

■ When you first take a look at the new Woody Itson Strike Zone, it jumps out at you. The white to ruby red to chrome finish is wild! Even the decals featuring turquoise graphics stand out. There's no mistaking this one.

The best part about Diamond Back's new flatland model isn't how good it looks, but how well it works. And you don't have to spend a fortune to get one. The Strike Zone retails for under \$400 and comes equipped with a heap of killer parts!

FOR SERIOUS FREESTYLERS

The Test Society immediately flipped over two things: the Woody Itson bars and the ACS/SunTour Freecoaster. Woody's handlebars are one of the original bars designed for freestyle. They're not overdone and are very strong. The Freecoaster is trick. It's a precise component which allows the rider to switch between a coaster brake and freewheel in a matter of seconds. You can even make the adjustment during the mid-

dle of a run. For those who ride both ground and ramps—or have to share the bike with a younger brother—it's a revolutionary idea.

The Itson frame's integral platform is another part that's not overdone. Too many manufacturers build a huge platform that's really unnecessary. You know, the kind you can hold a formal banquet on, invite 12 of your best friends and still have room left for the butler and the maid. This bike's platform is roomy enough to pull off killer framestands, but it doesn't get in the way.

Test Society members were especially stoked about the chain stays on the Strike Zone. They're bowed up to give a rider's feet more room in the rear triangle during chain stay tricks. A few minutes on the bike, and your feet will know the difference, thanks to this innovation.

STOPPING ON A DIME

You've heard it a thousand times, but for the Strike Zone it's really true! The brakes work great—you really can stop on a dime. Of course, the bike we tested was dialed in by Woody, but you should expect the one at your neighborhood dealer to be equally well adjusted. When the Freecoaster is in the coaster-brake mode, we found very little gap between pedaling forward and backpedaling to stop.

Woody &
Diamond
Back
created 1
killer
machine

Woody has been seen smilin' a lot lately. You would be too, if you had a signature series bike out. Woody powerin' down a happy lane on "his" ride.

THE SECOND STRIKE ZONE



The only gripe we had with the braking system was the ACS 6770 levers. We found them a little too long and a bit too far kicked-out for the average rider. If you prefer shorter levers, you may want to replace them. The bend can be adjusted using two box-end or adjustable wrenches.

One thing that certainly didn't hurt the performance of either the brakes or the entire bike, was the Tioga Comp Ramp tires. These babes may say "Ramp," but don't kid yourself. They work just as well on the ground. It's nice to find a bike that comes stock with quality tires. Tires are an item that we more often than not recommend replacing at the first opportune moment. Not here.

STRIKE ZONE



BUT HOW DOES IT HANDLE?

It normally takes a while to get used to a new bike; adjusting to new geometry isn't always easy. AF associate editor and top amateur flatlander, Karl Rothe, found the Strike Zone a breeze to get accustomed to. He found the handling very stable. Test Society rampster Robert Smart rode it on the ramp and was equally impressed. The bike's geometry is a good compromise between the slowness you want in a ramp machine and the quickness flatlanders demand.

"How ya doin', guys?" Woody's signature bike felt super stable in the air. Relaxed one-hander by Robert Smart.

SPECIFICATIONS:

1988 DIAMOND BACK WOODY ITSON STRIKE ZONE

I. FRAME AND FORK

Type: Freestyle, age range 10 and over.
Frame design: Single top tube into dual top tube near seat mast. Integral rear standing platforms.
Frame construction: Full chromoly
Diameter of top tube: 1-1/4"
Diameter of down tube: 1-3/8"

Diameter of stays: 5/8"
Fork construction and design: Chromoly, with dual fork peg bosses.
Diameter of fork blades: 1-1/4"
II. GEOMETRY
Wheelbase: 35-1/4"/36-1/4"
Steering head angle: 76°
Seat tube angle: 68°

Bottom bracket height:

11-1/2"
III. DRIVE TRAIN
Pedals: Victor VP-707, chromoly axle, white.
Cranks: Tioga Task Force, one-piece chromoly, 180mm, chrome plated.
Chain wheel: Tioga Compact Disc, silver, 44T.
Bottom Bracket: Beartrap-type, Tange.
Chain: KMC 1/2"x1/8", 90 links, black and chrome plated.
Freewheel: ACS Sun-Tour Freecoaster, 16T.

IV. WHEELS

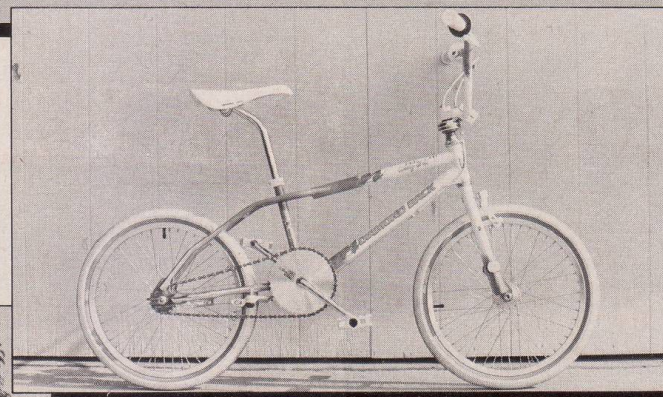
Rims: Sumo, 48-spoke.
Hubs: Suzue Sealed Tech, large flange, front. SunTour Freecoaster, rear.

