

# MONGOOSE TWO/FOUR



**M**ongoose was not among the very first to enter the 24-inch BMX market—and with good reason. Their 26" Kos Cruiser had established itself as the machine of choice for racing in the cruiser classes. After seeing the 24-inch cruisers start to make heavy inroads into the racing-cruiser market, Mongoose decided to do something about it.

Test by Bob Hadley

Photos by John Ker

Let's start out by being blunt: the new Mongoose Two/Four is the best handling twenty-four-inch racer we have ever tested. Up until now most of the twenty-fours we have tested have been weak in their front-end geometry. The problem common: front wheel washout on flat turns. Not so on the 'Goose Two/Four: turns of any type can

be attacked with full confidence that the front-end will stick. Any drifting or sliding out starts with the rear end first and is completely predictable. The front end geometry on this bike is dialed in.

### The Kos Cruiser Look

Cosmetically, the Two/Four maintains the look that was



Dawn of a new era? Maybe. The design of the Two/Four could change the shape of all 24" race bikes to come. Mike Miranda basks in the glow.

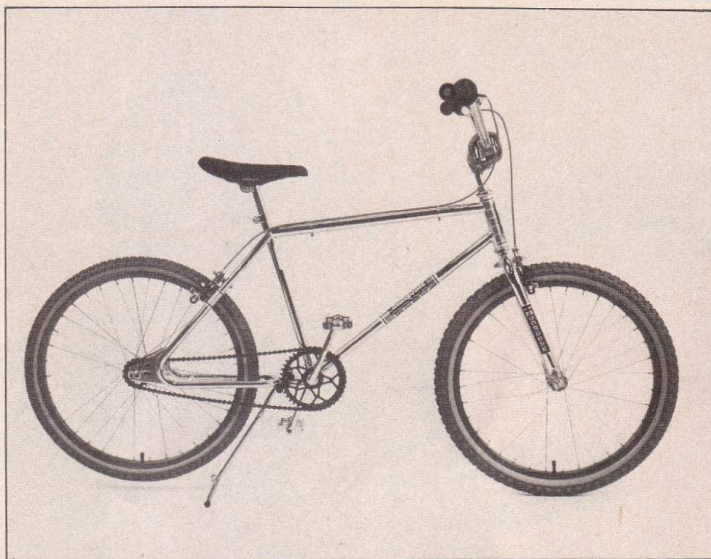
# MONGOOSE TWO/FOUR

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## DIMENSIONS

Weight	(A) Wheelbase	(B) Head Angle	(C) Seat Angle
27 1/4 lbs.	41.25"	71°	72°
(D) Hanger Height	(E) Hanger to Axle	(F) Top Tube Height	
11.8"	17"	27"	

## FRAME SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	Material/Construction	Seat Post Diameter	Head Tube Style	Hanger Style
6 3/4 lbs	4130 chrome-moly/heli arc	7/8 inch	Standard	Standard

## FORK SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	Material/Construction	Height	Offset
2 1/4 lbs	4130 chrome-moly/heli-arc	14.3"	1.19"

## BIKE COMPONENTS

Cranks	Chain	Pedals
Mongoose 175mm	Mongoose 1/2 X 1/8	KKT
Gearing	Wheels/Hubs	Seat/Seat Pillar
42/18	Araya 7X Shimano DX	Kashimax suede steel
Stem	Bars/Grips	
Mongoose gold stem	Mongoose SS cruiser bars	
Brakes	Tires	
Dia-Compe 890	Mitsuboshi Comp III	

established in the Mongoose cruiser line by its big brother, the Kos Cruiser. Against most of its twenty-four-inch counterparts, the Two/Four stands tall, and not just figuratively speaking, either. At almost thirty inches high, the top tube is at least five inches taller at the seat mast than the majority of twenty-four-inch racers. It is also taller than many of the twenty-six-inch racers on the market. Why the high profile? The odd-ball 5 1/2-inch head tube that Mongoose uses accounts for most of it. Lower profile bikes all use a standard four-inch head tube which allows for more compact front triangles. Trying to achieve a lower profile with the longer head tube would probably result in an awkward-looking front triangle. If you are willing to live with the tall frame, what you will gain is the superior strength and structural integrity that the longer head tube offers.

