

THE DIAMOND BACK SUPER VIPER



DB's street serpent gets a little more bite for the buck

Story by McGoo

Photos by J.K.



Speed jumping was easy on the bike. The CW bars took a little getting used to, but once we did, we liked them fine.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A few days ago Eddy King, Robby Rupe, McGoo and I got together at Honda Hills to ride, evaluate, and photograph the new Super Viper. The session lasted several hours.

After we were all done, I seem to recall McGoo telling me he was going home to eat a couple of pizzas for dinner and then try to dream up a new angle for his report on our test.

I imagine that's just what he did. His recall in regard to the evaluation of the bike is virtually flawless. But for the life of me, I don't remember this phone call.

—J.K.

□ "Hello, Diamond Back? This is McGoo at *BMX Plus!* Lemme speak to big Al, please."

"May I ask what this concerns, Mr. McGoo?"

"Sure. Tell Al I've got Eddy King and Robby on the phone. We want to tell him how our test on the Super Viper went."

"One moment, please. I'll get Mr. Stonehouse for you."

"Hi, guys, Al here."

"Hi, Al. Hey look, Eddy, Robby, John and myself just got back from the Super Viper test at Honda Hills, and we thought we'd fill you in on it."

"Great. How was it?"

"That depends. How much does the bike cost?"

"Just under 180. Why do you ask?"

"Well, the bike looks good and handles okay, but Robby thought some of the components could have been . . ."

"Let me talk to him, McGoo. Hi, Al, this is Robby Rupe. Say, I was wonderin' about this thing's steel hubs. What gives?"

"As you know, Rob, we had to try to keep the cost down somehow. They're steel, but they're good quality. Tell me, did you notice all the other trick stuff on the bike?"

"Yeah. Like the KKT alloy pedals and the Dia-Compe 890 brakes with the Tech 4 levers front and rear. I was really impressed with that. All the other bikes I've tested in this price range come with Taiwanese copies."

"And how about the real A'ME Dual grips and the alloy quick-release chain ring!"

"Who's that yellin' in the background?"

"That's just Eddy tryin' to get his two cents worth in on the test. Don't pay any attention to him."

"That's all right, Rob, go ahead and let him tell me what he thinks about the bike."

"Okay, here he is."

"Hey, Al, how's it goin'? Eddy here."

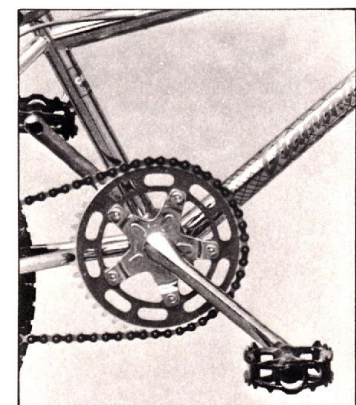
The shortness of the Super Viper made it a blast to slide, even though its shallow head angle made it a bit unpredictable for our tastes. Robby didn't seem to have any problems with it, however. ▶



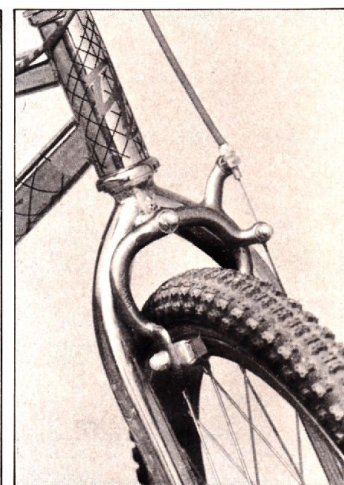
SUPER VIPER



Robby never did feel comfortable jumping this bike, but he said he would have been happy to do power slides all day long. We figured half the day was enough.



The Taiwanese drive train components were just what we expected to find on the Super Viper, but its KKT alloy pedals were a pleasant surprise. We experienced some tweakage with the steel cranks, but it was believed that our prototype did not have heat-treated units. The stock bikes reportedly won't suffer this malady.



