

FREESTYLE'S BEST BUY? MAYBE SO
BEST BUY? MAYBE SO
Big-bucks performance
at a low-bucks price
at a low-bucks price

☐ Bob Haro is not your average corporate executive. For one thing, he's not yet 30 years old. For another, he can positively rip on a bicycle. It's an oft-told tale by now, but it's probably worth mentioning that Bob was once widely considered to be the top freestyler in the world, back before the AFA and freestyle contests even existed. In fact, Bob and his freestyle teammate from those days, R.L. Osborn, are generally considered to be the guys who created freestyle as we know it.

EARLY DAYS

Back in the early days of BMX, Bob and R.L. were racers. Like most racers, they spent a lot of time on their bikes, and during some of that time, they started doing tricks on their bikes that they could use to show off their bike-handling skills. Thus was born the sport of freestyle.

Haro needed to find some way to make a living, so he started selling number-plates to racers. A naturally gifted artist, his stylish-looking numberplates soon came to be regarded as the best in BMX, and soon most of the sport's top riders were running them.

Bob's numberplate business soon outgrew his kitchen, where he used to heat them over his stove to bend them into shape. He rented warehouse and office space, and started to pursue his business seriously. In time, he created additional products, and his business kept growing. Somewhere along the line, about five years ago, Bob decided to market a freestyle bike similar to the one he was riding in the trick shows he was doing on the side. It was modeled after his old Torker race bike, whose most distinguishing feature was its double top tube, which made for a great framestanding platform. He called his first bike the Haro Freestyler, and an industry was born. TODAY

Over the years, the original Haro Freestyler evolved into the Haro Master, now Haro's top-of-the-line bike. During that period of evolution, Bob retired from doing freestyle shows because of problems with his knees, so he ended up putting more and more of his time into his business. As a result, he started coming out with more and more products, all in the Haro tradition of combining excellent performance with great styling.

The Haro F.S.T. came out about two

Paradise.
The FSX
Was one
of the
easiestto-getusedto
bikes
We've
ever
tested.

▼Tony Adams lofts the FSX high above his plywood

After ten minutes on the bike, Dave Nourie gave it a thumbs up for its flatland capabilities.

years ago. It was designed to be a dualpurpose bike—one that was equally at home in the freestyle and racing camps. In fact, the initials stand for Freestyle, Street and Track. There was nothing terribly radical about the idea. The first bikes used for freestyle were BMX race bikes, and they were obviously suitable for the street, too. The only difference was that the F.S.T. (Haro later dropped the periods from the name) was primarily a freestyle bike that could do double

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Those who prefer the feel of Ukai 48-spoke alloy rims may want to consider the FST. which is the same bike as the FSX in every other way.

duty on the track. As a matter of fact, it turned out to be a very good performer in both modes of riding.

Now, at long last, we come to the FSX our test bike. The FSX is basically the same bike as the FST, except for the wheels. The FST has 48-spoke alloy wheels, whereas the FSX has six-spoke Skyway mags. Otherwise, they're the same.

As Haro's lowest-priced, entry-level freestyle bike, the FSX is a lot different from its higher-priced brethren, the Master and Sport. For one thing, the FSX and FST sell for around \$250, but the Master and Sport hit your wallet for close to 400 big ones. How can that be, when visually the bikes look to be of almost equal quality?

It wasn't easy. To do it, Haro had to rethink the bike from the ground up in order to cut costs without seriously cutting quality.

For starters, the FSX and FST have trimoly frames. That means the main frame tubes are chromoly, and the seat stays and chain stays are simply steel. On a purebred race bike that would be considered an unpardonable sin, because it increases the weight of the bike a few ounces, thus making it a little



slower in its initial acceleration. On a freestyle bike, it's no big deal.

The seatpost, handlebars, chain ring and spider are also steel instead of chromoly. Again, on a purebred race bike that would be a cardinal sin, but here again it's no big deal-as long as they're strong enough to take abuse without bending, which we were about to find out.

We picked up our test bike at Haro headquarters in Carlsbad, California.

Our first stop was Tony Adams' house in Santee, California, about 40 miles south of the Haro offices. Tony and friend Sean Diveley were on hand to help put the bike through a torture session. After a few minutes of setting up the bike to their personal preferences (seat height, handlebar positioning and brake adjustments), they began to cut loose on it.

