



Low-buck lowdown on

# THE EXPERT

□ BMX Products, makers of Mongoose racing equipment, builds its bikes for two purposes: racing and winning. And if you were to ask Mongoose factory superstars Eric Rupe and Billy Griggs, they'd tell you that most Mongoose stuff does just what it was made for—and very well, at that.

But like most big BMX companies (or smart ones, depending on your perspective), Mongoose also makes bikes that end up taking their owners to and from school, cruising to the video arcade, and filling in spare time with flights over dirt piles in the vacant lot. The name for these bikes is "entry-level racers," but most people call them "street bikes." Because of its low price, the Mongoose Expert has been put into this mundane category.

When bikes cost as little as the new Expert does (around 165 dollars), most people don't take them seriously for BMX racing applications. The gang at BMX Products is trying to change that theory with the new Mongoose Expert. Robby Rupe said something you don't hear very often at a street bike test: "This bike is good." The Expert proved to be a very good street/race bike when we compared it to the rest of the bikes in its class. Some of the things we exposed might surprise you.

## EXPERT CHANGES

Last year's Expert was a decent buy at 175 bucks. This year's Expert is even better. And it costs less. Changes for '85 include swapping the old Pro Steel metal rims for the tasty new Pro Class pierced aluminum units and tossing the old steel hubs and lacing the Suzue alloy hubs, front and rear. Still more renovation occurred by moving up to Victor nylon pedals, a color-coordinated aluminum Pro Class Power disc with a 44-

*Robby's skydives on the 'Goose were brutal. It was amazing that the only component casualties were the bent forks and the tweaked cranks. A 170-dollar bike should never hold up to this kind of pounding, but the Expert did, and we were pleasantly surprised. ▶*

## Mongoose's answer to the street fighter/race bike dilemma

Story by Harold McGruther



tooth brushed steel chain ring, and a Mongoose stainless-steel seatpost. The standard stuff that was retained from last year's Expert is the all-chromoly Expert frame and fork, Pro Class-styled handlebars, Cheng Shin knobbies and Mongoose vinyl grips. All things considered, the '85 Expert is an incredibly good bike when stacked up against its 1984 predecessor.

## THINGS THAT WENT SOUR

It was unfair of us to consider Parks in Fullerton, California, as a suitable testing ground for the mild-mannered Mongoose street thrasher. But we chose it anyway. Once Robby finished thrashing the bike, however, we were glad that we had. Our jaunts around the Parks facility proved to us that the Mongoose Expert really is a good bike. After repeated aerial assaults over the Parks gorge, the 'Goose solicited complaints from Robby in only two areas: the cranks and the forks. Robby's continual hard landings from ten feet off that jump should have done a lot more damage to the Expert. But they didn't, and we were impressed.

*If your BMX needs include daily transportation and 7-Eleven runs, Mongoose has the bike for you. One hundred and sixty-five dollars can't buy more machine than the Expert. ▶*



*The Hi-Ten stem that came stock on the Mongoose drew various comments from the test crew, but Robby's reaction was the best. Thankfully, the money Mongoose saved on the stem was spent in other areas of the componentry to make the '85 Expert their best street bike yet.*



# THE EXPERT



When Robby brought the Expert in after his first warm-up laps, we didn't have to beg him for some initial comments. "This bike is good," were the first words out of his mouth. By the time the test was finished, we agreed with him.

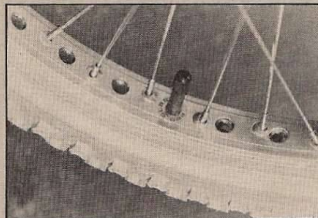
One Mongoose component that should have failed but didn't was the Hi-Ten handlebar stem. That's because it wasn't tested on the bike. One look at this stem by Robby, McGoo and test tag-a-long Eric Rupe was all we needed to *know* it would fail our test. The top clamp on this stem was melt-forged aluminum; the stem's wedge bolt was of extremely poor quality; and the rest of the stem was cast from a mystery material that resembled pot metal. When a company has to shave pennies off the price of an econo-scoot, the stem is probably as good a place as any to start. If you buy an Expert, buy a new stem to go with it. We assembled our test bike with a Mongoose Pro Class stem and had only intermittent periods of looseness until it was broken in.

