

SUZUKI GVX1 WORKS COMPETITION

Mello Yellow? More Like Suzuki's Bazooka!

Story & Photos
By Bob Osborn

Once each year since 1974 a motocross bicycle has been introduced by a major Japanese motorcycle manufacturer.

Yamaha was first with the Moto-Bike, a fully-suspended bicycle that was a blast to ride but prone to tweaks and sheared crank pins, heavy, and generally boggish in a bicycle motocross race.

The next Japanese biggie to jump in was Kawasaki. These bikes sported rear shocks, an all-aluminum heat-treated frame, and a fake shock—triple clamp assembly instead of front forks. What with all this suspension paraphernalia, the Kaw just didn't get it when it came to flat out motocross racing.

Twinkle-toeing into the picture late in 1976 came the Suzuki Works Competition Bicycle—the GVX1. Besides how to name a bike so it sounds faster than anything in the world, had Suzuki learned anything from its predecessors? Well, hold your Fruit-of-the-Looms, young heroes, 'cause this is a different breed of Japanese cat!

The new Suzuki motocross bike is not only delightful to your eyeballs, but it fairly blossoms with trickness.

The Aspen Yellow frame is chrome-moly with deeply fishtailed space-welded double gussets at the steering head. The dropouts are long-slotted for switching sprockets without changing the



Eisenacher and Suzuki, motoflying to glory and a 1st place trophy.



length of your chain. There is a cross tube between the seat stays that can be drilled to accept a caliper brake for freewheel conversion.

Phront Phorx are tubular chrome-moly jobs that curve forward to provide 1 1/2 inches of rake, absolutely perfect-garcia when combined with the frame's 73-degree steering head angle. Those guys at Suzuki did their homework. Color is the same mellow yellow as the frame and has the words 'SUZUKI WORKS BMX' emblazoned down the front. Neat. Very motocross.

The frame and fork combination will absorb wondrous amounts of thrashing, are spot-on in the steering geometry and weight distribu-

tion departments, and look mucho hot. The only possible bug in the soup is the 5-pound 6-ounce frame weight which could have been reduced a pound or so. Had Suzuki done this, they would have sacrificed some durability, so it's only a very tiny bug, and because very tiny bugs don't eat much, your soup (or frame, in this case) will last a lot longer.

Cranks are 6 1/2-inch chrome Takagis, heat-treated, of course. Pedals are the chrome KKTs with chrome-moly shafts. Both cranks and pedals are super-tough BMX stuff.

Tires are 20x2.125 Grippers with the Goodyear tread pattern. Good shoes. Rims are Araya heavy-duty steel with 105-gauge spokes.

Are you getting the picture yet? The GVX1 was built to do anything that you've got enough nerve or dumb to try, and still be in good shape when the smoke clears.

A reduction of the blinding speeds attained during motocross competition is accomplished with a Shimano coaster brake.

The gear combination supplied with the Suzuki is 40-18 which gives the amazing gear number of 44.4. With this gearing you could ride up a telephone pole if you could get enough traction. For motocross it's way too low unless you can turn 20,000 rumps (RPMs) with your legs. Suzuki didn't blow this, it's part of the CPSC requirements for a street legal bike. Sort of. Anyway, change the back



BMXA: Tell me, Mr. Jones...have you leaped any tall buildings lately?
MR. JONES: Not really, just a few medium-sized ones to keep in shape.



Mello Yellow, Japan's finest BMX bicycle. This is one quivering mass of racing machinery. It'll take you where you want to go. Posthaste!



Ike and Suzook at the Western States Championships (Morris), doing some trail-blazing for the 16 novice class.



It all comes down to this moment. The split second when you realize you're riding one of the finest BMX machines available.



Bulletproof Takagi 6 1/2-inch cranks, KKT pedals, and a black 'Works' chain guard that is really more for the street than motocross.



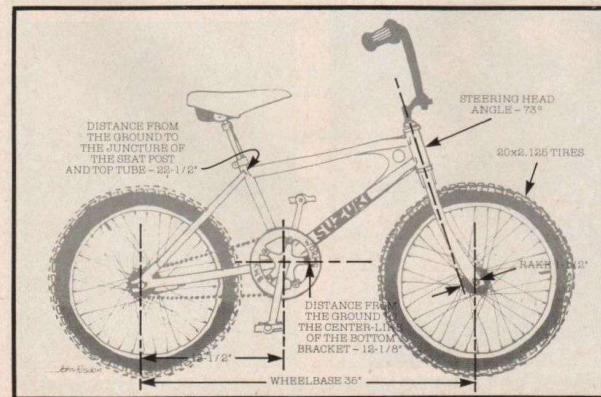
Classic style through powder. The Suzuki is quick, accurate, and responsive.