Tires: Tioga Comp Ramp, 20"x1.75", front and rear.
V. STEERING
Grips: Fuan, Mushroom-type, white.
Handlebars: Woody Itson, chromoly, 28-1/2" wide and 8-1/2" high.
Stem: ACS Rotor 55, white.
Headset: Tange.

VI. SEATING

Seat: Diamond Back, Dominator-type.
Seatpost: Chromoly, laidback, 30-degree bend, 16-1/2".
Seatpost clamp: Diamond Back, alloy.
VII. BRAKES
Front: ACS 860, white.

Rear: ACS Gripper, white.
Levers: ACS 6770, with locking lever, white.
VIII. ACCESSORIES
Detangler: ACS Rotor.
C.P.S. equipment: Reflectors and chain guard.
IX. WEIGHT
 28-1/2 lbs.
X. PRICE
 \$365 to \$385.
XI. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
 Taiwan
XII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 Diamond Back
 c/o Western States Import
 1837 DeHavilland Dr.
 Newbury Park, CA 91320



Woody went to great lengths to prove how much he believes in his bike. Does this 1-hop handstand get the point across?

For what it's worth, Karl was able to pull off pinky squeaks on his second attempt. And Robert could easily have ridden the Strike Zone on the ramp well into the night. It's a well-designed all-around freestyle bike.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

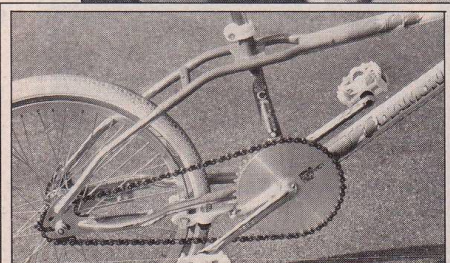
Okay, okay. Who do we either pat on the back or point the ol' finger at? The engineers at Diamond Back and Woody. Woody is, of course, responsible for the bars—they're his design. They're the same ones that were originally made by VDC, and then later by Hutch. Woody designed the frame (except for the gusset) along with the serrated rear platforms and the position on the fork pegs. We don't think the use of ACS components was accidental. Woody's long association with ACS must have had something to do with their presence on this bike.

But the real credit goes to the folks over at DB for manufacturing another top-of-the-line freestyler. Even though it's marketed as a flatlander, it can just as easily be used on the ramps. Still, the most impressive aspect of the Woody Itson Strike Zone is that you get a great bike at a reasonable price. No, you can't pick one up for \$200 or \$250, but you won't break the bank, either. And you'll get a solid bike, backed by a company and a rider with a solid reputation. ■



Not only did the ACS angled stem lower the bars for comfort and riding ease, the ACS brakes provide sure stopping.

COMMENTS ON THE WOODY ITSON STRIKE ZONE
 "The levers are a little too long and a little too kicked-out for the average rider."
 "I like the idea that a bike can come stock with a quality tire for a change."
 "You get your money's worth with this bike."
 "The brakes work great!"



Woody's unique, bent seat stays give you enough room for fancy foot functioning.

Who... Where, when, why... Club - 1

THE RADDEST CONTEST EVER

King of Vert Finals

■ If you weren't there, you missed it. Bad. Real bad. We could tell you all about it, but it would be better to show you, so that's what we're going to do.

There are a few things that might be better said in words than in photos, so we'll do that.

- It was the last contest of the year in Ron Wilkerson's 2-Hip King of Vert halfpipe series, and Ron held the contest at his home in Leucadia, California. Attendance was by invitation only, because Ron lives in a residential neighborhood, not Jack Murphy Stadium, which is where this contest deserved to be, considering how incredible it was.

- Nearly all the top ramp stars in freestyle showed up to compete, including seven pros and 26 amateurs.

- The format was the standard King of Vert jam session. The pros all had a 20-minute time period they had to share. They drew for order. All got on top of the ramp, and then took turns riding until they had to stop and rest. Each guy got three runs in which to do his best stuff. When they were finished, the judges totaled up the scores. The amateurs did the same thing but had only two runs each.

- The judges were R.L. Osborn, Mark Lewman, Pete Augustin and Andy Jenkins. They scored the riders on a scale of one-to-ten points per turn. The high and low scores were dropped, and the runs were averaged.

- The level of riding was insane. Dominguez and Blyther did the highest airs of the contest, around the ten-foot mark by most people's estimates. Blyther did tricks such as candybar airs around nine feet out. Dominguez did a 540 that was about seven feet above the coping. As if that weren't enough, he went for a 900 seven or eight feet out as his final air of the contest. Spinning like a madman high above the people on the ramp, he came down and landed a fraction of a spin



Fiola is on the comeback trail. Last year's shoulder problems don't seem to be affecting him anymore, and he's jamming again. Fifth place, Pro.



