



KUWAHARA KZ-1



Bleeding off some speed. The KZ1 doesn't feel fast but don't let it fool you. It is.

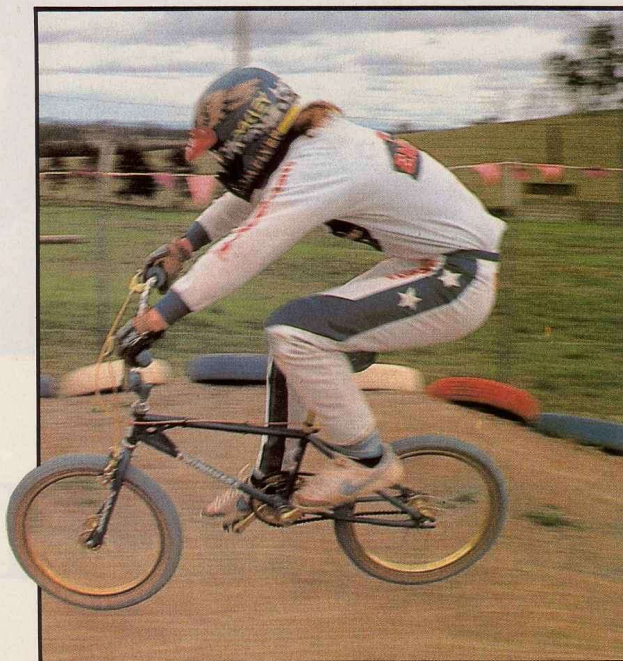
Japan, famous for its Sumo wrestling, suki yaki and Datsuns, now has a foothold in Australian BMX with its Kuwahara range, the KZ-1, and with its fierce reputation OS, our test rider Keiren Hood couldn't wait to get his destructive little hands on it. We were assured by Kuwahara that if them little Phantom Agent critters couldn't break it, no one could, but go ahead and try.

With that statement firmly in our minds we set off to Metro-West determined to return home with either a very sore and sorry test rider or a handful of BMX parts. The sky was very dark and rain seemed likely, hurriedly we fed Keiren half-a-pound of raw meat and sent him out for a few quick laps to adjust to the KZ. After the ritual of dialing in the seat height and handle bar position, it was time to get rad.

After a few heavy jumps where our maniac camera clicker kept screaming higher, higher, we took time out to check all the nuts and bolts for tension. Amazingly nothing worked its way loose, even the brake cable hadn't stretched. Full marks to Kuwahara and Turrumurra Cycles who prepared our KZ-1.

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From the Land of the Rising Sun the KZ-1 rises beyond the limits of ET.



At speed it's rad.



KUWAHARA KZ-1 SPECIFICATIONS

FRAME: Built from aircraft quality Cro-moly mitted tubing.
FORK: Kuwahara chrome-moly.
HANDLEBARS: Redline approved V-bar.
GRIPS: OGG.
STEM: Suntour power stem.
HEADSET: Tange MX2.
RIMS: Ukai box aluminium.
HUBS: Suntour high-flange aluminium.
BRAKES: Dia-Compe MX1000 caliper.

BRAKE LEVER: Dia-Compe pre-bent.
TYRES: IRC coloured skinwall.
PEDALS: KKT lighting alloy.
CRANKS: SunTour VX crank set.
SPIDER: Sugino chrome-moly.
FRONT SPROCKET: SunTour 44T.
REAR SPROCKET: SunTour 16T.
SEAT: Tahei Elina lighting bolt.
SEAT POST: Fluted alloy.

SEAT POST CLAMP: SunTour alloy.
FOR MORE INFORMATION: See your local World of Wheels shop or have your shop call Apollo Bicycles.
MANUFACTURER: Kuwahara Cycles Limited Osaka, Japan.
DISTRIBUTOR: Apollo Bicycles P.O. Box 313, Gordon 2072, NSW Ph: (02) 498-7380



Dia Compe MX 1000's the best.



Suntour three-piece cranks a little wimpy but get the job done.

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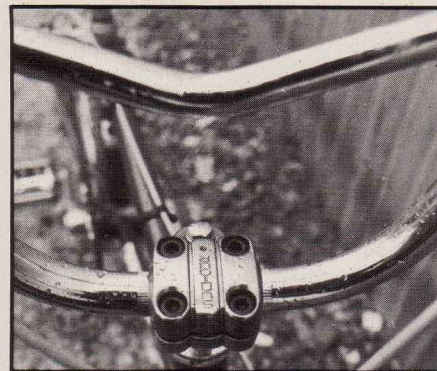
Meanwhile, back on the track the KZ-1 proved itself to be indestructible, soaking up all the abuse and punishment heaped upon it. The handling was very neutral, that is, when you wanted to turn left in a hurry the KZ-1 wanted to turn with you. High speed stability and speed jumping saw the KZ-1 perform effortlessly with no hint of either frame or fork flex. Cornering is where BMX race bikes must handle. Let's face it, when you're racing you don't need a bike that gets an insane amount of air or one that you can wheelie for miles. Going in faster, holding a tight line and getting out like your pants are on fire, now that's cornering.

Is the KZ-1 the perfect BMX-er for corners? Nothing's perfect, but with Kuwahara's front end geometry it comes close, by allowing the rider to hold his line through a corner. This gives you a lot of confidence then dualing for a bermed corner knowing that you can pick the higher, faster line without fear of your front wheel climbing out and over, giving you a dose of instant pain.

The Ukai rims ran true all through the test and once the IRC tyres were scrubbed in they gave good traction with only a hint of sideways walk. When it came time to use the stoppers the Dia-Compe MX 1000 brakes really showed us why so many production BMX-ers have these as standard equipment. Their stopping power was first class and with a fiddle on the quick adjustment knob you can dial in that much needed feel.

Actually the layout of the whole bike was comfortable and easy to get used to. The Elina seat was quite good with no sharp edges to catch and rip through your nylons on. The fluted alloy seat pole took everything served up to it and the Suntour clamp held the whole package neatly together.

The only faults the KZ-1 had are faults shared by nearly all other BMX bikes. Rider preference, not every rider has the same size hands, so things like grips and pedals are not going to suit everyone. That's not saying BMX bikes have poor grips and pedals, but small inexpensive items like these shouldn't sway your decision from one brand to another.



Redline V-bars and Suntour stem. Try and think of two more respected names.

The bottom line on the Kuwahara KZ-1 is that this bike has been designed and manufactured with racing as a major factor. Top quality components abound on the KZ-1, they all do their assigned chores without problems or breakages. The KZ-1 is fast, durable and easy to ride, so after the respect we developed for it during the test we can see no reason why this bike won't capture its share of the trophies.



Cornering's a breeze. Out in front and still heaps of time for style.

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