



SKYWAY STREET STYLER

Skyway's first complete freestyle bike



□ The freestyle market is the hottest thing in BMX today. It's so hot, in fact, that Skyway has decided to devote nearly all its advertising and promotional dollars to the freestyle marketplace.

Last year Skyway introduced its first freestyle bike. The bike was the Street Beat, but it was available only as a frame-and-fork set when we tested it in our September '85 issue. We wondered at the time why they didn't release a complete freestyle bike. The Street Beat certainly demonstrated their freestyle know-how. Apparently they were testing the waters, so to speak. Skyway is now ready to unleash its first complete freestyle bike. They call it the Street Styler, and it has Skyway quality written all over it.

FIRST LOOK

The first thing we noticed about the Street Styler was its overall look. The styling is cool and current. Everything on our test bike was either white or lavender. The frame, fork, seat, tires, and handlebars were all white. Everything else on the bike, including the six-spoke Tuff Wheels, was lavender or lavender and white, except for a few chromed items and some nuts and bolts. All in all, it was a great-looking machine.

We wouldn't buy a bike just for looks, however, and neither should you. It was time to take a closer look at the bike to see just what Skyway has to offer.

PLATFORMS

Some of the newer companies to get into freestyle have decided that a freestyle bike is supposed to have platforms. For many the general attitude appears to be "the more the merrier." Skyway, however, has some very talented freestylers on its trick team; they know what works and what doesn't, and the bike shows that.

The Street Styler has just one real platform on it, and that's around the seat mast. It's one of the best-designed frame platforms we've seen: large



Randy liked the Street Styler for ground tricks. We found it to be stable for the majority of our flatland moves.

◀ Randy Tischmann getting caught up in the cross-fire of Buff's ramp. The place has SO many phone wires, you'd think Mike were president of AT&T.

The Rad Squad

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STREET STYLER



By the day's end, all stops were being pulled out. The Skyway is a solid bike that can cut the mustard in any freestyle application.

enough to give good footing around, behind and in front of the seat tube, but no bigger than absolutely necessary. Skyway has also come up with an interesting innovation for its top tube. They've flattened and grooved the top of it to make it easier to stand on. It's clean and simple and it works.

We were a little surprised at first that the Street Styler had no platforms on the forks or chain stays, but then we remembered that Skyway makes some of

the best axle pegs in freestyle. Apparently, they decided that those are highly personal items in terms of rider preference, which indeed they are. Many of the top ramp stars prefer not to have pegs on their bikes at all, although it seems like all the top flatlanders use them.

As it turned out, the absence of front and rear pegs was not as much of a loss as we first thought. The front axles stuck out just far enough that we found we could do forkstands on them even



We were only marginally impressed with the Skyway's stem. You have to remove the top piece to tighten the wedge. What's more, the stem didn't clamp the bars as well as expected.

without pegs (although we wouldn't say the axles completely eliminated the need for such accessories). As for the absence of rear platforms, we found that the chain stays were bent out from the back wheel just enough to make them perfect for standing. This bike was full of pleasant surprises.

COMPONENTRY

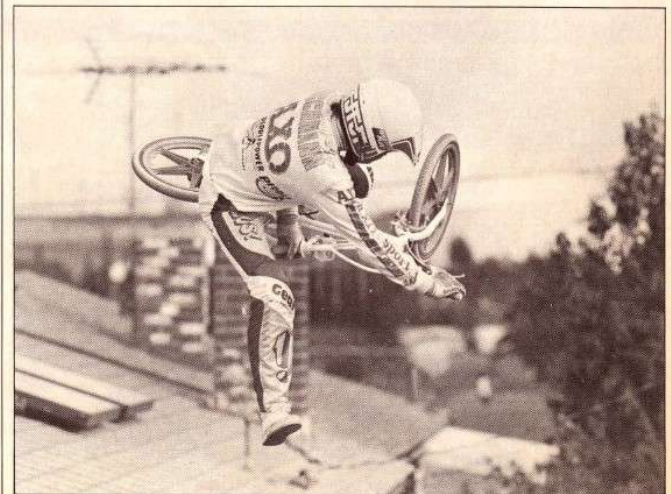
As it turned out, another pleasant surprise was the brakes. The Taiwanese-made Chang Stars used to be so inferior to Dia-Compes that they were embarrassing. Not any longer. The Chang Star Freestyle 980s on this bike were dialed. We know we keep saying this every few months, but Taiwanese components are really getting good.

