

STORY BY LEW
STUNTWORK BY DON
PHOTOS BY WINDY

'86 RED LINE RL-20-II

TO LIVE AND DIE FOR SANONESS

Headlights appeared in the rear-view mirror, and we knew we were being followed. We booked down a deserted alley. "Gas it, A.J.!" I shouted, "They're on to us!" The car lurched forward, and Andy squealed the tires in third gear. It was starting to get hectic.

Even with A.J.'s high-performance driving, they were gaining on us. Suddenly, gunfire lit up the alley, and almost simultaneously our car was strafed with bullets. (Probably an Uzi or a Mac 10, I thought, as the rear window caved in on Gork and Don-Boy. Luckily, they were unhurt.)

"Jeez! Those guys mean business," yelled A.J. as a bullet took out our rear-view mirror. It didn't look good. They were getting closer, and all we could hear was the motor in Andy's car winding out, the high-pitched roar drowning out even the constant rattle of gunfire from behind us.

By now, we were down by the shipyards, blazing past warehouses. Dockworkers stared in awe as Andy's Dodge Colt flew by, then they dove for cover when they heard the shooting.

continued

FREESTYLIN'



Get the complete RL-20-II for '86. It'll be easier getting a date with Madonna than getting ahold of one. The price? Three times the number on the wall.

We swerved violently to the right, just missing a forklift loaded down with crates. "We've got to lose 'em soon. Your car won't hold up much longer," screamed Don. We knew he was right. Then, up ahead, we spotted our only hope—the drawbridge. A freighter was heading toward it, and the attendant had already lowered the guardarms. The drawbridge had begun to rise.

The dark blue Mercedes sedan behind us was so close we could read the plates: RED-1. We could see their faces lit up by their own gunfire. There were four of them.

The drawbridge had risen to a 30 degree angle already. We were still a good 100 yards away. The bridge was still climbing—now past 45 degrees.

By now, the attendant had spotted us, and was frantically shouting into a phone. I braced myself, and Don and Gork hit the floor in the back seat. There was nothing Andy could do except cringe. The windshield cracked as we broke through the wooden guardarm. The attendant was outside his booth now, jumping up and down, shouting, and flailing his arms over his head.

We hit the slope of the bridge, now at a 60 degree angle. I glanced back to see the Mercedes screech to halt at the bottom of the slope. We'd lost 'em. I turned around just in time to see the car leave the pavement. There was the sensation of free-floating, like jumping a set of doubles.

The engine was screaming, and I couldn't even hear myself gasp. Sparks flew as the car slammed on the other side, just barely makin' it.

"Man, that was TOO CLOSE!" said Gork. No one said much else as we headed south to our mist-shrouded, fog-drenched, mountaintop H.Q., but more than once we glanced nervously behind us and checked for other cars.