What! Actual Dia-Compe 890 brakes front and rear on the Super Viper? It's true! Now that's a welcome sight. Check out the lack of the previously omnipresent DB double-head gusset. Larger diameter top and down tubes handle all the frame loads just fine, thank you.



One way Diamond Back kept the price down was by using mild steel here in the rear frame triangle. Nevertheless, the weight was still kept to a respectable 25 pounds, 11 ounces.

◀ The Super Viper was clearly designed for smaller riders than our two pros. Eddy felt more comfortable jumping the Super Viper than Robby did. Riders under about five-five will find the bike better suited to their size requirements than our around five-eight testers.

"Things are great, Eddy. What were you saying about the Super Viper?"
 "It's got a lot of good stuff on it. I didn't know we could make such good bikes this cheaply. I really like the all-new design of the frame. What's it made of, mild steel?"
 "Absolutely not, Eddy. Only the rear triangle and the fork are mild steel. The rest of the frame is constructed of 4130 chromoly. It's totally strong. Aren't you glad to see us get rid of the head gusset?"
 "You bet. The one-and-a-quarter-inch down tube and one-and-an-eighth-inch top tube make the bike look really beefy. I'm glad to see that you switched to a rear end like I have on my bike—it looks a lot cleaner."

"Well, speaking of cleaner, what did you and the rest of the gang think of the new frame graphics?"
 "Tell him I thought they were trick."
 "McGoo liked them."
 "Forget the decals! Tell him how it handled!"
 "Who's doing all the screaming back there?"
 "That's Rob. Ignore him. I'll talk to you about the performance later. Right now I wanna get back to the parts. We had a little problem with the forged steel cranks. Once we started jumping the bike, the cranks bent a little bit. What's the deal?"
 "The Super Viper we gave you guys for the test was a prototype. Chances are very good that the cranks weren't heat-treated. We're going to use a mild-steel crank on the production models, but we'll make sure that all of the cranks are heat-treated first. Did you guys have any other problems?"
 "As a matter of fact, the mild-steel forks did get a little tweaked. We thrashed the bike pretty hard, though."
 "You and Robby are too big for the thing anyway, Eddy! You guys are pros! We designed it for entry-level BMXers and street thrashers—kids around 12 or 13. Anyone over 15 years old would just destroy the Super Viper if given enough time."
 "Maybe, but Rob and I tossed it around quite a bit, and it held up perfectly. It didn't even get the new-bike rattles."
 "That's because I put it together so well."
 "Quit it, McGoo, you think you're the god of BMX!"
 "Sorry, John, I got a little carried away. But seriously, everything on the bike did bolt together really well."
 "Hey, Eddy, let me speak to McGoo again."
 "Hi, Al, it's McGoo again."
 "What did you think about the bike?"
 "Eddy kinda summed everything up pretty well. He did forget to mention the seatpost and handlebars, though. I couldn't believe we didn't bend the seatpost! For a mild-steel job, it sure held up well. The CW Pro bars were cool. They took some gettin' used to, but their positioning and bend were totally cool."
 "Thanks, McGoo. Tell me, what did you think of the way the Super Viper handles?"
 "I'd better let Robby tell you that—he's been dying to get on the phone."
 "This is Robby again, Al. Lemme give you the full scoop on how this thing rides. First it wheelies easy. Maybe too easy. The rear end felt short. With the bike's laid-back seatpost and 68-degree

SUPER VIPER

BMX PLUS!

