

In an unusual step, Yokota specified Italian Columbus Cromor OR tubing for this model. Its thin walls require careful torch work, so vice-president John Harrington had to find a smaller builder in the Orient with the requisite skill. It seems to have worked because the welds on our test bike looked flawless. However, despite the special tubing, the bike weighs 31.3 pounds, in part due to the 3.7-pound fork. A Rock Shox Mag 20 would save about ¼ pounds.

Overall, the Yosemite Pro shows that you don't have to tolerate motorcycle prices to get a suspension bike. Moreover, it represents the leading edge of a new genre of affordable sprung models. Before long, I predict we'll see shocks on hybrids, and perhaps even (cross yourself) road bikes.

A revolutionary—or shall we say shocking—concept. ■

ROAD RACING



Bridgestone RB-2

An Inexpensive, Unexpected, Race-Ready Roadster

BY JOHN KUKODA

NOT EVERY BICYCLE QUALIFIES FOR THE cliché, "most energy efficient mode of transportation ever devised." Among all the varieties, it's the road bike (a.k.a. "road racer") that's superior at carrying a rider fast and far across all types of asphalt.

If you pound pavement on a hybrid or mountain bike, you're squandering precious energy to overcome extra weight and rolling resistance. Ride either on a Sunday club outing and you'll learn firsthand that OTB stands for something besides "off-track betting" (off the back).

Even if you love off-road cycling and are blessed with endless singletrack, there'll be days when your legs are willing but your arms and butt feel like hammered dogmeat. Riding a road bike is the perfect alternative because a few hours of sustained spinning on smooth asphalt builds the endurance you need to enjoy epic days on the trail. Mountain bike champions such as Ned Overend, Ruthie Matthes, and John Tomac (plus MOUNTAIN BIKE's dynamic duo, Capt. Dondo and Uncle Knobby) all log big-time miles on skinny tires.

Of course, if you're interested in long-distance events or USCF racing, nothing but a road bike will do. Although most riders understand this, they're apt to have the common misconception that "real" racing machines have 4-figure prices, fragile finger-width tires, and the unpredictable behavior of a squirrel on a rush-hour freeway.

Wrong, wrong, and wrong. The proof is provided by Bridgestone's versatile RB-2, a race-ready \$585 roadster that leaves hybrids and mountain bikes in the dust.

The RB-2 boasts Japanese construction, which is almost unheard of these days. (Most bikes in its price range are built by Taiwanese factory workers.) Bridgestone's Japan-based facility makes it possible, so use the money you save to buy a good set of lightweight race wheels, and you'll still have enough left for a few seasons of entry fees. The stock Araya 20A rims, shod with wide, smooth-rolling 700x28C Ritchey Force semi-slicks, are perfect for most uses this side of the district championship. Their wide footprint vs. typical 700x20C tires provides added comfort and traction with little extra

YOKOTA YOSEMITE PRO

Distributed by: Yokota Cycle USA
2016 Martin Ave.
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Country of Origin: Taiwan

Suggested Retail Price: \$899; \$999 with Rock Shox Mag 20 fork

Sizes Available: 15, 18, 20 (tested), 22 in. (center-to-top)

Weight: 31.3 lbs.

Frame: Columbus Cromor OR double-butted chrome-moly steel with double-taper stays; Dirt Research AfterShock air/spring suspension fork

Wheelbase _____ 42.5 in.; 108 cm

Seat tube _____ 20 in.; 50.8 cm

Top tube _____ 22.8 in.; 57.9 cm

Head angle _____ 72 degrees

Seat angle _____ 73.5 degrees

Chainstays _____ 16.7 in.; 42.4 cm

Bottom bracket height _____ 12.2 in.; 30.9 cm

Fork rake _____ 1.8 in.; 4.57 cm

Trail _____ 2.33 in.; 5.91 cm

Wheels:

Hubs _____ Shimano Deore DX, quick-release, 135-mm rear axle spacing

Spokes _____ 15-gauge Wheelsmith stainless steel, 32 front, 36 rear

Rims _____ Sun Metal CR-20

Tires _____ Onza Porcupine, 26x2.1 in., Schrader valve

Drivetrain:

Deraillleurs _____ Shimano Deore DX, thumbshifters

Chain _____ Shimano Hyperglide

Crankset _____ Shimano Deore DX, 175-mm crankarms, 24/36/48T chainrings

Bottom bracket _____ Shimano BB-UN70 sealed cartridge

Freewheel _____ Shimano Deore DX 7-speed, 13-30T cassette

Components:

Brakes _____ Shimano Deore DX cantilevers

Pedals _____ Shimano Deore DX, nylon clips and straps

Headset _____ YST 707, Fisher Evolution 1½-inch size

Seatpost _____ SR Tall Cool One

Saddle _____ Avocet R-20 Gel

Bar/stem _____ Alloy bar; Dirt Research chrome-moly 15-cm stem, Onza Spy Bar bar-ends



JOHN P. HAMEL

weight. Plus, the RB-2 has enough fork and stay clearance to accept 700x32C touring tires or 700x28C hybrid knob-bies. So equipped, the bike's potential goes beyond racing.

