

WIN A CAMPY-EQUIPPED MERLIN EXTRALIGHT!

PETERSEN'S

Bicycle

GUIDE

Parkpre Pro/Elite Test

TITANIUM TEAM MACHINE

BIKE RACK BUYER'S GUIDE

**SHIMANO
STI SHIFTERS**
HOW TO KEEP THEM
FACTORY FRESH

PRO RIDING SECRETS
*Chris Boardman:
Time-Trial Techniques*

BICYCLE TESTS

KHS K50 AERO TURBO
Tunnel-tested wind cheater

RALEIGH SP2000
Is 18 pounds too much for you?

JAMIS EUREKA
Rate Ready,
Bargain Priced

February 1994 \$2.95 U.S.
\$3.95 Can. £1.95 U.K.



Team
Parkpre's
Pat McIlvain





Clockwise from top: The Pro/Elite Titanium in its element: in the rough and ready to roll. Smooth, clean welds belie the Pro/Elite Titanium's Chinese pedigree. Tuning the Manitou 3 fork is a snap. Just unscrew the elastomer-kebab, insert the desired bumpers and tighten it back down again. The whole operation can be accomplished in less than two minutes.

PHOTOS: KEVIN WING
HELMET: GIRO
JERSEY AND SHORTS: AUSSIE
SHOES: ADIDAS
SOCKS: BG LOGO BY REVI
GLOVES: DESCENTE



**WHEN IT COMES TO
TITANIUM, LOOKS CAN
BE DECEIVING, BUT THE
TRUTH IS ALWAYS
IN THE RIDING**

By Jackson M. Lynch

According to Alcoholics Anonymous and all those other 12-step recovery programs, the first step to solving your problem is admitting you have one. Well, I guess it's time to 'fess up. I admit it, I'm hooked—I'm a titanium junkie. I've accumulated it all: titanium road bikes, mountain bikes, stems, bars, bottom brackets, nuts, bolts, spokes, even key chains. That's not to say I don't care for other things in life, like carbon, steel or metal matrix. No, I've got a "jones" (loosely translated, "a very strong desire") for all that stuff, too. Ti's just my addiction of choice, I guess. So when the opportunity arose to ride Parkpre's Pro/Elite Titanium, its factory team bike, I leapt at it.

This wasn't actually my first foray on a Pro/Elite Titanium. Last summer I rode one in a local Southern California race. The original Pro/Elite Ti was delivered to me a couple of days before the race. We got to know one another for three or four hours before that weekend's competition, and I was quite favorably impressed by its smooth, steady gait, neutral handling and eagerness to climb. So when the '94 model arrived, I figured the Pro/Elite Ti and I would pick up right where we had left off. Well, I was partially right.

>



**PARKPRE
PRO/ELITE
TITANIUM
TEAM MACHINE**

PARK PRE PRO/ELITE

Astride this year's model with a new Manitou 3 suspension fork, I gleefully romped around the Santa Monica

turns and through arm- and leg-bloodying singletrack with no soft place to land in sight, the Pro/Elite got me through with just a few scrapes.

Climbing is, as I mentioned, one of

fleeced, taken for a ride, literally.

"Come on, Randy, these welds are too clean," I said with utter disbelief. "The bike rides like a domestically produced frame."

"Nope, it's Chinese Ti, welded in

The Pro/Elite's no-frills approach translates into a clean-looking, sweet-riding steed.

PHOTO: LYNNE MCCREARY

Mountains and the rim of the Santa Clarita Valley. The frame's subtle balance of stiffness and resilience seemed to energize my legs, if not my head, and renewed my passion for bikes bred purely for the hunt, for pursuing one another—race bikes. The Pro/Elite is well-balanced and steady. Bolting down a fire road strewn with tricky off-camber turns that equally challenge one's skill and nerve, time after time, I pointed the Parkpre into the line, dug with my outside foot and mumbled my usual Native American prayer for nature's kindness. Whether by acumen or Mother's intervention (Mother Nature, that is), I avoided plummeting off a cliff at 30 mph. The credit for my survival is at least due in part to the Parkpre's superior handling and predictability. Flicking in and out of

the Pro/Elite's strong suits, as well. These are the post-Malibu-wildfire easing-into-Thanksgiving days here in Lotusland, and the mind often signals the body to find the couch and remote control. With the Pro/Elite beneath me, I was able to forestall the seasonal onset of "potatoism" for at least a few weeks. Hopefully, they'll let me keep it through the off season and I won't pick up my "winter 10."