1. Bike: Diamond Back Super Viper, 20-inch, complete bike.
2. Age range: 10 to 14 years old.
3. Country of origin: Taiwan.
4. Intended use: Street thrashing, novice BMX racing.
5. Wheelbase: 34-7/8" to 36-1/8".
6. Bottom-bracket height: 11-1/4".
7. Chain stay length: 15".
8. Steering head angle: 71°.
9. Seat tube angle: 68°.
10. Frame: Diamond Back Super Viper model, 4130 chromoly front triangle, mild-steel rear triangle. Features: 1-1/4" O.D. down tube, 1-1/8" O.D. top tube, 5/8" O.D. seat and chain stays.
11. Fork: Diamond Back, mild steel throughout. Features: 1" O.D. fork legs, leading-axis design.
12. Rims: Sumo, alloy, 20" x 1.75", 36-hole, blue.
13. Spokes: 36/080, chrome plated.
14. Hubs: K.K. steel, low-flange, chrome plated.
15. Tires: Cheng Shin 20" x 1.75", front and rear.
16. Cranks: One-piece mild steel, 6-1/2" (165mm), chrome plated.
17. Pedals: KKT quill-type, alloy, black.
18. Chain: TYC 1/2" x 1/8", silver/black.
19. Bottom bracket: Hatta steel, retained ball, silver.
20. Front sprocket: Sugino chromoly spider, chrome plated; Sugino 44-tooth, alloy chain ring, blue.
21. Freewheel: SunTour 16T, four-pronged, chrome plated.
22. Brakes: Dia-Compe 890 callipers, blue; Tech-4 levers, silver; Dia-Compe brake cables, blue.
23. Headset: Steel, retained ball, chrome plated.
24. Stem: Sugino, alloy and chromoly, black and chrome.
25. Handlebars: CW Pro bars, 28" width x 9" rise, chromoly, chrome plated.
26. Grips: A'ME Dual, black/white.
27. Seating: Nylon saddle, blue; mild-steel laid-back seatpost, chrome plated; alloy seatpost clamp, blue.
28. Miscellaneous: C.P.S.C. chain guard and reflector set.
29. Overall weight: 25 lbs., 11 oz., minus chain.
30. Approximate retail price: \$174.95.
31. For additional information contact: Western States Imports, 1837 DeHavilland Dr., Newbury Park, CA 91320.



The short rear end makes the Super Viper wheelie really easily—maybe too easily. It might be worthwhile to switch to a straight seatpost to get your weight a little farther forward.

seat tube angle, it feels like you're sittin' over the rear wheel. Most smaller guys would be better off using a straight seatpost to get their body weight centered over the middle of the bike. The bike wanted to jump funny, but that's probably because it has such a short wheelbase. That short rear triangle sure makes it snap out of the gate. . . that was a big plus. The steering was a shade on the slow side. I know you want to make a bike beginners can handle, so I can understand why it feels that way. All in all, your Super Viper is a pretty sensible bike for novice to intermediate BMXers. I hate freestyle, but McGoo tells me it would even be okay for starting out in that."

"Well, thanks for your input, Robby. It sounds like you really spent some time with the bike."

"I figure Eddy and I put about three months' wear and tear on the bike during our test and photo session. We

weren't easy on it, that's for sure." "I can tell. Thanks again, Robby. Let me speak to John now."

"Good afternoon, Al, this is John speaking. I trust you're having a pleasant day?"

"I sure am. Thanks, John. What did you and the gang think of the Super Viper?"

"Well, after carefully scrutinizing the frameset and making some preliminary evaluations about the quality and design of the components, McGoo and I allowed Edward and Robert to abuse the bike as they saw fit. During their riding session, we shot photographs and took notes for the test. I had read that a similar procedure was used in the early 1890s to test vertical air pinions on reciprocating-ball breather shafts at the Johnson Engineering facility in Piscataway, New Jersey. I believe the article appeared in the October 1981 issue of *Modern Crop Dusting* magazi—"

"That's great, John, but could you get back to the bike test?"

"Oh, forgive me, Al. At any rate, the Super Viper performed rather well. Having solicited the opinions of our professional test crew, I think we can safely say that the Super Viper is a fine bike for its intended age and skill categories. At a suggested retail of \$174.95, it also appears to be an excellent value. If current retail sales trends continue, your quarterly profit quota should remain stable."

"Uh, well. . . thank you, John. I understand completely. I think. Tell all the guys I appreciate the comments. We'll be seeing you later."

Epilogue: What John said was that Diamond Back would probably sell a ton of its new Super Vipers. The price is right, the quality is high, it handles fine for a beginner's bike, and it looks nice. Diamond Back, you done good. □

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