



• Besnia puts the finishing touches on "The Half-Dome" a gravel/touring frame with matching custom racks.



NO BAD DAYS

Goodday Bikes and Curiosity Bags combine to offer unique custom combination

WORDS BY JASON SUMNER | PHOTOS BY NOLAN BLUNCK

Like so many custom framebuilders, Chris Besnia's creative journey from hobbyist to full-fledged bike-making business owner is an evolutionary one. The Massachusetts native is a 2011 graduate of the highly regarded BCI frame building school in Asheville, Oregon, and has been fabricating frames ever since. But for the first handful of years Besnia's Goodday Bikes (an ode to what happens when you ride a bike) was more side hustle than fully sustaining vocation. During that time he also worked as a professional bike mechanic and did facilities maintenance at Alta Ski Area near Salt Lake City, Utah.

But any ambiguity about where the proverbial next rent check was coming from went away in 2019. That was the year Besnia and his girlfriend (and business partner) Arly Landry decided it was time to go all in, launching what turned out to be a successful Kickstarter campaign. Alongside Besnia's stunning custom steel bikes were Landry's beautiful handmade—and fully integrated—bikepacking bags. It was this unique symbiotic relationship, dubbed Goodday Bikes + Curiosity Bags, that fueled that initial fundraising campaign (88 backers helped them generate over \$14,000 in orders). It's since gained the couple increasing success in the crowded world of custom bikes and gear.



“That was really our debut to the world,” recalled Landry, a bright-eyed 30-year-old who grew up in Gunnison, Colo., to which the couple relocated in 2020 in an effort to secure both more affordable shop space and access to great riding. “It was like, ‘This is our idea and we are quitting our other jobs and doing this.’ We just went for it, because yolo, right.”

Through the Kickstarter campaign they received orders for three custom frames and around 60 bags, recalls Landry. “It was kind of perfect,” she added. “We immediately had lots of work to do and no time to do anything else.”

Flash forward to present day and the steady stream of work continues to flow through their 1,300-square foot shop on the southwest side of Gunnison, which is just a half hour drive from the mountain biking Mecca of Crested Butte. And, more importantly, it’s an easy spin away from the exceptional Hartman Rocks trail system.

“I love commuting and riding everywhere,” says Besnia, 37. “So being able to ride to Hartman in six minutes really fits our lifestyle.”

Besnia’s custom bike offerings include playful long travel hardtails, capable gravel adventure rigs and long-distance drop-bar touring steeds. All are well suited for the riding in this lesser populated zone in Colorado’s central Rockies that’s laden with hundreds of miles of singletrack and endless lonely dirt roads. Much of it is great bikepacking terrain, something Besnia and Landry love to do.

All Goodday frames feature some variation of Goodday’s trademark swoopy top tube aesthetic (including some with a twin top tube) plus “hints of vintage flare” Besnia dubs “mutant Schwinn.” “I don’t make straight bikes,” he adds.

The roots of this whimsical building style trace to his early years growing up in western Massachusetts near the Columbia Bicycle factory. “Ever since I’ve had an affinity for that classic townie design,” Besnia says, adding that he’s currently churning out about a dozen frames per year while also making customs forks, stems and a one-piece bar-stem combo dubbed the Space Moose.

“I love nailing the small details,” he adds. “It’s something I got from the road racing

• [Above, Left] Landry sews a custom Curiosity framepack in the company of her cactus and succulent collection. She learned her craft at a sewing school in Salt Lake City.

• [Above, Right] Every Goodday bike has a name and a story. Pictured here is the nautical themed “Belafonte” complete with submarine bento bag, framepack with portholes and a Steve Zissou head badge.

• [Facing Page, Top] This Goodday “adventure bike” blurs the lines between gravel grinder, mountain bike and fine art. Custom Curiosity bags add a carrying capacity and class.

• [Right] Besnia and Landry relocated Goodday Bikes + Curiosity Bags to Gunnison, CO, to take advantage of more affordable shop space and easy access to great riding.



world. It's super bike nerd details that a lot of people don't notice, like having a dropper post that fits your saddle height perfectly."

