

SCHWINN PREDATOR



Schwinn says they're selling TONS of the Predator Free-Form EXs, and we tend to believe 'em. Why? Great bike. Great price. Need we say more?

"Hey, dude. C'mere a minute."

The moon was full, but I could barely see the figure in a overcoat motioning to me from the alley about 10 feet away. I had a bad feeling about this — I knew that my late-night cravings for Slurpees would catch up with me one day. My stomach started to knot up as I quickly surveyed the scene. No one in sight. I could

continued



Twilight flight. Schwinn's one-man freestyle force, Ron Wilton, testing the atmospheric conditions.

PHOTO BY STEVE GIBERSON

Free-Form EX *A Lotta Bike For A Little Money*

make a run for it, but this character was holding something in his right hand. I decided on my tactic — stay calm and composed.

"I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT. JUST DON'T SHOOT!"

"Sssshh. Don't make a scene. I just want you to check somethin' out." And with that he disappeared into the shadows.

I stood frozen on the sidewalk. Now's your chance, I told myself — RUN! But my legs wouldn't move.

A half second later, the guy reappeared, this time riding a white bike.

"How do you like it?"

"Um, ah, fine, I think."

"Guess how much it costs."

What? I doubled over in laughter.

"I get it! This is THE PRICE IS RIGHT! Wait, I know, I'm on CANDID CAMERA, right?"

"No." The dude was getting a little impatient. "Just humor me, okay?"

"Whatever you say." This whole thing reminded me of a bad episode of the TWILIGHT ZONE, but I wasn't in a bargaining position. "What was the question again? Oh yeah, the price."

I cautiously moved toward the bike to get a closer look. The stranger tilted it towards me and I took hold of it. I could see him a little better now; he was wearing glasses. On his overcoat was an XTC patch and a few buttons — Elvis Costello, U2, the Cure . . . hmmm, the dude must be into new music. I still wasn't able to tell what he had in his hand; it looked a little too square to be a gun, but I wasn't sure. It was funny, but I had this feeling that I'd seen him someplace before.

I'd definitely seen the bike before — a Schwinn Predator Free-Form EX. A couple of people at the park had 'em, and they'd told me that they were great for the money. Okay, educated guess time.

"How 'bout 250 bucks?"

"Too high. Actually it's \$204.95."

"Whoa. Great bike for THAT price. Now can I go?"

"Not so fast. I'd like you to answer a few quick questions for me; it'll just take a minute."

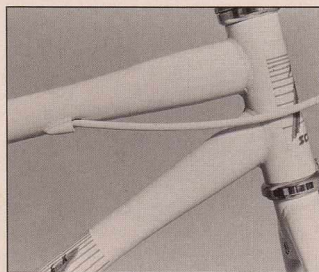
"Shoot." My heart stopped. Dumb thing to say.

He squeezed the object in his hand and pointed it in my direction. Click. "Do you freestyle?"

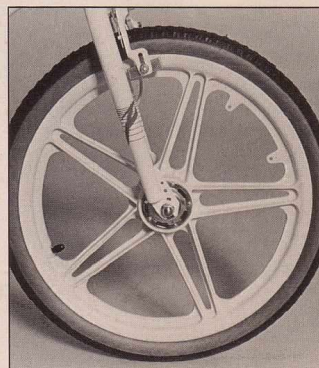
"Yyyeee . . . yeah. A couple of my buddies and I go to the park to jam . . . down by the lake. Some-



This ain't no ordinary lawnmower — a power mover maybe? Wilton, cutting up the crete at one of his favorite hangouts, Balboa Park in San Diego. Ron adapted to his Schwinn REALLY fast.



The Free-Form EX's top and down tubes gradually change from round to oval as they near the head tube. It makes for a front end that can handle plenty of punishment. Plus the rear brake cable is routed through the top tube's interior — no more mangling it on frame stands.



Schwinn's own Predator mags are made of Zytel plastic, so they should be durable enough for anything you throw at 'em.

times we ride ramps at Rat's house."

"Show me what you can do."