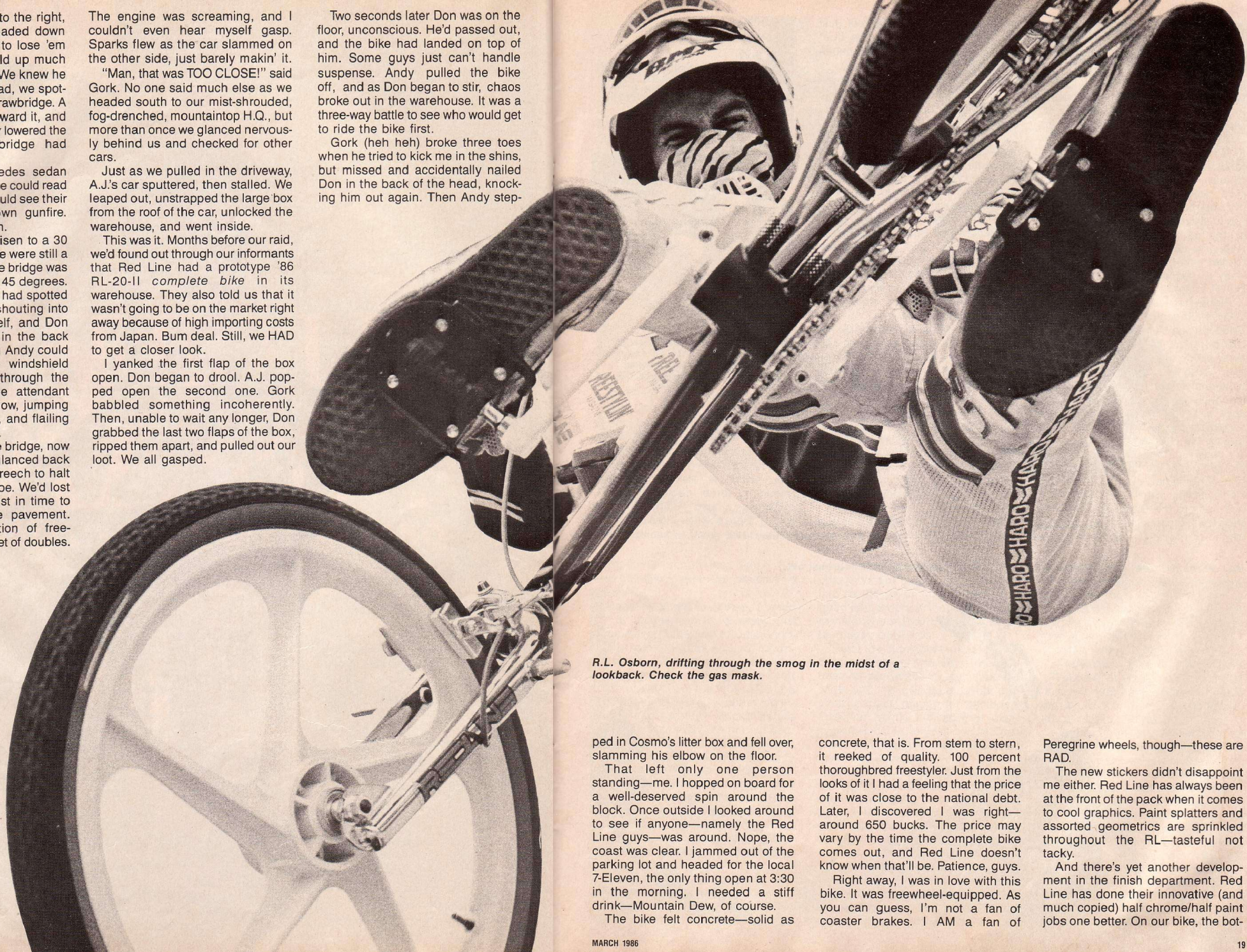
Just as we pulled in the driveway, A.J.'s car sputtered, then stalled. We leaped out, unstrapped the large box from the roof of the car, unlocked the warehouse, and went inside.

This was it. Months before our raid, we'd found out through our informants that Red Line had a prototype '86 RL-20-II complete bike in its warehouse. They also told us that it wasn't going to be on the market right away because of high importing costs from Japan. Bum deal. Still, we HAD to get a closer look.

I yanked the first flap of the box open. Don began to drool. A.J. popped open the second one. Gork babbled something incoherently. Then, unable to wait any longer, Don grabbed the last two flaps of the box, ripped them apart, and pulled out our loot. We all gasped.

Two seconds later Don was on the floor, unconscious. He'd passed out, and the bike had landed on top of him. Some guys just can't handle suspense. Andy pulled the bike off, and as Don began to stir, chaos broke out in the warehouse. It was a three-way battle to see who would get to ride the bike first.

Gork (heh heh) broke three toes when he tried to kick me in the shins, but missed and accidentally nailed Don in the back of the head, knocking him out again. Then Andy step-



R.L. Osborn, drifting through the smog in the midst of a lookback. Check the gas mask.

ped in Cosmo's litter box and fell over, slamming his elbow on the floor.

That left only one person standing—me. I hopped on board for a well-deserved spin around the block. Once outside I looked around to see if anyone—namely the Red Line guys—was around. Nope, the coast was clear. I jammed out of the parking lot and headed for the local 7-Eleven, the only thing open at 3:30 in the morning. I needed a stiff drink—Mountain Dew, of course.

