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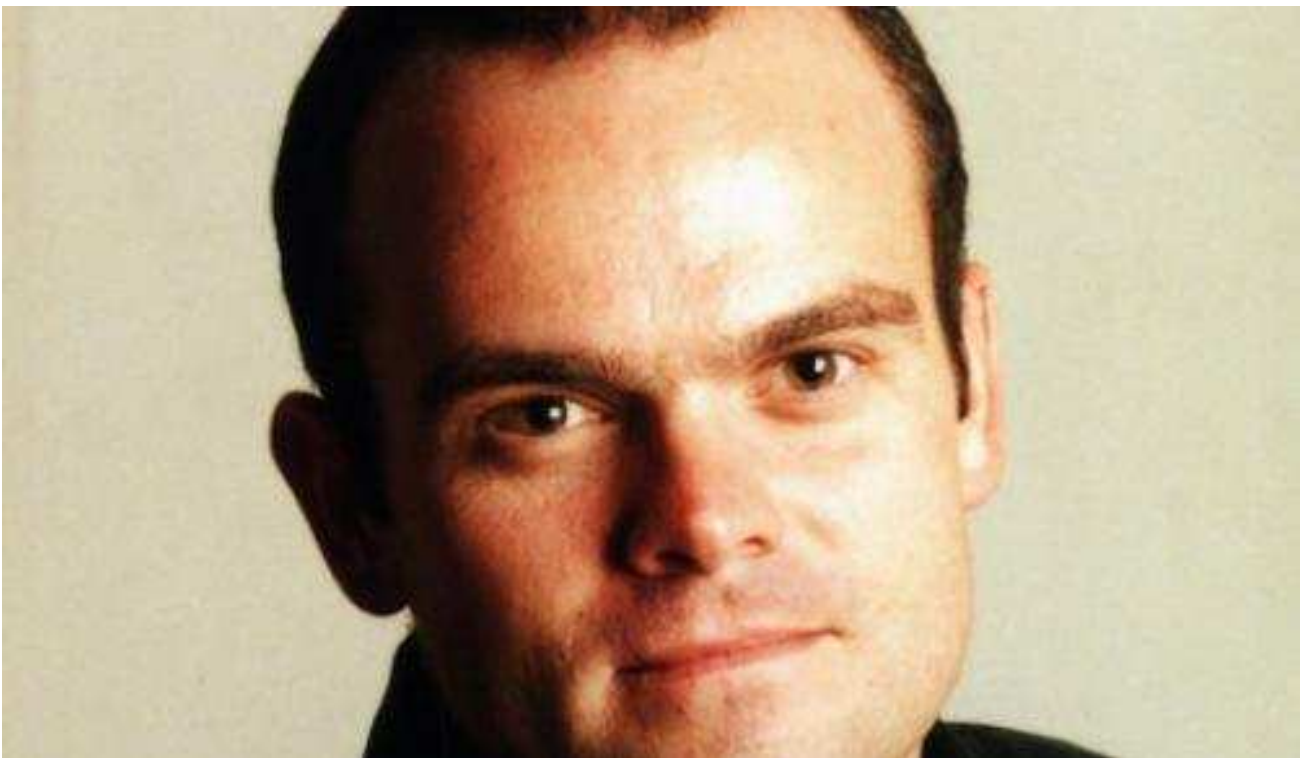
Kevin McCallum: Right bike creates the right smile

SPORT / 17 October 2016, 09:28am

 **Kevin McCallum**

Eighty-seven bicycles owned by the late, great Robin Williams are up for auction. I love bikes. I love Robin Williams. I want one of the 87. I want a little piece of Williams, something to hang up on the wall and look at and tell people that 'Robin Williams once owned and rode this'.

I want one of his collection to ride now and then, to take it down to my local and point at the saddle and tell them, 'Robin Williams once sat there'.



Chief Sports Writer Kevin McCallum reflects on the late Robin Williams' love of bicycles, and dreams of getting his hands on one in Williams' collection. Credit: INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Williams and I had something in common. A 2005 Specialized S-Works Tarmac E5. It is a road bike. It is a beautiful thing, a carbon fibre top fused to a aluminium bottom section. I've had it, save for a few years when it went out on loan to family, for 10 years, having bought it second hand from Jamie Ball who finished third in the Cape Town Cycle Tour on it in 2005. It is now my only road bike.

I've thinned out a collection that once numbered 10 bikes to four through necessity, a necessary evil.

Bikes gave love for Williams. He bought a bicycle for Conan O'Brien, the television host, when he was going through a hard time: "I went through, publicly, kind of a bump in the road, and I was feeling a little low," said O'Brien.

"Out of the blue, Robin Williams buys me a bicycle. It sounds like a silly thing. He was the first person to buy me a bicycle since my parents bought me a bicycle. When I was 35. But I was kind of low and Robin loved to ride, and I loved to ride, and he bought me a bicycle. But this is so Robin Williams: He bought me this bicycle and he had it delivered to my house and it was the most absurd bicycle you've ever seen. It was bright orange and bright green and it had shamrocks on it.

"I didn't know him well enough to justify this kind of (gift). So, I called him up and I just said, Robin, I'm floored by this bike. And all he would say is, Well, I know you ride and I know you could use it. And he went, Does it look ridiculous? Does it really look ridiculous?" I said, Yeah, and he went, Good. Do you really look stupid riding it?" And I said, Yeah, I'm gonna look really stupid." He's like, Well, then that's good then."

Williams' collection is being auctioned to raise money for the Challenged Athletes Foundation, for athletes with disabilities, and the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, set up by the Superman actor and his wife to cure spinal cord injuries.

Reeve and Williams met at the Julliard School in New York in 1973 and were fast friends. Dana, Reeve's widow, said the two were closer than brothers.

Watching the auction tick over is strangely emotional. The collection has a bit of everything. There are three Pinarellos, one of them a Dogma 6.1 in the colours of Team Sky.

At the Change a Life tour last month I got to ride a Dogma F8 for 500km around Mauritius. It is a stunning machine, responsive and forgiving, a bike that surges forward with every pedal stroke.

There is a Cervelo or three. I once owned a Cervelo Soloist, the Team CSC aluminium one in black, the same frame (well, smaller, a lot smaller) that Bobby Julich won the 2005 Paris-Nice on. I bought it on eBay from the United States after a few glasses of wine too many. I got it for next to nothing. It took me three years to build it up. It was beautiful. That bike flew. I sold it. I still have pictures of it. Williams had a yellow Zipp 2001, a time trial frame designed by Zipp, a manufacturer better known for their wheels and components, and once owned by South African Andy Ordning. It is an extraordinary looking bike. As of yesterday, the Specialized S-Works Tarmac E5 had attracted \$2 900. The Zipp 2001 was going strong at \$6 500. He told velonews.com the simple reason he owned so many bikes. "I went, Wait a minute, that's pretty, but that one's prettier!"

The auction runs until October 25 on <https://m.paddle8.com/auction/robin-williams/> . I'll be watching and dreaming.

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