



"Could you ask him? I just gotta know. I'll bet it's something totally rad like Thunder Avenger or Samurai Spokes of Justice or . . ."
 "Hang on, I'll show him my leathers."
 Clinker waits, working on the

KZ-2 got the nod from our nurds. Next time around we'll try on the superhot little KM-1.
 According to Kuwahara, the KZ-2 was designed for the bigger, stronger rider. It's a flat-out race bike fortified with some heavier, stronger, and

cheaper (about \$40 worth) componentry. The same frame and fork are used for both bikes.
 Here's a rundown on how the KZ-2 differs from the KZ-1:
 Steel KKT Surefoot pedals, color coordinated (instead of KKT Lightnings).
 Larger Red Line style V-bars (instead of the smaller Red Line Micro Line style V-bars).
 SunTour chrome-moly/alloy Power Stem (instead of the SunTour forged aluminum jobber).
 One-piece chrome-moly Takagi cranks (instead of the SunTour VX alloy three-piece set).
 Dia-Compe center-pull rear caliper brake (instead of the Dia-Compe MX-1000 side-pull).
 Dia-Compe aluminum seat post clamp (instead of the SunTour aluminum clamp).
 Regular Ukai alloy box rims (instead of Ukai shiny sides).

per), Jon Marzolf (16 Expert), Todd Roach (14 Expert), and Troy Raatz (10 Expert) who has been hotter than a pistola lately. Bob Roach, Todd's dad, is the team manager.
 Kuwahara also sponsors one foreign rider, Chris James of Au-

stralia. While we were testing, Kuwahara received word that Chris had just won the Pro main at the Australian World Challenge Cup.
NATIONAL TEAM
 Backing up the factory team is a squadron of National Team riders about 150 strong. (Remember the Kuwahara ads: We're looking for a few good men?) These yahoos have a mini-factory deal, a deal Kuwahara feels is more than a notch above co-sponsorship.
 The National Team is still looking

for new riders. Here's the scoop, if you think you have what it takes: Compile a resume of your racing results, bop down to your local Kuwahara dealer, and tell him you're interested in the team deal. If the dealer thinks you're qualified, he'll explain the conditions of the National Team contract to you and your parents and forward everything to Kuwahara. They make the final decision, based on the dealer's recommendation. If a rider gets the green light to join the green, black, white, yellow, and red, he receives free a jersey, a bunch of T-shirts, stickers and patches, a hat, and even a business card. The rest of his gear, including his racing bike, he gets at a 25 percent discount.

KUWAHARA KZ-2

AH SO. FULL-TILT-BOZO RACING MACHINERY FROM THE LAND OF THE LOTUS BLOSSOM.

The scene is a bedroom overlooking a quiet residential street somewhere in the midwest. Clinker O'Hara is sitting on his bed, munching an apple while devouring the latest issue of Mighty BMXA. Around the room numerous Hot Shot color photos are Scotch-taped to the walls. In the corner, the contents of Clinker's overturned laundry hamper are scattered across the floor. On Clinker's desk we can see the three-day-old remains of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a National race program autographed by Kevin McNeal, Frank Post, and Lee Medlin. At the foot of the bed, Sprocket, the family mutt, is leaning against the wall.

The phone rings.
 Clinker picks it up and hears, "Well, did you get it . . . huh . . . huh . . . huh?"
 The caller is Eddy Ishikawa, Clinker's school buddy and member of Kuwahara's National Team.
 "Yep, I sure did. It's right here in my room. I rode it all afternoon, then polished it up . . . Say, Eddy, there's something I've been meaning to ask you."
 "Shoot."
 "Do you know what those Japanese symbols on the team pants stand for?"
 "Kuwahara."
 "But what does Kuwahara mean?"
 "Beats me. I was born in Cleveland remember? It's my dad who's from Japan."

crossword puzzle in BMX Action.
 "Hey, Clinker, you really sure you want to know?"
 "Uh huh."
 "You're pos you want to know?"
 "Oh, wow, just tell me."
 "Mulberry Meadow . . ."
 "Did you say dull very pedal?"
 There must be some static on the line.
 "No, mulberry meadow. That's what Kuwahara means."
 "Oh . . . Tell you what, Eddy, I won't tell anyone if you don't. Deal?"
 "Deal."

It's been just about two years now since the first Kuwahara cranker reached our shores from the Land of the Rising Sun. Response to the bikes has been on the rise ever since. A lot of that success has to do with high visibility. Racing results. Splashy ads. A seven rider factory team. 150 National Team riders.

