

Gordon's Rhoades Car Buying Tips

By Gordon Koppang

1	<p><i>Order Early – Shipping your bike may take a while</i></p> <p>Rhoades Car does not ship bikes one-at-a-time as they are built. They wait till they have a full load of bikes – then ship them all at once. Every time you miss a “shipping date”, delivery of your bike will be set back two or three weeks! You must pay the full purchase price plus the cost of freight before Rhoades Car will ship your bike. I waited until July to order and didn't get my bike till the end of October! Your results may vary.</p>
2	<p><i>The single-speed option and the single brake option are adequate for indoor use only.</i></p> <p>Unless you plan to ride exclusively indoors – in a shopping mall or factory – <i>do not</i> order the single speed or single brake options. For hills and sudden stops in the real world, you'll want the dual brake option.</p>
3	<p><i>Order the “36-speed” gearing – it's worth every penny</i></p> <p>Remember the Rhoades Car is a steel-framed four-wheeler and you'll feel the weight on even modest grades and hills. Add some groceries or a picnic lunch – your dog or a kid or two and you'll be wishing for more than 6 gears.</p> <p>The compound gearing on the Rhoades Car uses two loops of chain and two gear clusters. Driven by a single front sprocket at the pedals, the first loop of chain turns a 7-speed cluster. That cluster is keyed to an intermediate shaft and single sprocket. The intermediate sprocket turns a second loop of chain and a 6-speed cluster fitted to the rear axle. This arrangement (7 x 6) yields 42 ratios not 36. With the optional compound gearing, the Rhoades car has a 15-inch bottom gear and a 77.5-inch high gear.</p>
4	<p><i>I recommend the “Dual Brake & Positive Traction Combo”.</i></p> <p>I don't know why, but ordering the dual brake & positive traction “combo” is less expensive than ordering dual brakes and positive traction “separately”. Without “Positive Traction” the Rhoades Car is a one-wheel-drive vehicle. Positive traction sends power to both rear wheels. If you plan to ride on rough terrain or in sand, gravel, mud or snow, you will want the traction available from both rear wheels.</p>
5	<p><i>Standard Handlebars or Butterfly Steering?</i></p> <p>The optional butterfly steering may look cool but it forces you to pedal leaning forward with your hands almost between your knees. The standard handlebars offer a higher rise and a longer reach. The higher rise means riders don't pedal with their hands between their knees, and the longer reach allows the operator to settle back into the seat – no need to ride in a awkward forward lean.</p>

6	<p><i>Steel rims and spokes or Nylon Mags?</i></p> <p>The steel rims and spokes look like chrome but they're just polished steel. With 36 1/8th inch (3 mm) thick spokes, they're plenty strong but rust in the blink of an eye. The 5-spoke nylon mags will not rust, but they are liable to break under rambunctious use. You decide.</p>
7	<p><i>Electric Assist?</i></p> <p>If you are thinking of bringing a Rhoades Car with electric assist into Canada, you are entering a tangle of federal and provincial regulations. No matter what province you live in, Canada Customs enforces the federal regulations enacted by Transport Canada. Transport Canada requires that every motorized vehicle entering Canada have a VIN number, seatbelts, headlights and turn signals, etc., etc.</p> <p>Don't order a Rhoades Car with the factory installed electric assist. Wait until your new bike is safely over the border and then order a motor kit from Staton-Inc. in Oklahoma City (not to be confused with Briggs and Stratton).</p>
8	<p><i>What about Options?</i></p> <p>Rhoades Car charges a fat premium on all its options (seats, lights, speedometers etc). You can buy these things off the shelf for <i>less than half</i> what Rhoades Car charges. If you're trying to save money, order the base plastic seat and replace it with a boat seat from Outdoor Superstore (U.S.) or Canadian Tire.</p>
9	<p><i>Should I buy Used?</i></p> <p>Rhoades Cars appear regularly on eBay. Why are people selling? My hunch is people sell a Rhoades Car because it's too hard to pedal (6-speed or single speed) or it doesn't have adequate brakes. Older Rhoades Cars used go-kart style band brake. Even two band brakes are not enough for emergency stops. The old-style brakes hardly work at all when rolling backwards - a nuisance if you want to stop to rest partway up a hill. Buy new and you get exactly what you want plus the latest improvements like disk brakes. Buy used, and chances are you're taking on someone else's regrets.</p> <p>If you buy direct from Rhoades Car, they look after the crating and shipping – they'll ship right to your door. Spending the money is probably less painful than trying to arrange shipping yourself.</p>