

# TEST



## BMX PLUS! TESTS THE FUJI FEATHER!!!

The Fuji Bicycle Company has been making bicycles for over 80 years. 1980 marks the first year that the Japanese manufacturer has ventured into the competition motocross market. Just recently Fuji introduced a complete line of Motocross equipment. The Fuji professional is an all out lightweight racer, the feather is a medium priced race bike and the MX-500 is the low-budget model.

We tested a Feather model. Each color the Feather comes in has its own name: Orange peel, White Cap and Plumb Crazy. But don't ask us where they got those names (I think the marketing department had a bit too much Saki one night.)

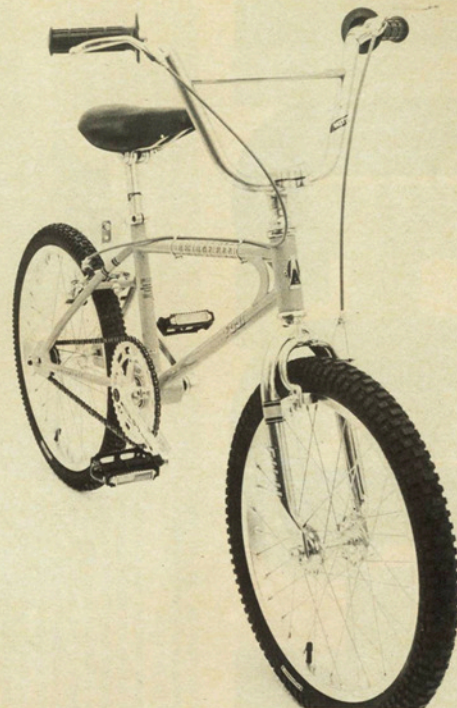
When we got the bike, the first thing we noticed was the funny looking handlebars. The bars are made by Fuji and the crossbar is slightly bent away from the rider and conforms to the number plate bend. After riding the bike we decided the bars were a bit narrow and sweep back too much for our riders' taste. We took the bars off and set them up to a pair of Redline V-bars (micro size). The Fuji bars are just a bit narrower than the V-bars and they have a bit more bend where the bars sweep back. They'd probably be OK for smaller riders. We put the Redline bars back on the bike for the test.

The stock grips look like old Yamaha grips, which went out with 30 cents a gallon gas. We put 'em in the refrigerator and slipped on a pair of Oakley II's. No blisters with Oakleys.

The frame is half chrome moly and mild steel which give the extra strength where it's needed and doesn't hurt your pocketbook so much. Several manufacturers (most notably Mongoose) use this approach with their medium price range bikes. The rear drop out slots are long enough to make a wide range gear changes without taking out or adding links to the chain. The rear brake mount is positioned about as perfectly as it could be. The dacompe brakes have long adjustment slots so the binders can be adjusted to contact the rim properly in all but the most forward and most rearward wheel positions. The stock brake pads worked OK at first, but they lost their effectiveness after one ride. We replaced them with a pair of Kool Stop KS-C pads. The front brake worked adequately but it was permanently removed when we changed the forks. More on that later.

The Fuji frame is built in Japan and instead of regular hell-arc welding at all the joints, the frame is brazed together at some and welded at other.

In order for brazing to work, the joints have to match perfectly before they're bonded, which is exactly what Fuji has done. The only conventional welds on the frame exist at the rear drop outs. The frame held up to all of the thrashing we gave it. Although we were pretty limited to the amount of time we had to ride the bike we did get in a few cliff hangers. We'll be keeping the bike over the next



The colors on the Fuji "Orange Peel" are very striking (See color photo). The frame comes with a real nameplate on the headtube instead of the commonplace sticker. This doesn't make the bike necessarily better, it's just kind of classy.

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several months, so if any problems develop with the frame we'll let you know.

The only problem we encountered during the whole test was the way the bike handled with the stock Tange/Fuji forks. The bike washed out like crazy in turns. When approaching turns you couldn't stuff the front end into a line without it plowing away. If you tried to force it you ended up wasting a lot of energy just keeping the front end in the groove.

We changed the forks (after the initial test run) to a pair of leading axle Tange TX-500 forks. Presto! Instant fix-all. That simple change tamed down the handling of the Feather enough to consider it one of the better handling bikes we've tested. The combination of long wheelbase (37 inches), good weight distribution (15 inches between the rear axle and the bottom bracket) and a now spot-on front end make the Fuji a stable jumper, berm buster and great all around racer in the mid-price range.