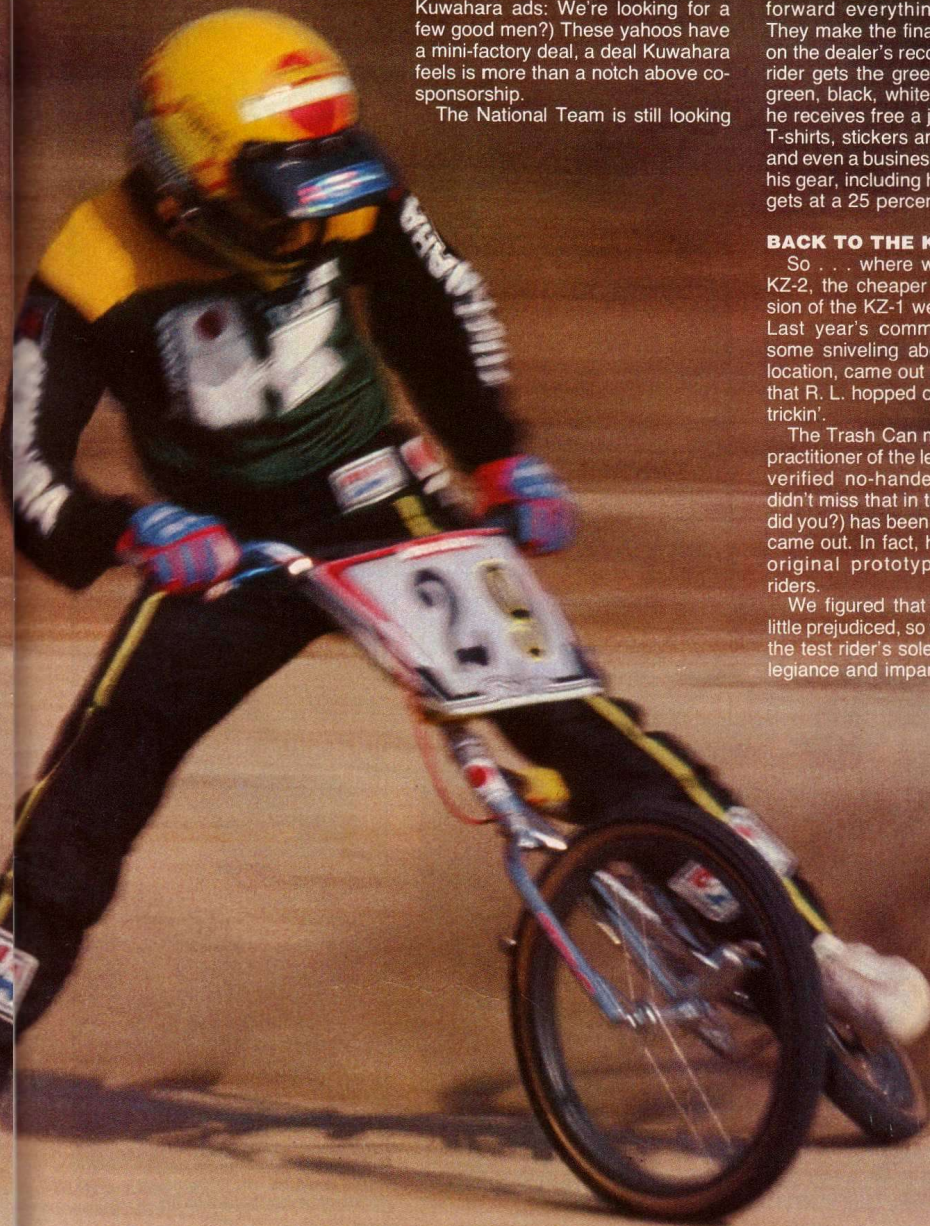
DIFFERENT MODELS

The Kuwahara line, three complete bicycles, is the result of a joint venture between Kuwahara in Japan and Everything Bicycles in Torrance, California. Howie Cohen's Everything Bicycles, one of the nation's biggest distributors, designs the bikes for the factory, advertises them, and acts as the marketing arm. Kuwahara builds them and ships them out to fourteen world-wide distributors.

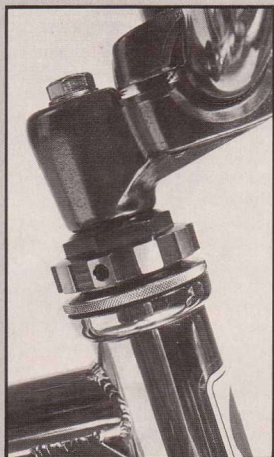
We looked at the KZ-1 last year (August, 1980). This time round, the

FACTORY TEAM

Frank Post and Matt Harris are Kuwahara's team Pros. Other teamsters include Lee Medlin (16 Ex-



Medlin, steamin' to the max.



Looka this new alloy thing from Everything Bicycles, the outfit that distributes Kuwaharas. It replaces the stock head lock nut, is hand adjustable, and locks positively with two Allen bolts. This jobber doesn't come with the bike, but it's so trick we had to stick it in here anyway. SunTour manufactures it.



