

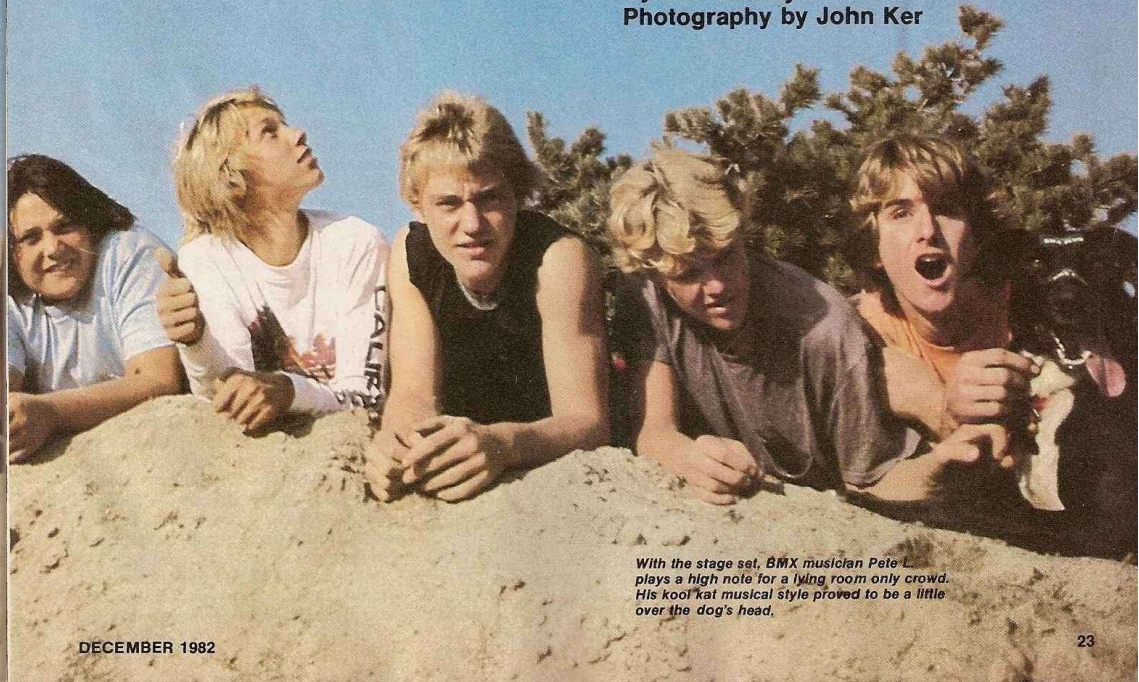
DIAMOND BACK SILVER STREAK

Winning Just Got Cheaper



Most mid-priced racers tend to be missing a link somewhere along their way to being truly raceable machines. But not the Silver Streak; it's Diamond Back's answer for the rider whose folks can't quite justify the five or six hundred bucks that it runs to go top-of-the-line. The Silver Streak is the next-best thing—at one-half the price. And, unlike most of the so-called racers in its price range, the Streak has it totally together. Diamond Back executive Michael Bobrick explains, "The Silver Streak is an entry-level race bike based on the Diamond Back Medium Pro frame. As such, virtually every aspect of the Silver Streak is geared to meet what we felt should be minimum standards of true raceability based on weight, reliability, and affordability."

By Bob Hadley
Photography by John Ker



With the stage set, BMX musician Pete L. plays a high note for a lying room only crowd. His kool'kat musical style proved to be a little over the dog's head.

The Silver Streak, along with all other Diamond Backs, is manufactured in Japan by Koizumi Japan. Prior to getting into the bicycle business with Diamond Back, Koizumi worked in prototype and tool development for Kawasaki motorcycles and specialized in high-quality fabrication of chrome-moly. Based on the work they've been doing for DB, their quality is exactly that—high.

Mike Bobrick explains, "Hiroban Koizumi just loves BMX. He's got all the Diamond Back posters all over his office, and he's really into it. As far as we're concerned, their quality is unsurpassed. We've got complete confidence in their work."