In general, the Taiwan-manufactured Street Styler is a happy mix of Japanese and Taiwanese parts. Key components include 175mm Takagi cranks, Hsing Ta pedals (similar to Shimano DX platform models), a Skyway Hot Seat, a Taiwanese-made stem, and Kenda freestyle tires, 20x1.75s front and rear.

HOW SHE RIDES

Skyway told us they purposely designed the bike as a compromise between the demands of the hard-core flatland fiends and the aerial experts. As such, they designed the bike with a 72-degree head angle and strictly neutral steering—a little slower steering than a pure ground bike and a little faster steering than a pure ramp bike. Our riders, Rich Sigur and Randy Tischmann, adjusted to it easily for both types of radness.

For our aerial evaluation of the bike, we borrowed Mike Buff's halfpipe for an afternoon. In fact, we brought along both our freestyle test bikes for this month and had Randy and Rich try them both on the same day.



Randy liked the Street Styler for its small size, which made it easy for him to control in the air.

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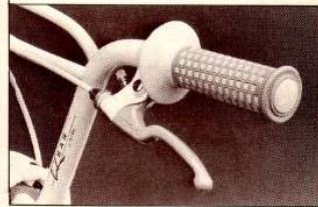
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STREET
STYLER

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1. Bike: Skyway Street Styler 20-inch complete bike.
2. Age range: 13 years and over.
3. Country of origin: Taiwan.
4. Intended use: Freestyle or street.
5. Wheelbase: 35" to 36-1/4".
6. Bottom-bracket height: 11-15/16" (center to ground).
7. Chain stay length: 15-1/4" (center of bottom bracket to center of rear dropout).
8. Steering head angle: 72°.
9. Seat tube angle: 70°.
10. Frame: Skyway Street Styler, 4130 chromoly, 1-1/8" O.D. top tube, 1-1/8" O.D. down tube.
11. Fork: Skyway, 4130 chromoly, tapered blade, freestyle design.
12. Rims: Skyway 8-spoke nylon Tuff Wheels.
13. Spokes: N/A.
14. Hubs: Skyway, heat-treated high-tensile steel axles, loose-ball design.
15. Tires: Skyway by Kenda, 20" x 1.75" front and rear, freestyle tread.
16. Cranks: Takagi, 175mm, one-piece, chromoly.
17. Pedals: Hsing Ta HTI-A12, aluminum cage, chromoly axle, platform type.
18. Chain: KMC, steel.
19. Bottom bracket: Tange, steel.
20. Front sprocket: Tracer Duralumin, 43T, aluminum alloy.
21. Rear sprocket or freewheel: Shimano 16T.
22. Brakes: Chang Star, Freestyle 980 models, front and rear.
23. Headset: Tange, steel.
24. Stem: Skyway by Hsing Lung, hollow main bolt.
25. Handlebar: Skyway EZ Bar, 27-1/4" width x 8-1/2" rise.
26. Grips: Fuan.
27. Seating: Skyway Hot Seat, nylon saddle, straight chromoly seatpost.
28. Miscellaneous: C.P.S.C. equipment (reflectors, chain guard, etc.).
29. Overall weight: 27-1/4 lbs.
30. Approximate retail price: \$279.
31. For additional information contact: Skyway Recreation Products, 4451 Caterpillar Rd., Redding, CA 96003; (916)243-5151.
H.Q. #1: Where does Tommy Casale live?



The Chang Star brake levers were surprisingly good, providing ample braking power. The grips weren't as popular; they thrashed within the first hour of riding.

The difference in the size of our two riders proved to be a factor in their appreciation of the two bikes. At five-eleven, Rich felt slightly too big to be comfortable on the rather smallish Street Styler. Randy, at five-six, found the bike a little smaller than what he's used to (a GT Pro Performer), but discovered that the smaller size made the bike easy to get radical with. And Randy did get radical. He gave the Street Styler high marks in the aerial capabilities department.

