



SPECIALIZED



Where the Girls Are The Sea Otter Classic attracts a demographic that is becoming stronger, faster and richer

Women and Cycling Present a \$2.7 billion market potential

For a while, hanging a price tag on a women's cycling demographic and then bombarding it with women-specific products sounded like just a bunch of **marketing hooley**. The glint in a marketing director's eye when he considers the untapped billions (that's right, billions) in revenue could blind his design engineers who were put to task to create women-specific products. Currently women control 3/4's of household spending. Michael J. Silverstein of the Boston Consulting Group stated in a recent NYTimes article that "women will earn more money than men if current trends continue by 2028." It's true that women grow wealthier by the day and regarding women and cycling, the reality is this: **Mom isn't out running errands** or at aerobics class any more, instead she's doing hill intervals, clearing rock piles or threading her way through the trees - and she needs better gear.

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), women and cycling present a **\$2.7 billion market potential**, 6.7 percent of which is spent on sporting goods/footwear/apparel. While that number should cause marketing directors to weep tears of joy, reaching that market has proven to be a "sticky wicket" in terms of access. Big retailers like Best Buy, Sears, and Home Depot have figured out where the purchasing power resides and have redesigned entire shopping mall wings to accommodate women. Smaller retailers, especially ones in niche industries, struggle to create a marketing plan let alone tailor it to market potential. Events like the Sea Otter Classic, North America's cycling season kick-off event, offer a rare chance to convene cyclists and vendors in a hands-on marketplace where buyers and sellers get to demonstrate cycling products in a real-life environment.

"When the Sea Otter Classic throws open its gates from April 12-15, 2007, nearly half of the expected 60,000 attendees flooding Sea Otter Village will be women," said Frank Yohannan, president and CEO of the Sea Otter Classic. "They will arrive in droves as racers, recreational riders, team managers, mechanics, soigneurs, fans, and spectators. They come to Sea Otter to explore, test, sample and try out every opportunity that presents itself. And for vendors in search of direct contact with this often hard-to-reach group, there is no better place than the Sea Otter Classic."



The girls are Olympic mountain bikers, L-R: Gunn-Rita Dahle, Mary McConeloug, Alison Sydor
photo: [Chris Milliman](#)



Specialized's Designs for Women StumpJumper Expert FSR can turn a cyclist from a great technical rider into an expert technical rider



Bike shops are allegedly unable to keep Specialized's wildly successful DFW Ruby in stock

Vendors like Specialized Bicycles, Truvativ, and Clif Bar that either manufacture women-specific products or create items small enough to fit women bring their product lines to Sea Otter for the **opportunity to launch new products** to one of the **most targeted and influential audiences** in North America.

"We use Sea Otter as a venue to kick off the model year," said Eron Chorney, women's brand manager for Specialized. "With all the different events at Sea Otter and the many different cycling disciplines in one place, it allows us a great opportunity to have people demo and see all of our products in one place."

To ignore women's market potential would be like posting a "Don't Touch" sign when King Midas strolls through the door. Women become cyclists to achieve better fitness and weight loss, and have quality social time. Women ride to beat their boundaries into submission and then stretch them beyond recognition. The savvy companies, like Specialized, that craft gear for women to keep their cogs rolling might also tell you that women control nearly 3/4's of household spending, including purchases of recreational equipment like helmets, bicycles, tricycles, car racks, baby seats and trailers. Consider Sea Otter's healthy slice of the cycling pie and then do the math, **49 percent of**

Sea Otter fans control 70 percent of household spending. 35 percent of cyclists' nationwide earn an average household income in excess of \$75,000, which could lead to annual spending budgets of between \$10,000-15,000 for recreational items per household. To ignore the women who come to Sea Otter would be a little like the designers of Office software saying "No thanks" to the purchasing manager at Microsoft.

"In 2002 I finally decided that I would buy a brand new road bike - all of my bikes before then had been used," said Kerry Litka, who now races for Terry Precision Bicycles. "I started shopping in July and I didn't buy until January. I spent \$2,000; I wanted to spend \$2,000 and I wanted to get the best bike that would fit me. For me as a cyclist, getting the right fit is my number one priority; if the bike doesn't fit then nothing else will work. I researched and researched - I think women in general tend to do that. I don't think women are impulse buyers when you're talking about that much money; I think women want the best quality for their needs and they don't mind paying for it."

Research shows that women learn about cycling differently than men and the chance to convene in Sea Otter's charged environment offers women a unique setting to explore, test and sample the myriad products geared specifically toward them. An expected 29,000 women will unleash their cycling prowess at the Laguna Seca Recreation Area for four days, April 12-15, 2007. Vendors will have a rare opportunity to reach out to this market rich in potential and the needs to reach it. We already know that the Tour de France, Paris-Roubaix, and Milan-San Remo are where the boys are; now we know that at the Sea Otter Classic next April will be where the girls are.



"Getting the right fit is my number one priority."

At 4'11", Kerry Litka proves to be a challenge for bike manufacturers.
photo: [Jonathan McElvery](#)

Expo area for the 2007 Sea Otter Classic has been expanded to accommodate the increasing quantity of exhibitors who apply for space each year. The Sea Otter Village sells out by event time without fail, however space is still available by contacting Skip Latham at skip@seaotterclassic.com

About Sea Otter Classic LLC

The 17th Annual Sea Otter Classic will be held April 12 - 15, 2007 at the Laguna Seca Recreation Area, Monterey, California, USA. The four-day 'Celebration of Sport' is considered the

world's largest cycling festival, hosting nearly 10,000 professional and amateur athletes and 50,000 fans. The Cypress Youth Fund is the Sea Otter Classic's philanthropic arm. The Fund provides funding to organizations that benefit their communities in the areas of youth, sport, education, and environment. More information can be found at www.seaotterclassic.com or by calling 800-218-8411.

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