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# CRUISERS

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*Breeze on Breezer . . . buns up. The 26 inch balloon tires on these bikes allow them to go just about anywhere.*

LOADED FOR BEAR AND UNGODLY EXPENSIVE

# FULL BORE CRUISERS



*The Pro Cruiser: Chrome-moly frame, Tange forks, Shimano cranks, Mesinger seat, Ukai aluminum rims, stainless steel spokes, Carlisle Nobby tires, etc. 5 speeds. Cost is \$500.*

This thing is so new that nobody's sure just yet what to call it.

The way it all started was when a few people in Northern California figured it would be neat to have balloon-tired bikes to ride on hiking trails and back roads. So they either bought new cruisers for around \$150 or rummaged around in peoples' junk piles until they came up with an old klunker for about \$5. Obviously, the \$5 klunker quickly became the hot tip . . . a couple new tires and they were ready to go.

Gradually these back roads bikes became known as "Clunkers" . . . which for some unknown reason later changed to "Klunkers."

So anyway, these people would ride their Klunkers up in the hills surrounding San Francisco, be-bopping up and down the trails and fire roads, happy as anything.

Then one day, as such things usually go, somebody suggested the possibility that they could blow the doors off somebody else getting to the bottom of the hill. And the race was on.

But it didn't end there. The following weekend the loser was back up in the hills with a "wanna try that again?" look on his face and a new 5-speed gear cluster on his Klunker.

Macho instincts being what they are, the lowly \$5 Klunker shortly evolved

into a highly sophisticated mega-buck machine equipped with parts made from every kind of exotic alloy known to man.

All of a sudden, the generic name—Klunker—kind of sticks in your throat. Especially when you're counting out anywhere from \$500 to \$1200 for one of them. ("Here's 1200 bucks, gimme that . . . oh . . . that red Klunker over there.")

If you want to study these bikes in their natural habitat, you have to travel to Northern California. Which is where we found Mert Lawwill, ex-Harley-Davidson flat track racer and one of the stars of the original "On Any Sunday" movie . . . smack dab in the middle of all this.

Mert is manufacturing a . . . uh, Klunker. It's called the Pro Cruiser. At the time of this writing he had produced and sold 75 bikes and was starting to build the next 100. The Pro Cruiser retails for under \$500 and employs some class equipment.

The only other people who are producing pure Klunkers are Joe Breeze and Tom Ritchey. Each has built around 10 bikes. The Breezer and the Ritchey sell for an incredible \$1200 . . . which gives you an idea of the quality of workmanship and components that is put into these bikes.

We asked Mert, Joe Breeze, Gary Fisher, Charles Kelly, and the owners of the Cove Bike Shop in Tiburon—the people at the very heart of this brand new pastime—what they thought these bikes should be called.

Of all the names that have at various times been applied to these bikes—Klunkers, Ballooners, Bombers, Down-