Also according to Bobrick, the main reason for the top-notch quality and consistency of Koizumi's work is the total control they have. Everything, right down to the plating, the final assembly, and the packing of the bikes into the boxes is done at the Koizumi plant.

On our Silver Streak test bike the workmanship, frame alignment, and plating was 100%. In challenge to their claim, however, we scoured



The snake coiled and ready to strike. In capable hands the Silver Streak is a consistent winning streak.



Dangerous Dave kicked out, crossed up, and headed south. The Dangerous One, a 14 Expert, found plenty of room to strut his stuff on the Streaker.

every inch of the bike in search of flaws and we found one. The welding was only 99% perfect—we noticed that the filleting looked a bit thin in the area of the seat mast/bottom bracket joint. At major stress areas like the head tube and around the rear drop-outs, the filleting was A-OK and the welds were easily of aircraft quality.

Instead of a complete chrome-moly frame, like you'd find on the higher-priced Diamond Backs, the Silver Streak is half chrome-moly and half high-tension steel. This change alone cuts the manufacturing costs of the Silver Streak frame way down. The high-tension steel is easier to fabricate, requires less polishing for chrome, and welds easier than chrome-moly. The chrome-moly is used for the front half where most of the stress occurs. This idea is not new at all. U.S. makers, primarily Mongoose, have been doing this for years on their lower-priced bikes. The combination of chrome-moly and high-tension steel offers decent weight—it's not as heavy as an all high-tension steel frame would be—and, most importantly to the Silver Streak, the lower production costs help put the bike into the mid-price range.

As far as reliability goes, the frame is likely to be every bit as sturdy as the 100% chrome-moly



The new DB SS instills confidence and inspires style and speed. Racers or serious play riders from about 10 to 15 years old are gonna love this thing.

frame, since most frame failures occur in the front triangle. We should also add that the rear drop-outs are thicker than on the DB Medium Pro, which should add some stiffness to the frame.

Forks are a critical part of any frameset. On this, Diamond Back didn't compromise. They went with the best they had to offer: the standard DB Pro fork which is 100% chrome-moly with a slightly offset axle design.

Complementary Components

In complement to the Silver Streak frameset and to the credit of the people at Diamond Back, a number of components that are used don't merely make the grade, they are the grade. How about Araya 7X rims, Dia-compe caliper brakes, Suntour EZ-Off freewheel, an SR forged seatpost clamp, and DB chrome-moly handlebars? With the exception for riders' personal preferences for handlebars or

spreading or distorting.

Extruded aluminum seatposts, whether fluted-style or otherwise, aren't considered the strongest seatposts going. But for the lighter riders that the Silver Streak was intended for, the silver and black DB post does the job. We'd have to figure the weight limit on the post is around 125 pounds. You could add about twenty pounds to that limit if you like to run your seat low (six inches or less). Our 155-pound tester bent the post on the first run, but consider the weight of the rider and the fact that the post was out to the "max limit" line.

The aero-style seat, however, was the topic of debate among testers. Some liked it; some didn't. The common complaint was that the sharp rise in the tail started to become uncomfortable after a while in the saddle. The aero-style design does seem better suited for road bikes where the rider doesn't sit as upright. The question of whether or not the shape truly affects the aerodynamics of a BMX bike in a positive way also came up. Forget it; this seat is there for looks and that's it.

Up front we find a melt-forged (actually pressure-cast) SR DB stem. While not offering the same strength as a cold-forged stem, the process has proven to be very reliable and an inexpensive way to make stems. The final testimony is, of course, that the bars didn't slip once during the test. Physically, the stem has a throw of about 1-1/2 inches which makes it well suited to the overall configuration of the Silver Streak and the stock six-inch-rise DB chrome-moly bars.