R.L. totally tabletopped.



The KZ-2 was totally controllable in repeated power slides.

SET-UP CRITICAL

This test proved to be a real eye opener regarding the importance of

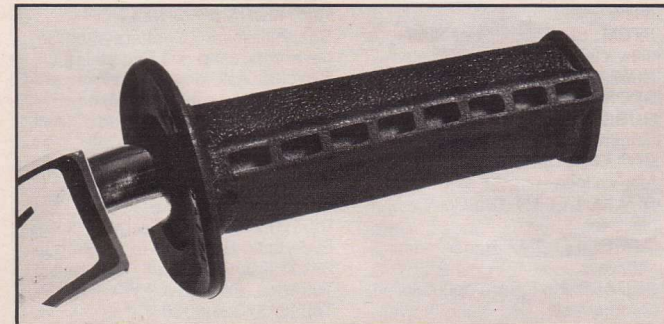
bike set-up. R. L. virtually lives on his Kuwahara trick bike. Who knows, he may even sleep with it. Yet his first



R. L.'s new trick, the Osborn seat osculator. Actually, he's ballin'.



Say, "Howdy do," to the KZ-2.



The grips are sorta funky lookin' but they work. They have a good feel. They're made by OGK to Kuwahara specs.



Lee Medlin gold medalin' high above the Mojave Desert.

riding impression was, "I felt like I was riding another brand bike. My bike is so dialed right now." Any references to his own bike leave him reeking with reverence and total contentment.

R. L. uses different bars and a different seat post. Two basic rider preference items, yet that was enough to make handling seem totally different. R. L.'s conclusion, "If you try to build two bikes exactly the same, they'll feel different, no matter how you do it." One of life's little mysteries.

Then Kuwahara factory rider Lee Medlin, who joined us for photos, told us he practices on his race bike because he can't build a duplicate bike that feels exactly the same.

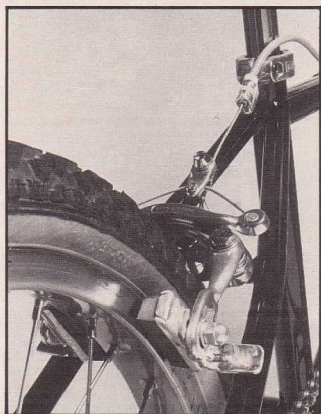
Interesting. Evidently, with superspokers, detail is critical. A different bend of the bars or a repositioned seat can completely change how they handle.

Of course, R. L. is pushing six foot now, so it's understandable why he favors a bent seat post. It also helps

out for doing tricks. His final conclusion, "If I put my bars and seat on this test bike, it would probably feel 129 percent better to me."

BUFF'S CRITIQUE

Last year, Buff, three inches shorter than his current vertical state, felt like the bars on the KZ-1 were too far forward. This year, they seemed okay, but his overall mood about the bike was down a bit. "It felt fast. It turned like a good bike, jumped like a good bike. There's nothing wrong with it." But the ride didn't exactly



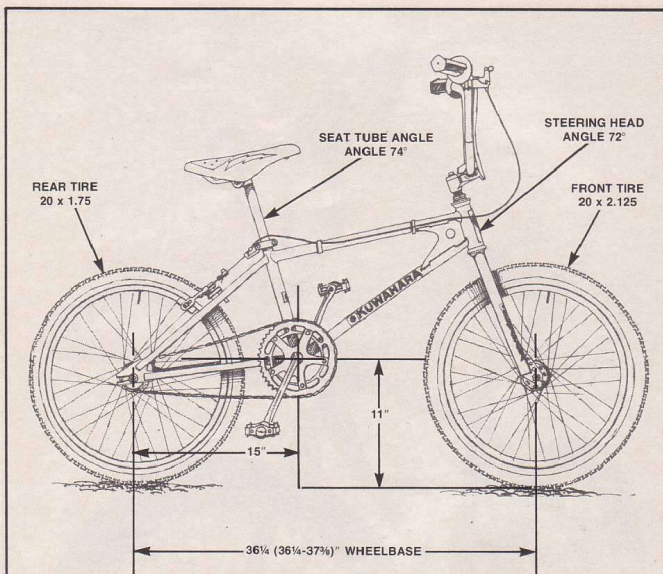
Center-pull calipers aren't that common on race bikes. Hot stuff.

score a nine-point-nine on his ten-meter either.

CONCLUSIONS

What's this all mean? That saddle position and handlebar selection can be really critical. They can change an overall impression from "this bike is so dialed it makes my socks fall off" to "this is another good bike, but there's nothing extra special about it."

In short, the distinction between a scooter that gets the glands working overtime with anticipation, passion,



KUWAHARA KZ-2 SPECIFICATIONS

FINISH: Electrostatically applied powder epoxy.

