



TORKER TORKFLYTE TEST

When Greg Hill and John Ker unloaded the Torker Torckflyte for the first of two photo sessions, John said, "Bob says this is a good bike!" Greg looked at the machine and said, "I can tell that just by looking at it!"

What attracts Greg Hill to the Torckflyte is not that the bike is good looking but the fact that the machine looks good. It has functional lines, good angles, and the quality construction that experts can spot in a race machine just by looking at it. The nice thing about Torker is that they go beyond the visual aspects of making bikes. Lots of bikes look good

on the outside but not every bike can combine excellent looks, excellent handling, and excellent construction the way Torker does.

The Torckflyte is shipped to your dealer unassembled, which is how we received it. From the moment we slipped the first bottom bracket up into place we fell in love with the bike. The thing fit together like a dream. Cups fit perfectly, the absolute best we've ever seen! The seat post fit perfectly and threads on the forks were so clean that the adjusting cone spun on it like a precision lead screw. The Torckflyte was such a treat to

work on that we were almost ready to recommend it on the basis of ease of maintenance alone. But then we thought for a moment, "Wait a minute. What if this baby's a ringer? What if they made sure everything was perfect before they sent it to us?" To find out for sure we phoned two well known Southern California dealers. One in the San Diego area and one in the San Fernando Valley. At both shops Torker is not the primary line of bikes carried, it's simply an extra line they stock to meet varying customer demands. Their reactions to the Torckflyte they

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had received mirrored our own impressions, especially with the chrome plated models like our test bike.

Like we said, the Torkflyte is a good-looking bike. The chrome and blue combo we had was very appealing. We should probably clarify that the double top tube design might not appeal to everyone. To be absolutely honest, Torker's double top tube design has turned off at least a few mainstream cyclists. You almost have to figure that anytime makers stray away from the standard configuration of single top and down tubes, they start treading in dangerous waters. The Torker approach is not what cycling engineers have been working on for decades to improve. Regardless of how it's engineered, the only thing that really counts anyway is how the bike performs. Any criticism of the design is irrelevant until you test the product under fire, and in our opinion, the Torker can stand the heat and that's all that matters.

The handling on the Torkflyte is precise. The front end is nimble, the kind you can loft easily over obstacles, yet responsive in any turning situation. To Greg Hill the Torker "handles good" in the stock configuration. Greg rides a GT in competition and, although he made no other specific comparison, he said the Torker "felt short" in the rear end. The short rear end may account for the Torkflyte's preference to "ride the groove" (instead of flat-tracking it through flat turns) which is exactly how you should ride flat turns (see "Turning Strategy" page 43, May 1980, BMX PLUS!) Berm riding is Torker territory. After five minutes of getting used to the bike you find yourself doing Eddy King power wheelies out of every berm you hit. The bike simply makes you feel like getting stylish. It's no miracle worker, remember, it just helps you use what skills you already have to their fullest, which is the most any bike can do. Jumps are handled smoothly and again the best surprise is no surprise. The Torker's agile front end makes speed jumping easy and aerials are only limited by the capability of the rider.

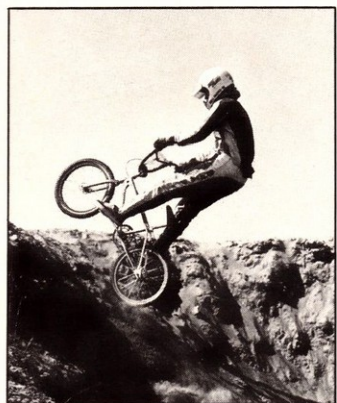
The profile on the Torker is best suited to riders 5'10" or shorter. Anyone taller, should probably use something with a little more room up front, like a Schwinn Sting.