Before I could answer, he motioned for me to ride the thing. I climbed aboard and cruised around a little bit. This bike was dialed in. This guy had to be a bike shop mechanic or somethin'.

"Could we hurry it up a little? I've got to go back to work."

I rode into the street and pulled off a couple grasshoppers and then a curb endo. He was being a little pushy, but I figured I'd better do what I'm told and then maybe he'd let me go. I pulled up next to him.

"Handles good."

"What else? Imagine you're doing

a bike test; what would you say about this bike?"

This was gettin' weirder by the second. "What am I supposed to say? It's a cool bike for the price. It handles good, although the head angle is pretty steep, which isn't really bad, but it takes a little bit of getting used to. The steepness actually helps on certain tricks like endos and front wheel hops."

"The head angle is 75 degrees."

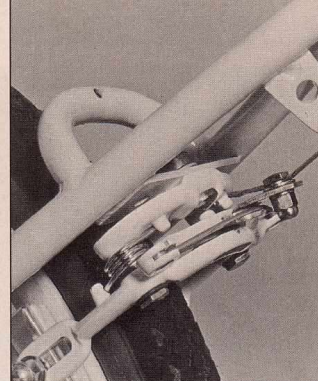
"Really? Not as much as I thought."

"Anything else?"

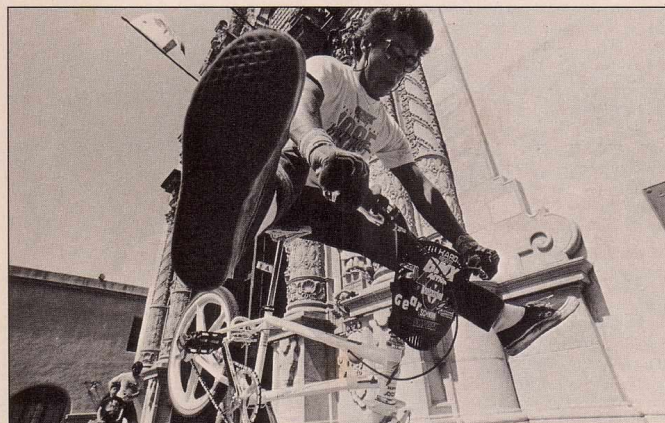
"Okay. The sticker on the seat tube says the frame is 4130 chrome-



Here's something you wouldn't expect to find on a \$200 bike — holes for routing the cable through the fork leg — a Potts Mod accommodation. Installation is a tuff, but the end result is an extremely trick and uncluttered fork leg. Also notice the recessed front brake bolt. Cool idea.



Here's a different set-up. The rear caliper is a Dia-Compe 750 centerpull mounted UNDERNEATH the seat stays, making it less likely you'll crunch it during a hectic move. The bar welded on top of the seat stays makes a great place to stand on without the brake up there. Chalk up a couple more for freestyle innovation.



Wilton, goofy footin' an endo in Balboa, Bob Haro's old stompin' grounds.

moly Bi-Oval tubing — whatever that is. Sounds like it should stay in one piece just about forever. Tapered forks, too — cool."

"Bi-Oval tubing means the top and down tubes flare from round to oval as they near the steering head tube. That allows for more weld surface area, which means greater frame rigidity."

"That's nice."

"How about the components?"

"Well . . . (sigh) again they're pretty hot for 200 bucks. The Dia-Compe brakes and Tech 4s work great — stop the bike FAST. The SunTour coaster brake does the job. I don't particularly like the handlebars — they're a little short in

width and they seem a little too swept back — I'm a bit big for 'em. I'd trash 'em for a real freestyle bar, like Red Lines, CWs, or Vectors. Oh, and those checkered plastic grips have got to go. They kill my hands."

"The stem?"

"Good, but ACSs are a little hard to adjust. I have one like this on my bike, and it's loosened up a couple times. You've gotta yank the cable part of the way out to tighten up the wedge bolt, which has an Allen head. Not a big deal."

"Well, Schwinn and ACS are working on a new hex bolt that'll replace this one. That way you can use an open-face wrench to tighten every-

thing up."