Drive Train

Pedal power is transmitted via a very solid drive train. The style of cranks on the Silver Streak is the buyer's choice: one-piece or three-piece. Our test bike had the three-piece alloys. Going this route adds about ten bucks to the Silver Streak's base price. The style crank you should get depends on your size and riding style. The heavy-handed or large riders (over 120 lbs.) would more than likely be better off with the one-piece cranks. Smaller and lighter riders would benefit from the lighter weight of the alloys, and the 170 mm length would not be too short.

Replaceable cages are the hot tip on the new Diamond Back pedals by SR. Four flat-head Allen screws hold the cage to the pedal body. The original cages on the Silver Streak are chrome-plated steel, but Bobrick informs us that alloy cages are available as replacements through any Diamond Back dealer. The pedal shafts can be maintained

levers, better stuff than this cannot be had on any race bike at any price.

It is true that some corners were cut with the Diamond Back Silver Streak to keep the price under three-hundred bucks. But as we will explain, none of the stuff is junk. Everything represents good basic value and quality.

Let's start with the Suzue (pronounced Sue-zoo-ee) loose-ball hubs. These are the first cousins to the Suzue sealed-bearing hubs that are found on the Diamond Back Turbo. They are high-flanged, black-anodized, cold-forged hubs with heavy-duty axles. Other hub brands could take a lesson from Suzue on the use of large jam nuts on the rear axle. Suzue does this with all of their BMX hub sets, and I don't know one mechanic who doesn't appreciate them. The large nut goes a long way towards preventing axle slots from

easily. The guts can be exposed by removing the dust cover with a simple 6mm Allen wrench (the same size wrench as needed for the seat-post clamp and the stem bolts).

Each link on the custom Izumi chain is half chrome and half black. It's a nice touch and a perfect example of the kind of thought that went into the Silver Streak. Gearing is at 44/16 as delivered, which is about average for most uses. Incidentally, the drive train is all 1/2"x1/8" equipment.

Rubber Department

In the rubber department, we find the Silver Streak has Diamond Back tires: a 2.125 in front and a 1.75 in the rear. Both tires are skindense construction and specify inflation of 35 to 40 psi. We had our best luck with the DB tires at slightly higher pressures. Although traction was good, what we liked best about them was their predictability. As we leaned over progressively, the tires started to slide progressively with no surprises. The compound held up well to abuse; skidding didn't peel off big patches of rubber, and after several days of riding, only a few knobs on the rear were scuffed up. The tires should last well.

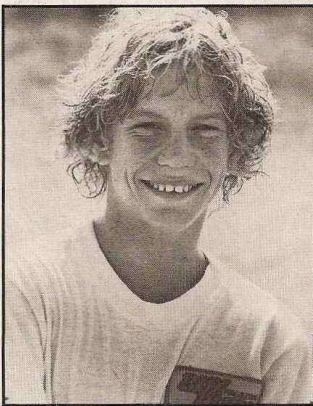
At last to the grips. You'll notice on our bike and in the DB advertisements for the Silver Streak Oakley-3-style grips by Faun. Well, the guys at Diamond Back concluded that fake Oakley 3's don't make it (we agreed). All the bikes currently being sold will have more comfortable foam "Cush 2"-type grips.

Riding Impressions

We found the Silver Streak to be capable of handling all forms of riding well, but its medium-quick turning capabilities should make most at home on your typical race track—which would be flat, with maybe a downhill start, and tight fast turns. We also found the Silver Streak to be capable of accommodating a wide variety of rider sizes. Even our tallest tester (me), at about 5' 10-7/64" (more or less, depending on the time of day,) fit comfortably on the Silver Streak with only one change—tall DB pro bars. Naturally, if you're that tall you'd do better to be looking at the bigger DB Pro or even the Turbo, but the Silver Streak can be adapted. Its best range is with riders 5' 5" or smaller, like our newest test rider, "Dangerous" Dave Gianunzio, who at 14 is 5' 11" tall. The target age group with the Silver Streak is the 12 years old. As Mike Bobrick put it, "We designed the Silver Streak for that group of



We know what it looks like, but no, it's not a laid-back seat post. At least not intentionally. The stock fluted-alloy post turned to butter after we cut loose with some heavy-duty lunar landings.