Rough stuff can be attacked at full speed. The front end stays responsive and the rear end tracks right in line. The bike feeds back little messages to the rider allowing him to compensate for the variations in terrain and traction.

## ODDS AND ENDS

The brake cable ferrules have little spring clips to hold them into the lever assembly. Makes it a pair



With the stock forks the bike had to be forced into a slide like this. For some this could be a blessing in disguise. For others it might be a fun-spoiler.

to remove the cables in a hurry, so we took them off. Must be some kind of new CPSC requirement.

The rear brake calipers came with little add-on metal pieces that are supposed to keep the brake arms from flexing. All they did was rub against the frame and make it hard for the brakes to release. We took those off, too, and the brakes work fine, even better, without them.

The Fuji gooseneck was a work of art; simple, light and functional. We never needed to use a hammer to loosen the wedge either.

The Sugino-made Fuji cranks surprised us with their durability and resistance to flex. Extra gears are available at most bike shops.

One of the MKS pedals bent slightly on a crash where the bike landed on its side directly on the pedal.

The Fuji seat is slightly padded and is comfortable enough for long rides. It's also plenty light for racing.

The HKK chain is top grade equipment, as are the Mitsuboshi Silver Star tires. The rear hub is a Sunshine and it's threaded to accept a freewheel on both sides.

## SUMMARY:

The Fuji Feather with the stock forks is a crippled bird, but once the forks are changed to the leading axle type the bike becomes a fire-breather. The consumer shouldn't have to make this kind of major change after



After filing his plan, Carl takes the "Feather" out for a quick flight. The long wheelbase and the good weight distribution makes the bike fly very easily.



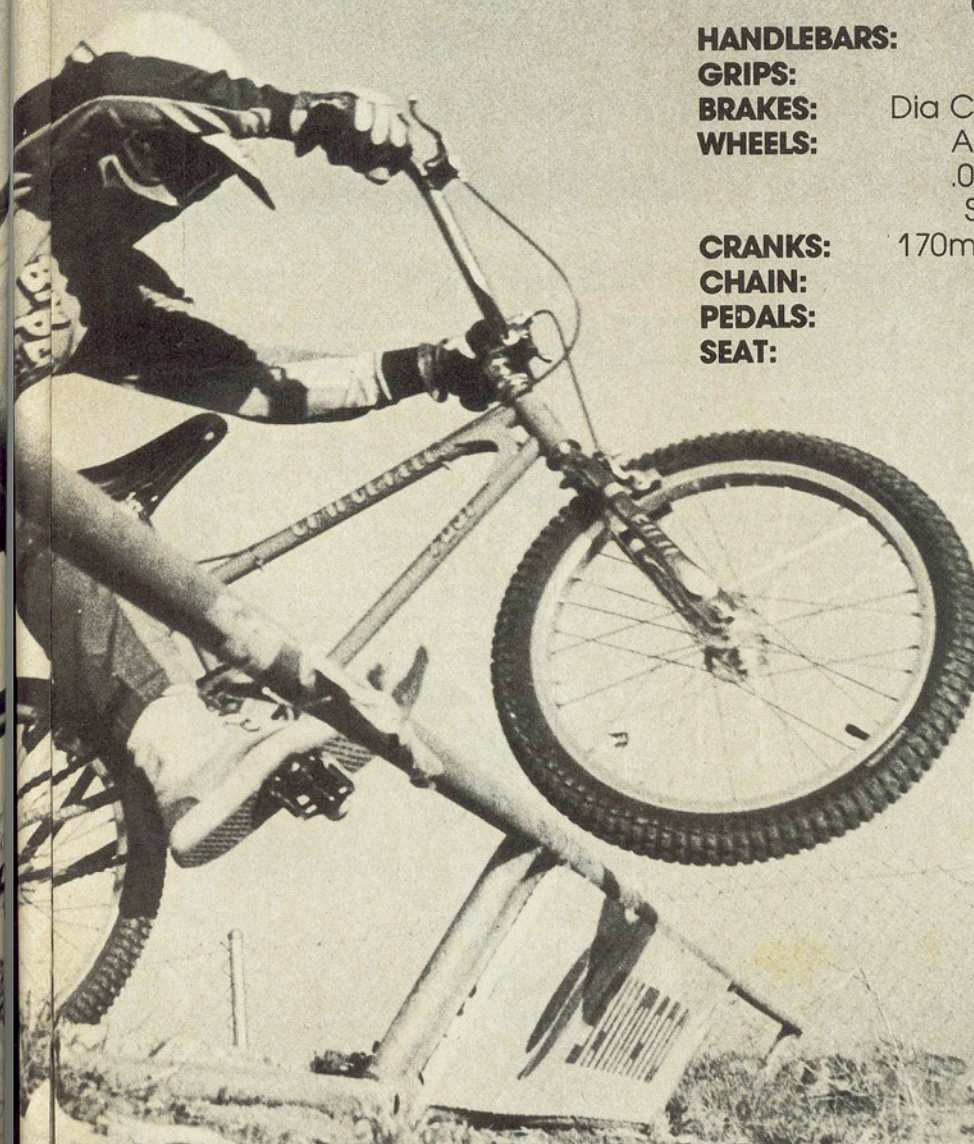
Mid-air corrections like this went smoothly on the Fuji. This was at the Valley Youth Center in Van Nuys. Other test tracks included the secret Sylmar and Lomita proving grounds.

