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Cycling is serious business here

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Green and healthy: Bicycle store Bums on the Saddle focusses on promoting cycling as a way of life.— Photo: S. Mohan Prasad

Cycling may not be the preferred mode of transport in Jayanagar, even if it does have dedicated cycle lanes, but the folks at Bums on the Saddle, a bike shop in 4th Block, have helped make the transition to greener commuting easier.

“The idea is not to sell a bike but to sell the idea of cycling,” says former IT employee Rohan Kini, one of the two cycling enthusiasts that set up the store in 2006.

Bums on the Saddle, or BOTS, as Rohan calls it, sells imported bicycles, the accessories needed to maintain them, cycling apparel and other gear.

But the more interesting part of the job, says Rohan, is the interaction with customers, and witnessing the impact that cycling has on their lives.

‘A little geeky’

Running a bike store is exciting, hands-on and helps him connect with people, he says with enthusiasm. “It can be a little geeky,” he points out, and even though it’s practically a 24-hour job, the pros far outweigh the cons.

The shop’s customers are largely young working professionals, and BOTS conducts workshops at companies, encouraging more people to commute by cycle. They also train owners to be able to maintain their own cycles, enabling them to become self-reliant.

Night riders

BOTS has a number of activities set up for Bangalore’s cyclists. There’s the Sunday morning ride, the Wednesday night ride, and the monthly race.

Although they’re attended by riders of different abilities, it’s serious business: the courses can be around 30 km or 40 km long, and the number of participants range from one to 14.

All of those who work at BOTS are passionate about cycling themselves, and Suraj L.N. Swami, who leads the night ride, recalls the time when he was the only person that showed up. “I went ahead with it anyway,” he laughs.

(Bums on the Saddle is at 301/C, 35th Cross, 9th Main, 4th Block. Visit www.bumsonthesaddle.com)

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