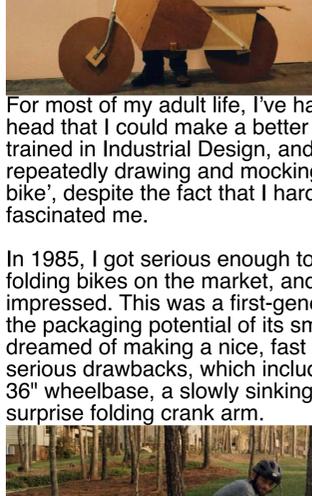


Hello, it's really nice to be here.

I've been making Swift folders in New York for the past 14 years. People like them because they're simple and strong, and get small enough quick enough to be practical.

I've got some slightly embarrassing slides here to show you my design process—the evolution of my thinking—on this project.



For most of my adult life, I've had the idea stuck in my head that I could make a better folding bike. I was trained in Industrial Design, and found myself repeatedly drawing and mocking up the 'ideal folding bike', despite the fact that I hardly rode at all—it just fascinated me.

In 1985, I got serious enough to buy one of the few folding bikes on the market, and wasn't very impressed. This was a first-generation Dahon. I loved the packaging potential of its small wheels, and dreamed of making a nice, fast folding bike, without its serious drawbacks, which included a wheelie-inducing 36" wheelbase, a slowly sinking seatpost, and a surprise folding crank arm.



I thought things over for the next few years.

My first really productive act was to modify a 'full-size' long wheelbase bike to take 20" wheels, just to see how it would ride. And please note that this was well before there were 20" wheeled folding bikes all over the place.



By this time I had also acquired an old garage-sale Moulton, so I had a better yardstick to judge by than the Dahon.

The unique thing about my recurring folding bike vision

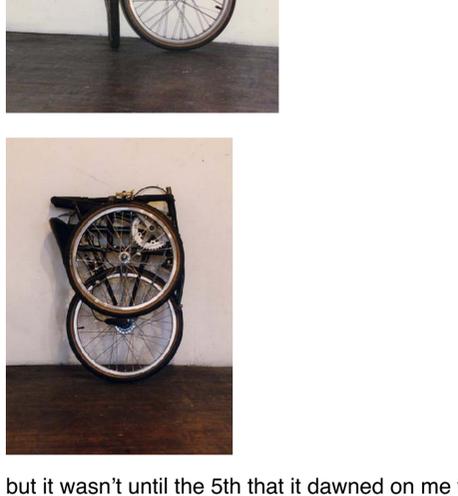


was that it needed to get as narrow as your average person—about 20"—but it could run as tall as needed, preferably tall enough for a standing nervous New Yorker to keep their hand on it while it rested on the ground. I figured it was no big deal to remove the front wheel and seatpost.

Around 1992, I had the extreme good fortune to meet Jan VanderTuin, a small-scale bike builder in Oregon who was willing and able to economically prototype my design until it was right.



The first attempt was awful. Whatever aesthetics it had got lost in translation, and the human factors of the fold were actually dangerous.



I learned a lot working with Jan, and by the third prototype, I was getting happy.



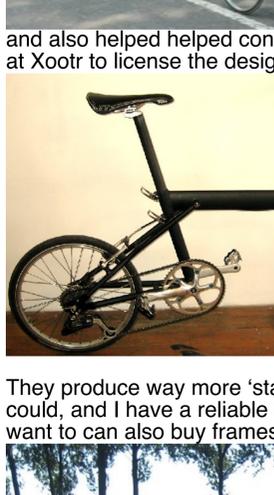
I also started listening to people. My sister-in-law volunteered to test it for a few months, and told me that taking the front off was stupid, and that she was always afraid of forgetting the saddle.



The 4th one was better,



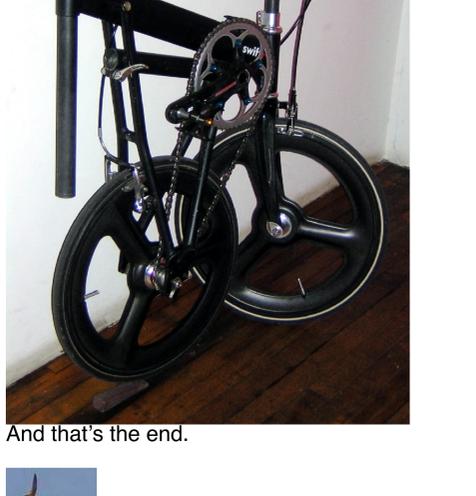
getting close to my preconceived ideal,



but it wasn't until the 5th that it dawned on me that by keeping the top tube continuous through the seat tube, the seatpost could stay in place and lock the fold.



This was it—the design was set. Jan started serial production of the frames, 5 at a time, and I assembled them. There was some good press, sales picked up, I found a local frame builder to do 50 at a time, and I settled into producing the 'mature' design. Internet word-of-mouth kicked in, but after a few years it was all getting boring. To brighten things up a bit, I sought to prove the design of my commuter bike through racing.



This was most admirably done by my good friend Matt, who showed up at the Lance Armstrong Time Trial in Philadelphia in his suit,



finished well up in the field, on a fixed gear, in the rain, folded up his bike on the finish line, and went home.

A little racing every year kept me inspired...



and also helped help convince the nice people at Xootr to license the design.



They produce way more 'standard' bikes than I ever could, and I have a reliable frame supply, so people that want to can also buy framesets and do it themselves.



I have more time to play around with custom orders now, and have fun with things like 14 lb carbon fiber folders.



And that's the end.



I should also say that I choose the name Swift not only because I wanted the bikes to fold fast, and go fast, but also because of the birds of that name—I love the idea of little black chimney swifts nesting in the infrastructure of our society, popping out to do their errands, and coming back to fold up for the night.

Thank you.