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as recommended by the mighty dave t

## the mighty dave t's words of the week



*"i cannot be the front man in the echelon - i'm a protected rider".*

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## u2needyourheadsfixed - last updated 12 february 2009

### great things come in small packages



in the early nineties, when i sold bicycles as well as repaired them, the first account was with giant bicycles which, at that time, did not have the considerable profile they have since garnered through professional racing. since sales is not quite my forte, some of the rudimentary techniques employed to shift as many bicycles as possible are certainly laughable to me, and would likely be to those who earn their living on a grander scale even today. however, i digress slightly: most of the sales came around christmas, a bizarre time of year to purchase a bicycle in my opinion, but a welcome addition to the income during the expensive month of december. many of you will have seen the punchline coming several sentences past, but whenever anyone inquired as to the type of bicycle we would be providing their offspring on 25th december, the answer would, of course, be *a giant*.

and without a trace of irony in the majority of cases, their riposte would involve a gesture depicting the actual size of the child(ren) involved.

first few times it was funny, but same question, same answer lost its allure after a while. i'm sure it still happens in some bike shop, sometown, anywhere. but with the recent surfacing of janol apin's *les p'tits velo* the question is now, if you can survive the horrible mixing of metaphors, completely on the other foot. miniature bicycles carrying miniature cyclists, either fashioned from plastic or, more desirably, die-cast metal. however, unlike giant bicycles, it is less than possible to trudge manfully or womanfully into your local bike shop and purchase a mini-peloton, however much lower the price is

likely to be.

roger fonderie started making die-cast zinc miniature cyclists in the 1950s, and still occupies the same premises in egreville just south of paris. the originals were intended as toys for children, but the current market is rather heavily skewed towards the adult market; nothing wrong with that. it is possible to acquire models that are painted when they arrive, or plain zinc for painting by the new owner. fonderie are also able to supply miniature, realistic transfers to add that air of authenticity to any handpainted models. three versions are available: a plastic cyclist with separate metal cycle positioned as either a sprinter, champion, rider or drinker; a single position all metal rider; and a thin, all zinc sprinter or climber. the decals/transfers are from old stock from the seventies all the way through to the nineties.

in the mid-seventies, henri roger fondrie produced between ten and fifteen thousand of the wee blighters, an output that has grown to 20,000 today. changes in european regulations regarding the make-up of the paints used in the process has meant life has not been without its problems, but they also now make models for the tour de france caravan, waterman and le chat renault, but the miniature cyclists are a perennial favourite, still produced with care and passion.



roger fonderie will charge an exceptionally reasonable 16 euros (£14.50) for a parcel of roughly 25 cyclists - 1kg; and carriage works out at around the same per 1kg pack, so you can have a couple of dozen cyclists for 32 euros (\$20). a lot less than bob stapleton paid for team high road.

as doctor who has been quoted as saying '*what's the point of being a grown-up if you can't behave like a kid now and again?*'. hear, hear.

[fonderieroger.fr](http://fonderieroger.fr)

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## what's a foot?

every year, one or two retailers advertise before, during and after the tour de france, the leaders' jerseys as worn by the more active members of july's peloton. and i have often wondered who exactly buys such garments. because surely it is number one in the unwritten byelaws of cycling that you don't nip out on the sunday ride wearing the yellow jersey? and

