

Art of Olive Green

Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

Archives

All posts for the month August, 2012

Kickped vs. Xootr customer service: Losing Your Bearings

Posted by *getraer* on *August 10, 2012*

Posted in: MadeInUSA, Self-Sufficiencies. Tagged: bike, comparison, customer service, folding scooter, Goped, KickPed, NYCEWheels, Patmont Motor Werks, review, scooter. 5 Comments

When I dropped the KickPed off at NYCeWheels on Thursday, everything was straightforward as if they hadn't tried to welch on their lifetime warranty on Tuesday (<https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2012/08/07/kickped-vs-xootr-customer-service-review/>). The counter guy, previously dubbed "Brown," was coincidentally named David Browne, which I learned not because he introduced himself, but because it was printed on the work order receipt that I insisted he give me. He asked if "Alex" said it was ok for me to leave it, I said yeah, he said then it might be ready today. I looked at the sign on the wall, which estimated a 9-day turnaround on service. David said it was something fast that they could probably do after closing the doors, so obviously they were full of malarkey the first time. I left my number.

Sure enough, Alex called at 1930, a half hour after they close, and said it was ready. Turns out they had read my post, but it seemed none of us were going to acknowledge that—though his "Thanks, buddy" was to be our most cordial exchange throughout.

Fair enough. I went in the next day to pick it up, and David and "Blond" were at the desk again. (He wasn't blond at all, but the distinction had served. I could as easily have used Vladimir and Estragon, Rocky and Bullwinkle, or A and B.) "Aah, the blond guy!" said Blond with exaggerated cheer when he put my scooter down on the counter. I didn't hear him because I was staring at some flange they had put on the bolt securing the rear wheel. I asked what that was, thinking it was a spacer, and he said "I don't know, it's not supposed to be there... You know what it is, it's the guts of the old bearing." He proceeded to unscrew the bolt, remove the race, and tighten the nut back down. There was a long silence while he did that, then he said, "So am I blondie, or brown?"

"You don't have blond hair," I observed.

"Neither does he," he said with what must have been smugness.

"I thought you were, I didn't really look directly at you."

"Thanks!" he said. Was he offended by a perceived failure to acknowledge his humanity?

"So why were you such dicks the other day?"

"I dunno. We were busy."

"You weren't busy, I was the only one in the store."

He gestured to a screen behind him, "We had a lot of internet stuff going on," then without missing a beat, "you want an extra bearing?"

"Sure." With that, it was done. It was clear that an extra bearing was the limit of his civil capabilities, and probably his way of

suggesting “And stay out!” A lack of confidence in the materials, a dismissal, or both.

Maybe their service team (probably one frayed guy) is in over its head. Maybe the margins in their business are poor, and the staff don't care about a career in alternative transportation sales. Repairs must be their biggest man-hour loss on paper. Introducing a simple, indestructible product like the KickPed would change that, though the novice buyer won't choose a KickPed over a the dominant Xootr unless it has a gimmick like a lifetime warranty. And [New York City leads the kick scooter market](http://www.nypost.com/p/entertainment/hell_on_wheels_SmYGR5KyqukK7C5WvLeiOL) (http://www.nypost.com/p/entertainment/hell_on_wheels_SmYGR5KyqukK7C5WvLeiOL), which is growing: 45% of Xootr's 2011 sales were here, up from 36% in 2010. But a warranty without service risks the store's reputation, and most people who live here have neither a workshop nor the time to replace a defective bearing, even if it does take only a half hour.

The KickPed may be sturdier than the Xootr. You'd better hope yours is.

KickPed vs. Xootr: Customer Service review

Posted by *getraer* on *August 7, 2012*

Posted in: MadeInUSA, Self-Sufficiencies. Tagged: bike, comparison, customer service, ex3, folding scooter, Goped, KickPed, NYCEWheels, Patmont Motor Werks, review, scooter, Xootr. 10 Comments



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/cyl-bearing-roller-wall.png>)

