

BICYCLE
MOTOCROSS
ACTION

OFFICIAL TEST

THE BIG KAHUNA LAGUNA

BERM BUSTIN' WITH NON-FERROUS METALS

STORY AND MOTOPHOTOS BY THE STAFF
WILD AND RACICAL TESTING BY BLJ
HALF-HEARTED TESTING BY R.L. AND RANDY

Color is getting to be a big thing in BMX racing. It doesn't make you go any faster, but it *shor* is purtier.

Last night at the Covina track there was this little guy, maybe seven years old, who was totally decked out in bright lime green; frame, pants, jersey, helmet . . . the whole enchilada. He looked like an un-Sanforized version of Jimmy Weinert. And do you know something? Even though lime green is not one of my favorite colors, this little squirt looked sharp.

New BMX teams are spending more time choosing their racing colors than a teenage girl spends deciding what to wear to her first prom.

There is probably some involved psychological explanation for a racer's affinity to bright, colorful machinery and racing clothing . . . like compensating for an inhibited ego, or some other psychological reason that commands an almost total lack of interest on the part of everybody except the shrink who thought it up in the first place.

Or maybe the reason relates to our ancient, more militant past, when our ancestors, armed only with clubs and spears, knew the psych advantage of warpaint, beads, and other body decorations.

Whatever the reason . . . color is in. It's the hot tip, the only way to go.

And so we step up to the Laguna GT for close examination. And, as you should have already guessed, the first thing about it to hit you right in the eye is . . . color. Coordinated color. Bright flashy color.

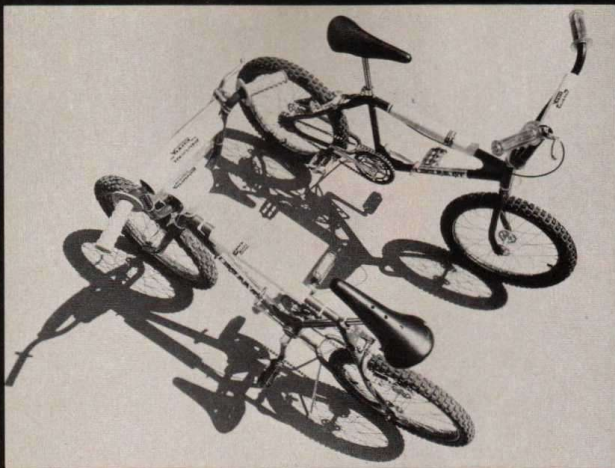
The GT comes in a choice of three colors: gold, blue, or red. These are electrostatically applied powder epoxy coatings; very bright and very durable finishes. Even the aluminum surfaces are finished in this manner, as opposed to anodizing. The frame, handlebars, forks, rims, and seat post of each GT are finished in these matching colors. Add the startling white safety pads and you've got some mighty fine lookin' racing machines.

The Laguna GT is the first aluminum framed bike we've tested in the hallowed pages of *The Most Factory Magazine*. But we already knew almost exactly what to expect from the frame because it's been around for a long time.

Originally this frame was made exclusively for FMF (Yeah, that's why it looks so familiar). But, since FMF ran into hard times and is not buying many (if any at all) of these frames, Laguna is. And well they should . . . they are great frames.

The only difference between the FMF frame and the Laguna GT, ex-





A hummingbird's eye view of the mighty Lagunas. All pads and plates are included.



R.L. getting some aerial style.

cept for colors, is that the FMF used to have three lightening holes in the steering head gusset, whereas the GT has only two. Also, the GT frame has a spacer added between the seat stays that is drilled for a caliper brake. Weight of the Laguna GT frame, according to our postal scale, is three pounds eleven ounces, give or take a few drams. That's light, folks.

The forks are chrome-moly Tange TX-500's, finished to exactly match the frame color. Weight is two pounds two ounces.



The brake lever supplied is unbent and works almost not at all. To stop it from jamming your fingers, it must be bent.



Some very zoot equipment: KKT chrome-moly pedals, Takagi Tourney alloy 6 1/4 inch cranks, and a Takagi alloy sprocket.

