



**BIG PICTURE**

# Bamboo on Wheels

CRAIG CALFEE REALIZED THE STRENGTH OF BAMBOO while using a stick of the stuff to lift his 60-pound dog, who had gripped it playfully in his jaws. That experience led Calfee, a maker of elite carbon-fiber bicycles, to wonder whether bamboo could support human riders. He spent a week cut-

ting, smoking, and gluing the material into a bicycle frame, then rolled the prototype into a trade show. That was in 1996. Today Calfee Design, based in La Selva Beach, Calif., sells the four-pound bamboo bikes for \$2,695 each, and they account for more than a quarter of its \$1 million in annual sales. "Serious bikers like them because they're high-performance frames," says Calfee, 45. "Environmentally conscious people like them because making them burns less carbon." This month he brings his bikes to Ghana, in western Africa, to teach local craftsmen how to utilize their abundant bamboo. The endeavor is philanthropic, but Calfee hopes African framemakers will profit from his design.

—MINA KIMES

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