



DIAMOND BACK Super Viper



Yup, the Super Viper is a flattrackin' fool. It may be cheap (as in inexpensive), but it is a totally good bike to learn the basics of BMX'n on. Oh yeah, check out how Harry and Kirk are keepin' an eye on each other.

THIS IS ONE DURABLE 'LIL ULTRA ECONO-QUAL SCOOT

Most Factory Magazine. The moon hangs full in the sky, and a heavy mist has settled in on the murky moat (it's dirty 'cause Buff has been skippin' out on cleaning it) surrounding the castle's moss covered stone walls. There's nary a sound 'cept for an occasional hoot owl hoot-hootin' off in the distance.

In one of the mighty fortress' towers, a lone 40 watt light bulb burns

(with only an occasional flicker) while Cosmo is busily doing what he does best — snoozing.

Over in a corner, a pair of black cloaked figures work frantically over an operating table.

They work without a sound. Their movements are choreographed — honed by years of practice. They instinctively pass tools back and forth without the other having to ask.

Suddenly, as if on cue, both of the mysterious mechanics put down their tools, and reach inside their robes to click off small boxes. Reaching up, they pull U-shaped headsets off their heads, and turn toward each other. Suddenly, one member of the strange duo cuts loose with a fiendish laugh.

"Well, looks like this one's ready for action. I've got all the measure-

ments, specs, and weights. Diamond Back Super Viper, huh? Betcha lunch at El Gordo's that it doesn't last more than about fifteen minutes under Capt. Kirk."

"You're on. I have a hunch that we might get a surprise out of this guy — even though it only costs \$179.95."

"Heh, heh, heh. All right, sucker, I can almost taste them tacos right now. Say, howza 'bout letting me bor-

row your Rush tape for a while and I'll let you give Ratt a listen?"

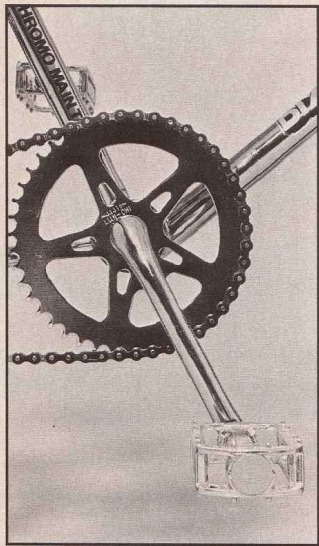
"You got yourself another deal."

TALE OF THE SUPER VIPER

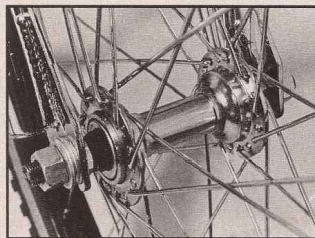
Ah yes. The Super Viper. A very, very affordable member of Diamond Back's reptile clan. But at what expense does such a low price tag come? Does Diamond Back throw their good reputation to the wind to



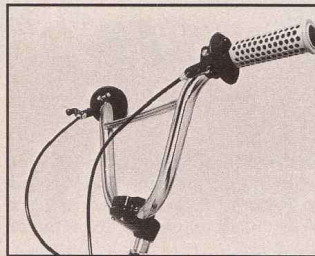
Gotcha! Remember in that classic motorcycling movie, *ON ANY SUNDAY*, when Steve McQueen roosted all over his riding buddies? Heh, heh, so did Harry. Sorry, Kirk.



The 165mm hardened steel one-piece cranks didn't lurch, munch, tweak, twink, or buy the farm. Extraordinary for non-chrome-moly cranks. If you plan on racing, you'll most likely need longer cranks (probably 175s), and you should also consider replacing the steel one-piece front sprocket with a spider and chainwheel setup to ease gearing changes.



The steel-shelled K.K. hubs aren't the prettiest inner-spinners we've ever seen, but they do roll well, and we didn't have any problems with the axles bending.



We replaced the stock bars with a pair of Red Line STR bars since the Super Viper's bars are totally narrow — only 22 3/8 inches wide. That's barely wide enough to mount both the grips and brake levers. We were much happier with the new bars in place.

provide the multitudinous masses of Grey and Black fans with an ultra-econo but substandard scoot?

Nope.

