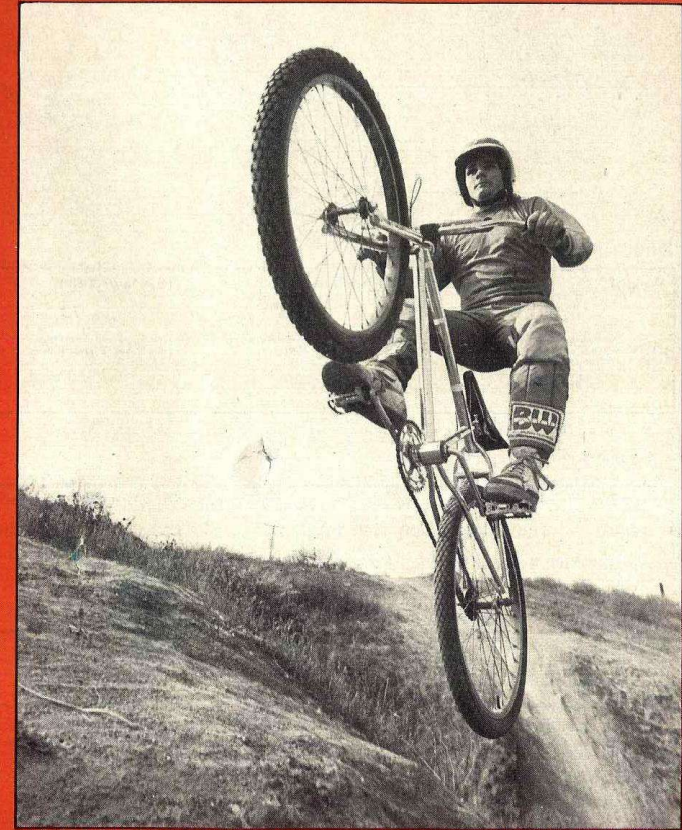




GT landed Greg Hill and promptly loaned him to us for the GT 24 test. As you can see, he had no trouble adjusting to the bike at all. Photo by Bob Hadley.

GT TEST

GT's twenty-four-inch racer offers top performance on the racetrack. It may well be the ultimate weapon in the cruiser classes.



Claveau brings the front end up with full confidence. The GT combines the agility of a little bike with the stability of a cruiser.

For a small company GT seems to have all the bases covered pretty well. On one hand they've got the little bikes, a mini and a pro, and on the other hand they've got the big 26-inch cruiser.

With the release of their latest model, the GT 24-inch cruiser, they've got all the ground in between covered.

GT wasn't the first company to make a twenty-four inch racing cruiser, but they were among the first to grasp the validity of idea and go to work refining it. Gary Turner, the G.T. behind GT, supervised the development of the 24. Gary likes to be analytical about designing frames, taking it one step at a time. Only after several

GT 24

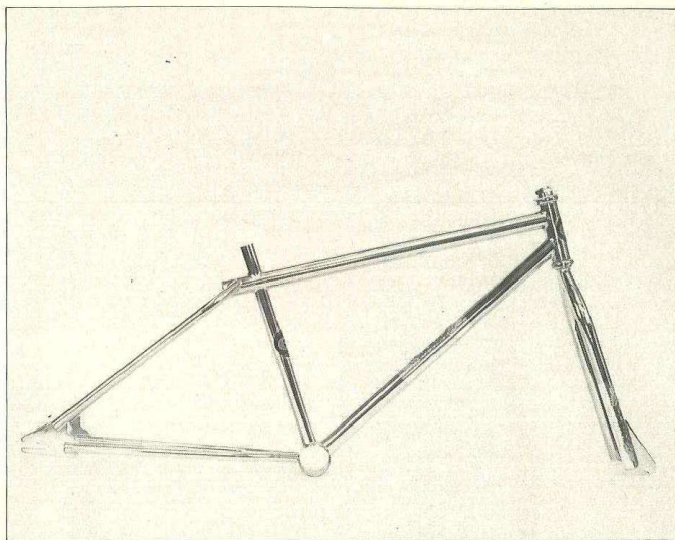
Serial Number: 881750

GT BMX
4018 "B" Chandler Ave.
Santa Ana, California 92704
(Approx. price frame and
fork is \$200.)

