

# Schwinn Cimarron

## Surprise! Surprise!

**Y**ou know what I hate about mountain biking? Lung-searing climbs up long, steep and dusty dirt roads. And when it's hot, I mean really hot and humid, sweat pours into my eyes.

Just when I've resigned myself to take this punishment and complete the climb without stopping, the biting flies zero in to torment me further. Hot on the trail of my sweaty body, the deer flies, gnats and mosquitoes bite me and buzz into my eyes and ears and up my nose. Like little kamikazes they drown in my bodily fluids. What fun.

But oh, I love those fast descents. That's my chance to laugh at those winged devils and forget the pain in my legs as the cool wind dries my sweat and refreshes my parched lungs. That's what makes mountain bike riding worthwhile.

That's why I have to have complete confidence in my machine. Riding a bike that resists shifting and has brakes that

inspire fear instead of confidence is like entering a lion's cage with a water pistol and a wet noodle.

And that's why I like the Schwinn Cimarron. I know it may shock some anti-Schwinn snobs, but this bike is neither a heavy-gauge clunker nor a conglomerate of "Schwinn Approved" lower-line parts. Equipped with top-notch components and a double-butted chrome-moly frame with a uni-crown-style fork, the Cimarron is a real, hard-core mountain bike.

It's no secret that over the last few years when it came to keeping up with the rest of the class, Schwinn was a tad tardy. You might say they hadn't been studying as hard as they should. Some even believed Schwinn would soon drop out of school. That's why the Cimarron comes as such a surprise.

Shimano makes the drive train, including the excellent Deore XT derailleurs and shifters, Uniglide chain, and 600-se-

ries cranks and freewheel. (Biopace chainrings would have been nice—Schwinn, are you listening?) The hubs and cantilevers are also Shimano: Deore XT of course. The hubs are sealed and the brakes are very powerful.

Having chosen such good stuff for the important parts, you might think Schwinn would skimp on the rest to save money. Think again. The seatpost is none other than the new XC from SunTour, as are the pedals. The seat is the popular Avocet Touring I. The Schwinn folks even used DT stainless spokes, the best. This time they did all their homework.

Well almost all. In an attempt to attract both hard-core off-roaders and casual street riders to the same bike, Schwinn used a high-rise bar and stem combination. The problem is that the bar makes

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Model:** Cimarron

**Manufacturer:** Schwinn Bicycle Co., 1856 N. Kostner Ave, Chicago, IL 60639

**Price (suggested retail):** \$570

**Frame tubing:** 4130 double butted chrome-moly three main tubes; chrome-moly forks and stays.

**Finish:** Forrest Green

### Dimensions:

Wheel base: 108.58cm (42.75")  
Fork Rake: 5.5cm (2.16")  
Head tube angle: 70.0°  
Seat tube angle: 70.0°  
Top tube: 57.58cm (22.75")  
Chain stays: 45.72cm (18.0")  
Bottom bracket height: 30.48cm (12.0")  
Weight: 29.43 lbs

**Available Sizes:** 18" (45.7cm), 21" (53.3cm), 23" (58.4cm).

**Size Tested:** 21" 53.3cm

### Drive Train:

Crankset: Shimano 600 Triple  
Bottom bracket: Shimano  
Freewheel: Shimano 600  
Chain: Shimano Uniglide  
Front Derailleur: Shimano Deore XT  
Rear Derailleur: Shimano Deore XT Superplate  
Shifters: Shimano Deore XT

### Gear Pattern:

	28	38	48
14	—	70	89
17	43	58	73
20	36	49	62
24	30	41	52
28	26	35	45
32	23	31	—

### Components:

Brakes: Shimano Deore XT Cantilever  
Pedals: SunTour XC  
Saddle: Avocet Touring I  
Seatpost: SunTour XC, 26.6x200mm (see Note)  
Stem: Nitto double clamp style, alloy  
Handlebar: Nitto Alloy  
Headset: Shimano 600 EX