At a glance the Two/Four may look as if the guys at Mongoose simply shrunk their twenty-six inchers. This is not the case. More than a casual resizing of the wheels went into the design. Several experiments were done with the geometry before the bike even got its official name. The result of that research is a racing bike that is extremely well balanced in its handling characteristics. For most general riding situations, with the rider in a basically unmodified position, the bike handles great.

Even in the most radical situations, drastic body movements are not necessary to maintain control. On jumps, stand slightly forward from the sitting position, tug on the bars, and you're launched in perfect form. If you like, tuck in; the bike will still maintain the same attitude with no problem. On berms, feet up with your weight on or centered above the seat and you'll get no surprises. Do you want to square off a tight berm? Put your inside foot down. At the right instant lean hard to break both tires loose simultaneously and make your pivot. The Mongoose Two/Four is one of the few bikes, twenty-four or twenty-six, that will break both tires loose on demand in almost any situation.

Fast, flat sweepers are where the dialed-inness of the Two/Four's front end kills other bikes in its



**Test-rider Miranda couldn't believe how easily the Two/Four jumped. The overall handling was superb in virtually every riding situation possible.**

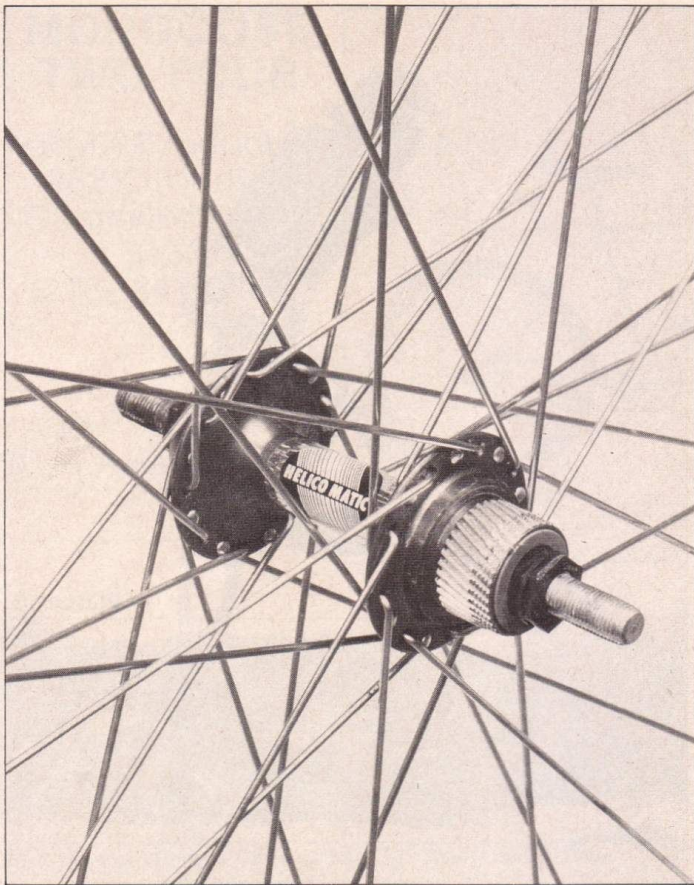
class. The acid test is in flat turns that get progressively sharper. It is these decreasing-radius turns that separate the men from the boys, or, as in this instance, the great geometry from the good. Ideally, you want a bicycle whose back end will slide out smoothly and predictably as you lean sharper and sharper into the turn. If a bike's front end slides out at all, forget it: even if you don't crash you'll lose valuable time. The Mongoose handles the situation precisely, as if it were drafted to those exact requirements.

## Rock Solid

Great handling is of utmost importance in bike design, but it is worthless if the machine doesn't stay in one piece. Anyone who has

ever heard the name Mongoose is also likely to be familiar with their reputation for rock-solid sturdiness. The tradition continues with the Two/Four.

Although it isn't the lightest frameset in its class, probably no other twenty-four can touch the Mongoose's high strength-to-weight ratio. The chassis is extremely stiff, making it resistant to the flex or "whip" that occurs under hard acceleration. As we mentioned previously, the longer 5 1/2-inch head tube increases the rigidity of the entire front triangle. The longer the head tube the more reduction in the stress transmitted to the frame through the fork. At 1 1/2 inches longer than the norm, the front fork's leverage on the head is substantially reduced. Of course, you could make the head tube even



**Our Two/Four came supplied with the Millard Helicomatic hub. It's a strange one (see story). Plans call for future production models to come with Shimano free hubs.**

longer, but, aside from looking dorky (remember the Moosegoose?) it would be an overkill. The 5 1/2-inch head on the Two/Four seems to be a happy medium. Perhaps the only potential drawback in the design is the thirty-inch top-tube height dimension it produces. For taller riders this is no problem, but since twenty-four-inch-class bikes are starting to attract the twelve- and thirteen-year-old market, the Two/Four could suffer from it.

