

Forbes

Priority Bicycles: How To Build A Better Bicycle

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Priority Bicycles
A lightweight bike from Priority Bicycles

A couple of years ago, I came across a guy named David Weiner and his brand new bike at an outdoor gear show. The bike grabbed my eye because it was a handsome and seemingly well-made street cruiser. Only upon examination did I realize that it was something new. Not only was the bike extremely lightweight but in lieu of a steel chain, it had what appeared to be a rubber belt drive. It turned out that it wasn't rubber, in fact, but carbon. There was no grease and it was the essence of simplicity.

The price of the bike, at under \$500, was also a revelation, in a world where spending a couple of thousand bucks on a street steed is a given. Cut to 2018, where Priority Bicycles can be seen being ridden by the cool kids all over New York City. If you've stayed at a Viceroy Hotel & Resorts property, one of the Nantucket Island Resorts or the Wickaninnish Inn on Vancouver Island you may have ridden one, since they have each bought fleets of these very sturdy cruisers, which now come in multiple models. I ran into David last week at his sleek storefront space in Tribeca and asked him about the origins of [Priority Bicycles](#).



Priority Bicycles
David Weiner, founder of Priority Bicycles

So how did you decide to get into a business that set out to revolutionize bicycles?

I grew up turning wrenches in bike shops, always taking great pride in helping others to enjoy their bicycles. Although I eventually worked my way into the corporate world, my heart never left. After almost 10 years in software, in 2014, as the CEO of an international software company, I decided I needed a change in lifestyle. When I resigned, the only thing I could think of was that I wanted to make bicycles.

Having been away from the bicycle industry, but always following the trends, I noticed that bicycles had continued to develop upmarket for performance features, however, none of the advancements had made it down market to support everyday riders like my friends and me. As a former bike mechanic, I always had to tune up my friends bikes before we could go riding every season. I knew there had to be a better way. So I set out with the goal to make cycling simpler with bikes that are low maintenance, great looking, and affordable. A bike should be comfortable and lightweight, and simply bring joy to your day, not hassle or frustration. Our bicycles arrive 95% assembled and with all of the tools in the box to complete the assembly, and in most major cities we offer [Velofix](#) for white glove delivery service.



Priority Bicycles

The Gates Belt Drive used on Priority Bicycles

How did you come up with the idea of using a belt drive, as opposed to a conventional chain?

The goal from the start was low maintenance. I went through every component on a bicycle with a focus on improvement. Many bike problems for recreational riders and commuters can come from the chain—it can rust out, pop off, require tune ups, and can get your hands and pants greasy. We knew belt drives were the superior option when it came to reliability. Auto makers did the same many years ago and they last on average two to three times longer than a traditional chain.

That said, building a belt drive into a bike is serious work. It requires considerations to be made to the bicycle frame design and gearing systems, plus they cost significantly more. Despite the advantages of the belt drive system, those challenges created barriers to wider adoption within the bike industry. Since we knew it was a great solution, we committed to design and engineering, and finding the right partners, as we did with [Gates Carbon Drive](#), the leading belt drive manufacturer, to deliver a high quality, low maintenance experience at an affordable price.



Priority Bicycles
Classic Plus Gotham Edition

What are some of the other features that distinguish Priority bikes from the rest of the pack?

We focus on features that make the bike ready to ride when you are. All of our bicycles feature a low maintenance design, which starts with the [Gates Carbon Drive](#), which is widely regarded as the premium in the industry. All of our bicycles use an aluminum frame, making them lightweight, and feature puncture resistant tires, as nothing takes the joy out of riding quicker than getting a flat. All of our bicycles feature internal gears, which last much longer than traditional derailleur systems, and some of our bicycles even feature a Continuously Variable Transmission, or CVT, by [NuVinci](#) which is a step-less gearing system that's the ultimate in low maintenance. Our high end commuter, the

