



FIT FOR LIFE

Love at first sight

After looking for a long time, Carol Westmorland has finally found 'the one' - a saddle for her bike, that is

Make the wrong choice and years of misery may lie ahead. Make the right one and you can be guaranteed only blissful unity. Your choice will be made by a steadying hand as, while you are blinded by looks, function and suitability is more important. Yet your end choice may still be the wrong one. Thereafter you rub along in the hope that over time things will get easier but, sadly, they never do. The trouble is that a good one is instantly forgettable. Nobody finds the need to talk about it. The only barometer you can use is that, with the good ones, there will be more of them out there.

So with my return to my first love, I am appraising things. There will be no more putting up and there will be no more misery. Instead, time has, and will continue to be, invested. There has already been one casualty. It now languishes awaiting some other unsuspecting target should it get the chance. These things are without doubt trial and error. Often the emphasis is on trial.

So now, four months in, it has happened. I wasn't actually looking but there it was before me. I believed instantly that it was 'the one'. It was already attached but nothing was going to stop my pursuit. I asked questions and found its origin. As a bonus it also aesthetically pleased. Function and style.

Husband, he with the vested interest, felt money was no object so was delighted to take delivery a few days later. Of course it is impossible to know if you have made the right choice



'AS A BONUS IT ALSO AESTHETICALLY PLEASED. FUNCTION, IT SEEMED, AND STYLE'

until you are put under pressure. This happened last weekend. A 10-mile time trial on the A6. The day brought heat and a raging head wind. I grinded - we seemed the perfect match.

You don't actually sit whilst you cycle. You are perched forward rather than plonked atop. Females do have wider sit bones, but unless you are prepared to be prodded by the expert your dimensions for a saddle that fits will remain an enigma. It is impossible to guess. A too wide saddle will not allow you to turn your legs freely. You will do better choosing a saddle that is unisex and a medium width. I also like a ridge but not a hole and slightly tip my seat forward. Men like to tip theirs up. Didn't you know? It is a personal choice. Expect to encounter the good and bad before you find the one.

Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.co.uk