CRITICISMS: BOTH GOOD AND BAD

The Street Styler wheelbase is about an inch shorter than most full-size bikes. That may be a plus or a minus, depending on the rider. We'd say that the bike is probably better suited to riders under five-six. Taller riders may want a longer seatpost and a taller stem to feel comfortable. We also found that the EZ Bar handlebar cut down on the amount of clearance for our knees, but that shouldn't affect smaller riders.

The only component we weren't totally happy about was the Fuan grips. They were comfortable and stylish, but the soft outer sleeve started to tear after just a few contacts with the ground.

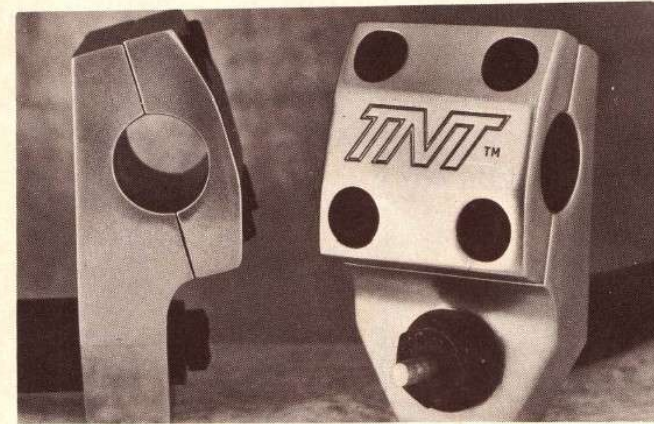
The cranks and pedals held up perfectly. The Skyway stem held well, but Rich said he did feel it slip a little once while he was riding. Rich is famous for hanging up on the ramps, however, so we wouldn't consider it a problem.



The name "Street Styler" doesn't do the bike justice—it is a SHREDDABLE ramp bike too!

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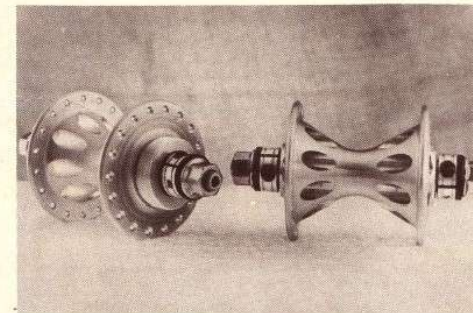
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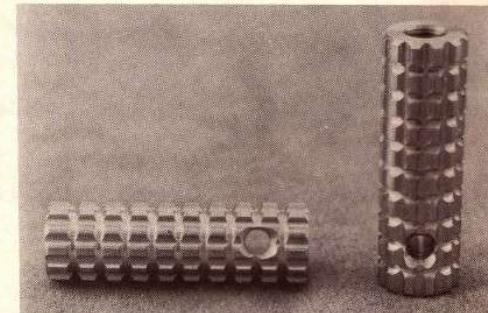
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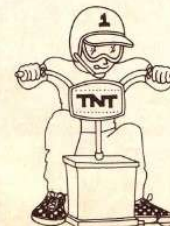
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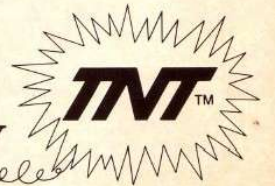
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The Kenda freestyle tires gripped well on both pavement and plywood. Rich rated them almost as good as Panaracers, his personal favorites.