The far turn at Simi. Come in hard, hit the mid-turn jump at its nearest edge, kick out the rear, aim the front down the coming straight, and drive hard. Another fabtabulous DeCoster move executed with much class by R.L.



Suzuki's phront phorx are chrome-moly, tubular jobs. Steering head angle, rake, and the resulting trail were spot-on for quick, accurate steering.



sprocket to something like a 14 and you'll be at least close to competition gearing. The chain guard on the front sprocket looks good, but according to Don 'Bowlegged' Jones, is kind of 'streey.'

There were no complaints from our test riders about the seat. However, the bars and gooseneck were subjected to a bit of verbal abuse. The Sakae gooseneck is not as bulletproof as an Ashtabula or one of the double-clamp jobs, and the handlebars are too narrow and too low for anybody much over 12 years old. Also, the angle of the grip area does not allow for maximum body leverage when



'Long Gone' Eisenacher, jamming to a 1st place trophy on the GVX1. Yarnell Track.



You can always recognize Yarnell by the gnarly track surface, a fair amount of which the Suzook just spread over the countryside when Eisenacher got a little sideways.

pulling into the pedals. (Bowlegged Jones rated them 'doofy.') Try some DG or Two Wheeler's bars or BMX Products alloy bars. The test team, including Jones, rated the grips 'cool.'

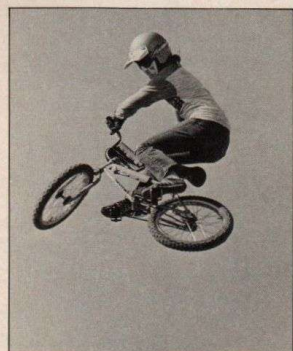
Cost of this bike is in the neighborhood of 150 dollars, and I should probably stick in here somewhere that the Suzuki GVX1 Works Competition Bicycle (whew!) is supplied with the various and sundry reflectors that make it street legal as per the edicts of the CPSC. But they are easily removed when trimming down for competition.

And speaking of competition, folks, let's get on with how this bright and beautiful bicycle boogies in a berserk, blistering, bouncy BMX blowout. (Eat your heart out, Scot.)

The combination of a short wheelbase and 73-degree steering head angle produced some very exciting moments for our almost fearless test team during the getting-used-to-the-beast part of testing. Going over the jumps the handlebars seemed to have an attraction for belt buckles, the steering was QUICK, and going through fast turns the rear wheel was not at all content with just following.

After a number of end-swappers and semi-loopers, the mighty BMXA test team began adjusting to the Suzuki's eccentricities. Once they had it wired, the GVX1 turned

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What style! What grace! More Don Jones tall building leaping.

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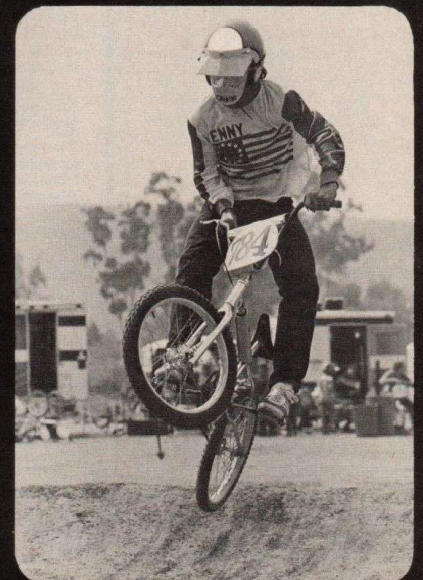
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Product Analysis: THE SUPERBYKE TUF-NECK



By Bob Osborn

In a previous issue of BMXA we ran a product release of the Tuf-Neck. We said that if this gooseneck is as good as Superbyke says it is, they've really got a hot item.

The notorious BMXA test team has been running Tuf-Necks on their racing and thrashing bikes for about four months now. You are about to find out if the Tuf-Neck measures up to Superbyke's promises.