COLORS: Chrome, black, blue, white, red.

WEIGHT: 26 pounds, 8 ounces (with pads and number plate).

RETAIL COST: Approximately \$345 painted, \$385 chromed.

FRAME: Kuwahara, constructed with Tange chrome-moly tubing, heli-arc (TIG) welding.

FORK: Kuwahara chrome-moly.

HANDLEBARS: Red Line approved V-bar.

GRIPS: OGC (Kuwahara designed).

STEM: SunTour Power Stem, alloy clamp, chrome-moly stem.

RIMS: Ukai box aluminum.

SPOKES: .080/36.

HUBS: SunTour high-flange aluminum.

BRAKES: Dia-Compe center-pull rear caliper.

BRAKE LEVER: Dia-Compe pre-bent.

TIRES: IRC BMX Racer skinwalls.

PEDALS: KKT Surefoot, colored, chrome-moly.

CRANKS: Takagi one-piece forged chrome-moly, heat-treated.

SPIDER: Sugino chrome-moly.

FRONT SPROCKET: SunTour 44T aluminum chainwheel.

REAR SPROCKET: SunTour 16T freewheel.

SEAT: Tahei Elina nylon.

SEAT POST: Nagaoka aluminum alloy

SEAT POST CLAMP:

Dia-Compe aluminum

ACCESSORIES: California Lite Kuwahara pads.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

See your local Kuwahara shop or have your shop call Everything Bicycles. Ask for a free sticker at your shop or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Everything Bicycles.

MANUFACTURER: Kuwahara Cycles Limited Osaka, Japan

DISTRIBUTOR: Everything Bicycles 23145 Kashiwa Court Torrance, California 90505 Tel: (213) 325-6300



Lee and Mike running wide open about four and half miles in front of Oz's brand new mega-long telephoto lens.

drool, slobber, and heavy sighs, and one that doesn't, can sometimes be amazingly subtle, especially for an experienced rider.

Hey! Nothing bent. Nothing broke. The bike has good components. It handles good. It held up for tabletops, dead plop landings, and high speed slides. We know the frames and forks are tough.

R. L. is heavy sighs and glazed eyes about his bike, set up to suit him and what he does. Morgan keeps getting crazier on his Ku. Kevin McNeal liked his enough to keep it when he could have his pick with a new sponsor.

So what we're saying is, everything you need is there for a totally durable and responsive scooter. If the factory set-up isn't spot-on, the bike can be dialed to satisfy a wide range of tastes and applications. Once the Kuwahara is tuned, you won't find a better handling bike. ■

PED'LIN' LEE MEDLIN

One of the classiest crankers on Team Kuwahara (or any team) is 16 Expert Lee Medlin. Lee finished up 1980 with a total flourish, winning mains at all three Grand Nationals, taking 15 Expert in the NBA and NBL events and the 15 Over Open at the ABA finale.

In the first nine months of 1981 Lee chalked up about ten National wins in ABA racing, including four 16 Expert mains.

Lee's a sophomore at Norte Vista High in Riverside, California, just a hoot and a holler from the dear departed Corona track.

He often practices with his former teammate, Kevin McNeal, who also hails from Riverside. Hanging around with Kevin, Lee benefits from the Corona Kid's totally serious approach to training. Kevin pays a couple of neighborhood kids to video tape him. This includes practice. Lee and Kevin will alternate starts, doing as many as fifty at a time on Lee's dilapidated gate. Asked to describe how

long he's had his three-year old gate, Lee replied, "Oh, about six axle handles worth."

A starting hill for practice is just across the street from Lee's house. He also has a berm in his front yard, a jump across the street, and a fence that he bunnyhops.



Lee runs the following components on his Kuwahara: Grab On grips. Sabre number plate. ACS Z-Rims. Competition II rear tire. Cheng Shin 1.75 front tire. MKS pedals. Dia-Compe MX1000 side-pull caliper brake. Frank Post's steel one-piece Takagi crank.

SunTour Superbe hubs. Pro-Neck stem with Team Products Flex Fighter (invented by BMXA's Steve Giberson).

Lee doesn't look like the Incredible Hulk, but maybe he could be referred to as the Incredible Economy Sized Hulk. He handles incredibly hard gearing. His basic ratio is 46/16 and he sometimes runs 47/16. When he was just 13, he would pull 46/14 at Corona.

Lee explains, "I just get out of the gate better with hard gearing. I use my weight differently. A lot of riders put pressure on the gate, but I don't. I balance lightly. When I think the gate's going to drop, I lean back and wheelie out."

If Lee gets the lead, you have to figure he's gonna be gone on a long straight with that taller gearing kicking in.

The song says you don't mess with the Lone Ranger's mask. Another good idea, when it comes to serious pedalin', is not to meddle with Lee Medlin. ■