This report was compiled by:

Michael Hadley

Bob Hadley



DIMENSIONS

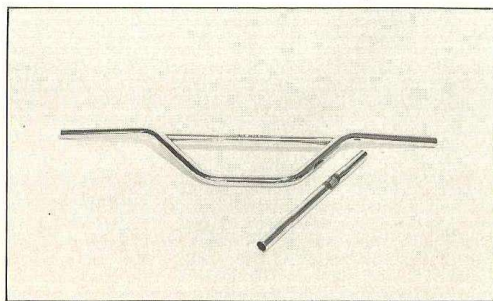
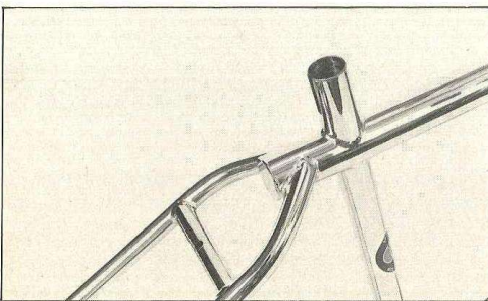
Weight 12.2 Kg	(A) Wheelbase 1028 mm	(B) Head Angle 73° 20"	(C) Seat Angle 69° 50"
(D) Hanger Height 298 mm	(E) Hanger to Axle 435 mm	(F) Top Tube Height 588 mm	(G) Trail 37 mm

FRAME SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	Material/Construction	Seat Post Diameter	Head Tube Style	Hanger Style
1.9 Kg	4130 Chromemoly/Heli arc	22 mm	Standard BMX	Standard BMX

FORK SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	Material/Construction	Height	Offset
.85 Kg	4130 Chrome moly/Heli-arc	363 mm	52 mm



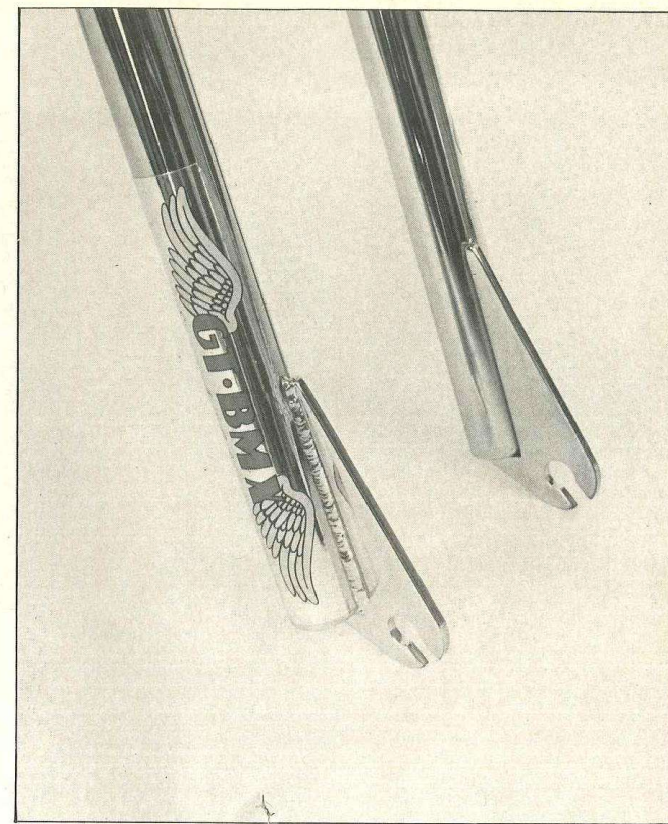
prototypes had been built and tested did Gary feel he had one that looked "just right". How does GT know when something looks right? Gary and his partner Richard Long have been involved in BMX a long time. Their involvement is more than just building frames in some factory somewhere. The two have probably spent more time at BMX races than just about anyone. That means getting something to "look right" is more than simple trial and error. It's translating all those years of on-the-scene involvement into a form that performs a specific function.

UNMISTAKABLY GT

The GT 24 fits right into the GT mold. Every model they make has the same distinct look, a good indication that the company has confidence in their initial design. GT's most unique feature is, of course, the seat post-through-the-top tube configuration. Although this design has been copied by several other companies GT bikes still manage to retain their distinct look and unmistakable identity.

Both frame and fork use chromemoly tubing and are heli-arc welded. All the welds are extremely clean and consistent. On the frame the top and down tubes are both 32mm (1.25 inches) in diameter. It used to be that 25 mm (1 inch) diameter tubing was the standard of the industry. In the past couple of years that has changed. Now the larger sizes (28 and 32 mm) are becoming the more common. The reasoning is simple: the larger diameter tubing has a greater strength-to-weight ratio. In addition it provides greater weld coverage, which especially on an unguessed frame like a GT, is a substantial advantage. It is also interesting to note that GT's top tube is welded perpendicular to the head tube. In theory, this tends to distribute more evenly the back-and-forth load forces that are transmitted to the head structure by the fork.

Simple yet functional is an appropriate description of the tail section. The rear dropouts are thicker than GT's of the past (probably to keep the axle slots from spreading, which is something that can be prevented by using the proper washers). One reason the GT rear triangle looks so clean and simple is that, outside the tubular caliper brake mount, there is no other bridging between the stays. The weight of the frame is 1.9 kg (4 lbs., 3 oz.), a good indication that this machine was not intended as a thrasher to any extent. It's built for racing.



