

## Smith & Wesson Public Safety Bicycle

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Smith & Wesson makes four bicycle models designed for public safety use: Perimeter (\$439.99 MSRP); Tactical (\$879.99 MSRP); Custom (\$1199.99 MSRP); and Full Suspension (\$1499.99 MSRP).

In the last eight years, I have purchased all of the bikes they produce. I have...OK ...I tried but I can't do this...I am compelled to handle this product review in an unusual manner. What we need to do first is to dispel all of the myths. Being involved in bike sales, first in my shop for nine years and then for the past eight at the Sheriff's Office, I've had many conversations with people who were confused about which one is the right one to buy. I noticed that whether we are talking about bikes, TV's or refrigerators, we all tend to make the same mistake when deciding which one to buy: we (men especially) overstate the importance of factors we consider when purchasing "big-ticket" items. This is fine as long as we have an above-average understanding of the goods we are contemplating purchasing. When someone who is more knowledgeable greets us and starts with "this model has Shimano ZX10 shifters and Avid XXX'7 brakes, we are dazzled and overwhelmed! Then we talk to the next salesperson, who gives their rendition of the same thing, telling us that their product is better than the rest, and we go into meltdown. It doesn't have to be that way. If we stick to the facts, we can make a much better decision. No matter what they say, no matter what your buddy who rides 5000 miles a week says, no matter what you think, 99% of the time a \$500 bike is a \$500 bike, no matter whose name is on it. Just because you are not familiar with the components doesn't mean they aren't any good. If one bike has Shimano cranks and the other has Truvativ, it doesn't mean that the bike with Shimano is a better buy or a better bike. All steel frames are created equal and all aluminum frames are created equal.

It's important to understand that the bike shop or the manufacturer – or maybe both – make the product great! It all comes down to service. For most agencies, the most important issue is price. Once you decided how much you have and want to spend, if you compare all the bikes in that price range to one another you will find that marketing gimmicks are all that separate the different bikes. Aesthetics are also important in your decision, so when you first see that bike with the bright yellow paint job and those glossy black decals, that's what gets your attention. What bike did you see in *Bicycling* magazine, which one did your riding buddies buy? These are all things that affect your decision. Remember to K.I.S.S. it...

So, why am I so hog-wild over Smith & Wesson bicycles? It's simple, really. In the past eight years, we have received stellar service, good products at fair prices, and consistency (i.e., standardization on a manufacturer's level). Many other manufacturers have to deal with public opinion on what is in...what is out ...what is cool...what is not...but a company that only deals with public safety only has to make us happy. Yes, it can be boring, but it is also very effective. The reason standardization is important to me is because all my bikes have the same seatpost size. I can slide a seat/seatpost combo out of the bike we received in 1999 and slip it into the one we bought last week. The derailleur hangers are all the same. The posts for the V-brakes are all the same. Bottom bracket widths and threads are the same. I can also buy replacement frames at a very reasonable price. That means I can take parts from two wrecked bikes and put them on a new frame and have a great bike at a very low cost. Many other companies cannot offer such consistency because they have to contend with public opinion and trends.

We started with seven bikes and now we have 540. I would not have been able to have built the fleet I have had I not stuck with Smith & Wesson Bicycles AND kept the bikes in top-notch condition. Those of you who know me know that I have had the same full-suspension bike for many years. Actually, I have

one of the first ones. I ride my mountain bike frequently and teach about 4 or 5 IPMBA classes a year at my department as well as teach at the conference and instructor courses. My bike has 100% of its original parts except for wear items like tires, chain, cassette and cables. There are a lot of good bikes out there. You are the only one who can decide which one is the best for you. And then take care of it.

I obviously have already chosen mine.

Pictures and technical specifications for all models are available at [www.cyclesg.com](http://www.cyclesg.com).

§ Performance 10 § Value 10 § Service 10 § Standardization 10

### **Smith & Wesson Tactical**

<b>Frame</b>	Rugged Aluminum
<b>Color</b>	white/black or black/ white
<b>Frame Size</b>	18", 20" or 22"
<b>Drive Train</b>	Sram® X-7
<b>Speed Shifters</b>	Sram® X-7 27
<b>Front Suspension</b>	RockShox® Judy J1
<b>Rims</b>	Alex DM-24
<b>Spokes</b>	36 SS
<b>Front Disc</b>	Avid® BB-5
<b>Brakes</b>	SD-5 Rear Linear Pull
<b>Saddle</b>	Tactical S&W Ergonomic Padded
<b>Rear Rack</b>	Fits Topeak® Quick Release Trunkbag
<b>Extras</b>	Bar Ends, Rear Mounted Kickstand, Water Bottles/Cages, Custom Decal (Police, Security, Sheriff, EMS)

*Bob is the Bicycle Coordinator of the Palm Beach County Sheriffs Office, where he is responsible for a fleet of more than 500 bikes. He owned a pro bike shop from 1977-1986 and has been an avid cyclist and racer – BMX, road, and mountain bikes – since 1977. He can be reached at [ricciardir@pbso.org](mailto:ricciardir@pbso.org).*

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