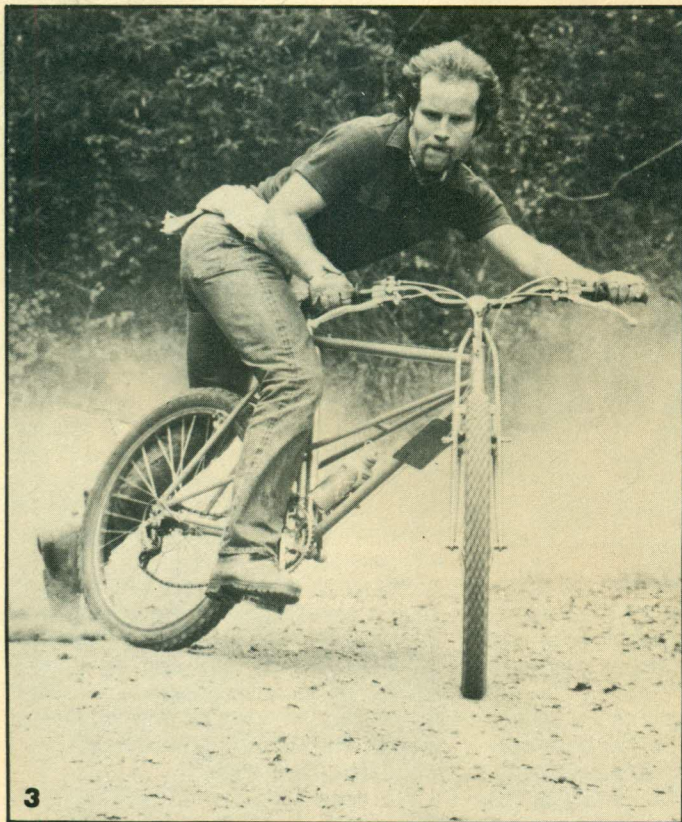
# CRUISERS



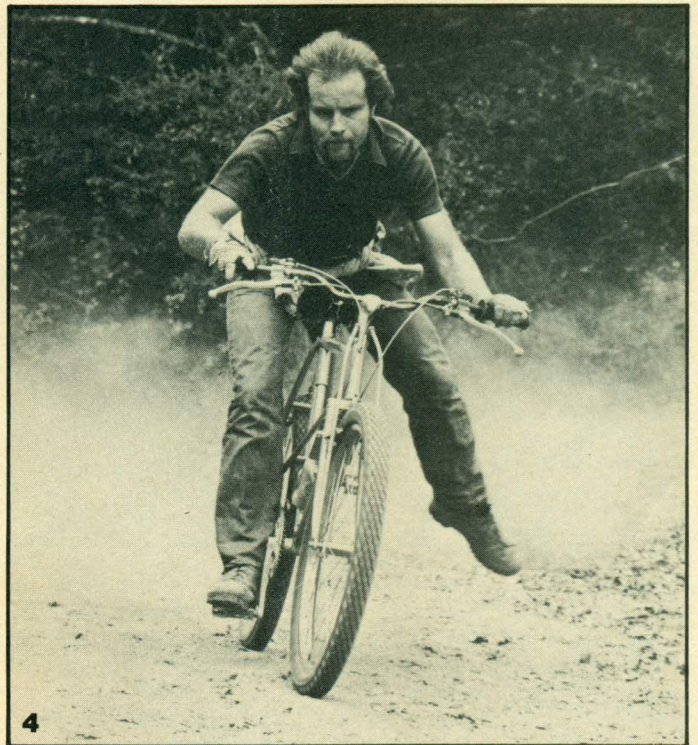
*This guy is Joe Breeze.*



*He designed and builds this bike. It's called a Breezer.*



*In this motor-drive sequence Joe is demonstrating the classic toe-slide method of correcting excessive drift.*



*There are four things that are totally incredible about these photos: That Breeze managed to save it, that he didn't bite his tongue off, that the Breezer retails for a mind-boggling 1200 bucks, and that these Klunker guys do not wear helmets when they race. Dumb.*

hillers, Mountain Bikes, Trail Bikes, Tankers, Cruisers, Cow Trailers—the consensus of opinion was that they should be called Mountain Bikes. And,

when you think about it, that name fits like a glove. We kind of favored Downhill Racers, but they're really more than that. They're uphill racers, downhill

racers, cross-country touring bikes, enduro bikes, fire road racers . . . you name it. What they are really, from our point of view, is the ultimate cruiser.



**Why, Martha, it's ol' Mert Lawwill, ex-Harley-Davidson flat track racer and one of the stars of the original "On Any Sunday" movie. He manufactures the Pro Cruiser.**



**The Breezer: Chrome-moly hand made frame and forks; Phil Wood hubs and bottom bracket, motorcycle bars, Magura brake levers, KKT Lightning pedals, Campagnolo seat post and seat post clamp, Dia Compe cantilever brakes, and so on. 12 speeds. Cost is \$1200.**