Hey, isn't that Dangerous Dave Gianunzio terror of the Redlands, and part-time BMX Plus guest tester? Yup.

riders, not for Igor the Gargantua!" Final Impressions

Aside from all the mechanically great things the streak has going for it, it also has looks. Yep, people in general like the looks of the Silver Streak. Everywhere we went with the bike, people would eye it over. Now we are not here to judge looks per se, just performance and value; but when a bike draws the amount of attention the Silver Streak did during our out-and-about jaunts, it deserves to be mentioned. As far as doing what it's supposed to do—the Streak does it. As an entry-level race bike it has pretty much set the pace for others to follow. It is certainly the best value in BMX to ever come across the waters.

Bike: DIAMOND BACK SILVER STREAK, 20"
Age Range: 12 YEARS AND UP
Country of Origin: JAPAN
Intended Use: RACING/HIGH PERFORMANCE STREET.
Frame: DIAMOND BACK 4130 CHROME-MOLY FRONT TRIANGLE, HIGH TENSION STEEL REAR TRIANGLE, HELI-ARC WELD, CHROME PLATED. TOP TUBE O.D. 1", DOWN TUBE 1", AMERICAN-STYLE BOTTOM BRACKET, HEAD TUBE 4"
Fork: DIAMOND BACK LEADING AXLE, 4130 CHROME-MOLY, HELI-ARC WELDED, CHROME PLATED. LEG O.D. 1", RAKE 1 3/8"
Wheelbase: 35 1/4 - 37" Top Tube Length: ϕ to ϕ (CENTER TO CENTER)
18 1/4" Chainstay Length: ϕ to ϕ 15 1/2". Bottom Bracket Height: 11 1/2"
Steering Head Angle: 71° Seat Tube Angle: 72°
Wheels: RIMS: ARAYA 20" X 1.75", 7X ALLOY, 36 HOLE. SPOKES: ASAHI 80 GAUGE CHROME PLATED. HUBS: SUZUE LOOSE-BALL, HIGH FLANGE, ALLOY.
Tires: DIAMOND BACK (IRC) SKINWALL, 20" X 1.75" REAR, 20" X 2.125" FRONT.
Drive Train: CRANK: DIAMOND BACK (BY SUGINO) THREE-PIECE ALLOY 170 MM W/LARGE BOTTOM BRACKET, LOOSE-BALL ADAPTER SET. PEDALS: DIAMOND BACK (BY SAKAE RINGYO) ALLOY BODY AND REPLACEABLE CAGE, 9/16" CHROME-MOLY SHAFT.
CHAIN: 1/2" X 1/8", BLACK AND CHROME. FRONT SPROCKET: SUGINO 44T, QUICK-CHANGE, ALLOY. FREEWHEEL: SUNTOUR, 16 T. E-2 OFF CALIPER (REAR ONLY) W/DIA-COMPE CABLE AND TOURIST LEVER. HEADSET: TANGE-TYPE CHROME-PLATED STEEL W/RETAINED BALLS. STEM: DIAMOND BACK (BY SAKAE RINGYO) MELT-FORGED, ALUMINUM FOUR BOLT W/ CHROME-MOLY SHAFT.
HANDLEBARS: DIAMOND BACK 4130 CHROME-MOLY, 7" RISE X 22 1/2" WIDTH, HELI-ARC WELDED, CHROME PLATED. GRIPS: FAUN 8, VINYL (TO BE CHANGED TO CUSH 2 TYPE) SEAT: KASHIMAX AERO, PLASTIC, AERODYNAMIC, W/ 7/8" FLUTED ALLOY POST, SAFETY SEAT CLAMP AND SAKAE RINGYO ALLOY SEAT POST CLAMP.
OVERALL WEIGHT: 23 3/4 LBS. APPROXIMATE RETAIL COST: \$280 - 290.00

For additional info
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