It took a couple of weeks and quite a number of bliss-filled hours in the saddle before I spoke to Parkpre's marketing director Randy Commans, to bone up on the bike's gene pool, so to speak.

"So the Pro/Elite frames are made in the U.S.?" I queried rhetorically.

"No," Commans confidently replied.

My jaw dropped. I'd been duped.



After a long day of shooting, Jackson hammers to the summit to enjoy the sunset.



The rear brake-cable routing isn't the most graceful we've seen, and the excess bend in the cable adds friction.

Taiwan," he said.

Man, was I thrown for a loop. The Pro/Elite has the clean, low, even beaded welds of a Litespeed, Merlin or Sandvik, and it rides like them, too. And since the previous Chinese workmanship I'd seen didn't even remotely approach the U.S.-made Ti bikes, I was amazed.

My amazement turned to conceptual clarity as Commans related the birth of Parkpre nearly four years ago. Japanese-born Cozy Yamakoshi was an integral cog in Diamond Back's rise to prominence in the late '70s and '80s as the designer of the company's best-selling BMX and mountain bikes. He eventually grew tired of the impersonal juggernaut Diamond Back had become and pulled the rip cord in 1987. Afterward, Yamakoshi kicked around the bike business as a consultant for a year or so and then finally had the yen to design again. About that time Integra Precision was born.

"Where did Parkpre come from," I asked Commans one afternoon.

"Cozy named the bikes to honor Mr. Park, the man who got him started in the bike business many years ago in Japan," Commans replied. "It's just his sense of loyalty." Loyalty, huh?

"Cozy's reputation from his previous success has garnered him considerable respect in Asia when it comes to sourcing and spec'ing," Commans added.

"So that's how these welds got this good?" I asked.

Commans hesitated for a moment, "You could say that," he replied.

Lockstep Spec'ing? Nah!

The Pro/Elite, and for that matter much of the Parkpre mountain bike

line, gets a few distinctive spec changes this year. Moving away from predominantly Shimano-equipped bikes, you'll find Pulstar hubs on all Parkpre models over \$600. These hubs have become favorites among racers because the flanges feature a straight-pull spoke design, adding strength and durability. Other lightweight performance enhancements aboard the Pro/Elite are violet anodized Critical Racing cantilevers with Madison brake pads. These brakes don't look like much—they're pretty slim—but grab a handful of the front lever and you'll find yourself in a low-level orbit looking for a soft place to set 'er down.

According to Commans, Parkpre has made a concerted effort to equip each of its models with as much race-team sponsored hardware as possible. On a number of the bikes, especially the Pro/Elite, you'll see a major portion of those sponsors represented. "We've tried to be loyal to the people who've been loyal to us over the past few years," claimed Parkpre's Randy Commans. There you go with that loyalty thing again, Randy.

Onza, the Santa Monica, California-based aftermarket guru and one of Parkpre's key sponsors, gets the nod four times over on the Pro/Elite Titanium, with clipless pedals, grips, bar-ends and the front tire. Unlike many of the previous clipless numbers, Onza's H.O. pedals rely on elastomers to provide release tension. You can adjust the release tension by changing the elastomers at the fore and aft of each body. There are three different durometers (rubber hardness) and the procedure takes about 10 minutes. In terms of performance, acclimation time is a bit longer than Shimano's SPD and other SPD-like pedals. Dial-



PFR Competition handlebars and Onza bar-ends and grips complete the Shimano Deore XT-based control center.

ing the engagement scenario can be tricky, but it's worthwhile. There's some rotation built into the system, allowing you to choose between 6 or 10 degrees of movement depending on the cleat and your need for freedom. The Onza OZ bar-ends are attractive and light (89.5 grams), but a bit short for those of us with slightly larger than average paws.

The light and durable Araya RM 395 XC Team rims are shod with some decidedly tired rubber. An Onza Racing Porc up front paired with a Maxxis Cobra in the rear lets me know I better hold on for my life in the corners. Luckily, tires are easily changed to your favorite model once you have the bike in hand, which is exactly what I did after a couple of early duets with danger. We've seen prototypes of new Onza tread that looks very promising and should be hitting the stores soon after you read this. I can't speak for Maxxis, but the Cobra doesn't seem destined for the podium any time soon.