## HANDLING IMPRESSIONS

Despite its small size, the Expert felt comfortable for average-sized riders like Robby. We built up our test bike with a laid-back seatpost, but Robby told us he would have liked the stock straight unit equally well. No one ever heard Robby grumble about any peculiar handling on the part of the Mongoose, so we felt that was a good sign. Its cornering manners were very neutral and predictable, thanks mostly to the low bottom-bracket height of 11 inches and the average wheelbase of 36 inches. Cheap bikes sometimes have a tendency to cringe at the slightest hint of a high-speed berm.



To set up our Expert for larger riders, we installed a Mongoose Pro Class stem and a laid-back seatpost. Robby felt that the stem swap was essential, but, depending on your riding style, the laid-back post may or may not be necessary.



The alloy Pro Class rims are the single greatest improvement on the new Expert. Many bikes costing 50 dollars more don't have wheels that can compare to these.

## BMX PLUS!

1. **Bike:** Mongoose Expert, 20-inch, complete bicycle.
2. **Age range:** 12 to 15 year olds.
3. **Country of origin:** Taiwan.
4. **Intended use:** Street/intermediate-level BMX.
5. **Wheelbase:** 34 3/4" to 36 1/2".
6. **Bottom-bracket height:** 11".
7. **Chain stay length:** 14 1/2".
8. **Steering head angle:** 74°.
9. **Seat tube angle:** 74°.
10. **Frame:** Mongoose Expert, 4130 chromoly throughout. Features 1-1/8" O.D. top and down tubes, 5/8" O.D. rear stays, chrome finish.
11. **Fork:** Mongoose design, mild steel. Features: 1" O.D. fork blades, drilled crown for front brakes, chrome finish.
12. **Rims:** Mongoose Pro Class, aluminum, 36-hole, silver with red rim strips.
13. **Spokes:** 36/0.80° chromed, brass nipples.
14. **Hubs:** Suzue low-flange aluminum front and rear, silver.
15. **Tires:** Cheng Shin Comp III type, 20" x 2.125" front, 20" x 1.75" rear, red.
16. **Crank:** One-piece forged steel, 175mm chrome.
17. **Pedals:** Victor VP-767 nylon, 1/2" spindle, quill-type, black.
18. **Chain:** KMC 1/2" x 1/8" steel, black/silver.
19. **Bottom bracket:** Mongoose steel, retained ball, silver.
20. **Front sprocket:** Mongoose Power Disc aluminum, red. 44T brushed steel chain ring, silver.
21. **Freewheel:** Shimano 16T chrome.
22. **Brakes:** Lee Chi MX-900 type, silver, front and rear, with Lee Chi Tech-3-type levers.
23. **Headset:** Mongoose steel, retained ball, chrome.
24. **Stem:** Hi-Ten cast aluminum/metal alloy, silver/black.
25. **Handlebars:** Mongoose Pro Class design, mild steel, chrome, 7 1/4" rise x 26 1/4" width.
26. **Grips:** Mongoose design, vinyl, red.
27. **Seating:** Fu Kong nylon aero BMX saddle, red. Mongoose stainless-steel post, natural. Dia-Compe-type hinged clamp, silver.
28. **Miscellaneous:** N/A. 10. Who won the Pro Open class at the 1982 ABA Grand Nationals?
29. **Overall weight:** 26 lbs.
30. **Approximate retail price:** \$165.
31. **For additional information contact:** BMX Products, Inc., 5152 N. Commerce Ave., Moorpark, CA 93021-1797.



Thankfully, the Expert has managed to break out of that rut.

## A FINAL GANDER AT THE 'GOOSE

If you're looking for a race bike in street clothing, Mongoose has laid the golden egg. For serious BMX racing the Expert needs a few mods—new chromoly forks and cranks, and a new stem. If you add up the price of the Mongoose and about 75 bucks for the new parts, the Mongoose is still cheaper than many of its competitors, which have problems of their own. Considering that fact, and all of the other good things that they've managed to deliver for the money, Mongoose has done a great job of carrying on its winning tradition with the '85 Expert. □



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