"That's cool."

"How 'bout the drivetrain?"

"The what? Oh, the cranks and stuff. Not bad when you consider how cheap the bike is. Sugino cranks — they look like steel."

"They are. One-piece and heat-treated, though."

"That's good. So they'll take a fair amount of thrashing. Aren't they 170s?"

"Yeah."

"A bit short for me, but probably passable for younger guys. Ah, most of the other stuff is pretty basic, but good. Sugino steel spider, sharp-lookin' white and black chain, and MKS look-a-like pedals that grip solid. Viscount seat, chrome-moly fluted seat post, alloy seat post clamp."

"Great. Wheels and tires?"

"(Sigh) Well, the tires are, let's see . . . Cheng Shin 20 X 175 skinwalls. The tread looks kinda like the Panaracer's, and it seems to provide plenty of traction. I wasn't too hot on the looks of those mags at first, but they kinda grow on you. They feel solid . . ."

"They're made of Zytel plastic — you know, from Du Pont — so they're pretty thrashable."

"What's really trick, though, is the way the cable runs through the top tube and the fork leg for the front brake. It makes the bike look so CLEAN. It'd be a hassle setting it up, but I think it's worth the trouble in the long run 'cause it keeps the cables out of your way. The recessed front brake bolt is a totally sano idea — no more brake guards or ripped up Vans. Cool bike, it's got everything you need for shred-din'."

"Yup. Well, I think that'll do it." Click.

I breathed a sigh of relief. That was a tape recorder in his hand. He was tapin' our conversation. What for, though? It really didn't matter. It was gettin' cold and I wanted to head home.

"You mean I can go now?"

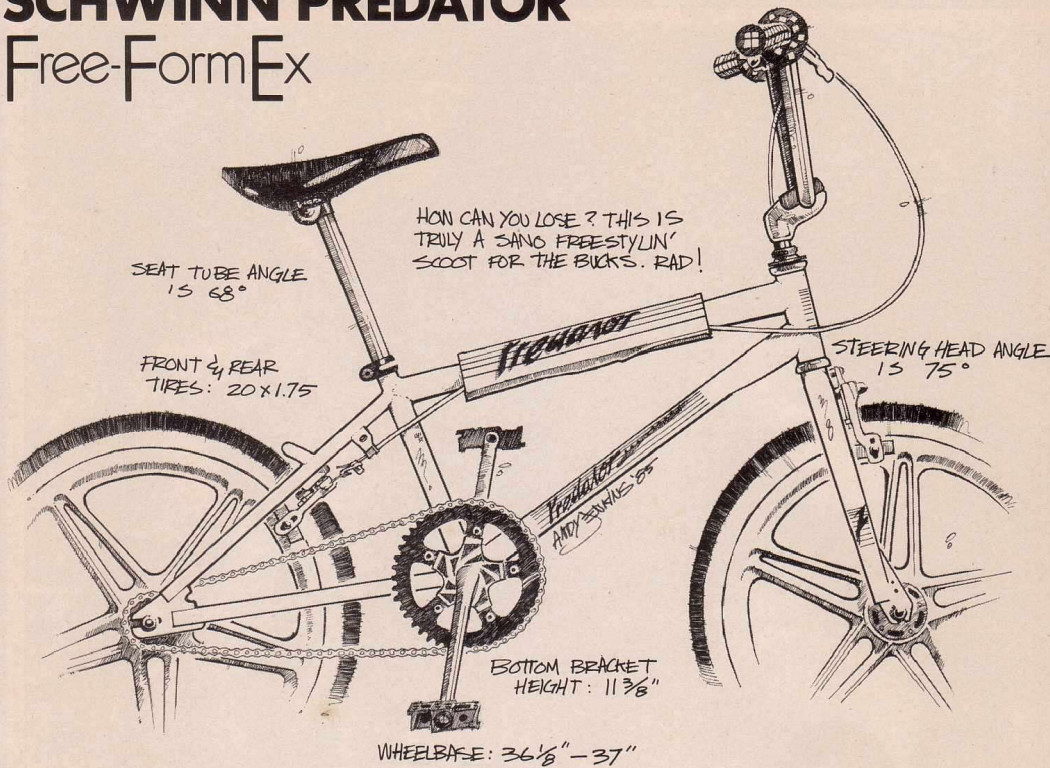
"Sure thing. And thanks a lot — you helped a bunch. Well, gotta a magazine to finish. See ya, spud." And he grabbed the bike and jammed down the street.