All this tire room means plenty of fender clearance, a rarity these days. But, sadly, the bike's only glaring omission is the lack of dropout eyelets. Fitting fenders is still possible, of course, but requires the clutter of adapter clamps.

That's it for the criticism, however, because angle for angle and tube for tube this bike's dialed-in frame geometry is identical to Bridgestone's flagship RB-1—about the sweetest-handling production bike out there. As they should, the dimensions vary with frame size. Our 56-cm sample combined a comfortably slack 73-degree seat angle with a longish 56.5-cm top tube, providing an efficient over-pedal position and room to stretch out. Up front, its 73.5-degree head angle is paired with a 4.5-cm fork rake—a perfect match that provides an agile, yet stable ride with a textbook 2.12 inches of trail.

The bike also looks right, with a

THUMBNAIL



Japanese-built frame incredible at this price
Ideal all-purpose frame geometry
Tire clearances add versatility



No dropout eyelets
Not enough Bridgestone dealers

semi-sloping fork crown, short-point lugs, and niceties such as a chain hanger on the right seatstay and a pump peg behind the head tube. Unlike some competitors, it has no cost-cutting unicrown fork, new-wave TIG welds, or lawyer-mandated, idiot-proof retaining dropouts to confound quick front wheel changes. A tasteful blue-and-ivory paint job completes the package; metallic purple is

also available.

Bridgestone kept the price down by sparing no expense on the frame but wisely equipping it with serviceable budget parts. These include Shimano 400EX derailleurs, Dia-Compe Blaze sidepull brakes, and a Sakae bar, stem, and seatpost. They work fine but can easily be upgraded (unlike a cheap frame). Even at its low price, however, the RB-2 diverges from the ordinary with MKS track-cage pedals, Christophe spring-steel toe clips, and a Sugino DAC crankset with low Q-factor (distance between the outside edges of the crankarms), which Bridgestone says promotes more efficient pedaling. Our 56-cm bike was spec'd with unusually long 175-mm crankarms, which didn't trouble me, especially on hills where their extra leverage helped, but they may be extreme for some riders. Smaller frames get 170-mm arms, the right size, but the crankset isn't available with the 172.5s preferred for larger sizes. ■

BRIDGESTONE RB-2

Distributed by: Bridgestone Cycle (USA), Inc.
15021 Wicks Blvd.
San Leandro, CA 94577

Country of Origin: Japan

Suggested Retail Price: \$585

Sizes Available: 50, 53, 56 (tested), 59, and 62 cm (center-to-top)

Weight: 23.2 lbs.

Frame: Triple-butted Ishiwata chrome-moly steel frame and fork, lugged construction

Wheelbase _____ 39 in.; 99 cm

Seat tube _____ 22 in.; 56 cm

Top tube _____ 22.2 in.; 56.5 cm

Head angle _____ 73.5 degrees

Seat angle _____ 73 degrees

Chainstays _____ 16.1 in.; 41 cm

Bottom bracket height _____ 10.8 in.; 27.5 cm

Fork rake _____ 1.77 in.; 4.5 cm

Trail _____ 2.12 in.; 5.37 cm

Wheels:

Hubs _____ Shimano Exage 500EX, quick-release,
126-mm rear axle spacing

Spokes _____ 32, 14-gauge stainless steel, 3-cross

Rims _____ Araya 20A, silver

Tires _____ Ritchey Road Force, 700x28C

Drivetrain:

Derailleurs _____ Shimano 400EX, indexed down
tube levers

Chain _____ Shimano Hyperglide-50

Crankset _____ Sugino DAC, 53/40T alloy
chainrings, 175-mm crankarms

Bottom bracket _____ Tange sealed

Freewheel _____ Shimano 7-speed Hyperglide-50,
13-23T cassette

Components:

Brakes _____ Dia-Compe Blaze sidepulls

Pedals _____ MKS Sylvan track, Christophe
steel clips, MKS nylon straps

Headset _____ Hatta Vesta steel

Seatpost _____ Sakae CLE alloy, 1-bolt, 220 mm

Saddle _____ Avocet racing

Bar/stem _____ Sakae round-bend alloy, 41.5 cm;
Sakae alloy, 10 cm

TIME TRIAL/TRIATHLON



Cannondale R700

ZZZoommm! What Was That?

BY SCOTT MARTIN

ABOUT THE ONLY ACCESSORY MISSING from this bike is a bag to put over your head so your bike-snob buds won't know you've turned tri-geek. Then again, you might be going so fast on this light, aero

speedster that all they see of you are your other cheeks.

Like most time trial/triathlon bikes, Cannondale's R700 looks funny and goes quickly. This still-small category of