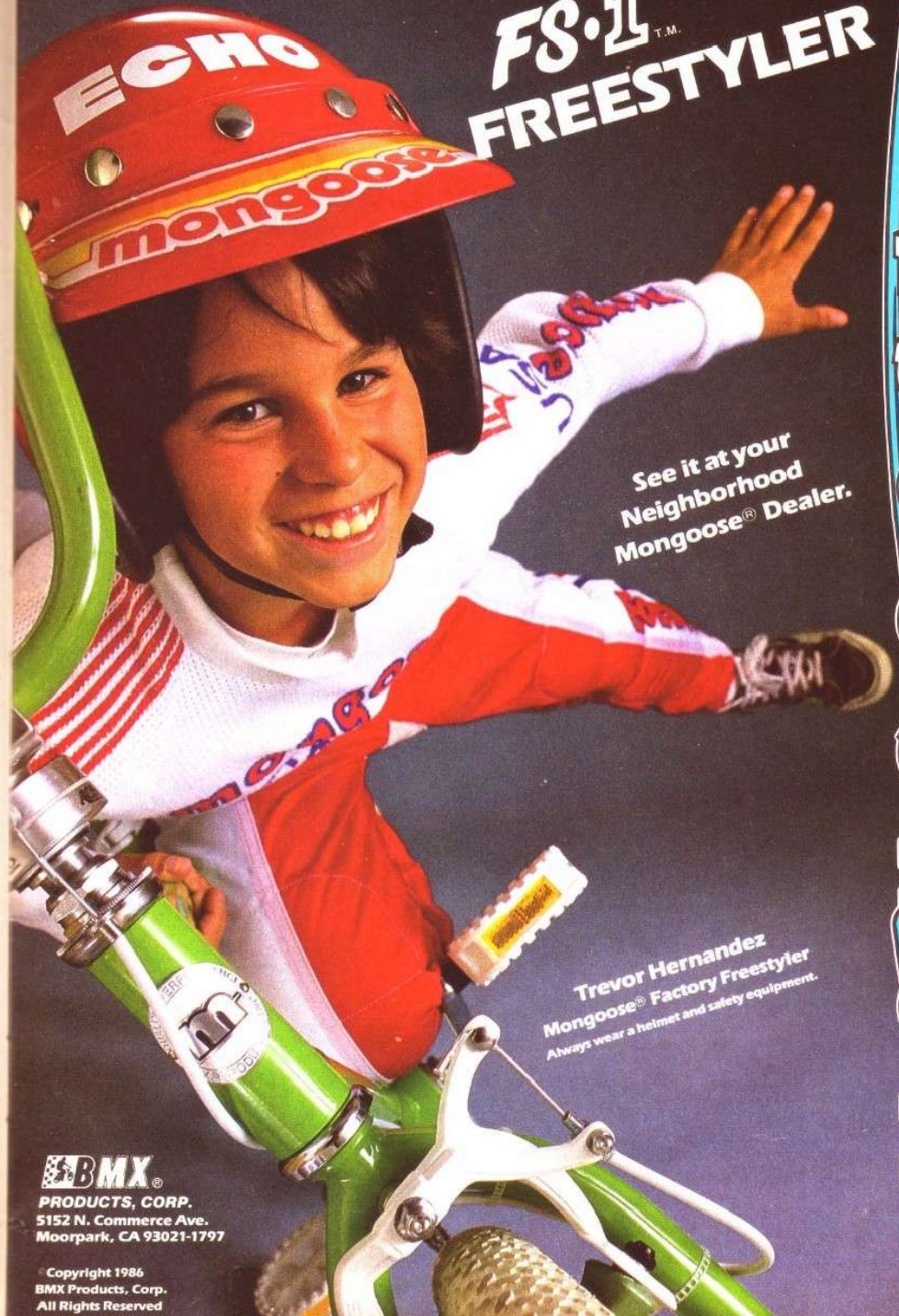
CONCLUSION

The Street Styler is the kind of freestyle bike that should please almost anyone from beginner to expert. The components are good, and the overall construction is first-rate. The welds and finish are especially nice. The bike gives you the impression that some knowledgeable freestylers had a part in designing the bike, and in fact, that was the case. Skyway used its freestyle team to take the bike through the gradual refinements of six different prototypes before they were ready to release it.

We put the bike through some serious freestyle torture, and nothing broke or tweaked. When we told the guys at Skyway that we tore up the grips a little, they were completely amazed. We wouldn't be surprised if they find a way of making their grips indestructible now too. It's tough to find a company that is as quality-conscious as Skyway, and that shows in all its products. The Street Styler is no exception. It's a serious freestyle bike. □

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