The Pro/Elite Titanium comes with a choice of four suspension forks: Manitou's third-generation "3," Tange ProStruts, the Rock Shox Mag 21 or Rock Shox Quadra 21. The ProStruts is the team-issue duo-prong and the one I raced on. It's a bumper fork that uses microcellular foam rather than rubber elastomers. I was extremely pleased with the ProStruts' performance, but for an elastomer fork it's going to be tough to beat the new Manitou 3. The M3 outperforms all other elastomer forks on every



Like every Parkpre bike above \$600, the Pro/Elite features Pulstar hubs with straight-pull spoke lacing for added strength and durability.

PARK PRE PRO/ELITE

front—small hits, big hits, stutter bumps, you name it. Beyond that, it's the easiest to fiddle with. Merely unscrew the caps at the top of the crown and pull out the elastomer shish kebab, change the bumpers, screw it back in and fly.

The remainder of the Pro/Elite's bits and pieces come emblazoned with Parkpre's own PFR label. While not the lightest perch at 242 grams, the PFR Competition saddle is one of the most comfortable around. Its hand-

SPECIFICATIONS

Price: \$2700 to \$2850 (complete, depending on fork)

Sizes available: 15, 17, 19, 21 in.

Size tested: 19 in. (center to top)

Frame weight: 3 lb 5 oz (1.50kg)

Fork weight: 3 lb 1 oz (1.39kg)

Front-wheel weight: 3 lb 12 oz (1.70kg)

Rear-wheel weight: 4 lb 11 oz (2.13kg)

Total weight: 24 lb 10 oz (11.19kg)

Frame material: 3Al/2.5V titanium

Fork: Manitou 3 adjustable elastomer

Wheels: Pulstar hubs, Araya RM 395

XC Team 32-hole rims, 14-gauge stainless steel spokes

Tires: Onza Racing Porcupine 26x2.1 front, Maxxis Cobra 26x2.1 rear

Drivetrain: Shimano Deore XT 175mm 22/32/44 Compact drive crankset, 11-28 Hyperglide cassette, XT front and rear derailleurs, Rapidfire Plus shifters with Optical Gear Display, Shimano Hyperglide chain

Brakes: Critical Racing cantilevers

Other components: Onza H.O. clipless pedals, PFR butted chrome-moly 13cm stem, Alloy double-lock headset, Zoom 2000 PFR 140-gram alloy bar, Onza OZ bar-ends, Onza grips, PFR Competition saddle with perforated leather, Kalloy 27.0x345mm seat post

GEOMETRY

Seat tube: 19 in.

Top tube: 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Head angle: 72°

Seat angle: 72°

Chainstays: 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.

Wheelbase: 41 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Fork rake: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

INFORMATION

Parkpre

5245 Kazuko Ct.

Moorpark, CA 93021

(800) 727-5773



some minimalist, cutaway body is deceptively plush over the long haul. The control center is adorned with a 13cm double-butted chrome-moly stem, with a lustrous titanium finish.



Onza's new H.O. clipless pedals may take a little getting used to, but after the honeymoon they're awfully sweet.



The PFR Competition saddle is minimalist-looking and comfortable at the same time.

Jackson's appreciation for titanium turns into pure speed.

One Last Bone and Then I'll Go

There's always at least one "dab" on every bike. This time it's the rear brake routing, with a ferrule welded to the left side of the seat tube just below the collar and a stainless insert for the cable to run through. It works well enough and probably won't cause you any trouble, but it sticks out a bit, is not very pleasing to the eye and has the potential for disaster. If you slam it into something, you could damage the insert or, worse yet, break off the ferrule and debilitate your rear braking.

I can't tell you if the Pro/Elite's frame is going to hold up like its U.S.-bred cousins. I don't have the electron microscope or a spiderlike frame crusher to stress it out to failure. That's not really the point, since you'll probably put more stress on the frame by driving into the garage with it on your roof rack. What I can definitely vouch for is the Pro/Elite's ride: It's sweet. And I'm a bona fide titanium snob.

Oh, in case you're wondering how the race came out, I was 13th. **BG**