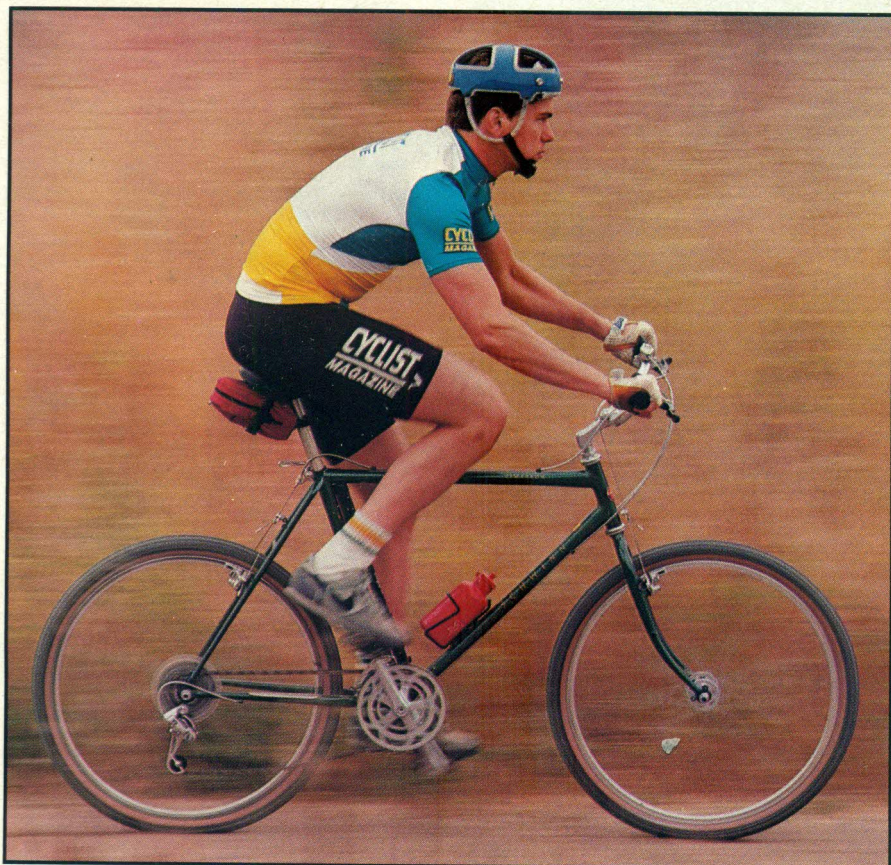
### Wheels:

Rims: Araya 7X, 26x1.5  
Spokes: DT Stainless  
Hubs: Shimano Deore XT  
Tires: Schwinn Terra 26x2.00

**Picks:** DT spokes, XC seatpost.

**Nits:** High-rise handlebar.

Note: Dimensions are for bike tested. Weight is actual. Tube lengths are measured to intersections of centerlines, except seat tube, which is measured to top of tube. Seat post is measured from top of machined surface to "Max" line.



you sit up too high, and when placed in an upright position greatly reduces handling control. While this position may appeal to street riders (don't ask me why anyone needs a \$570, 18-speed "cruiser"), it makes off-road riding atrocious. Moving the bar forward and down and using 2.125 knobbies improves control immensely. But because of the high rise of the bar, some washing-out problems remain. This stops the bike from reaching its full potential as a great off-roader. Fortunately the solution is easy: replace the bar.

A potential problem lies with the rear brake cable stop. Instead of a brazed-on mount for the cable guide, the Cimarron uses an aluminum gadget which slips over the quick-release seat binder-bolt. This is a weak point in the rear brake system. Should you find yourself in some unscheduled bush inspection and break

the brittle alloy guide, you will be without a rear brake, which happens to be the more important of the two.

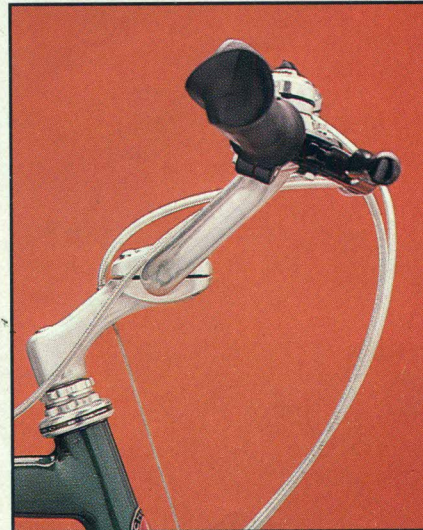
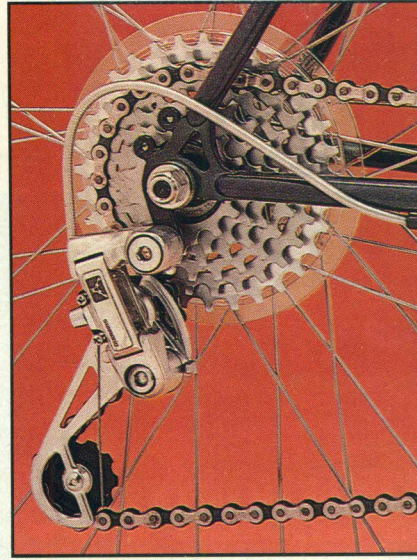
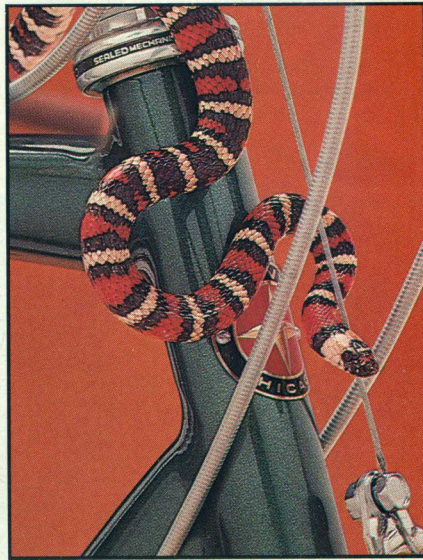
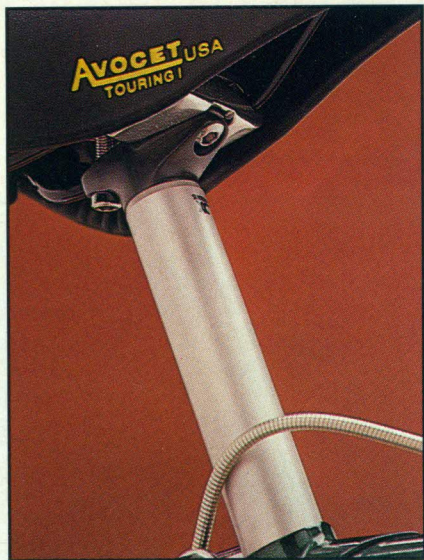
The bike comes with 26 x 2.00 dual-purpose tires with a center ridge and smaller knobs for improved street riding. It's another attempt to broaden the appeal of this bike. Personally, I prefer real knobbies, but I'm sure demographics and other whiz-bang marketing stuff has told manufacturers that a lot of people use mountain bikes for street use. The Schwinn tires certainly do work well on the street. In the dirt, however, full knobbies improved control.