The bike felt concrete—solid as

concrete, that is. From stem to stern, it reeked of quality. 100 percent thoroughbred freestyler. Just from the looks of it I had a feeling that the price of it was close to the national debt. Later, I discovered I was right—around 650 bucks. The price may vary by the time the complete bike comes out, and Red Line doesn't know when that'll be. Patience, guys.

Right away, I was in love with this bike. It was freewheel-equipped. As you can guess, I'm not a fan of coaster brakes. I AM a fan of

Peregrine wheels, though—these are RAD.

The new stickers didn't disappoint me either. Red Line has always been at the front of the pack when it comes to cool graphics. Paint splatters and assorted geometrics are sprinkled throughout the RL—tasteful not tacky.

And there's yet another development in the finish department. Red Line has done their innovative (and much copied) half chrome/half paint jobs one better. On our bike, the bot-

tom bracket and a portion of its adjoining tubes were black, which then faded into black dot patterned stickers, which in turn faded into either the front triangle's flaming red finish or the rear section's chromed luster. A sano idea that looks even trickier than it sounds.

The bike had THE cranks on it—401 Flights. These things will take MAJOR abuse. 4130 heat-treated tubular chrome-moly throughout, plus they come with a splined chrome-moly spindle that reduces flex to about zero, and won't strip out on the first front wheel hop you do. And now Flights come in chrome, radberry, turquoise, white, and red. They've become status symbols in BOTH freestyle and BMX.

Right between the cranks... BAM, another surprise. A brand new Red Line sealed bottom bracket. On this pup, the bearings are tucked away inside the bottom bracket and are protected by a machined aluminum shield. It couldn't look any cleaner—or spin better. Red Line says you may be able to buy one separately by the time you read this. Maybe. No word on the price.

I rode up to the 7-Eleven, and thought about the bike. Even at this hour, it would get snagged for sure if I left it outside. I wheeled it in the door and back to the Big Gulp fountain. Seventy-five cents later I was on my way to the local Del Taco; it had a

killer flatland area in the back lot. Just as I pulled up, I tapped the front brakes. Big mistake. Spontaneous Vander roll. Ground—1, Lew—0.

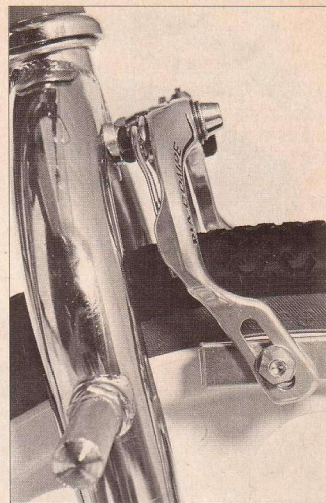
Who would've expected stock brakes to work that good? Certainly not I. They're Dia-Compe's new FS 883 calipers, also called Nippon. They're so new that no one knows much about them. The caliper arms are beefier and the front caliper has a recessed bolt that tightens with an Allen wrench. And how do they work? A dumb question.

On the other hand, the Tech 5 levers aren't the best. These scaled-down mountain bike levers are too long; on Miami Hoppers the lever hits the pavement before the grip. Bogus. Plus the lever's locking mechanism takes two hands to operate—awkward is the word.

Back on the bike, I tried ALL my moves: endos, rollbacks, pogos, and yes, even the dreaded track stand. All without a hitch. I scruffed up the MKS Grafite 2000 pedals during a couple of Osborn Twirls, but they were no worse for wear.

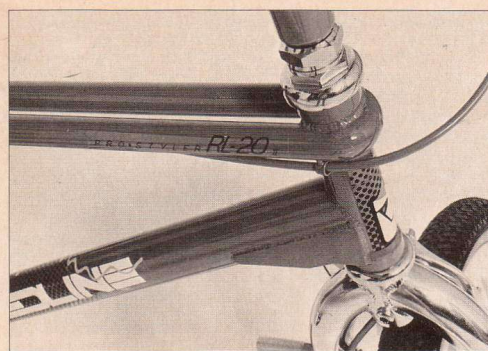
I decided to try a frame stand. There was plenty of room on the twin top tubes. A lawnmower was next. I leaned too far forward, expecting the frame to flex. Stupid move. I fell forward and got an Oakley B-2 in my ribs. Ground—2, Lew—0.