Denny Davidow liked the responsiveness of the Feather with the leading axle forks.



## FUJI FEATHER ORANGE PEEL SPECIFICATIONS

<b>WEIGHT</b>	24 lbs.
<b>FRAME:</b>	Brazed Chrome Moly with Mild Steel
<b>FORKS:</b>	Tange/Fuji TX1200 (Straight Leg)
<b>HANDLEBARS:</b>	Fuji
<b>GRIPS:</b>	Mach
<b>BRAKES:</b>	Dia Compe (F & R)
<b>WHEELS:</b>	Araya Box Rims .080 ga. spokes Sunshine Hubs
<b>CRANKS:</b>	170mm Sugino/Fuji
<b>CHAIN:</b>	HKK
<b>PEDALS:</b>	MKS
<b>SEAT:</b>	Fuji Padded

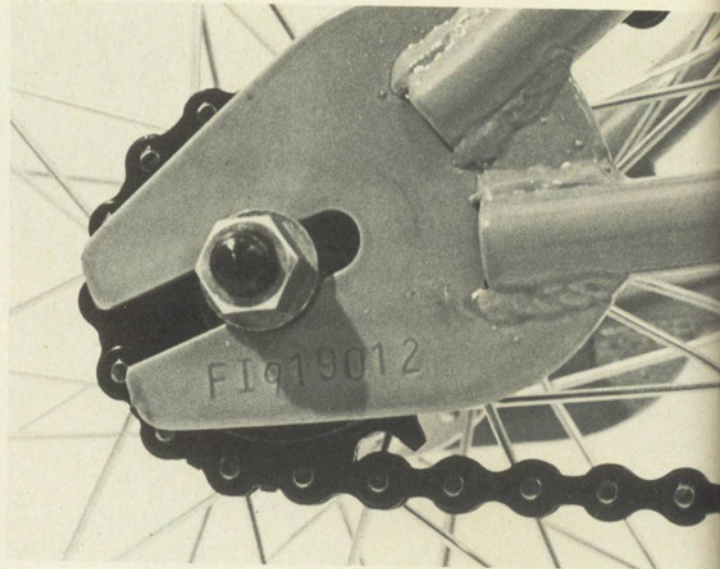


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he's already laid out his hard earned cash. We'll bet that some riders might even prefer the stock set-up, but not too many. Everyone that rode the bike before and after liked the replacement forks better.