The new 24-inch forks feature extra thick dropouts to resist the flexing that occurs with the bigger wheels.

BEEFY DROPOUTS

Like just about everyone else, GT uses tubular chrome-moly leading-axle-style fork. Legs are heli-arc'd to the steering stem. GT's fork dropouts are beefier than most. The extra thickness reduces the tendency of the dropouts to flex, which is a common problem with cruisers (big wheels have more leverage). The fork weighs only .85 kg (1 lb., 14 oz.), which is remarkably light for a 24 inch fork. In fact, one of the first things we did with the GT was take it out and see if we could detect any flex in the fork. The conclusion: only if you throw your weight into the front end (not recommended) when you're landing from jumps or going over whoops can a noticeable amount of flex be detected. Based on past experience most fork failures occur at either the dropouts or the steering stem. With the flex only noticeable in extreme

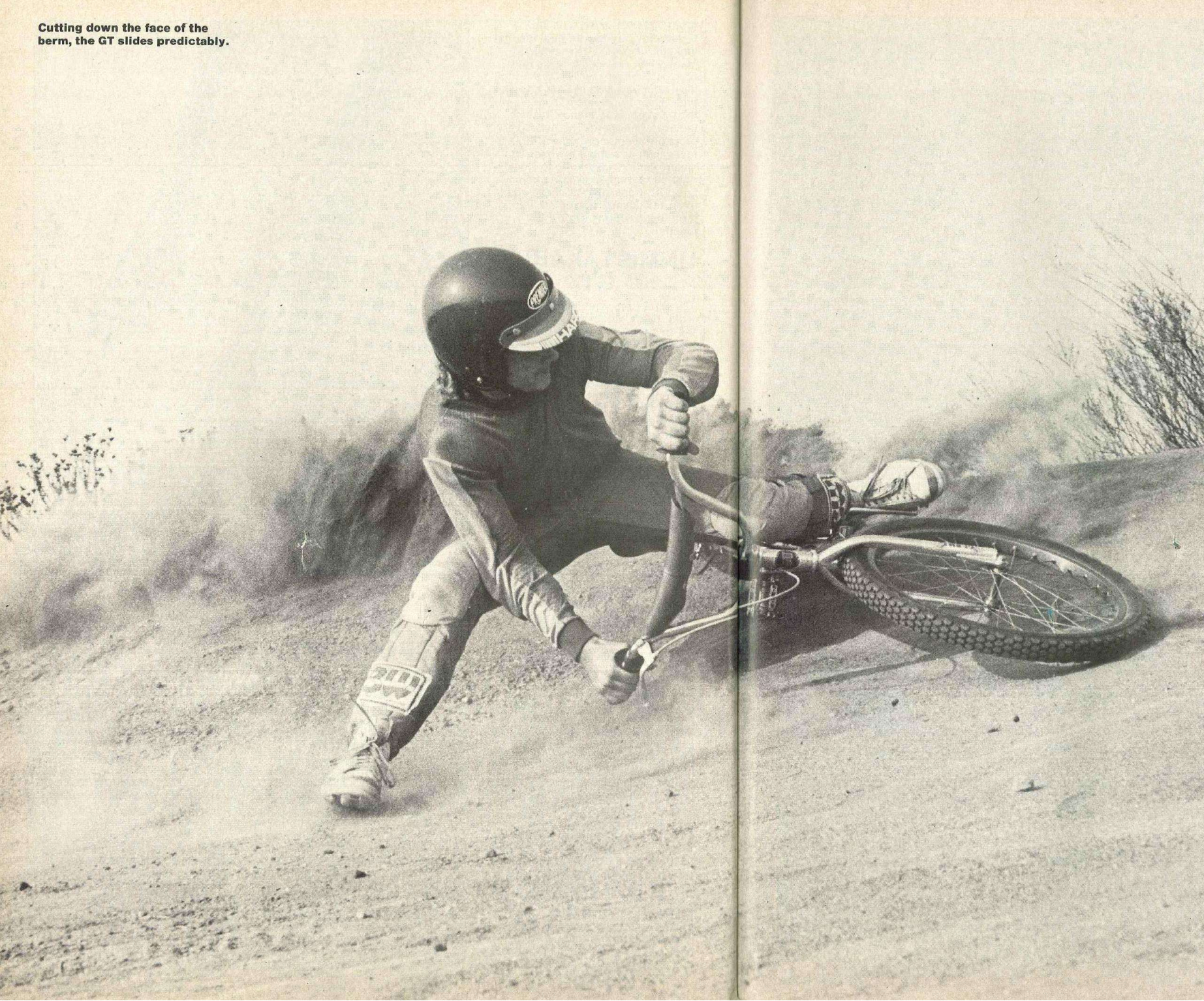
situations, the forks will most likely stand up to any racing situation. Like the frame, the forks are made for racing, not thrashing.