But first, a brief description. The jaws or clamps of the Tuf-Neck are aluminum, not heat-treated. They are clamped together (over the handlebar tube) with four beefy, hardened Allen bolts. An Allen wrench of proper size is supplied with the package. The stem is 1010/1018 mild steel which is press-fitted into the bottom aluminum plate under 40,000 pounds pressure and then pinned in place. The Tuf-Neck retails for about 23 dollars. Stem bolt and wedge are not included.

STATEMENT NO. 1: WEIGHS LESS THAN ONE POUND.

To be exact, the Tuf-Neck weighs 14½ ounces, without the stem bolt and wedge. For comparison, the Ashtabula forged gooseneck weighs 15 ounces and the Cook Bros. chrome-moly double-clamp gooseneck weighs 19 ounces, that's both without stem bolts and wedges.

STATEMENT NO. 2: WILL WITHSTAND 80,000 POUNDS PRESSURE.

80,000 pounds of what kind of pressure? We can say that during the four-month test period, none of the Tuf-Necks cracked or tweaked, although we did experience a couple other problems.

STATEMENT NO. 3: NO WELDS TO BREAK.

Can't argue with that. What did happen to one of our Tuf-Necks

was the pin that holds the plate to the stem (in addition to the press fit) worked inward until it came into contact with the stem bolt. Before this was discovered, the stem bolt was loosened and tightened several times, resulting in a deep groove being cut into the stem bolt. This happened to our fearsome Tech Editor, Rob Lynch. He discovered it after the second moto at Van Nuys. So as not to lose the pin, he tapped it the rest of the way out and rode his third moto relying on the press fit to hold the clamp on the stem. Without the pin, the gooseneck had a loose, wobbly feel despite the 40,000-pound press fit. Later Rob tapped the pin back in place and has had no further problems with it.

Not so much a problem, but still annoying, was the initial creaking of all the Tuf-Necks. This was probably caused by the stem bolt stretching. After the bolts were snugged up several times and everything seated in, they quit creaking.

STATEMENT NO. 4: THE HANDLEBARS WILL BEND BEFORE THE TUF-NECK WILL RELEASE ITS VISE-LIKE GRIP.

If the right-sized Tuf-Neck is used (1" or 7/8"), if the bars are cleaned of grease or oil, and if the Allen bolts are cinched down super tight. One time R.L. landed so hard that he tweaked a mag wheel and knocked the bearing cups loose in it without the bars shifting in the Tuf-Neck. Another time Don Jones landed on the front wheel so hard that the alloy bars sheared off at the crossbar, and yet the Tuf-Neck held firm.

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SUZUKI GVX1
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into a very accurate machine for hasty transportation.

The time had arrived to make a few modifications and take the Suzook out to the field of honor. First the reflectors came off, then the cranks were switched to 7-inch Takagis. BMX Products alloy box bars and an Ashtabula gooseneck were installed and the gearing was changed to 46/17 for the lightning-legged 16-year-old Ike Eisenacher (eyes-n-nokker), who was elected to do most of the race testing.

After a bunch of races and a bunch of trophies, we've got a bunch of info from which to draw a bunch of penetrating, fairly accurate conclusions. Namely:

Right out of the box the Suzuki is plenty competitive for the average racer and will take as much thrashing as the strongest bike you might want to compare it with.

At 33 pounds, the Suzuki is a bit heavy for serious, white-knuckle, wild-eyed competition. 20X1.75 tires, alloy rims and 80-gauge spokes, alloy bars, and maybe a freewheel conversion would drop the weight to the ultra-competitive level.

The quick steering and short wheelbase take some getting used to, but once mastered, provide such accurate and responsive handling characteristics that your brain will be bogged.

Once the bars are switched, the short wheelbase and resulting location of the bottom bracket produce a power/leverage position that gives blazing acceleration if you've got enough marbles in your pocket.

So, what does this all come down to? Well, lemme tell 'ya, with a price tag in the 150-frogskins area, and considering the fact that you get chrome-moly forks and frame, and taking into account the el superbo handling characteristics after you get used to it, this Suzuki GVX1 is a red-hot bike at a red-hot price! Dollar for dollar, point for point, you can't beat it.

Honda, where are you???? •

Anybody wanting more info about the Suzuki GVX1 can write to:

Suzuki, BMX Dept.
13767 Freeway Dr.
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

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