"This bike is really easy to get used to," Sean told us after he'd been on it a few minutes. Tony shared his opinion. Both guys prefer to ride with a coaster brake, but they had no trouble at all pulling off

OFFICIAL BMX PLUS! TEST BIKE **PRO AND CON LIST** HARO FSX

PROS

Great handling Gyro included Excellent Strong components Cool graphics All platforms Feels expensive included Reasonably priced

A little heavy

CONS

Some parts aren't chromoly

a number of high variations within minutes of getting on board the freewheelequipped FSX. The two were in total agreement: The bike handles really well and is a cinch to get used to.

As for the components, they held up fine, too. The chromoly cranks staved absolutely straight and true, even after repeated aerials. The seatpost and handlebars came out of their test the same way they went into it-looking brand new. The only item we had a slight problem with was the Haro Group 1 stem. The bars moved a little every once in a while. We decided it was due to the fact that the inside clamping area of the stem, and the midsection of the handlebars are both painted. Brian Scura showed us a trick last year that will solve the slippage problems in such a situation. All you have to do is remove the bars from the







stem and scratch off the paint where the stem and bars connect. Do that on both the stem and the bars, and you'll have no problems.

Almost all the comments were favorable: "It accelerates well." "It's really smooth." "It has good parts for a stock bike." "The angles are good." "I like the wheels a lot. I've got rims on my bike, but I really like the Skyways. I might have to go back ... It looks good."

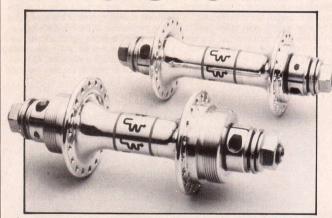
The only changes they wanted to make were minor. Tony thought a black seat would look better. Sean said he would want to exchange the pedals to minimize slippage on his more extreme lookbacks. Otherwise, they were incredibly impressed with the bike.

CHANGING RIDERS DOESN'T CHANGE OPINIONS

While we were in the San Diego, California, area, we took the bike to Sea World to get some shots of Dave Nourie trying it out there. Then we went over to Ron Wilkerson's house to let him try it. You'd expect the factory guys to say everything was peachy keen, even if

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Even the Santee ramp has its rules.

they thought otherwise, but that's not the case. Factory guys are usually brutally honest about how they feel about a bike, although they sometimes won't tell us what they think until after we agree to keep their comments out of print. In this case. Nourie and Wilkerson had nothing to hide. "I'd probably make it a little longer. . . but then it would be a Sport," said Ron. He said he honestly couldn't believe how good the components and the handling were for an inexpensive bike. "This bike's got everything you need." he said. "I'd buy it." And he was serious.

After we brought it back to the office, we turned it over to Larry Manayan, a Mission Hills, California, local who is a hot freestyler and regular helper in our bike evaluations.

Larry can be a real nit-picker about bikes, but even he couldn't find fault with much on this one. "The geometry and handling are great," he said after his first ten minutes on the bike. "The seat and handlebars are easy to grab together," he added. "It's good that it comes with a Gyro. The brakes work well.

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GT - performer wht ch lay orn blu onk

CW Prestyle - wht, lav, pnk, grn ...

1986 Hare Sport - wht, chr, blu, grn

HANDLEBARS

GT Pro Std - chr, wht GT Mini - chrome 17.50.

Haro Group 1 Racing

PEDALS (ord

Suntour XC II Bear C Shimano MX 15 - cl SR-MTP 100 - seale

MKS Graphite - blk, Vector XC II Type Pe

STEMS

DK-Pro. Mini. XL - a Hutch F/S Stem . 2

ACS Rotor 45 Stem ACS Rotor 55 Stant

ACS Rotor Stem w Haro Group 1 Stem Odyssey 6 - bolt F/S

HEADSETS

MX-2 Quick Adjust - chrome. Tioga Bear Trap - CP, blu, blk, lav, pnk

(24T for 1 pc., 28T for 3 pc.)

ga Sealed - rd, blu, blk, w/ch

Tioga MX-7 - sealed mech, CP, wh, grn, bil GT Epoch - ch, wht, bik, lav, grn, pnk Hutch 2-in-1 Lock & Spacer - s.m.l. chrome .

DK 2-in-1 Lock & Spacer - s.m.l. chrome .

Redline 401 - 175 180 185mm ch wht

Profile wreated 88 - 175, 177, 180, 186mm, ch NEWI Perspries - 175, 180mm, ch NEWI GT Pro Serbes - 175, 180mm, ch Sugine CR-M0-1 pc, 175, 180mm, chrome. Sugine CR-M0-1 pc, 175, 180mm, chrome. NeWI Max Rev Dublar - 175, 180mm, chrome. Hospe sasied 88 - 247 e27, chrome. Tipps sasied 88 - 247 lor pc. NEWI Tipps Sasied Mech - 247 for 1 pc. NEWI Tipps Sasied Serber - 247 for 1 pc. Bullayer Sasied - 10 rdb, dc. Sugine CR-W1 value for 3 pc. Sugine CR-W1 value for 3 pc.