Fig. 1. Drawing: Silberwolf; Wikimedia Commons CC

The wall seal on my KickPed's rear wheel roller bearing broke last week. In fig.1 you see an example bearing with wall intact, in my pic below the interior is exposed—not an ideal condition for something packed with greased bearings a couple inches above

churning road grit. I'd remove the wheel for a full view of the bearing but as you will see below, I don't want to provide a pretext to void my warranty. In my [earlier review](https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/xootr-vs-kickped-folding-scooter-throwdown/) (<https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/xootr-vs-kickped-folding-scooter-throwdown/>) I noted that the rear wheel bearings began to whine 4 months after purchase whenever I rode through the rain, so they were not watertight from early on. The bearing filled with grit and degraded quickly after the wall broke; a couple of days after the breach the collar holding the bearings skipped off and the whole wheel slid on its axle up against the frame, so that the friction made it almost too hot to touch after a fast 3 minute ride.

Yesterday I called the NYCeWheels store, which sold it to me just over a year ago when it hit the market. I told the guy on the phone that I'd need to bring in a KickPed for warranty service, and when I bought



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/imag1740.jpg>)

There should be a blue plastic wall fused between the collar and outer edge of the roller bearing.

it. I explained the failure, and he supposed that the bearing had been defective when it left the factory, or the installer had hammered it onto the tire too hard, weakening the wall seal. “Thousands of scooters have been out there with no problem,” he added, and said they could replace the bearing in an hour. I could drop it off and pick it up the next day if I didn't have an hour to wait, and that they'd loan me a scooter to get back to the train (a 10-minute walk from the store). I had thought I'd have to lug the KickPed while riding my troubled Xootr just to save on 50 minutes (total) of walking.

MAINTENANCE FREE, LIFETIME WARRANTY

At the store, 2 guys were at the desk. One was blond, one brown haired, neither was who I had spoken to. Both looked at the damage. “Blond” said maybe I said on phone that I wanted warranty service to a Xootr, which I hadn't, and which wouldn't have made sense anyway since the KickPed is NYCeWheels' product (with GoPed). In fact the website encourages users to bring it in for free [biannual safety checks](http://www.nycewheels.com/kickped-kick-scooter.html) (<http://www.nycewheels.com/kickped-kick-scooter.html>) as part of “free lifetime service.” They call the KickPed “100% bullet-proof,” “indestructible,” and go so far as to say: “This is a kick scooter that you buy once and never have to worry about breaking or needing repairs.” Yet Blond added they might not have the wheels in stock, which I thought odd because it's their product. Maybe they don't carry them because the KickPed is “maintenance free.” Blond left the shop to ask someone if there were wheels in inventory. He returned and said they didn't have the wheels there.

“Brown” told me I could get wheels online and they were “only about \$55.” But, he added, if I had the shop install them, with labor I was “**already halfway to the cost of a new scooter, so I might as well buy a new scooter.**” At my incredulity, Brown told me that the warranty only covered the frame, and gestured at the KickPed on the counter to encompass the handlebar / stem assembly, deck, and chassis. Blond added cheekily that I “should have read the fine print.” When I complained, Blond had the balls to quip, “**Maybe it’s time for a bike!**”

I had to get to work and clearly the situation was deteriorating fast. I asked if I could just replace the bearings, and Blond said sure, I could get them at any skate shop. I picked up the KickPed and left, planning to check NYCeWheels’ website when I arrived at the office.

Of course I had read correctly a year ago. As an editor, it’s impossible that I hadn’t “read the fine print” when spending \$250 of my hard-earned—editors are often as poor as they are punctilious. I called back and spoke to Alex, who was probably “Brown” because he was sitting at the counter nearest the computer and phone 45 minutes ago. I asked him to send me a link to the language stating that the lifetime warranty only covered the frame, and there was a 30-second pause during which I heard several mouse clicks. Finally he said dully, “We’ll honor the bearing repair for you.”

“You can’t send the language because it’s not there!” I said, “Then I’ll bring it by.” I’ll post whatever comes of that, if they don’t rig the KickPed to spill me in traffic.

And here: [the thrilling conclusion \(https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2012/08/10/kickped-vs-xootr-customer-service-losing-your-bearings/\)](https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2012/08/10/kickped-vs-xootr-customer-service-losing-your-bearings/) to this weeklong saga traversing 2 counties and 3 trains.