Chris Potts lofted big airs with style but didn't make the Finals in the Open Expert class.



Matt Hoffman is insane. Besides doing as many as three super-hard tricks in a single air, he also lofted some of the highest variations the world has ever seen. First place, Open Expert.



Joe Johnson's second-place finish behind Matt Hoffman seemed much closer than the scores would lead you to believe. Even Matt's parents thought the runs were too close to call.



Wilkerson had the homecourt advantage, but third place was it for him here.

Upside down and droppin' fast, Matt Hoffman dive-bombs his way to first place in the Open Expert division. ▶

John Ker





(about 30 degrees) short of how he should have. He slid out unhurt at the bottom of the ramp. Even though he didn't quite pull it off, most people still considered it the raddest aerial in history with the possible exception of...

- Ron Wilkerson's "nothing." Yes, Ron Wilkerson did his much-talked-about no-hander no-footer, jumping completely off his bike in midair and then grabbing it back again, getting his feet back on the pedals and riding it out. It was perfect. It was so insane that people in the audience were screaming their brains out in disbelief. They were holding their heads in their hands, their mouths wide open, their eyes popping out, screaming madly. The commotion was equaled only by Dominguez's almost-successful 900.

- Matt Hoffman and Joe Johnson fought the duel of death in the Open Expert class. These two guys are much radder than most of the pros in the limbless-variation department, but they don't do 540s the way Brian and Michael do them. To give you some idea of how rad Matt was in this contest, we'll tell you what he did in one single air: He took off, did a no-footed cancan, then went to a no-footed one-hander, and still got back on the bike okay to land and ride it out. Joe Johnson was doing double tricks on a lot of his airs, but he still couldn't beat Matt. We thought it was a lot closer between them than the judges did, though.

- If Matt had been in the Pro division, he probably would have won.

- There was a year-long points battle in the series for the pros and the experts. Brian had a three-point lead in the series coming into this contest, so he would have had to finish at least three places behind Michael in order to lose the title. Instead, their riding was so closely matched that it was a veritable tossup as to who won this last contest. Michael got a 9.05 and the win for the day. Brian got a 9.04 and the win for the year.

- Matt and Joe came into the finals one point apart in their battle for the top Expert of the year. Whoever won this contest won the title. Matt did it.

- Ron is already making plans to put on another King of Vert series. He'll be announcing the schedule in a few weeks. Ron Stebenne will run it for him so he can concentrate more on his riding.

- If you get a chance to see one of these King of Vert contests, do it! They are absolutely unbelievable. ■

KING OF VERT FINALS
The Enchanted Ramp, Laucadia, California
Sponsored by Haro, Odyssey

PRO	POINTS	WINNINGS
1. Mike Dominguez/Diamond Back	9.05	\$725
2. Brian Blyther/Haro	9.04	425
3. Ron Wilkerson/Haro	8.89	225
4. Josh Wilbur/GT	8.73	125
5. Eddie Flota/Un-sponsored	8.58	
6. Todd Anderson/General	8.19	
7. Rich Sigur	7.89	

Club - 2
Past tense of is.

OPEN EXPERT	POINTS	WINNINGS
1. Matt Hoffman/Skyway	9.26	800
2. Joe Johnson/Haro	8.69	784
3. Dave Vaelker/Dyno	8.56	1987 PRO CHAMPION
4. Bob Kohl	8.55	Brian Blyther/Haro
5. Dino DeLuca/Dyno	8.49	1987 EXPERT CHAMPION
6. Jack Smith/Haro	8.39	Matt Hoffman/Skyway

◀ **Brian Blyther put major sky between himself and the coping on his way to the year's King of Vert Pro title.** John Ker



THE RADDEST
Fresh from his stage act in Las Vegas, Nevada, Gary Laurent proved a one-time top-ranked racer can hang with the heavies in a major ramp jam.



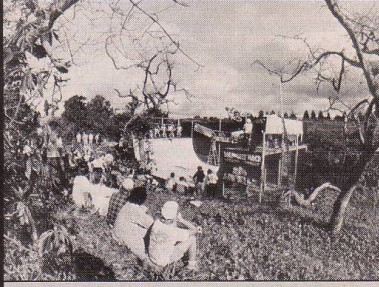
Dominguez needs to be seen in person to be appreciated. His limbless variations are few, but his overall mastery is enormous. First place for the contest, second place for the year.



Brian Blyther blasted big airs and rad 540s (like this one) all year. He lost this contest to Michael by one one-hundredth of a point but still won the year's overall Pro title.



Dino DeLuca is more famous for his airs than he is for his platform tricks, but this pedal-picker drop-in proved that he's more than just a sky man.



The gnarled trees give the Enchanted Ramp a country look, but the San Diego freeway is only a stone's throw away.



It may look though as the photographers are trying to knock him out of the sky with their cameras, but it's just Bob Kohl doing his Superman air for the fisheye-lens crowd.