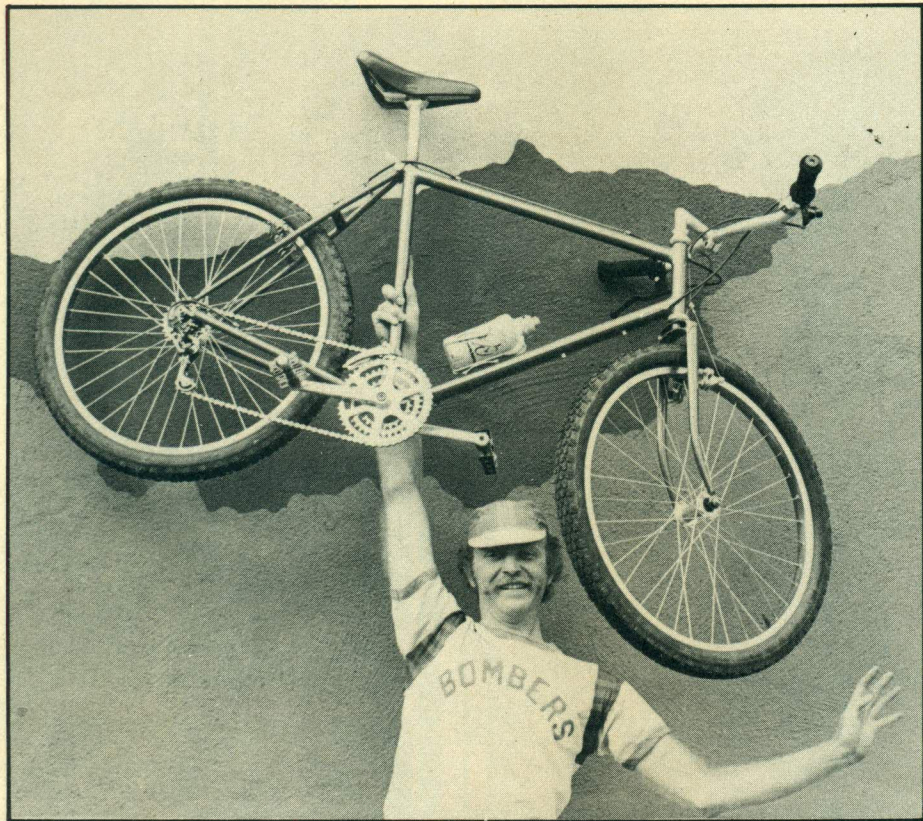
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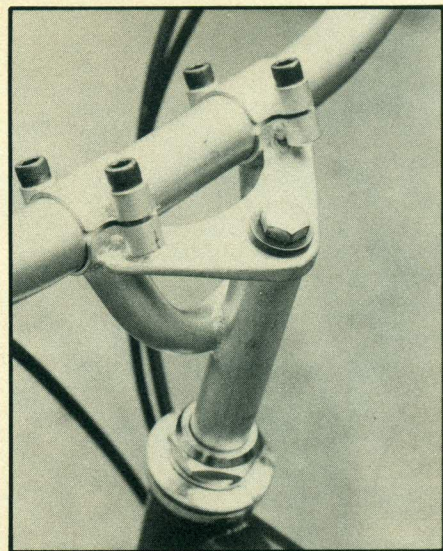
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*The Ritchey: Chrome-moly and mang-moly frame and forks, TA cranks, Phil Wood hubs and bottom bracket, KKT pedals, Uniroyal tires, aluminum touring bars, Grab On grips, Campagnolo dropouts, and like that. 18 speeds. Cost is \$1200.*



*Superlight prototype stem from Lawwill-Knight, Ltd., the company that manufactures the Pro Cruiser.*

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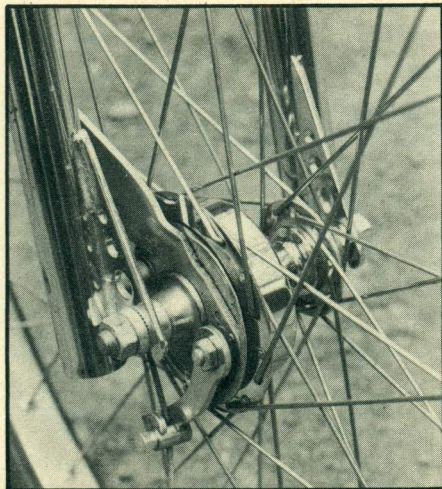
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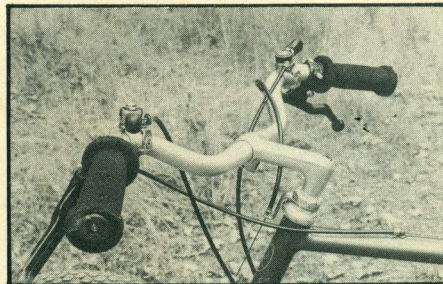
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This new breed of bicycle is an extremely sophisticated piece of machinery. Weight usually runs in the 30 to 35 pound



