became second nature. The rigidity and total lack of bounce at the rear end was a refreshing change, in fact, an invitation to really scoot after floating around on the Moulton's cushioned ride.

The V-brakes delivered plenty of braking, and the gears worked fine. One component I'd probably change is the folding pedals: most sporty riders will have their favourite clipless system to install anyway. I found the folding ones supplied a bit slippery in the wet.

One thing I didn't get a chance to try was how it handles loaded up. The Airnimal racks will let you mount two rear and two front panniers (plus bar bag and top bag if you get carried away). You'd also want to lower the gearing in this case...

**CONCLUSIONS**

As a fast, invigorating city bike the Airnimal makes a convincing case. Fit drop bars instead and you'd also have a quick road machine with one overwhelming extra benefit: the fold. More specifically, the suitcase fold for travelling: I see this bike as perhaps the ideal holiday companion.

Limitations? It suits the vigorous rider, not the potterer, and for touring use you'd want more gears which might not be too easy to retro-fit. Tyre availability could be an issue on tour, too, but the fast fold could get you home in a taxi if need be.

Overall, an appealing concept and great value at the high-performance end of the folding bike spectrum, and I can't think of any direct competitors at any price.

**Peter Eland**

**AVAILABILITY**

Direct from Airnimal, or via some dealers. Contact them for details: Airnimal Designs, Unit 8 Robert Davies Court, Nuffield Road, Cambridge CB4 1TP, UK. Tel +44 1223 523973 Fax +44 1223 471004 or see [www.airnimal.com](http://www.airnimal.com)



**BELOW LEFT:** The lower seatpost tube has scale markings. You can also see the spring-loaded ball clicked into its socket, keeping the upper part precisely located.

**BELOW:** The Joey's brake and gear controls



**ABOVE LEFT:** The Joey suits a vigorous rider, and is well suited to the cut and thrust of city riding

**BELOW:** The folded package is by no means small, but it's an easy process. The front mudguard might be better removed.



**JUMPING ON A JOEY**

Cambridge-based Airnimal Designs have recently expanded their range from the original single model, the Chameleon, to include an off-roader (the Rhino) and a non-folding compact racer (the Mambo). Also new for 2004 is the Joey, a slightly simplified, non-suspended urban or leisure bike priced at £695 in the UK.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

The chunky blue frame has a neatly 'linear' appearance, falling away from the head tube right down to the dropouts at the back. It's well made in aluminium, with generous tubing sizes to keep everything stiff.

There are mounting points for a single bottle cage along the top of the main tube.

Cable routing is particularly neat and tight to the frame. Another nice touch is the split cotter clamp system for the lower part of the telescopic seatpost: rather than distort the hole in the frame to achieve the clamping effect, the quick-release presses pads in from either side to wedge against the tube and lock it in place.

There's another trick or two in the seatpost area, too. The upper tube (which runs to the saddle) is equipped with a spring-loaded ball

a few inches up from the end. This engages into a recess in the lower, larger-diameter part, so ensuring that the saddle is always the same height above the lower tube. And because there's a scale neatly marked on the side of this lower part, resetting the saddle 'just right' is made easy.

Up front, another quick-release just above the headset releases stem and bars. These are wide flat MTB style items, with the twist grip for the gears and Deore levers for the V-brakes front and back.

A defining characteristic of the Joey is the 24" (520) wheels: an

**LEFT:** Very tidy cable routing along the frame

**FAR LEFT:** Well executed welding and details on the Joey's frame. Folding pedals are slippery but easily replaced