And you can bet your collection of ultra-sano stickies on that, buckaroos.

We're not saying that you're going to be able to hop aboard a Super Viper and immediately jump into some hot and heavy racing action, but you *can* spend a very sizeable amount of time vacant lot thrashing, burning up the streets, and riding a few beginner races while you learn the basic steps needed to advance up to loftier stages of BMXdom.

SADDLE UP

Yeah, go ahead and climb on. What? Yeah, you're right. It is kind of on the small side. It's a mid-size scoot that'll supply the most thrills and good times per square second to folks in the eight to twelve or *maybe* thirteen year old range. We say *maybe* 'cause you *can* stretch the upper end of the age range a bit with a change of handlebars. More on that in a little bit.

The frame has a chrome-moly front triangle and a high-tensile steel tail section. This half-and-half construction method has proven very reliable with several manufacturers in the past, and the tradition continues here.

A major hot spot (no pun intended) on the frame is the welding. It's totally nice. Not shabby at all for a frame that's made in Taiwan. It wouldn't even be bad for a frame made in Japan or even the good 'ol U.S. of A. The quality of stuff coming from Taiwan has definitely improved over the last couple of years.

A pair of gussets at the steering head add some extra security in the durability department.

The Super Viper's forks are totally chrome-moly. Good sturdy stuff, too. The construction isn't the prettiest we've ever seen (with crimped-in bottom plates on the legs), but the welds have nice precise beads.

Now back to the bars. Ugh, yuk. 'Least for semi human-sized beans. They're only 22 3/8 inches wide, and they also have a very pulled-back bend to them. That's pretty narrow — even if the Super Viper is intended to fit younger berm-bustin' buckaroos. We replaced the stockers on our test machine with a pair of Red Line bars and were immediately much happier. Cosmo must



What a radicalometrist! The drop-off that Turbo Harry's divin' down is plenty hairy (and scary) enough when you're just riding down it. We're talkin' almost a 30-foot drop! Jeez!

Photo by Steve Giberson



DIAMOND BACK SUPER VIPER

HANDLEBAR WIDTH: 22 3/8 inches.
 TOP TUBE O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.
 DOWN TUBE O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.
 FORK LEG O.D.: 1 inch.

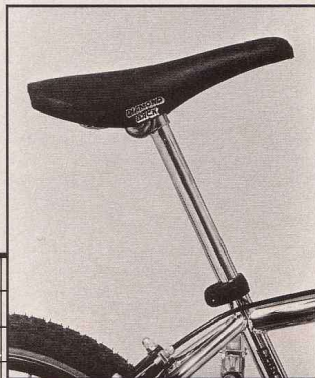
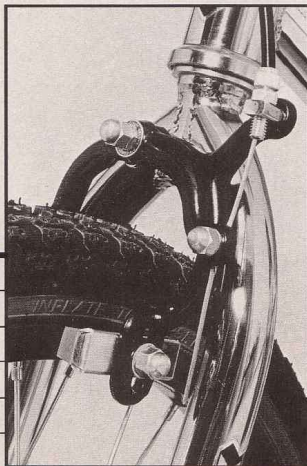
Components

FRAME: Diamond Back Super Viper, chrome-moly front triangle, high-tensile steel rear triangle.
FORK: Diamond Back Super Viper, chrome-moly.
HANDLEBAR: Diamond Back, high-tensile steel.
HANDLEBAR STEM: Diamond Back, aluminum and chrome-moly.
GRIPS: Fuan, F-1 type.
HEADSET: Diamond Back.
RIMS: Sumo, aluminum.
SPOKES: 36, .080, with brass nipples.
HUBS: K.K., low-flange, with steel shells.
TIRES: Cheng Shin.
BRAKE: Dia-Compe calipers, front and rear.
BRAKE PADS: Dia-Compe.
BRAKE LEVERS: Dia-Compe Tech 3.
BRAKE CABLES: Dia-Compe.
PEDALS: Diamond Back, aluminum and chrome-moly.
CRANK: Diamond Back, one-piece forged, heat-treated, 165mm.
BOTTOM BRACKET SET: Diamond Back.
FRONT SPROCKET: Lun Chi, one-piece steel, 44 teeth.
FREEWHEEL: SunTour, 16 teeth.
CHAIN: Diamond Back, 1/8 inch.
SEAT: Diamond Back.
SEAT POST: Diamond Back.
SEAT POST CLAMP: Diamond Back, aluminum.
MANUFACTURER:
 Western States Imports
 1837 DeHavilland Drive
 Newbury Park, California
 91320
 Tel: (805) 499-2603

