

# Twin Six Teams with Framebuilder, Crumpler on Branding

BY SEAN HONG

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Walt Wehner had never heard of Twin Six before Brent Gale and Ryan Carlson approached him to collaborate on designing a bike.

The co-owners of apparel company Twin Six were looking for a custom framebuilder, and Wehner, owner of Waltworks, was at the top of their list. Wehner agreed to produce a small run of 29ers that Twin Six will dress up with its own color and graphics scheme.

For Gale and Carlson, the project represents more a labor of love than a profit-minded initiative. “This is not going to be any kind of moneymaker for us. These are branding exercises, just fun things we’ve always wanted to do,” Carlson said.

Only about a dozen bikes—dubbed “Custom Stock” to allude that they’re from a custom builder but aren’t truly custom—will be made, in sizes medi-

um and large. The bikes will retail for \$1,100 to \$1,200 and become available early next year, Carlson said.

Wehner will cut his rates for the project.

In return, Twin Six will create a special collection of Waltworks jerseys and T-shirts—some of which will go to Wehner to give to his best clients. The rest will be sold on Twin Six’s Web site, with a portion of sales going back to Wehner.

“I said yes to the project mostly because there is a good synergy and merging of interests here,” Wehner said. “For a small loss of profit, I had a chance to build a relationship with a clothing supplier who could do some nice designs and have them produced.”

Profit is no light matter to Carlson and Gale, who started Twin Six by liquidating their home equity and credit

cards and currently handle operations from their basements. But the two find that taking design seriously and making great product can

be its own reward.

Twin Six also has a co-branding project in the works with Crumpler USA. Twin Six has designed 100 Complete Seed messenger bags that will become available after the holidays. Crumpler previously partnered with Independent Fabrication on similar limited edition bags.

Crumpler usually requires a mini-

mum order of 300, but made an exception. “We like to partner with small creative companies in the bike market that share the same common goals and personality as Crumpler,” said Lindsay Cousley, general manager of Crumpler USA. He said Crumpler would break even in the cooperative venture.

For all parties involved, developing exclusive designs offers a currency not measured in dollars—a brand’s “coolness.”

Crumpler will sell four or five bags on its Web site and provide a link to Twin Six’s Web site, where Carlson and Gale will fulfill remaining orders.

“Things are changing so much with branding in the world. We’re not going to be placing four-color ads in *Bicycling* magazine. There are much better ways to reach our consumer and stay underground but be known to people we need to be known by,” Carlson said of the cross-promotion. **BRAIN**



**Twin Six's Complete Seed messenger bag**