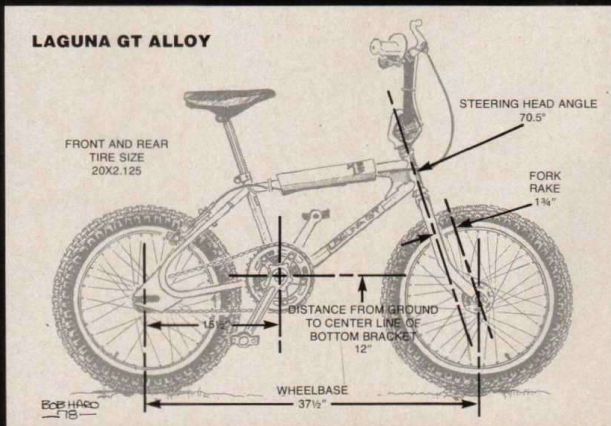
Handlebars on the Laguna GT are the aluminum box style. Color coordinated. Weight is one pound one ounce. Light as a feather. Well . . . a fat feather.

The grips supplied with the GT are lame. They're clear plastic uglies shaped something like Oakleys, with grooves in the surface that trap and hold dirt. Chuck 'em and get some Oakleys or Oury's or Preston Pettys or something good.

The Laguna gooseneck is a chrome-moly double clamp job that looks very much like the BMX Products Gold Stem, only it's slightly smaller and chrome plated. Weight is one pound three ounces. The stem is not color coordinated. Of course it wasn't really necessary, seeing as how it's covered with the stem pad anyway.

Which brings up the point that the stem, crossbar, and frame pads and numberplate are included in the original cost of the Laguna GT. This bike is ready to boogie at a suggested retail of \$249. You don't have to add anything except air in the tires and your racing number on the plate.

Shimano large flange hubs, eighty gauge spokes, and Araya rims make up the super light wheel assemblies. The rims are coated with the same powder epoxy color as the other finished parts. We have seen other finishes chip and peel off rims when caliper brakes were used. Because of this we really tried to damage the rim coating. All we accomplished was leaving a ring of brake pad rubber around the rim (like ring around the collar), which came right off by rubbing with a rag



dampened in paint thinner. Believe it, this is a tough finish. We've got to give it our "1000 Pound Bomb Proof" rating.

Fore and aft are 2.125 Cheng Shin knobbies. Is there even a question about traction with Cheng Shins anymore?

The Laguna GT power train starts with KKT chrome-moly pedals and Takagi-Tourney alloy cotterless 6 1/4 inch cranks on a standard conversion spindle. Next comes a Takagi 42 tooth alloy front sprocket, DID chained to a Maeda TA 888 16 tooth freewheel.

The Laguna GT comes with a single Dia-Compe caliper brake at the rear, which probably doesn't meet the CPSC braking requirements for street use, which were probably devised by bureaucrats who had never heard of bicycle motocross racing or BMX

racing bikes. (Lightweight track bikes, the ones with 27 inch wheels, are exempt from CPSC regs because they are only used for racing.)

But BMX people are rarely stopped, only sometimes slowed down, by governmental Victorian thinking and procedures. The way Laguna avoided having to put all that street equipment (reflectors, chain guard, front caliper, etc.) on a pure race bike was to send it to dealers in two boxes, one containing the frame, forks, etc.; the other with everything else. Maybe this doesn't make great sense to you, but it does satisfy a government regulation which doesn't make sense in the first place when you figure that this is a race bike, not a street bike.

A hard plastic, unpadded Freccia Doro seat comes with the Laguna GT. It is streamlined, lightweight, and great

for BMX. It's mounted on a fluted (B&D copy) alloy seat post with the grooves coated the same color as the frame.

Total weight of the aluminum framed Laguna GT is an astounding 23 3/4 pounds. That's box stock, right out of the crate . . . pads, number plate, and everything. Pretty mucho bueno, huh?

FINAL TRICKS FOR RACING

Before we took the Laguna GT out to the field of honor, there were a couple things that the test team guys wanted to modify. First they sawed about one inch off the ends of the alloy box bars, then slapped on a set of Oakley grips. They took the previously unbent brake lever and carefully bent it to just the right state of tweak.

Then they switched the 2.125 rear Cheng Shin for a 1.75 Cycle Pro gum-



Rapid Randy studying one of his favorite subjects, "Complete and Total Berm Destruction."

wall "snakebelly," which natchurly dropped the already low gearing (42-16) effectively even lower. To kick it up to your basic flat track gearing (we were heading out to Covina that night) we put on a 44 tooth Addicks.