By contrast, **Xootr customer service** has always been exemplary, even across great distances. For example, The ex3 was their short-lived nickel metal-hydride battery scooter with electronics from Nova Cruz. At \$900 it was like buying a used car you could fold up. It went 17 mph for up to 2 hours and had an innovative regenerative brake, which converted braking power into energy fed back into the battery/ies. It was hella fun but developed battery problems, and Xootr always honored a 3-month battery warranty via an independent repair guy in Queens. He was himself an enthusiastic F-scooter rider. I took the ex3 there 40 minutes on the train, 3-4 times to have the \$200 battery replaced, and each time he’d swap it out only for it to fail within the 3 month warranty. I gave up after a while, and because I moved and didn’t have to ride 4 miles to the train on something smaller than a bike, I never got it fixed. A couple of years ago I eBayed the ex3 to an electrical engineer specializing in batteries. FWIW, Nova Cruz LLC ultimately went bankrupt.

When I got a Xootr MG in 2007, it eventually exhibited some mystifying problems that persist today. The specifics are beyond this post, but my first service was 3 years after I bought it, and warrantied because they decided it was defective. A year later I had to send it to Pennsylvania again (at \$25 each time), but bought the KickPed to cover me. They sorted what appears to be a defect promptly and sent it back—*3 years after purchase*, despite a 1-year stated warranty. The decision is at their Xootr’s discretion, but compare their engineers’ discretion to the cavalier fuckery of NYCeWheels, and *caveat emptor*.

Rome—The Chronicles of Kronstadt

Posted by [getraer](#) on [August 3, 2012](#)

Posted in: Engaged art, Some thoughts have a certain sound. Tagged: Die Aesthetik Der Herrschaftsfreiheit, engagement, German, music, Rome, translation. 7 Comments

My rusty translation, from Disc 3 of Rome’s *Die Aesthetik der Herrschaftsfreiheit*. As always, I welcome any corrections from native

German speakers in the comments.

The Chronicles of Kronstadt

I sink in the ice of Kronstadt
 I lie under the plaster of Paris
 I am glued to the walls of Warsaw
 I stand petrified in Berlin
 I lie in the streets of Barcelona
 I fall in a hail of bullets
 from the White Guard
 I lie in the snow of Petrograd
 Lie buried in the forests of Peru
 I bleed out in the sands of Spain
 I lie on the Ukrainian steppes
 I freeze in Siberia
 Worn down between Hammer and Cross
 I escape over the sea
 And I shiver there too
 They send me back
 They send me away
 They ban me
 They consoled themselves with safety
 Over me away
 I'm lying in the port of Odessa
 Lying garrotted in Leon
 Mauled by the bloodhounds
 Of the new order
 I flow from torn-out throats
 I am the scream
 That rises from the steppes
 That drifts in from the sea
 Too seldom do I urge myself in circles
 Centers, wings
 And even my wish for gentleness
 Is drawn from the long struggle
 With the brutality
 From hiding, from ambush
 From the belief and the lie
 I speak in an awkward
 plethora of voices
 I'm wildfire
 I'm rumor, fragment and reason
 And now your search leads you to me
 In the exile of defeated revolutions
 In remote villages
 of the French provinces
 In Brusselers' garrets
 In attic apartments
 In Amsterdam and London
 In Barcelona's backyards
 In the barns of Gascony
 My tracks are covered
 Yellowed, tattered
 almost forgotten
 Spare are the remains,
 What from brochures and tracts
 Leaflets and reportage
 Essays and biographies
 Speeches and memoirs
 I know to report
 I lie buried in the bomb shelter
 Coded in encryption
 and bunkered
 between newspapers
 And false walls
 Hidden behind portraits