A MAGAZINE! Spud! Now it all made sense. I knew who this dude was . . .

"HEY, AREN'T YOU ANDY JEN . . ." But it was too late. He was gone.

SCHWINN PREDATOR

Free-Form Ex



SCHWINN PREDATOR FREE-FORM EX

SPECIFICATIONS

COMPLETE BIKE PRICE: \$204.95.
FINISH AVAILABLE: White with black and white components.
COMPLETE BIKE WEIGHT: 28 pounds, 9 ounces.
FRAME WEIGHT: 4 pounds, 13 1/2 ounces.
FORK WEIGHT: 1 pound, 12 ounces.
STEERING HEAD TUBE LENGTH: 4 inches.
HANDLEBAR RISE: 7 1/2 inches.
HANDLEBAR WIDTH: 26 3/4 inches.
TOP TUBE O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.
DOWN TUBE O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.
FORK LEG O.D.: Tapered.
BOTTOM BRACKET SIZE: Large.

COMPONENTS

FRAME: Predator Free-Form EX, 4130 chrome-moly, Bi-Oval tubing.
FORK: Predator Free-Form EX, 4130 chrome-moly.

HANDLEBAR: Schwinn T-type, steel.
HANDLEBAR STEM: ACS with Potts Mod, chrome-moly shaft.
GRIPS: Hsiang Li, plastic.
HEADSET: Steel.
WHEELS: Predator White Mags, Zytel plastic.
TIRES: Cheng Shin skinwall, 20 x 1.75 front and rear.
BRAKES: Dia-Compe MX 900 front, 750 centerpull rear. SunTour coaster brake.
BRAKE PADS: Dia-Compe.
BRAKE LEVERS: Dia-Compe Tech 4.
BRAKE CABLES: Dia-Compe.
PEDALS: Victor VP300 Platform or Wellgo LU-300 Platform (depending on availability), both with chrome-moly axles.
CRANK: Sugino steel, one-piece, heat-treated, 170mm.
BOTTOM BRACKET SET: Steel.
FRONT SPROCKET: Sugino, 43 teeth, steel.

SPIDER: Sugino BMX 4, steel.
REAR SPROCKET: SunTour, 16 teeth.
CHAIN: KMC, white/black, 1/8 inch.
SEAT: Viscount Dyna (to be replaced by the Viscount Dominator by early summer).
SEAT POST: Schwinn, chrome-moly, fluted.
SEAT POST CLAMP: Chang Star, alloy.
ACCESSORIES: Predator top tube pad.

OVERALL EVALUATION

QUALITY OF FINISH: Very good.
QUALITY OF WELDING: Good.
QUALITY OF COMPONENTRY: Good to excellent.

MANUFACTURER:
 Schwinn Bicycle Company
 1856 Kostner Ave.
 Chicago, IL 60639
 (312) 292-2900 ●

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They're engineered from the finest, super-light super-strong Swiss nylon. In just about every color but amphibian green. Then they're bamboo tumbled to give them a unique, silky smooth finish. So they look as good as they feel.