Since GT doesn't sell the 24" cruiser as a complete unit, the bike can be set up with virtually any combination of components. For reliability's sake we set up the GT frame and fork to be fairly basic.

A quick rundown of the hardware goes like this: GT bars, Pro-Neck stem, Araya 7C (24") rims, Shimano Free-hub set, Takagi 175 mm one-piece cranks, MKS BM-10 pedals, and a new Shimano DX Seat Pillar with a new Kashimax Aero saddle bolted on. The total weight of the bike, at 12.2 kg (27 lbs), was not bad at all, considering the tires we had to use (see the sidebar).

Provided the bars and seat are adjusted properly, the body positioning on the GT is comfortable. It feels more like a 20 inch than a cruiser when you just sit on the bike. Riding it is another story. Even though the wheelbase is only 10 per cent longer than your average little bike, you definitely

Cutting down the face of the berm, the GT slides predictably.



feel the "slowed down" characteristics that accompany larger-wheeled bikes.



Jumping the GT requires first getting used to the weight bias on the front end.

A GREAT HANDLER

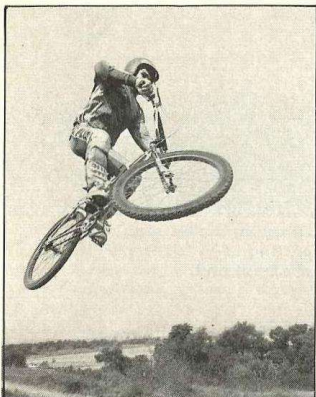
The steering response is neutral-feeling and the bike is very stable at high speeds, even though it has a quick (at least by 20-inch standards) 73 degree head angle.

Before getting into the handling any further, it is important to put certain things into perspective, primarily the tires. Within the tractional limitations, the GT proved to be a great handler. The tractional limitations of the tires were as follows: Anytime we were on hard surfaces where the *rubber compound* is most important, the tires worked great. Carlisle rubber is fantastic. But anytime we encountered the need to turn on *soft, loose soil*, where the *tread pattern* is most critical, the lack of a decent BMX tread found us trying everything we could think of to find some, *any*, traction.

Don't hold it against the GT; we know it can turn. When you do have traction the bike will lean, drift, and slide through turns predictably. Twenty miles of fast fireroad with 400 turns proved that.

We found the weight bias on the GT to be heavy on the front end. It doesn't wheelie as easily as some 26-inch cruisers. For speed jumping and getting quick starts this is good. It also tends to make you pay more attention to keeping the front end up on jumps. Shortening the

rear triangle would probably even out the balance and make the bike easier to wheelie, but it is doubtful that GT wanted a bike for doing wheelies. Full race is what GT wanted out of this 24, and that is what they got. After all, full race is the only thing GT makes. ★



The GT 24 was agile and steady in flight. Kirk applies mid-air correction technique to land the bike.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?

One can easily see the obvious advantages a twenty-four-inch-wheeled cruiser has over a twenty-six. Most apparent is the lighter weight because of the smaller, more compact chassis. Of course, an added advantage is that the smaller-diameter wheels are more responsive to turning situations. But perhaps the biggest advantage that twenty-four-inch cruisers have to offer hasn't been realized yet: a significant reduction in rotational weight. True, a twenty-four-inch alloy wheel (spokes, rim, and hub) is lighter than a twenty-six, but twenty-four-inch tires are still in the Stone Age. For example, The Uniroyal Nobby 24 X 2.125 blackwall tire weighs approximately 1050 grams. By contrast the current, state-of-the-art, 26 X 2.125 skin-wall tires weigh approximately 900 grams. Therefore, any advantage of having the mass rotating on the smaller radius is cancelled by the excessive tire weight.

It is almost traditional that tire technology lags behind other developments. You just can't make up a prototype tire like you can a frame. In the case of twenty-six-inch cruisers it took over a year before any real high-quality tires began to show up. Why the delays? When cruisers first showed up nobody was sure how popular they would become. Since designing a tire is so complex, and creating the tooling for it is so expensive, tire companies like to wait and see, rather than blow a wad of money on an unsure thing. The same thing applies to twenty-four-inch cruisers, except that now, with Murray and SE Racing mass producing twenty-four-inch cruisers, the lag time should be much shorter.

At any rate, when the high quality twenty-four-inch tires show up, twenty-four-inch cruisers will see about a twenty-five-percent reduction in rotational inertia compared to the twenty-six-inch cruisers. That in itself is a far more important gain than just having a lighter-weight chassis and quicker turning. ★



Kirk plants the tires firmly against the face of the berm to get maximum traction. Driving off the berm is the quickest way to turn the GT.

Rad Gallery

Brent Patterson. He says he can't jump. The evidence says something else. Photo by John Ker

