

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Shot Peening and the Mountain Bike Industry



An email from an avid mountain bike rider piqued our interest in this surprising industry. Why surprising? Because its marketplace is knowledgeable about shot peening and appreciates its benefits! This is a refreshing change from the blank stares we usually get when we say that we are associated with "shot peening". (Have you noticed how quickly people appreciate its value when we explain what it is and how it increases the safeness of our cars and airplanes?)

Let's backtrack a minute... in December a nice fellow, Darius, visited our web site (www.shotpeener.com) while researching shot peening. He had purchased an Ellsworth bike—Ellsworth hand-builds bikes in the USA—and noticed that the company promoted that its aluminum frame was shot peened. He then purchased some handlebars, also shot peened, and the pedal crank was shot peened, too. His curiosity inspired a web search on shot peening which led to us.

We took him up on his invitation to investigate how mountain bike manufacturers address shot peening in their marketing. Our research brought us to Race Face, an award-winning manufacturer of mountain bike components, in Vancouver, Canada. Race Face is an OEM to bike manufacturers and supplier to retailers that sell aftermarket replacement components. Race Face promotes shot peening at its web site. For example, the page devoted to handlebars reads "...Air Alloy aluminum tube shot peened for increased fatigue life."

Bryn Johnson, Product Designer/Research and Development at Race Face, shared these insights into Race Face and the typical mountain bike rider:

- The market for their components is male, in the late teens to early 40's, with high disposable income since the typical mountain bike costs \$1,000 +.
- Five to six years ago, manufacturers of bikes and components had to educate their market on the benefits of shot peening. However, as the industry matures, more buyers already understand the safety benefits of shot peening. They appreciate the value of the pebbled surface on a well-made shot peened handlebar versus the smooth finish on a cheaper version.

- Race Face shot peens aluminum alloy, steel, and titanium components.
- Race Face shot peens in-house and subcontracts to outside sources. Some projects go to a company in Canada and some go to Taiwan and China. Race Face utilizes metal shot and glass bead peening.

We can't expect every mountain bike rider to be like Darius and make such an effort to learn more about shot peening, but we are pleased to see shot peening marketed as a benefit. Many of us that distribute shot or manufacture cabinets don't see the end results of our daily work. Here's a good example of the shot peening industry making a product safer and more durable for a market that appreciates it! ○

Editor's Note: Thank you Darius and Bryn Johnson for your time and input.

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Handlebars

Air Alloy Riser Bar

Cold drawn, seamless, butted Air Alloy aluminum tube—shot peened for increased fatigue life.

Butting process puts extra material in critical 'high impact' areas, creating the optimal strength to weight ratio for an aluminum bar. This bar is so strong that it doesn't need a cross brace for support— it's used 'as is' by many of the world's top downhill riders.

Weight:	290 grams
Size:	26.5 inches, 1 1/8" rise, 9° rearward sweep, 4° upward sweep.

Air Alloy Low Riser Bar

Cold drawn, seamless, butted Air Alloy aluminum tube—shot peened finish for increased fatigue life.

Gradual external swaging and internal taper give increased strength and durability without adding an unnecessary weight penalty.

Colour
Bad Ass Black
Shiny Silver
Deep Red
Gun Metal Grey
Royal Blue

Warranty
2 years against manufacturer's defects

Material
Air Alloy

Installation
Download the installation guide

Enlargement of the Race Face web page at www.raceface.com/components/bars.htm. Arrows point to "shot peening".