While dusting myself off, I took a closer look at the frame. The top

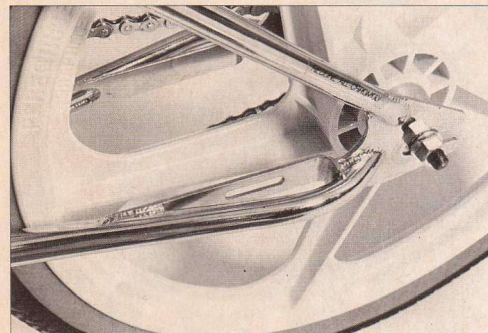


Yep, Dia-Compe has ANOTHER set of brakes out now—FS 883s. Both ends of the brake bolt tighten with an Allen wrench. The caliper arms are beefier, too. Peachy.

tubes wrap around the head tube to allow more welding surface, which means greater strength. The same goes for the 1 3/4 inch elliptical down tube, which is also triple butted (meaning three degrees of wall thickness; it also means it's thick where there's extra stress; thinner where there isn't). Absolutely NO



The distinctive wrap-around top tubes, beefy frame gusseting, built-in cable guides, recessed front brake bolt, clean welding, pure class paint job... quality all the way.



Panaracer Free Style tires, Peregrine wheels... like we said, don't change a thing. And scope out those standing platforms, and the chrome on the serrated dropout, and...

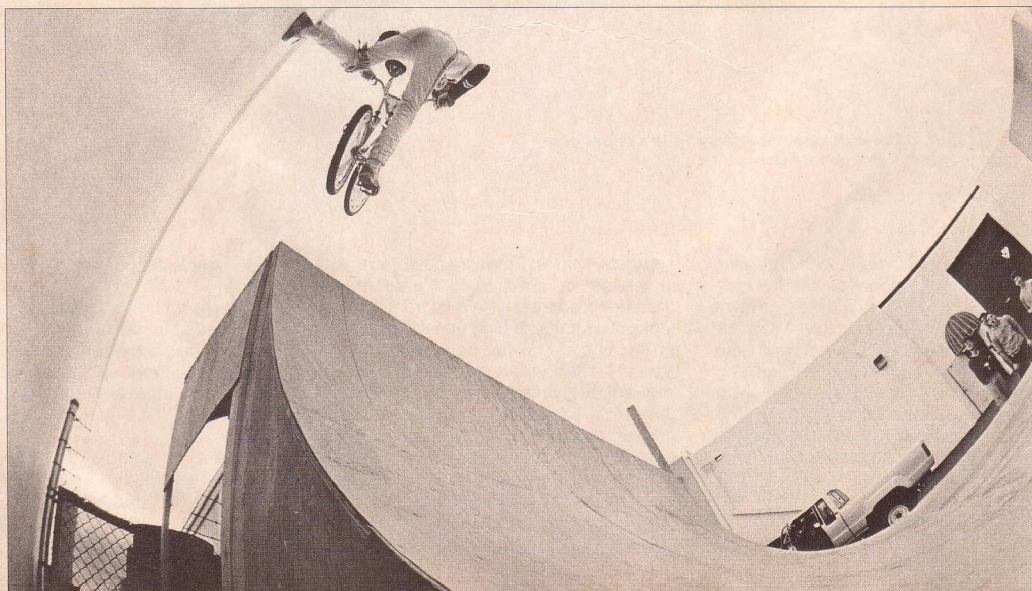


Red Line's new sealed bottom bracket. The bearings are cleverly concealed on the other side of that aluminum shield, so you couldn't get 'em dirty if you tried.



Red Line made the obvious choice for pedals and cranks—MKS Grafite 2000s and (what else?) 401 Flights.

R.L. on the RL, doin' some SERIOUS 2 by 4 footwork (two feet out and four feet over).



complaints about the rigidity or the geometry, and the welding is precise.

Red Line guarantees these frames for a lifetime, which is really unnecessary. I dare you to bust one.