The Tourney 6¾ inch cranks were switched with Takagi 7 inch forged cranks. The reason for this was that Building Leapin' Jones was going to race it, and he prefers the slightly longer crank and does not like the way alloys flex. For anybody much under fourteen or fifteen years old, the Tourney alloys would have been perfect.

IMPRESSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the how-do-it-handle department there are four basic variables to be considered: Steering head angle, fork rake, wheelbase, and bottom bracket location.

The steering head angle and rake must be considered together. Without going into all the interrelationships of the two, suffice it to say that the steering would be exactly neutral on a 36 inch wheelbase, but is just a

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shade slow when combined with the long 37½ inch Laguna GT wheelbase. What this will mean in a race is that you can do all kinds of things wrong and the Laguna won't pitch you on your ear. Just don't get gross about it.

The bottom bracket is located so that bike balance, end to end, is also neutral. In other words, if you loop or endo it's your fault, not the bike's. There is plenty of ground clearance for swinging those Tourney cranks.



Them tars got gription. No brag, just fact.



R.L. doin' a Grossi.

With the long wheelbase you can lean back into a full power position; arms close to straight, legs applying max pedal power, front end floating slightly, and zero slip at the rear. This is hookin' it on! On a shorter wheelbase bike there would be more of a tendency to loop if you did this. On the Laguna you can do it with aplomb!

AND IN SUMMARY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN . . .

The Laguna GT is brightly colorful, has a (relatively) unique alloy frame, is super light, has very high zoot equipment (not the absolute most highest zoot, but very respectably high zoot anyway), handles quite nicely (if a bit dull), and is priced very competitively with other flat out BMX racing bikes.

The quality and durability of most true bicycle motocross equipment is unsurpassed in the bicycle industry. And the Laguna GT is well up toward the top of the BMX bikes. And that ain't too shabby, young hero. ★

We've got it all together



Octopus grips for maximum hold

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The frame, heli-arc welded for sturdiness

Mag wheels in epoxy colors

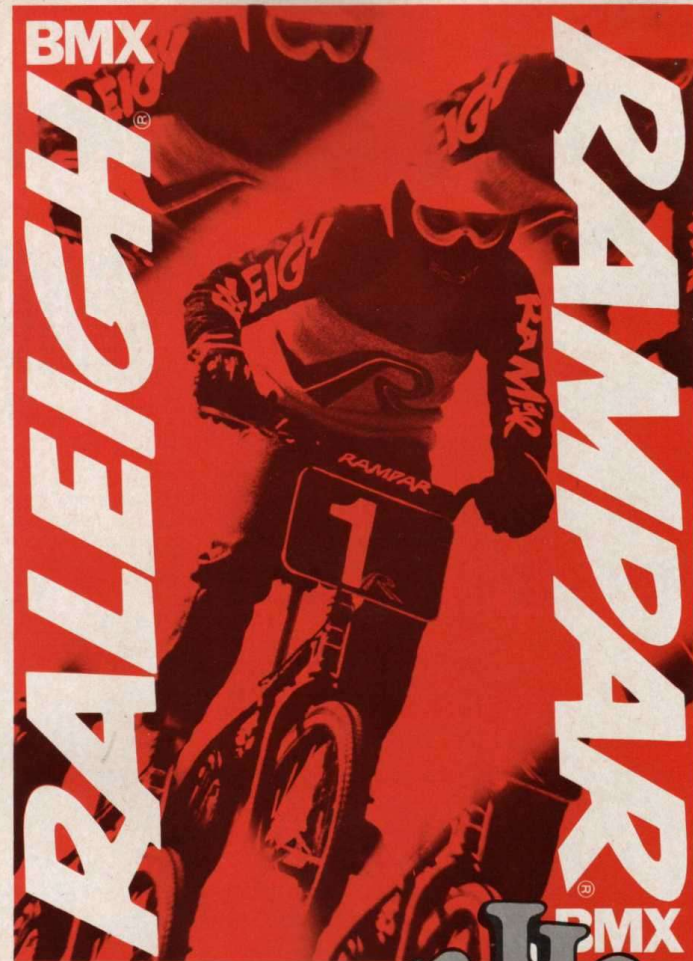
Ask your dealer about the warranty

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