PLATES AND NUMBERS

Haro Series 1B (white face) - Diamond Back, Rec

Zero-Nine Air-Flo - wht/blu, wht/blk, wh/rd Hutch Plate - wht w/blk or rd/blu/wht.

Hare Stadium Numbers - blk w/wht trim. Uni Twin Line Number - blk or wht.

Uni Cross-fire - blk, grn, blu, vio, wht . Hare Flo-Panel - wht, blu, rd, blk

Redline U-Bar or S-Bar Plate - white . Zero-Nine Mini-Flo - wht w/rd, blu, bl

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Hutch - pro, chrome, wht Hutch Hollywood - pnk, vio, baby blu. Hutch Trickstar - rd, blu, wht, pnk, vio, chr.

1986 Haro Master Freestyle - wht. chr. grn. blu

1996 Haro Sport - Witt, Ciri, Diu, giri Profile Champ Pro - chrome. 1987 Haro Master F&F - bik/blu, bik/rd. 1987 Haro Sport F&F - bik/blu, bik/rd, bik/wht.

GT Pro Performer - chr., wht, pnk, lav, blu. Hutch Pro - chr. wht, pnk, lav, rd, blu... Redline Forklitter "U" Bar - chr. wht...

Redline Forklitter Straight - wht, CP... Hutch Freestyle - chr. wht, rd, pnk, vio Vector-Haro Rep, Pro w/Stem - chr. wh

Skyway Pro E-Z - blu, gra, wht, lav, grn... Skyway Mini E-Z - blu, gra, wht, lav, grn... Tioga F/S Bar w/Standing Studs - all colors CW Freestyle - wht, rd, or, grn, chr., pnk...

GT - pro, wht, chrome.

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Hare RS2 - blk/blu, blk/rd	229.9
Hare FST - w/48's, blk/blu, blk/rd	
Hare FSX - w/mags, blk/blu, blk/rd, blk/wht	220.0
Haro Sport - w/48's, blk/blu	220 0
Haro Sport - w/mags, blk/blu, blk/rd, blk/wht	220.0
Haro Sport - w/mags, bik/biu, bik/ro, bik/wnt	. 329.5
Haro Team Sport - HP 48's, blk/turq	. 449.5
Hare Master - w/48's, blk/sil	329.5
Haro Master - w/mags, blk/blu, blk/rd	. 329.
Kuwahara Magician Exp	. 199.9
Kuwahara Magician Pro	
Kuwahara Bravo Pro	. 314.9
Diamond Back Hot Streak - aqua, tangerine	
Diamond Back Strike Zone - magenta, blu	309.9
Mongoose F/S Decade - w/48's, blu, grn, wht, CP	. 214.9
Mongoose F/S Decade - w/mags, blu, grn	. 224.
Mongoose F/S Decade Pro - w/48's, magenta	279.
Mongoose Californian - blk, CP/blk	. 229.
SCOOTERS	

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chrome	109.95
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Skyway six-spokers, Haro bars, Dia-Compe brakes, a Gyro detangler and well-placed fork pegs make this one of the best allaround freestyle packages we've seen.

The platform on top is good. The rear platforms are good, but you need pegs, too. Same with the front. The front pegs are good—the height is good—but they could be bigger. I'd put front axle pegs on it, too. I like axle pegs and something a little bigger. It's kind of heavy, but that's because I'm used to alloys." That was the harshest criticism we heard about the bike.

SUMMING IT UP

What we've got here is a bike that looks and handles great, one with good componentry and up-to-the-minute styling. What's more, its suggested retail price is \$279, which is about 40 or 50 dollars less than you'd expect a bike that looks and rides this good to cost.

The reason the bike costs less than it. looks like it should is, the folks at Haro cut production costs on the bike by using chromoly steel only in the places it's most





The rear platforms are unobtrusive but functional. Screw-on axle pegs would be an asset for some moves, though.

needed-places such as the forks, the front triangle and the cranks.

We didn't tell our test riders that the seatpost, handlebars and rear triangle were made of regular high-tensile steel, and they never quessed it. The bike took all the punishment we could give it and came through without so much as a scratch.

Under the circumstances, in view of everything we've seen and found out about this bike, we've got to admit that the Haro FSX (like its brother the FST) is one of the best buys in freestyle. And what's more, in case you're interested, we think it would work well as a race bike, too,

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