An interesting feature of the frame is the lugless head tube connections of the top and down tubes. These tubes are squeezed flat vertically to increase the strength and rigidity of that joint, Schwinn says. The seat cluster, on the other hand, is lugged. Another interesting

feature about the frame is where it's made—Greenville, Mississippi. It comes with brazed-on seat stay rack mounts, low rider mounts, double eyelets and double bottle mounts. It is stiff and has steep angles (70 degrees) which make climbing noticeably easier.

Differences aside, the Cimarron and I get along fine. I gave it a beating and it returned the favor. The derailleurs work great, the seat is comfortable and I especially love the extra height I can get out of the XC seatpost. If you're riding the proper-size mountain bike (that is, one a size smaller than your road bike), you need an extra-long post.

Looking for a good mountain bike for under \$600? Take a good look at the Schwinn Cimarron. Using all the right equipment (save perhaps for the handlebar), Schwinn proves that it's not too late for an old dog to learn new tricks. And



**While not standard equipment, a California Mountain Kingsnake examines the Schwinn's componentry. SunTour's nicely finished XC seatpost is extra-long to allow proper leg extension. Shimano's Deore XT Superplate rear derailleur has an extra pivot at the high-pulley for better shifts. The "cruiser crowd" will appreciate the adjustable handlebar, but off-roaders will want to keep the bars out-front, over the wheel.**

coming from the most recognized company in American bicycles, the Cimarron is built to take a beating. While the hardcore off-roader will want to replace the bar and tires, the Cimarron's dual-purpose appeal makes this bike a shoo-in for the combination street/dirt crowd.

—Mike Fuller

## *In The Beginning*



• Mountain bikes really started with Schwinn, although the company didn't know it at the time. Independently in California and Colorado, riders began taking the tough old Schwinn cruisers down fire roads and trails, and so a sport—and a bike—was born.

The realization that what goes

down must come up soon led to garage modifications like multiple-speed gearing. Brakes were a constant problem at first—"Repack," the famous downhill race, got its name from what you had to do to a coaster brake hub afterwards.

But going downhill fast, hanging it all out in a cloud of dust, was what the

bikes were for. And for some reason, the old Schwinn cruisers seem to have been very good at that. This one, for example, carried Gary Fisher to the fastest Repack time on record. Ever. No one before or since, no matter how "trick" the bike, has gone faster. So it is no wonder that when Joe Breeze made the first real chrome-moly mountain bike frame, he started with the angles and dimensions of the Schwinn.

Since then, Gary and Joe and a lot of others have made a lot of sophisticated, high-performance mountain bikes, bikes that do almost everything better and last longer doing it. But in all of them, underneath the paint somewhere, there's a little Schwinn. ■

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### **Specifications:**

Model: Excelsior  
Manufacturer: Arnold Schwinn & Co.  
Head Tube Angle: 66°  
Seat Tube Angle: 72°  
Wheelbase: 45"  
Weight: 44 lbs.  
Crankset: TA triple  
Front Derailleur: SunTour Spirt  
Rear Derailleur: Shimano 600  
Brakes: Union drum