

# HOME

& Garden



## Courtly art that reflects modern life

It's amazing what the Ming Dynasty, which ruled China for 276 years, has to do with 21st century life. As one can see from the artifacts on view in "Power and Glory: Court Arts of China's Ming Dynasty," through Sept. 21 at the Asian Art Museum, there are similarities between court life from the 14th to 17th centuries and our life today.

Take golf, for example, which court ladies in the inner palace are shown playing in a 15th century silk handscroll attributed to Du Jin. Along with porcelains from the

kilns at Jingdeshen that people worldwide have long admired, the galleries are filled with the artifacts that have inspired many of the Asian pieces we incorporate into our homes today — like the cloisonné mythical beast incense burner at left, from the reign of the Wanli emperor (1573-1619).

At far left is the rear face of a copper mirror celebrating longevity (1475-1644). Who knew looking in a mirror could add years to one's life? Perhaps seeing this exhibition will do the same.

— Lynette Evans



Bernie Mikkelsen designs bicycle frames based on the precise specifications of each one of his customers.

## A bicycle BUILT FOR YOU

Cyclists favor handmade frames for customization, artistry, detailing

By Nancy Davis Kho  
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Summer is here, and with it one rite as predictable as seasonal allergies: Bay Area cyclists are mounting their bikes — and checking out other people's.

Cyclists know that the rig you ride says something about you. Beyond the divisions of road and mountain bikes, subcategories emerge: carbon fiber, titanium, aluminum, steel. Fixie or granny gear. Lugs or smooth welds. An experienced cyclist assesses all of these traits in a quick glance.

"Customers develop a feeling of loyalty to their own frame," said Chris Padavana, owner of Eden Bicycles in Castro Valley. "It's a way of rationalizing their choice of a bike — and justifying the expense to their wives."

Joking aside, Padavana said he believes that having a nice bike is good incentive to start spinning. "You have to feel proud of what you ride," he said. It'll help you get up early and go when you'd rather stay home in bed."

Here's an added incentive: Like artisan bread and microbrews, bicycles can be handcrafted.

As opposed to manufacturing titans such as Trek and Giant, which produce thousands of bicycles in standard sizes, a builder of handmade bikes may produce just 20 frames a year.

A competent mechanic can adjust a factory-built bike to suit the average rider. But loyalists swear that the custom sizing, attention to detail and artistry of a handmade bicycle make for a better ride.

Handmade-bicycle makers have increased exponentially in recent years, as evidenced by participation in the North Amer-

### The Art of Craft

*Craft — that melding of fine materials with good ideas executed in rigorous detail — is in jeopardy. This occasional series is shining a spotlight on Bay Area artisans who are masters of their craft.*

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Photos by ERIC LUSE / The Chronicle

Calfee of Calfee Design creates custom bikes from bamboo. The bikes offer a low carbon footprint and a smooth ride. Calfee is bringing the bamboo bike concept to Ghana in an effort to create jobs. For the full story, see Page F4.

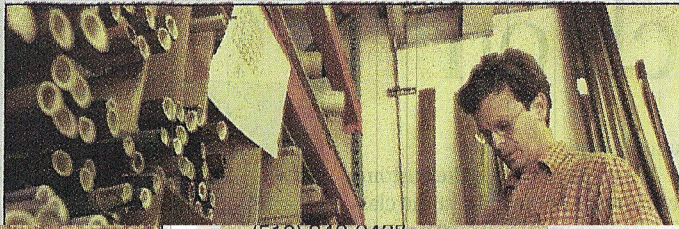
Craig  
ride. C



# Bamboo hits the bike lane

By Nancy Davis Kho  
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

When custom bike frame builder Craig Calfee needed a gimmick to attract attention to his designs at the Interbike show in Las Vegas 12 years ago, he turned



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## Resources

► **Mikkelsen Frames**, [www.mikkelsenframes.com](http://www.mikkelsenframes.com), (510) 521-9727

► **Ahrens Bicycles**, [www.ahrensbicycles.com](http://www.ahrensbicycles.com), (408) 410-8089

► **Calfee Design**, [www.calfeedesign.com](http://www.calfeedesign.com), (831) 728-1859

► **Eden Bicycles**, [www.edenbicycles.com](http://www.edenbicycles.com), (510) 881-5000

► **North American Handmade Bicycle Show**, [www.handmadebicycleshow.com](http://www.handmadebicycleshow.com)

► **Velo Sport Bicycles**

► **Pleasant Hill Cyclery**