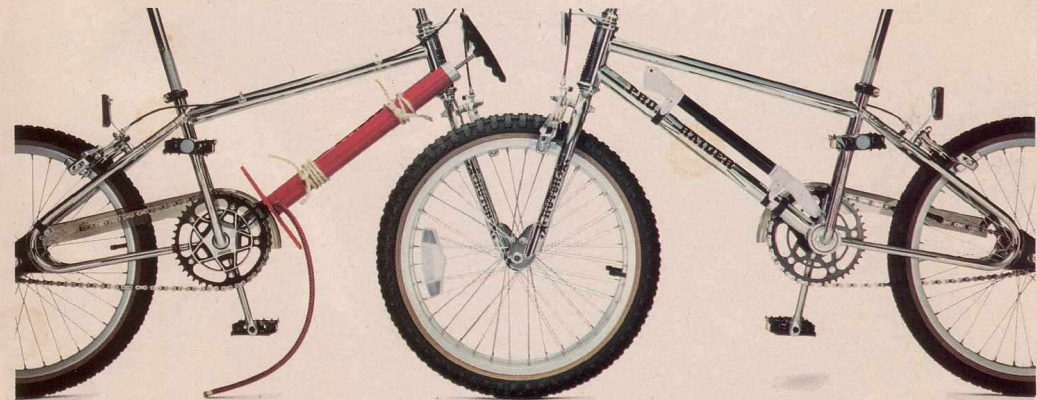
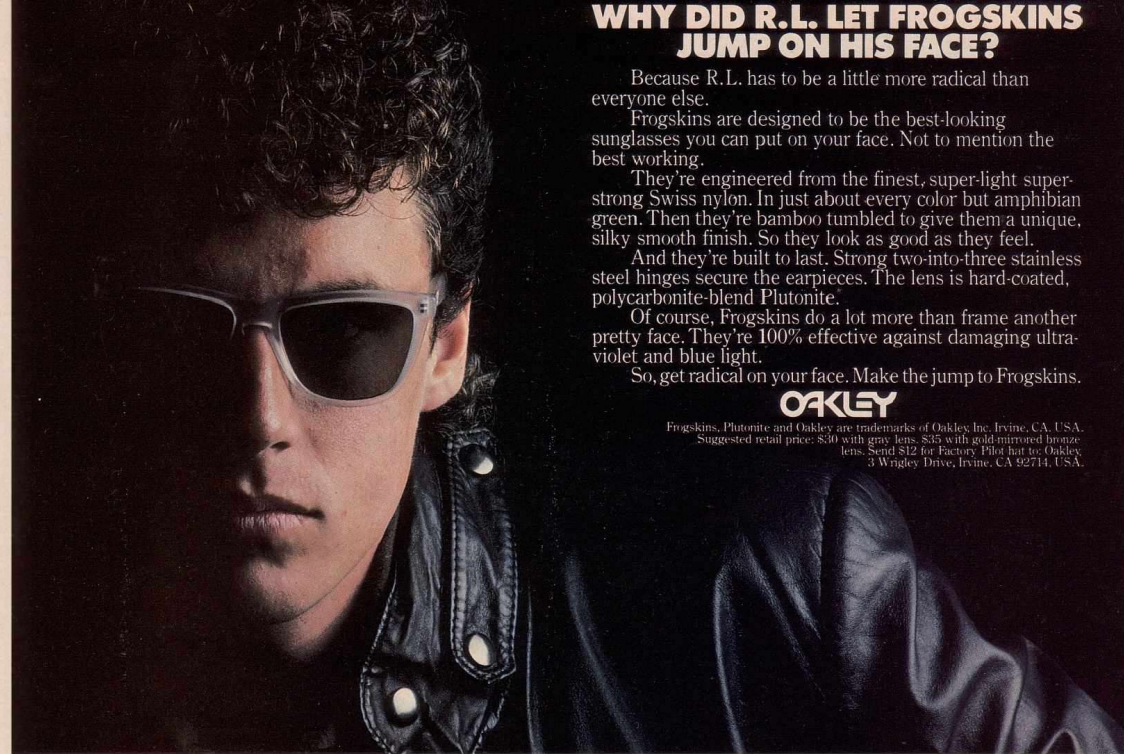
And they're built to last. Strong two-into-three stainless steel hinges secure the earpieces. The lens is hard-coated, polycarbonite-blend Plutonite.

Of course, Frogskins do a lot more than frame another pretty face. They're 100% effective against damaging ultra-violet and blue light.

So, get radical on your face. Make the jump to Frogskins.

OAKLEY

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