Price & Specs

COMPLETE BIKE PRICE: \$179.95.
 FINISHES AVAILABLE: Chrome with

black or blue components.
COMPLETE BIKE WEIGHT (without pads or plate): 25 pounds, 7 ounces.
FRAME WEIGHT: 4 pounds, 13 1/4 ounces.
FORK WEIGHT: 1 pound, 11 ounces.
HANDLEBAR RISE (C/L of stem clamp area to C/L of grip area): 7 1/2 inches.



"Hey, feet! Where do you think you're goin'? Get back on the pedals!" With the kicked out head tube angle and short stem, the bars tended to push you back towards the rear of the bus, which meant Kirk would occasionally pick up a little looping action. A stem with a longer forward reach would help the sitch'.

COMPONENT PACKAGE

Since the price of the Super Viper is well within the budget-minded class, the components mounted on-board rank accordingly, although there's emphasis on durability and qualness.

The aluminum rims come from Sumo, and they're tough. They held up to our test crew's mega-monsterous thrashing and were still pretty straight afterward.

In the center of the wheels spin some steel-shelled K.K. low-flange hubs. The K.K.s aren't that pretty to look at, but they do roll well. Also, they even have beefy axles that didn't bend during the testing festivities. Cool.



have gotten his paws on the stock bars 'cause we haven't seen 'em since. Maybe he put 'em on the factory Fe Line Fleastyler he was putting together.

After the bar change the next thing we noticed was that the steering head angle is kicked out quite a bit, causing the Super Viper to steer nice and slow. Good for beginners, but not so hot for total high-performance racing and such. This kicked-back head angle, when combined with the short forward reach of the Diamond Back aluminum and chrome-moly stem, sets the bars back towards your lap and forces your weight toward the back of the bike. This makes for a light front end that you have to pay more attention to than normal.

The seat tube angle fits right in with this design, though. It's plenty kicked back so that you're not knocking your knees on the bars when you're sitting down and pedalling.

Well whadda ya know? It's our guest test hero, that suave and urbane kinda guy, Turbo Harry Leary.

CRANKIN' CONVERSATIONS WITH THE TURBO HISSELF, HARRY LEARY



BMXA: "Last summer you dropped out of sight for a while. What was the deal there?"

Harry: "Well, in June my attitude started to get real bad. Sometimes I would jump on people's cases and they didn't deserve it. It'd be for things that were my fault. I'd blow a start, and I'd get so mad at myself that I'd take it out on somebody else."

"Anyway, that was getting out of hand, and I was kind of bummed at myself. My doctor, Dr. Rice, runs a sports medicine clinic down in San Diego, so I went to see him and I told him what was going on. He said he had this inpatient program that was four weeks long, where you stay with these other athletes, work out with them, and participate in group discussions about the world of athletics. I decided to go for it."

"While I was in there I was getting up every morning at 5:30 and training in this gym with these big guys. Some of the San Diego Chargers were there."

"Anyway, when I came out, I had a whole new outlook of the world, myself, my abilities, and how I could perfect them. It cost me six weeks of racing, so that just shot my year all to pieces, but I wouldn't change that for anything. I learned more in those six weeks than I have in 25 years about how to live life."

"Now I take care of everything that I need to take care of and I can keep a really good attitude. I really enjoy racing now. Last year, on the way to a race, it was great. When I got there, it was a pain in the rear. I did okay, but I didn't have as much fun as I'm having right now. I'm a lot more serious about

racing. Each day I've got a schedule I go by. It's made a lot of difference."

BMXA: "What else are you doing differently?"

Harry: "Well, I get up at 7:00 every morning, sometimes earlier because I'm taking English horseback riding lessons. I want to be able to jump while I'm riding a horse. It's so bitchen. I also do a lot of 10-speed and mountain-bike riding."

"Diamond Back has asked me to go out and race a few mountain bike races, research the market, see who's doing what, who's who, and put together a factory mountain-bike team."