The tapered forks are just as unbreakable. The bottoms of the fork legs are swedge-form closed to keep road rubble out of the tube. After the legs are slotted, the dropouts are inserted and carefully welded all the way around the outside of each leg. Complete weld coverage equals complete strength. These same methods are employed on the rear dropouts.

The rear triangle stays are also tapered—less weight without sacrificing any strength. The chain stays double as standing platforms, which are smaller than most platforms, but still able to accommodate the largest pair of Vans.

A lot of built-in features are on this pup: cable guides on the top tube and fork legs that keep the brake cables out of the way, thread-in steel fork

pegs that are knurled for traction, a coaster brake bracket that's formed into the left chain stay, and the serrated rear dropouts that keep the axle nuts where they belong. Sounds high-tech, huh? It is.

Red Line didn't cut corners on the bars and stem. The Forklifter bars seemed tailor-made for me; I liked the width and the lowered crossbar provided perfect seating for bar hops. Forklifter stems are another often copied Red Line innovation, but don't settle for imitations. The REAL ones work way better.

After I had thoroughly wasted my left leg on an aborted tailspin (final score: Ground—3, Lew—0), I cruised back to the warehouse. I felt kind of sorry that Red Line won't be offering this as a complete bike right away—then again, this one was MINE, which made me feel a lot better. Everyone else will have to wait for one, or build one up using either the RL-20-II frameset (\$250) or the frame and fork combo (\$349), which includes the

Forklifter bars and stem, the Dia-Compe FS 883 calipers, cables, and Tech 5 levers.

It was nearly light out as I wheeled into the driveway. Just then Don, Gork and A.J. drove up.

"Hey, where'd you guys go?" Andy slowly opened the car door. "The hospital. Gork had to get his foot X-rayed, and I wanted 'em to check my elbow, too." Don had a huge bandage on his forehead.

Suddenly, off in the distance, we heard tires squealing. All four of us hit the deck. They'd found us. Seconds later, to our relief, Oz whipped his Porsche into the driveway. He hopped out, briefcase in hand.

"Well, whaddya know? You guys are on time for a change. I'll never understand why you're always late..." He walked into the warehouse, shaking his head.

We looked at each other, shrugged, then got up and walked into the building. Another boring day at the office.

360 TOP ROCKIN'

Start off rolling forward real slow or just standing still. If you're stationary, you should be hopping to keep your balance.

Hop onto your top tube while holding onto your back brakes. You shouldn't be moving forward when you do the trick. Now lift one leg over the crossbar (whichever one feels more comfortable to you) and onto your front tire. Apply your front brakes—you can let go of the back ones. At this point you'll want to do little mini-hops to keep your balance.

Keep your arms really stiff to support your body for the spin. The trick is kinda like a boomerang, but your legs are scissored over the bars. Wedge your back foot against the seat post so you can push off with it—which is next.