*The Pro Cruiser runs Sturmev-Archer drum brakes front and rear.*

neighborhood which for a cruiser is feathery. They usually run 175 to 185mm aluminum pedal arms. Most have at least 5 speeds, some go up to an incredible 18 speeds. And all of the class Ballooners



*Standard Mountain Bike handlebar rigging . . . motorcycle levers, thumb-shifters for front and rear derailleurs.*



*This is the lightest seat/seat-post combo we've ever seen, except maybe the old Uni-Seat. It's an Avocet seat modified by Tom Ritchey. The undercarriage, clamp, and seat post are aluminum. Total weight: 19 ounces!*

use a quick-release seat post clamp so the rider can lower the seat for better control and lower center-of-gravity on downhill runs, and raise the seat for a better power position on hill climbs.

The big 26 inch balloon tires make it possible to ride over rocks, tree roots, small ditches, and most other things found on hiking trails and back country roads. On the average hiking trail a Mountain Bike rider can cover about 4 times the distance of a walker, with less effort. The environmental impact is about equal to a backpacker.

At speed, those big tires create a kind of gyroscopic stability not found in 10-speed or BMX bikes.

In Northern California there is a downhill course that some of the hard core Klunker people race on. The place is called "Repack." It's a twisting, turning, gnarly, downhill two mile stretch of fire road.

Actually Repack is not so much a race as a time trial. One guy at a time goes off against a clock. The record is 4 minutes 22 seconds which works out to be an average of about 25 MPH. And that ain't exactly just puttin' along.

Going full blast down this course with a standard coaster brake will result in

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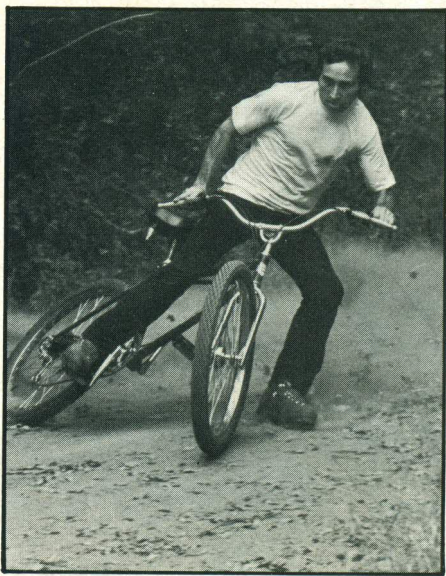
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fried bearings every time. Which means a repack with fresh grease before the next assault. Hence the name "Re-pack."

From our point of view, the racing potential of Mountain Bikes is the most exciting facet of their future. They can be raced on a motocross course, which



*Mert Lawwill; still hookin' it on, even without his Harley. But no helmet. Tsk, tsk, tsk, Mert.*

## **FULL BORE CRUISERS WHO TO CONTACT:**

### **PRO CRUISER**

Lawwill-Knight, Ltd.  
25153 O'Neil Ave.  
Hayward, CA 94544  
(415) 582-1388

### **BREEZER**

Breeze Industries  
28 Country Club Dr.  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  
(415) 388-1217

### **RITCHEY**

Mountain Bikes  
P.O. Box 405  
Fairfax, CA 94930  
(415) 456-1898

is gradually becoming popular with cruisers. Or less formally, it would be a total kick to get a few fathers and sons together; fathers with their 26 inchers, sons with MX'ers, haul people and bikes to the top of some local fire road, and then blast down. It would sure clear the cobwebs out after a dull week at school or work.

The only thing is . . . look out, fathers, your kids will dust you.

At least at first.