"I ride my mountain bike all the time. I got Denise (that's Harry's girlfriend) a horse, and she rides trails, so I follow her on my mountain bike. I go through all the streams and everything. It's really good training for your cardiovascular system, and just for endurance. I don't know how I'll fare in an actual race, but I went riding with David Clinton and all the guys from Western States (the company that distributes Diamond Back bikes) who race mountain bikes. Where they got off and pushed, I cranked right up the hill. I'll just have to try a race and see."

BMXA: "What else are you doing? I've heard that you have a stopwatch mounted on your bars for training."

Harry: "Yup. I'll wake up between 6:30 and 7:00, grab a cup of coffee, jump in the car, and head out to Colossus in Yorba Linda. I've got a watch on my crossbar to keep track of my riding time. I know that I'm gonna stay there three hours, no matter what."

"When I start a practice lap, I press the start/stop button on the stopwatch, and I keep track of how much time I actually ride. I'll be there for three hours, but I probably only ride for an hour and a half. Then I go over to Parks and stay there for a couple hours doing the same thing. That's helped a lot. I'll start the watch, go for a lap, and stop it when I finish. It's a really good thing to do. Just something to take the boredom out of it."

BMXA: "What else are you doing for training?"

Harry: "I've got a buddy named Allen Lane, and he's a 10-speed racer. He rides his 10-speed and I ride my 20-inch, and I try to keep up with him. I've just started doing that. Before, we'd mainly been going 10-speed against 10-speed, but he couldn't keep up."

BMXA: "It seems like you always

try to make it tough on yourself when you're training. Like riding the mountain-bike behind the horse or riding your 20-inch behind a 10-speed."

Harry: "It's like when you're racing. If you put yourself against somebody, you'll always do better. Life is that way."

BMXA: "How about weight training?"

Harry: "I've kind of tapered off on the weights 'cause when I was at the sports clinic, I was in the gym every morning. I really had a chance to build my upper body and legs on weights, so now I've just kind of dropped the weights and really worked on getting my style back. I'd lost my style. I wasn't really riding a lot and I sort of lost my ability to jump really fluidly. Right now it's coming back. Like today when we were shooting photos, I was pleased with the way I was jumping."

BMXA: "I've seen you out at the races writing in a logbook between motos. Why are you doing that?"

Harry: "After every moto I try to come back and write what I can remember. I rerun the race in my mind and if there was a good point, I'll write that I did good there, and if there was a bad point, then I'll write about that. I write about things that I need to think about the next time — just in case that point comes up again. For instance, I might have shut off too early, or taken a bad line."

BMXA: "Do you read back over 'em after a weekend?"

Harry: "What I do is, on the way home on the plane I go back over them and rewrite them if I can remember anything more. Sometimes I won't write the mains down until on the way home. Re-reading them is kind of interesting."

BMXA: "Do you save them?"

Harry: "Yeah."

BMXA: "How do you honestly feel about your racing right now?"

Harry: "I think I'm trying too hard. Physically, I'm ready. I couldn't really be in much better shape. But I think I have this big mental block about winning right now. I've got the attitude to come out and race and do really well. When I don't do so hot, I'm taking it good. Before I'd really fly off the deep end. I'm not having to replace so many things now. I don't come home and punch things, like my car. I know my racing's going to turn around."

"There are a lot of young guys out there and lot of fast people, but they're not that fast."



Capt. Kirk, tucked in and truckin' over the step jump at Colossus. After we changed the bars, the Super Viper fit Kirk — well, mostly anyways. It'll accommodate folks in the eight to twelve or thirteen age range the best. It's really amazing how much torture that the Super Viper took, even after we subjected it to all kinds of things that you shouldn't EVEN try on an ultra econo-qual bike. Diamond Back should be proud.

DIAMOND BACK SUPER VIPER VITAL STATS

PURPOSE: Racing (up to and including low-level novice), thrashable, bashable street scooter.

AGE RANGE: 8 to 12 racing and street, maybe 13 with a change of handlebars.

STEERING HEAD ANGLE: 69 1/2 degrees.

SEAT TUBE ANGLE: 63 degrees.

TIRE SIZES: 20 X 1.75 front and rear.

FORK RAKE: 1 3/8 inches.

BOTTOM BRACKET HEIGHT: 11 1/2 inches.

