

Saddle up with Finc  
Urban cycling never felt so good



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Karaoke fix

Issue

27



# Companion



## HERITAGE ON A PLATE

Four culinary creatives share their ancestral Asian knowhow in their favourite European cities



## Into the wild

Reclaim yourself on a wellness retreat in Mongolia, still one of the most remote places on earth



meet

# VOICE OF BACEPROT

Companion talks to Indonesia's all-female, hijab-wearing heavy metal trio

## JAKARTA CITY WALK

Join local Troy Fridatama for a tour of his favourite Oddbird neighbourhood hangouts and haunts



## Unravelling BATIK

How this symbolic ancient textile art has survived and thrives today



## Fresh moves

Pump it up with Southeast Asia's latest fitness trends



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**City cycles**  
FLINC founder, Marcus Freitag; right: FLINC cycles are practical and fun

# SADDLE UP BUTTERCUP

Companion discovers the inspiration behind FLINC, the compact city and cargo bike company

It all started, as a lot of things do, with Steven Spielberg. Markus Freitag, founder of FLINC Cycles, was just 12 years old when he first saw intergalactic blub-fest 'E.T.' at the cinema. As well as the actual movie, he was also impressed by Elliott's BMX, with the front basket and E.T. inside... a truly iconic cinema moment.

Later, it became clear to Freitag that "...the ideal everyday bike would have 20-inch wheels, be robust, and equipped with a large luggage compartment in the right place, ensuring lots of manoeuvrability," Lara Heller, the Communications Manager for FLINC tells me. And so, a mere four decades later, Freitag created an alien-inspired bicycle, perfect for nipping around. FLINC is a compact two-wheeler which is as convenient as an urban minibike, as comfortable as a cargo bike, and as sturdy as Elliot's BMX... though sadly it can't fly. Yet.

Why does the world need a FLINC bike? I've already noticed quite a few bikes around European cities. "The world still needs many sustainable mobility solutions: large and small bicycles, so many that there is at least one for every world/city dweller," Lara tells me. "A closer look reveals that the world especially needs bikes like FLINC, a nimble, compact city and cargo bike. FLINC adapts to all situations and, over its decades of use, to all stages of life and urban cycling needs." There are also a lot more technical bike words like 'hub dynamo' and '11-speed hub gear' which I don't understand, but

sound impressive. The main thing I glean is that it's made to last a lifetime, in stark contrast to the obsolescence built into many modern products.

Zurich seems to be such a green city, too. From the mountains to the rivers and lakes, there appears to be a healthy mix between the urban and the great outdoors... there's even alpine-fresh drinking water from fountains everywhere. So, is this a city-friendly cycle for a cycle-friendly city? "It's nice to see that there is a strong cycling community which is also politically active, but the roads are narrow and there are still few cycle paths," answers Lara, somewhat surprisingly. "But the city is working on solutions. By 2031, for example, the city wants to have 130 kilometres of cycle paths."

But what a picturesque part of the world to cycle in, from town to country in moments, the clear alpine air blowing in your face, the bother of the big city melting away. Does Lara have any favourite routes? "There are many beautiful routes, especially around Zurich. It's small, so you can be on the outskirts of the city in just 10 minutes by bike. Whether you head north or south, along Lake Zurich or the Limmat, there are city escapes; in all directions, as well as a few hills for mountain bikers and downhill fans."

It's also a city of bankers... it must be a great place to start a business? "It's not easy," replies Lara. "Living in the city is expensive, and not everyone



## FLINC PLAYLIST

**Glide**  
Melting Steine

**High**  
Fräulein Luise

**Negro yo soy**  
Massore

**Pelota**  
Khruangbin

**Marechia**  
Nu Genea, Célia Kameni

**Forever Fun**  
Moreeats, Kejeblos

**Nasnusa**  
Saba 5, Yurika Hanashima

**Spaceship Earth**  
Spaceship: Earth

**Hermanos Gutierrez**  
Low Sun

A playlist for urban cyclists



Photography: Philip Frowein; Lukito

can work on new projects for too long without an income. On the other hand, it's also much easier in Zurich because the city is a manageable size, so you can still make a name with a new product and limited resources. We want to get lots of people excited about cycling, especially those waiting for the tram; who don't look good on those unsightly electric scooters; or, even worse, are stuck in traffic jams in their cars."

Who would have thought a homesick alien just looking to borrow someone's phone would have led here. Now all they need to figure out is how to make them fly, and we'll see Swiss bankers peddling through the clear, alpine air before we know it.

Check out [zurichrides.com](http://zurichrides.com) for some great cycle routes around this Swiss city.



**MIX IT UP**  
Oaken Lab scents follow the road less travelled

# HEAVEN SCENT

Companion speaks to Chris Kerrigan, perfumer and co-founder of artisan perfume brand Oaken Lab

"It all began when I started tinkering around with making personal care products for my own use at home," recalls Chris Kerrigan who co-founded Oaken Lab with his wife, Cynthia Wirjono. "We wanted higher quality, natural products, but we couldn't find them locally. I became obsessed with making the perfect formulas, and that led to an obsession with creating fragrances for the products. At the time, 2017, we were active in our fashion retail company, The Goods Dept. By 2018, Cynthia and I decided to turn my new passion for fragrances into a brand."

Early on, Oaken Lab was focused on high-quality body care products with experiential scents, as well as a natural luxury formulas using ingredients like olive oil and shea butter. Soon after, Chris and Cynthia added their perfume and home scenting lines, and shifted their focus to a full fragrance lifestyle brand. In 2023 they opened their Oaken flagship store in the neighbourhood of Pereinan, Bali. Just last year they opened an Oaken Lab store in Plaza Indonesia, Jakarta. "We strive to be completely original in our style and tell stories with our scents," said Chris. "When I'm creating perfumes it's often very personal. I take inspiration from our experiences of travels, art, music, or just particular

moments that have left an impact. Since we are lucky to be in a country with such rich resources, I always try to incorporate some natural Indonesian elements like patchouli or vetiver into my scents. Often I have a specific memory or scene in my mind and build the fragrance around that. Other times I smell new materials that trigger inspiration."

Oaken Lab's best sellers include Sanctum Eau De Parfum, Far Afield Body Wash and Conservatory Reed Diffusers. They are also launching an exclusive scent for 25 Hours Hotel Jakarta The Odd Bird. Chris says, "When I create fragrances for others, I think about the space that the scents will be presented in, the brand identity, design, colour, texture, and even the way light fills the space. My goal is to create a scent that completes the entire sensory experience."



**TWO HEADS**  
Oaken Lab founders, Chris Kerrigan and Cynthia Wirjono

One of Oaken Lab's key messages is to follow 'the road less travelled'. "This partly refers to the literal art of traveling and the experiences that come of it," says Chris. "On a deeper level, it's also about choosing to follow an uncommon path in life, not conforming to what is considered 'standard' and discovering the unexpected. I suppose this is how we approach creating our scents. They are not what people think of as typical perfume." A true trailblazer. →