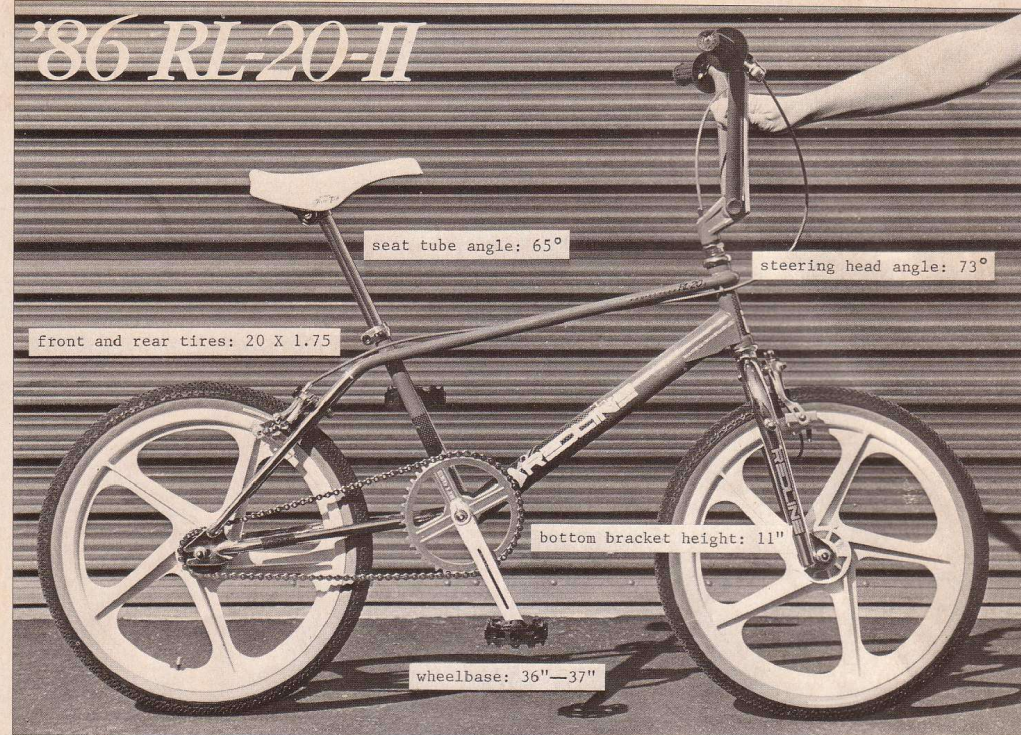
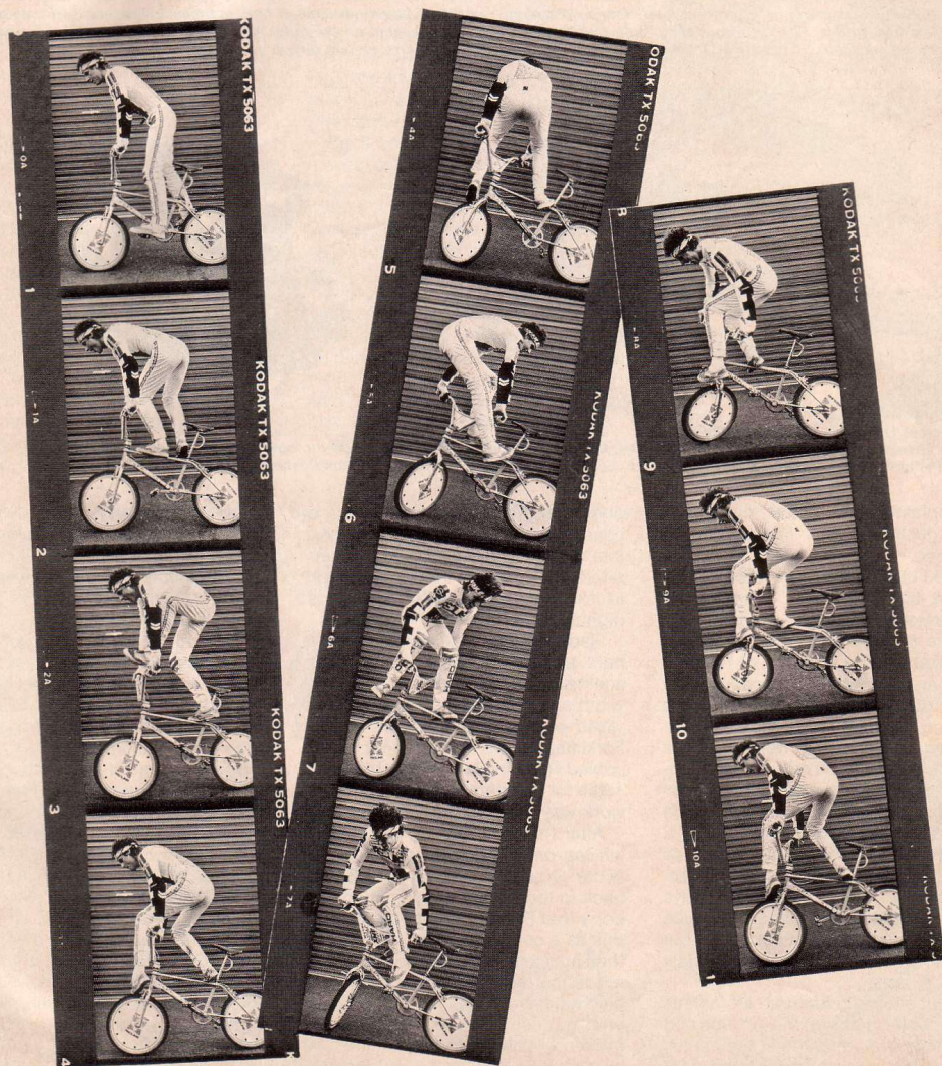
Stop hopping and push off of the seat post to get your spin going. Keep a real stiff hold on the bars and try to keep your

body centered over them as you go around. It's usually easy to spin frontside. Going backwards is tough.