Goodday also does in-house powder coat painting both on their custom frames and for customers who bring in their own frames or other parts. If it will fit in the curing oven (which Besnia built) he will paint it.

"When we moved here the nearest painter was over an hour away and was working four months out," Landry recalls. "We didn't want that to be a production bottleneck and we like that we can control that part of process. We don't want to end up with powder coated threads on the bottom bracket."

Goodday tig-welded frames run \$2,200 or you can opt for fillet brazed for \$2,400. Either way you get custom geometry, choice of tapered or straight head tube, a single-color powder-coat paint job, and in a nod to Besnia's love of long-distance bikepacking, Goodday's standard quartet of bottle cage bosses. Plus, free top tube bosses if you add a custom frame bag to your order.

Therein lies the figurative and literal beauty of Goodday Bikes + Curiosity Bags.



Goodday's custom bike offerings include playful long travel hardtails, capable gravel adventure rigs and long-distance drop-bar touring steeds.

Besides being one-off works of art, bikes and bags are designed to seamlessly fit together via custom sizing and frames with extra braze-ons and mounts that allow panniers and bags to be bolted on rather than attached with straps.

"There's a functional benefit to the design," said Besnia. "If you can eliminate all the straps you cut weight."

But the real story isn't about shaving grams. "All our bikes and bags have a theme and a story and a color scheme that's unique to each one," Landry explains. "And because there are no straps you get a super clean look that's something you can only get with custom. Both our skills really amplify each other and together we are something that didn't exist before."

While Besnia's bike building passion spawned from his youth, Landry's path into custom bike bag making happened later in life. "I was at a job I liked but I also wasn't sleeping at night because of some of the stress," she remembers. "I started thinking, 'What's my next step?' Then I listened to a motivational book and it was all about female entrepreneurship and how

you should create something that you want that doesn't currently exist. The idea is that if you do that you can't fail because no matter what you've created something you wanted."

With that mantra in mind, and a desire to make a bike pack that suited her artistic tastes and perfectly fit her bike (built by Besnia of course), Landry enrolled in a sewing school in Salt Lake City.

"I wanted something that you couldn't put a date on when it was made. I wanted it to be a little more timeless," she says. "And it turns out the art of sewing is alive and well in Mormon culture. I had the nicest little ladies teaching me. I don't think they'd ever had someone like me in their classes before, but I made some great friends and am forever grateful for their hand-holding and helping me figure out what kind of sewing machine I would need to make my bags."

With sewing school complete, Landry immediately started making custom frame packs along with bar, seat and top tube bags. And these are not run-of-the-mill monotone bags. For \$169 customers can choose from one of 18 vibrant colors and have the option to include an appliqué, which is ornamental needlework in which pieces of fabric are sewn onto a larger piece of fabric to form pictures or patterns.

Landry, who figures she's crafted around 300 packs thus far, says customer appliqué requests have ranged from spirit animals to favorite flower to special places.

"People usually come in with a color scheme or subject they are interested in," she adds. "Then I'll send them a couple sketches to narrow it down and then let them choose from there."

The packs themselves are made from durable, waterproof vinyl-backed canvas and feature easy sliding molded plastic zippers. Landry utilizes a clever and classy-looking lacing system to secure the pack to the top tubes of non-Goodday bike frames. But the real beauty of this operation is the synergy between bikes and bags.

"Our bikes are heirlooms made just for you that will eventually be passed down within a family," Landry adds. "Whether it's a bike or a bag or both, we want our customers to feel like they are commissioning an artist rather than just buying a piece of gear." ☉



• [Above] The idea for this triple yoke chainstay, Besnia says, came to him in a dream and is an elegant solution for keeping cable routing clean.

• [Below] Besnia TIG welds a steel truss fork designed to carry bolt-on, integrated panniers. Nearly all Goodday bikes have expansive cargo-carrying capabilities.