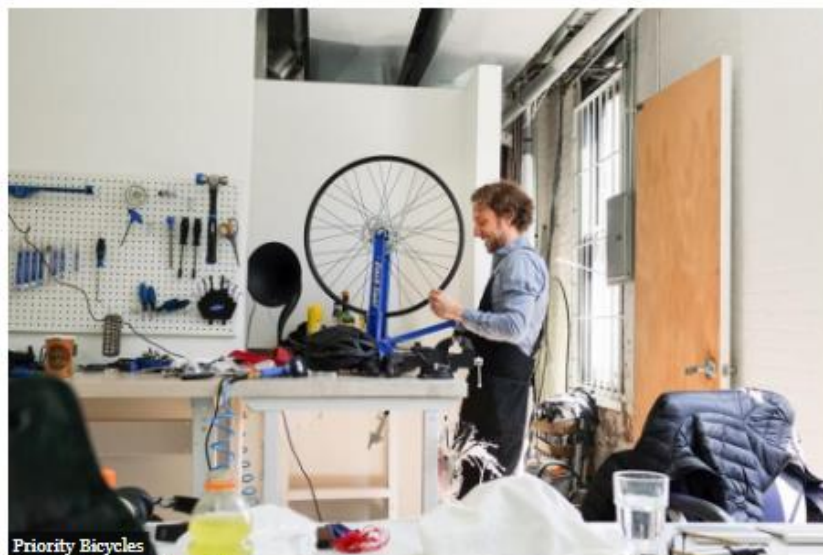
Continuum Onyx features front and rear self-powered lights and reflective decals. As our line has grown to include daily commuting, safety has become a huge priority for us.



Priority Bicycles
Priority Bicycles

The weight or lack thereof, is significant. How do you keep a street cruiser from being a beast of burden?

If a bicycle is heavy and cumbersome, it is hard to ride. As a resident of New York and daily commuter, I know first-hand the hassle that a heavy bicycle can create for people who live in walk-ups or have to manage a bicycle every day. Our bikes are generally the lightest in their class. When you focus on low maintenance and no rust, you're forced to use premium materials, and premium materials are lighter weight. Our weight savings is really a byproduct of our design.



Priority Bicycles
David Weiner at work.

Without giving away the farm, maybe you can tell us why you're able to sell a Priority bike at a reasonable cost.

There are multiple factors that allow us to price as we do. We've set up the business to sell consumer direct, which essentially results in the customer receiving wholesale prices. So by design our pricing is better. We own our warehouse and each bicycle is checked for quality control and shipped by our staff. We handle all service calls internally, 7-days a week. We are a very customer-centric team and all of us are equipped to handle customer inquiries. We are also highly automated. Using my background in software, we've built the company to scale quickly. We have a sophisticated ERP system from Microsoft, and a state-of-the-art customer support system from [Kustomer](#). As a software consultant, I saw a variety of ways that businesses ran inefficiently, resulting in increased costs for their customers. So while we've enjoyed success over our first few years in business, we've always been careful not to expand too quickly. We still operate like a startup, which keeps our overhead and prices low.



Priority Bicycles
A the Tribeca showroom

Do you have any ambitions to move into road or hybrid bikes that are designed for sport and training, as opposed to city-cruiser bikes?

As a small company that is so connected to our customers, we listen to them and respond to their demand. The responses to our first Priority Classic when we launched led the way to a kids line, beach cruiser, and commuter line. Our Continuum model has been incredibly well received as a best in class commuter. As we move into 2018 we have an all-road bike slated for the spring that we think is going to open us up to the touring and gravel market.



Priority Bicycles

Priority Bicycles are the fleet bike at Arlo Hotels in New York

When you're not in your Tribeca showroom, where do you like to ride?

I ride with my family on the West Side Highway almost every weekend. I have two boys (5 and 3) and they love to be out on their bikes. The West Side Highway bike path is great for kids, with very few stops and several playgrounds close by. When I can, I still love to go home to Clayton California and ride Mt. Diablo, which sparked my love of bicycles as a kid.

Visit [Priority Bicycles](#)

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