The approximate retail price is about \$300.00 (subject to change) which is about the ball park figure for other makes in the same component range. Components are basically all JBM parts (see specs) which perform well and are reliable. Everything worked up to par except the KKT RT-E-MX pedals. The pedals are

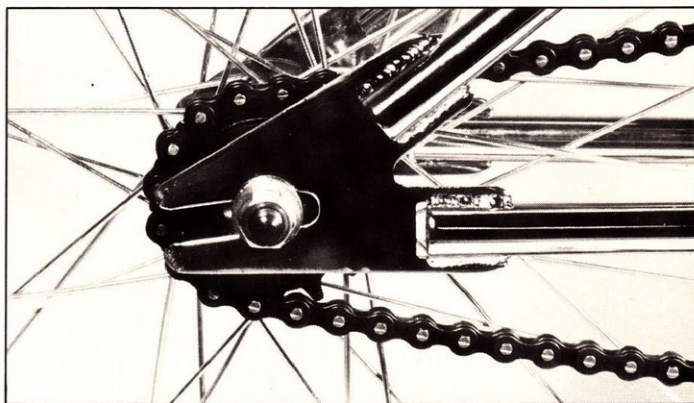
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specified as having chrome-moly spindles but the shafts aren't up to par with the KKT's other RT pedals. We substituted a pair of KKT Lightnings for the stock ones after they bent, which is why you'll see different pedals in the Greg Hill photos. Greg wasted the original set in only 30 minutes.

Torker's stem is basically a take off on the Pro-Neck but with a thinner profile. Only a press fit holds the chrome-moly stem into the alloy head. Although we haven't heard of any Torker stems coming loose, it should be noted that Pro-Neck uses a threaded fastener to secure the press fit. The six allen bolts used to secure the bars seem like a case of overkill. We would rather see only four large bolts instead of six small ones. The alloy bars did slip in the stem once on a harsh landing but after they were put back in their original position and chinned down again, they stayed put.



The Torker's versatility is due to its well-balanced geometry.



The only improvement we could suggest for the Torker would be to make the end of the stays butt up to the end of the rear drop-out slots.

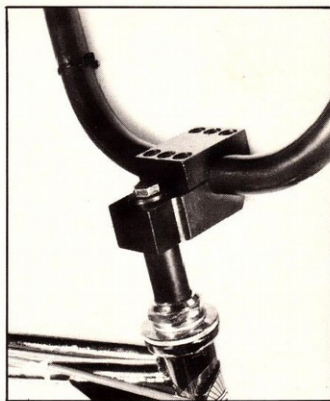


Some bikes might hinder your chances at doing maneuvers like this. Not a chance on the Torkflyte.

This means the only things holding the chain stay to the dropouts are the two fingers that are welded to the top and bottom of the stay. The problem does not exist at the seat stay because the tube and the drop are butted together and welded. The gap not only makes the frame look unfinished but it could cause some problems as the frame gets older.

Outside of our nitpicking on that last item, we feel that the handling, craftsmanship, and serviceability of the Torker Torkflyte are all topflight. The Torkflyte is a great machine, and one of the best bikes available in the \$300 price range.

If you would like information on the Torkflyte, or any other Torker product, just indicate it in the section of the Reader Service Card marked "Test Bike". It's on page 84.



Torker's stem. The upper mounting blocks are aluminum, the stem chrome-moly. Be sure to use a good pad with it.

Frame: 4130 Chrome-moly, heli-arc welded, chrome plated.

Fork: 4130 Chrome-moly, heli-arc welded, chrome plated.

Bars: Voris-Dixon aluminum V-bars
Stem: Torker aluminum clamp/chrome-moly stem.

Cranks: Takagi 175mm Chrome-moly w/quick change 44T

Seat: Troxel

Pedals: KKT RT-E-MX

Brakes: Shimano tourney model BR-MX20, with BL-MX10 lever

Bottom Bracket: Tange OPC

Head Set: Tange AW-27

Hubs: Shimano Freehub FH-MX 60, 16T

Tires: Mitsubishi Competition II 20X2.125 front, 20X1.75 rear.

Grips: Finish Line.

Price: \$300.00

*Our test bike came equipped with Sun Tour hubs due to back order of specified parts.

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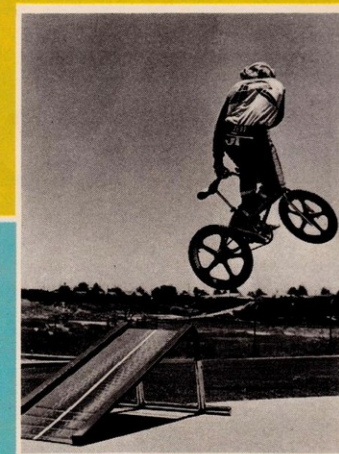
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