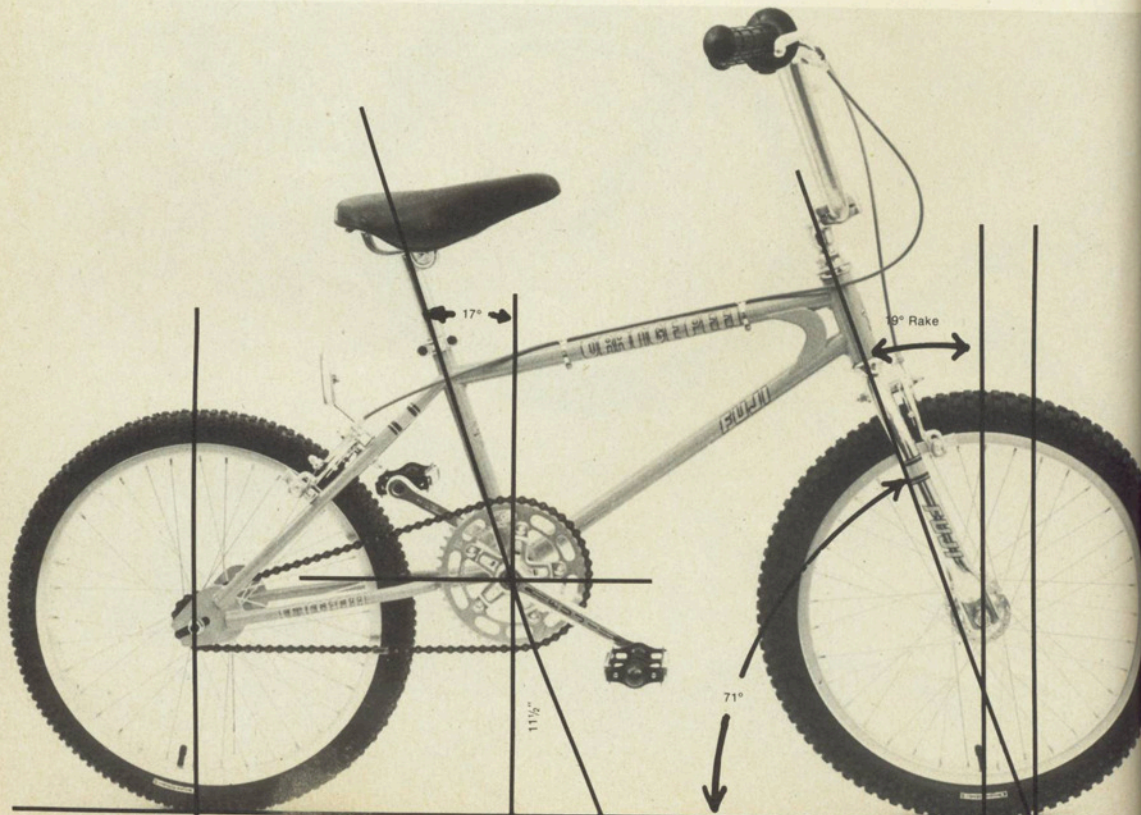
The only question that remains unanswered is the durability of the frame over a long period of time. We'll say right here that we think that it should hold up OK, but if it doesn't, you'll be the first to know.

For a medium price range bike the Fuji Feather Orange Peel is not a bad buy, except that it's got some heavy competition from Mongoose, Webco, Schwinn, CYC, DG and on, and on.... Before you buy any of these bikes, check your pocketbook first, then do some sharp shopping...

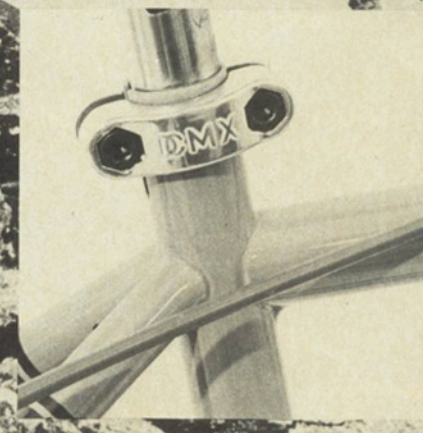
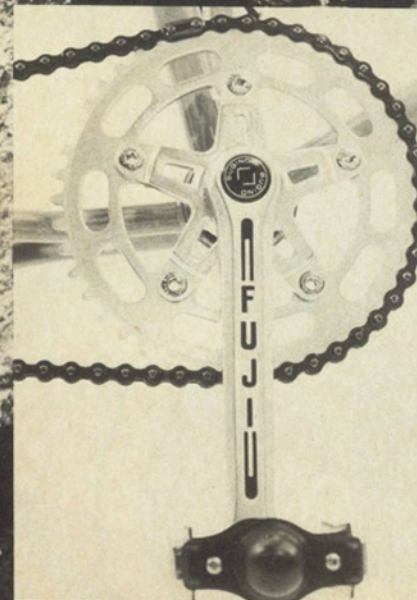


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The welds on the rear drop-outs look like they were pushed out of a toothpaste tube instead of a welding rod. The rest of the joints on the Feather are very sane looking.



The Sugino-made Fuji cranks held up surprisingly well throughout the entire test. The cranks were tough.



The Dia Comp seat post is a real lightweight (1.3 oz.) and is extremely functional as well.