

Caption: BIKEWORKS owner Bob Polakowski and daughter Lauren test one of more than 250 bicycles at the shop in Swansea.

Members of Note

There are bikes everywhere – on the left, right, on the walls and even hanging from the ceiling. Bob Polakowski, owner of BIKEWORKS in Swansea, estimates he has more than 250 bicycles in his shop at the moment, from children’s models to others close to what cycling marvel Lance Armstrong rides.

The store – opened for 11 years and owned by Bob since 2000 – has turned into a haven for cycling enthusiasts in this area. It supplies locals with all cycling-related accessories imaginable, from hydration backpacks with drinking tubes and gel-textured nutritional supplements to sunglasses, helmets and jerseys from cycling teams around the world. The shop also offers skateboards for kids, freestyle and dirt jumping bikes and bicycle child seats.

“We run a really honest, honest business here,” Bob said. “None of these guys would tell anyone that they needed something they didn’t. They have learned from me that the first lie you tell a customer will be the last time you see him.”

Behind a wall packed with pictures of Lance Armstrong and cycling paraphernalia, a service area holds bikes of all brands and sizes, which are brought in for all kinds of repairs.

“We change flats all day long during the summer,” Bob said. “I’m very proud of our service area – our turnaround time is no more than two business days.”

But don’t think BIKEWORKS is only your typical neighborhood bike shop. Besides changing tires, the store is also a high-end retailer, where, for example, one can buy the same \$250 shoes cycling champions wear or top-of-the-line bikes that can cost up to \$6,000. It is also the headquarters of the Swansea Velo Club, where serious local racers gather for time trials, competitions and to check what’s new in the cycling industry.

“We have more than 100 members in the club ranging from age 7 to 60,” Bob said. “We are associated with the United States Cycling Federation and the members get a 15% discount in accessories at the shop.”

BIKEWORKS is usually busy during the cycling season, from March to late September, and then at Christmas time. Bob spends the rest of the year cleaning, redesigning the displays and researching new products for his customers.

“You’re not getting rich running a bike shop,” said Bob, the father of six children, ages 4 to 15.

“We are in this business because we have passion for it.”

Open seven days a week, BIKEWORKS is located at 79 Swansea Mall Dr., across the street from

Toys “R” Us. For more information, please call 508-677-0710. By Diana Victor