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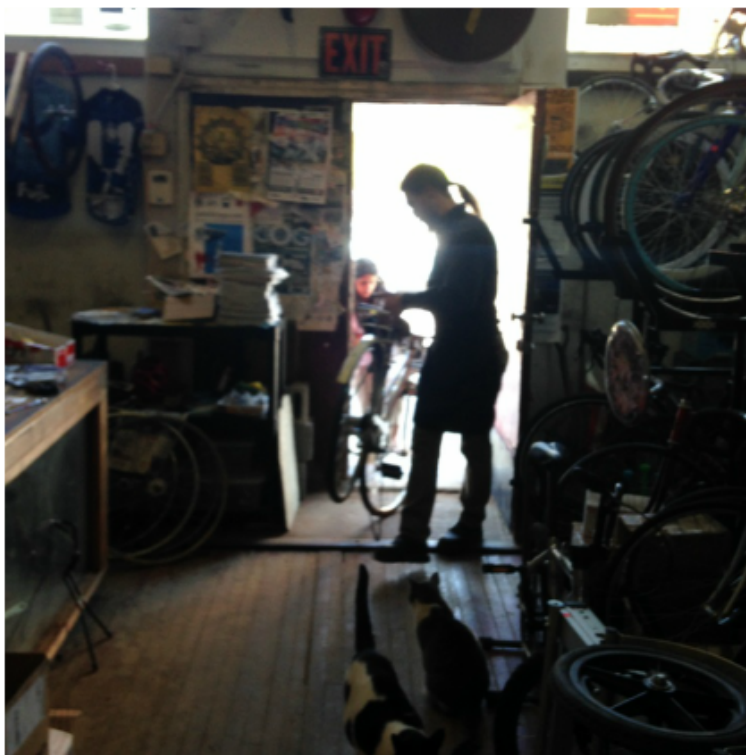
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# Discover the joy of bike commuting

## Step into History at Yojimbo's Garage.

5/31/2016 5 Comments



Located a few blocks from what was once the notorious Cabrini Green housing development lies Yojimbo's Garage. The bike shop has been there for 19 years and has witnessed the transformation of the neighborhood with upscale housing, trendy shops and restaurants nearby. Step inside the shop

## Our Mission

*To help bike commuters ride better, smarter, safer.... and of course have fun!*



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Entering Yojimbo's Garage is an experience unto itself. Unlike other bike shops, there are no windows with flashy display merchandise. Rather, the front of the shop is a metal door that requires one to knock for entry. This is a vestige of the crime in the neighborhood's past, but today it has the feel of requesting entry into a private club.

The name **Yojimbo** is a combination of Japanese words and is inspired by the Kurosawa film Yojimbo about a wandering Samurai dispatching justice in a small Japanese town. The word also has connotations of concierge or someone who serves. **Garage** is a reference to the mechanical aspect of bikes.



Marcus has a deep wealth of expertise and his passion for all things cycling is clear. He was a bike messenger and for years had an interest in opening a shop. Not surprisingly most of his initial customers were bike messengers. Eventually he helped to co-found the **xXx Racing** team in Chicago and was heavily involved in the initial years. The mix of customers expanded to include bike racers.

Yojimbo's Garage does 95% of the stuff most bike shops do including regular maintenance and tune ups. However, services also include building wheels, tubular tires, and custom bike configurations. The shop also has some highly unusual bikes such as a bike frame from Estonia that includes two tubes and a belt drive instead of a bike chain. The shop is a destination for bike enthusiasts that want to customize or build out their own bike which reflects the quiet patience of the founder.

Today, Yojimbo's Garage is a bike shop that has stood the test of time and continues to serve the local community. During the course of our interview different customers showed up including a bike commuter with a chain that had fallen out of place, a couple interested in a used bike and a guy that

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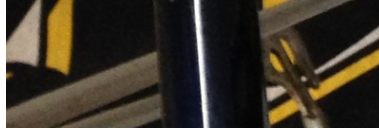


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Although he is modest, it's quite clear that Marcus was competitive rider in the past. Numerous biking medals dangle from his favorite bike which hangs on the wall. The Co-Motion bike has unique S&S couplings that enable the bike to separate into two pieces. In the past he could take it on the Metra train (before they allowed bikes), or to Europe without having to pay for oversize luggage.

## Velodrome Racing in Chicago

For the past several years Marcus has been involved in the preservation of the South Chicago Velodrome. A Velodrome is an arena for bike racing, typically with steeply banked curves. Chicago at one point was an active center for velodrome racing with 12 tracks some dating back to the 1890s. By the 1920's, bicycle racing was the highest paid sport (Sutherland).



South Chicago Velodrome. Photo courtesy of Colleen Crupa

The velodrome in South Chicago was built (finished) in Aug 2011. Marcus initially supported the Velodrome as a sponsor and provided advice. In late 2014 he got more involved and eventually, along with others, created a non-profit, [The South Chicago Velodrome Association](#) whose mission is to to save the facility. Marcus believes there is significant potential given its urban setting including the development of high-school programs for inner-city students. The association is seeking four things for the Velodrome: people to be involved, track repairs, a stronger financial foundation and a long-term land-lease. For an interested public, there are several [opportunities](#) to make a difference.

Looking ahead, Marcus points out some significant market factors impacting bicycle shops today including bike manufacturers selling directly to consumers. I have [heard this concern from other bike shop owners](#).

He expects significant changes for the bike service industry and recognizes that bike shops need to evolve. One thing that isn't changing is the need for great customer service and support. For



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During our interview, Marcus reflected on some of the more notable changes in the local biking. He recalls the growth in size and influence of biking starting when Mayor Daley took an active interest in promoting biking and bike infrastructure. Significant improvements have occurred with bike lanes, and riders can bring bikes on Metra and buses which was not possible when the shop opened. More communication between advocacy groups, racing clubs and commuting organizations is another change. The Chicagoland Bicycle Federation has become the [Active Transportation Alliance](#) with a much broader mission. More recently, Divvy has provided greater access to cycling through bike-sharing.

## Changes in Biking and Bike Shops

*Author's note: Thanks to my good friend Hector for making this interview happen.*

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5 Comments

**Kristen**

6/3/2016 02:48:14 pm

Best man ever. Marcus is really amazing in every way.

Reply

**[John Zappa](#)** ➔

6/3/2016 02:52:09 pm

Kristen,  
I completely agree. We're lucky to have him as part of the Chicago cycling community.

Reply

**hector**

6/17/2016 03:32:22 pm

I can totally vouch for Marcus' zen patience and knowledge. I have tested both by asking his advice when I've tried to build (and eventually succeeding - thanks to him) several bicycles. A true samurai!

Reply

**[garage door replacement Culver City](#)** ➔

4/8/2017 01:03:04 pm

Excellent Blog! I would like to thank for the efforts you have made in writing this post. I am hoping the same best work from you in the future as well. I wanted to thank you for this websites! Thanks for sharing. Great websites!

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