REAR SECTION LENGTH (C/L of bottom bracket shell to C/L of rear axle): 15 inches with 35 1/4 inch wheelbase.

WHEELBASE: 34 3/4 inches to 36 1/8 inches.

QUALITY OF FINISH: Good to very good. Nicely polished on the frame and fork, just a hair thin on the fork dropouts.

QUALITY OF COMPONENTRY: Okay to very good.

QUALITY OF WELDING: Excellent on the frame and fork, lame on the handlebars.

GEOMETRY: Excellent for beginners.

Very forgiving, but the front is a bit on the light side.

HANDLING: The front end loves lots of attention when cornering, jumping, and wheeling — and it needs it. Stability, even at high speeds, is excellent. It doesn't give you any surprises without lots of warning.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS:

Change the bars — unless you're a midget... The brakes work fine... We were amazed that the cranks weren't chrome-moly and honestly and truly held up under the aerially-inclined Capt. Kirk...

"The components are all right, the brakes work excellent..." "The hubs roll good, but they look kinda funky..." "The pedals worked pretty good. I didn't have any problems slipping 'em..." "It's a really good street and thrasher bike. It's good for the price."

TEST INPUT: Capt. Kirk, Gibey, Turbo Harry, A.J., Mr. T (Don T., that is) and winsome Windy.

The tires are Cheng Shin skin-walls with a Comp III type tread pattern. True, they're not Comp III's, but they're not bad.

Dia-Compe standard calipers grace both the front and rear of the Super Viper. They work just fine, partially thanks to the good leverage afforded by the Dia-Compe Tech 3 levers that are found on both ends of the bars.

Before the test we were a little worried about the Diamond Back one-piece cranks. They aren't chrome-moly, but they are heat-treated. Amazingly, they survived. And that was even after some particularly brutal landings by Kirk while we were testing at Colossus.

We're pretty sure that their 165mm length was part of the reason why the cranks came through the torture intact. Shorter cranks equal less leverage, and that means less chance for them to bend.

The one-piece style front sprocket is fine for thrashin', bashin', and just general gettin' crit riding, but when it comes time to start racing, you'll need to switch to a quick-change spider and chainwheel setup.

Pedals look quite a bit like SR's,

but they're not. They're H.T.I.s that have aluminum platforms and chrome-moly shafts. They survived too, by golly.

JAMMIN' AROUND ON THE SUPER VIPER

It's lots of fun. With the bike's somewhat chopperized steering head angle you don't have to pay tons of attention to your direction of travel 'cause the Super Viper won't take off for unwanted territory without giving you plenty of warning.

Power wheeling out of corners gets a little sketchy, mostly 'cause of the weight placement. Remember how we were telling you that the short stem and steering head angle pushed your weight back and made for a light front end? That makes it pretty easy to loop. If you were to add a stem with a longer forward reach, it would move your weight forward and we'd be talkin' perfectomundo.

Let's let Krazed Kirk cut loose with some miscellaneous comments on handling:

"It'd turn good for a shorter person. This is a small bike."

"When you're jumping, the back wheel drops and the front wheel lifts, so it loops some. You've got to keep your weight over the front end

more. A longer stem would probably help a whole lot."

Thanks, Kirk. Like we said before, the Super Viper is a totally cool bike for beginners to learn their stuff on, but advanced riders will find it does have some shortcomings in the handling department.

FINALIZING THE DETAILS

Back inside one of the towers of the Mighty BMXA headquarters, the two mysterious magazine moguls are hunched over a table peering at black and white proof sheets, color slides, and a computer readout of material gleaned from the savage testing of the Super Viper. They mumble back and forth between themselves. One member of this editorial crew is in a surly mood.

"Hmmmph. Well, looks like you were right. The Super Viper IS durable. And for only \$179.95. It DEFINITELY exceeded my expectations of how long it would last. The frame and fork survived — no probs. True, the cranks bent a little, but very few, if any, of the riders who'll fit this bike will put it through the kind of punishment that Kirk did."

"Told ya so. Now it seems to me that we had a small wager — and my stomach's talkin' munchtime. So if you're ready to go . . ." ■

Mr. H. Leary, caught somewhere between reality, and . . . The Cartoon Zone.
Photo by Gibey. Cartoonin' by Andy Jenkins