Halfway through your 360, the foot that was sitting on your front tire should touch the top tube real quick and give you another push to get you the rest of the way around. Once you're back to the starting point (after a 360 turn), you should set that same foot back on the front tire. Your other foot should end up on the top tube again—use it to stop your spin.

At this point you should have completed the 360, be stopped, and hopping again to keep your balance. To get out of it, release your brakes and use your left foot (or right, whichever happens to be on the front tire) to roll your front tire forward so you can pull your leg back over the bars and drop onto your pedals.

Next you just ride away from it with a look of total confidence. Good luck.



SPECIFICATIONS

PROPOSED COMPLETE BIKE PRICE: \$650.00.

FRAME AND FORK PRICE: \$250.00.

COMBO PRICE: \$349.00.

FINISHES AVAILABLE: Radberry, white, turquoise, and red, with chromed rear triangle and chrome forks.

COMPLETE BIKE WEIGHT: 27 pounds, 8 ounces.

FRAME WEIGHT (including bottom bracket and spindle): 6 pounds, 8 ounces.

FORK WEIGHT (including fork pegs): 2 pounds, 12 ounces.

STEERING HEAD TUBE LENGTH: 5 inches.

HANDLEBAR RISE: 8 5/8 inches.

HANDLEBAR WIDTH: 27 3/4 inches.

TOP TUBE O.D.: Double top tubes.

DOWN TUBE O.D.: 1 3/4 inches, elliptical.

FORK LEG O.D.: Tapered.

BOTTOM BRACKET SIZE: Large.

COMPONENTS

FRAME: Red Line RL-20-II, 4130 chrome-moly.

FORK: Red Line RL-20-II, 4130 chrome-

moly, with thread-in steel pegs.

HANDLEBARS: Red Line Forklifter, 4130 chrome-moly.

HANDLEBAR STEM: Red Line Forklifter with De-Tangler bolt, aluminum and chrome-moly.

GRIPS: Oakley B-2, rubber.

HEADSET: Hatta, steel.

WHEELS: Peregrine Master, nylon and graphite.

TIRES: National Panaracer Free Style, 20 x 1.75.

BRAKES: Dia-Compe FS 883.

BRAKE PADS: Dia-Compe.

BRAKE LEVERS: Dia-Compe Tech 5.

BRAKE CABLES: Dia-Compe.

PEDALS: MKS Grafite 2000, graphite and chrome-moly.

CRANK: Red Line 401 Series Flight, 4130 chrome-moly, with splined 4130 chrome-moly spindle.

BOTTOM BRACKET SET: Red Line, sealed bearing, aluminum.

FRONT SPROCKET: Red Line, aluminum, 44 teeth.

REAR SPROCKET: SunTour freewheel, 16 teeth.

CHAIN: Izumi, 3/32 inch.

SEAT: Elina Flyte-Tech.

SEAT POST: Red Line, 4130 chrome-moly, fluted.

SEAT POST CLAMP: SunTour, aluminum.

OVERALL EVALUATION

QUALITY OF FINISH: Excellent.

QUALITY OF WELDING: Excellent.

QUALITY OF COMPONENTRY: Excellent (better than that).

ASSORTED COMMENTS: "There's one thing I've always liked about Red Line—they know what they're doing. They proved it once again with this bike. I mean, just look at it." . . . "They've chromed the spots where it'd scratch." . . . "Just about every component is 100 percent quality." . . . "Everything matches up. It looks totally clean, totally professional, you wouldn't have to change a single thing." . . . "Enough said. Start saving . . ."

MANUFACTURER:

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