Ich versinke im eis von Kronstadt
 Ich liege unter dem Pflaster von Paris
 Ich klebe an den Mauern Warschaus
 Ich steh' versteinert in Berlin
 Ich liege in den Strassen Barcelonas
 Ich falle im Kugelhagel
 Der weissen Gardien
 Ich liege im Schnee Petrograds
 Lieg' verscharrt in den Wäldern Perus
 Ich verblute in Spaniens Sand
 Ich liege in der Ukrainschen Steppe
 Ich friere in Sibirien
 Aufgerieben zwischen Hammer und Kreuz
 Ich rette mich übers Meer
 Und mich fröstelt es auch dort
 Man schickt mich zurück
 Man schickt mich fort
 Man verbannet mich
 Man tröstet sich mit sicherheit
 Über mich hinweg
 Ich liege im Hafen von Odessa
 Liege garrotiert in Leon
 Zerfleischt von den Bluthunden
 Der neuen Ordnung
 Ich fliesse aus aufgebissener Gurgel
 Ich bin der Schrei
 Der aus der Steppe aufsteigt
 Der vom Meer herüberweht
 Zu selten dränge ich mich in Zirkeln
 Zentren, Flügeln
 Und auch mein freundlichseinwollen
 Ist gezeichnet vom langen Kampf
 Mit der Brutalität
 Vom versteckt, vom hinterhalt
 Von der Vorstellung und der Lüge
 Ich spreche in sperriger
 Vielstimmigkeit
 Ich bin Steppenbrand
 Bin Gerücht, Teil und Grund
 Und nun führt dich deine suche nach mir
 In das exil besiegtter Revolutionen
 In entlegene Dörfer
 Der französischen Provinz
 In brüsseler Mansarden
 In Dachwohnungen
 In Amsterdam and London
 In die Hinterhöfe Barcelonas
 In die Scheunen der Gascogne
 Meine Spur ist verwischt
 Vergilbt, zerfleddert
 Fast vergessen
 Spärlich bleibt das
 Was die Bröschuren und Traktate
 Flugblätter and Reportagen
 Essays und Biografien
 Reden und Memoiren
 Von mir zu berichten wissen
 Ich liege im Bombenkeller verscharrt
 In improvisierten Verstecken
 Und Bunkern
 Zwischen Zeitungen
 Und falschen Wänden
 Hinter Portraits versteckt

In the cellars of the exile
 One finds only remnants
 of conspiracy
 of life in the underground
 of the immortal camaraderie
 and hopefully
 What you find written here
 Has through a thousand secret
 hands been passed
 Conveyed
 Through generations, throughout
 Insights into tradition
 In witness reports and decrees
 Been passed on in secret
 copies
 Illegal printed material
 in manifestos
 Half-lost newspapers
 in fragile folds
 Full of languages believed dead
 In occasional hints
 Then you will always find
 something in my black fabric
 That we once encircled everything
 Are you looking for the testimonials
 of your champion?
 All of this may remain only fragmentary
 Each remains alone
 And yet in every gasp of this
 surrounding totality
 How would you compose me
 In writing?
 How, wanderer, do you want
 To give me a voice?
 To give this smoke form?
 To codify this air?
 And who will now
 Interpret authoritatively?
 Who built finality?

Is it a shame about humanity? Is it?

In den Kellern der Verbannung
 Finden sich nur Reste
 Von Verschwörung
 Vom Leben im untergrund
 Von der unsterblichen Kameradschaft
 Und hoffnung
 Was du hier geschrieben findest
 Ist durch tausend heimliche
 Hände gegangen
 Weitergereicht
 Durch Generationen hindurch
 In überlieferten Einsichten
 In Dekreten und Zeugenberichten
 In heimlich weitergereichten
 Exemplaren
 Illegaler Druckschriften
 In Manifesten
 In halb verschollen Zeitungen
 In brüchigen Konvoluten
 Voll totgeglaubter Buchstaben
 In spärlichen Andeutungen
 Findet sich dann doch immer noch
 Etwas von meinen schwarzen Gewebe
 Das uns einst alle umspann
 Suchst du nach Zeugnissen
 Deiner Vorkämpfer?
 All dies kann nur Fragment bleiben
 Man bleibt allein
 Und doch im jedem Atemzug von dieser
 Totalität umfassen
 Doch wie willst du mich
 In Schrift fassen?
 Wie willst du Wanderer
 Mir eine Stimme geben?
 Diesem Rauch eine form?
 Wie diese Luft kodifizieren?
 Und wer will nun
 Deutungshoheit erlangen?
 Wer Endgültigkeit errichten?

Ist es Schade um die Menschen? Ist es?



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com>

/2012/08/kron-mem.jpg) Photo: Витольд Муратов