The rear triangle has no design flaws nor any potential drawbacks. The single-tube, continuous-loop design is almost as old as BMX and is one of the most reliable methods of building tail sections. Strong rear triangles are extremely important on cruisers. The longer stays see much more stress than the shorter stays on a twenty-incher. The

Two/Four utilizes three-quarter-inch-diameter tubing for the triangle. Most other factories use five-eighths-inch-diameter tubing for their rear ends. The larger tube adds the strength necessary to withstand just about any thrashing. The connecting block between the stays and the hanger is actually a lighter-weight channel.

The hardware fit is typical of previous Mongoose bikes: the headset and hanger components install without a hitch. Any standard BMX seatpost (7/8") will fit into the frame.

### Bits and Pieces

With the exception of the wheels and tires, most of the components are Mongoose brand, including the handlebars, stem, grips, seat (made in Taiwan for Mongoose by

Viscount), and cranks (made in Japan for Mongoose by Takagi). Although not necessarily so for other twenty-four-inch cruisers, the Mongoose cruiser bars and Gold Stem make a good combination on the Two/Four model. That extra inch-and-a-half use they get from the steering tube puts them in a perfect position. Mongoose grips? Sorry. You'd be crazy to use them on your lawn mower, let alone any bicycle. It is rumored that Mongoose is about to come out with a soft rubber grip. In the meantime either use a better grip or get in the habit of wearing gloves all the time (which is a good idea anyway).

Mitsuboshi Competition III tires were mounted on our test model, but, according to the factory, later production bikes will come with Mongoose brand tires. The new tire is similar to that of the Mongoose twenty-six-inch tire, which is very good. It may not be quite up to the all-around greatness of the Comp III, but it won't affect the Two/Four's performance in any way. All of our previous experience with Mongoose tires has been very favorable. Maybe they should use the same rubber in their grips that they put in their tires.

In addition to the tire change, Mongoose reps say the hubs will also be changed on the final production kits.

### A New Idea

Our bike had French-made Millard hubs. With the exception of plastic dust covers, the front is fairly basic. The rear is a totally new concept in easy-off freewheels. Dubbed the Helicomatic, a helical spline on the hub mates with an adapter that threads into a standard freewheel. For BMX it isn't that great a deal. Most racers don't change their freewheels all that often. Even if you did, with the Helicomatic you need an adapter ring for every freewheel. If you only have one adapter you have to use a special tool (a second one; you already need a special spanner to unscrew the retainer ring) to remove the adapter. All this is more hassle than changing a SunTour E Z-Off freewheel, and a free hub is even less trouble. There is beauty in simplicity. One of our consulting engineers said, after examining the



**The real beauty of the Mongoose Two/Four lies in its handling of turns. It handles well in all turning situations, but it's in the flat ones where it really shines. The designers of the Two/Four really did their homework in building this beauty.**

Helicomatic, "Those French, they must not have anything better to do." Perhaps they should stick to ten-speeds, oui? Anyway, expect to see Shimano free hubs as standard equipment on the production Two/Fours.

In the binders department we've got Dia-Compe 890 calipers front and rear—just what the doctor ordered. You can't get much better than these. The touring-style control levers offer good leverage,

but they have to be bent out for larger hands.

Gad, can you believe this! Mongoose safety pads still have snaps. Everyone knows that velcro has taken over, kind of like the way cassette tapes took over eight-tracks. I'd hate to have to sell eight-tracks to make a living, you know? It kind of makes you wonder if progress is the result of laziness more than anything else. (Who could do without push-button phones, remote control TV,

automatic chokes, etc, etc, etc.? Enough of this trivia.)

### All in All

Bottom line: If Mongoose has built its reputation on reliability and great handling, then this bike will only help to perpetuate that image. It may not be the lightest, nor the shortest, nor the lowest, but as far as performance goes, this bike is capable of writing its own ticket to the finish line. □