

# GREG HERBOLD'S MIYATA

*The downhill shred missile*



Who's the fastest mountain biker of them all, you ask? None other than Greg Herbold, of course. Greg won the prestigious title of World Downhill Champion when he swept down the Worlds course at Purgatory at speeds in excess of 45 mph. The Durango, Colorado, resident has long been

known as one of the most talented downhillers on two wheels and with his production Miyata Ridge Runner he proved it. If ever there was a statement of mass in motion, Greg's Miyata is it—the bike weighs in at a hefty 32 pounds.

Despite the popular concept that down-

hill bikes are a breed apart from traditional mountain bikes, Herbold's Miyata is surprising in its visually plain appearance. One ride on the "H-Ball" bike and the first thing we noticed was how well it functioned. It was obvious that the time Greg has spent as a research and development rider for Shi-



mano has paid off. The brakes were the best-performing pair of stock brakes we've ever ridden with—they stopped on a dime! Greg is meticulous in his bike's setup; everything is thought out, from the dropped nose of his saddle to the re-drilled rear rim which allows easy access to the tire valve.

#### DOWNHILL RACER

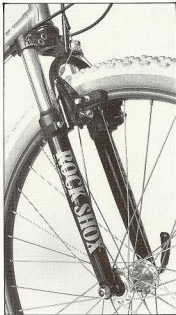
Due to the high-speed and often dangerous nature of downhill racing, it's no wonder the bike is specifically equipped for that purpose. Greg credits Miyata's own splined triple-butted tubing for giving the bike its needed torsional rigidity. At the same time

he lauds the frame's resilience and forgiving ride because "some flex is important to have since there's no rear suspension yet. One of the things I like most about the bike is the balanced geometry. The bike has equal weight distribution between the front and rear wheels with better cornering traction

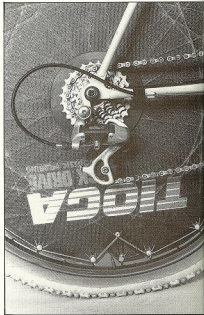
# HERBOLD'S MIYATA



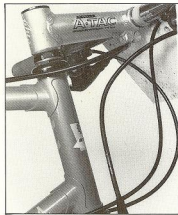
**Roostin' in their mugs:** Every time Greg Herbold had to climb the Purgatory hill to practice the downhill run, he had to pedal his 32-lb. Miyata up the steep climbs. For cross-country races Greg figures the bike could be made up to two pounds lighter. He credits Miyata's exclusive internally splined frame tubes for increasing the bike's torsional rigidity.



**Factory honch:** Herbold has been doing research and development for Rock Shox as well as Shimano. His forks use an oversize brake hoop and special oil for different damping. The Shimano brakes were set up perfectly so that they stopped efficiently with perfect modulation.



**For the grip:** Onza developed special white rubber Porcupine tires with a softer rubber compound that also won the Mammoth Kamikaze under Wayne Crossdale. Greg redrilled his rim to locate the tire valve in a more accessible place than the Tioga disc provides. The short-cage rear derailleur decreases chain slap, which often leads to it being thrown off.



**It paid off:** Greg was one of the first riders to run top-mount shifters under the bars. The result was Shimano's Rapidfire STI shifters, which Greg swears by for downhill racing since they allow his hands to stay wrapped around the bars. The Answer A-Tac stem is custom-made with 0° rise. For Durango, Herbold opted to use the heavier Answer Taperlite handlebars for less flex.

and more predictable handling characteristics." Helping out in the rear suspension department is the Tioga Disc Drive rear wheel. Up front "H-Ball" runs a standard set of Rock Shox with a personally developed oil level that changes how the fork reacts when bottoming out. The brake loop on the forks has been enlarged from 3/8-inch tubing to 5/8-inch for increased front-end rigidity.

To handle the rigors of high-speed hammering, Greg uses 36-spoke Araya RM-20 rims mounted with Onza white rubber Porcupine tires. "Even though the heavier wheel assemblies are harder to accelerate, I prefer them for their reliability and the confidence they give me. White Porcupines have a softer rubber compound which offers the best overall traction for a variety of terrain. I've also never flatted with them!" To achieve their noted gripping qualities, the white Porcupines use a very soft rubber compound and wear out incredibly quick; Greg's tires were missing whole knobs. Other less obvious touches include the custom-machined cranks (the left side crank is actually a Dura Ace road crank arm), custom 90-degree Answer A-Tac stem and an old-style SunTour XC front hub that uses a cartridge bearing and reinforced axle for increased rigidity.

## AGAINST THE TRENDS

Though most people would gasp at the thought of pedaling a 32-pound mountain bike, Greg just shrugs it off: "I'm really glad to have the weight for downhill stability. Besides, once you get the bike rolling it doesn't make much difference." Even when he uses the bike for a cross-country race, he doesn't think the bike gets any lighter than 30 pounds. The components he switches to for cross-country races are lighter wheel assemblies and Answer Hyperlite bars instead of the Taperlites he uses for downhills. Greg's best tip for bike preparation is simple: "Pay attention to the details—brake setup, cable routing, headset adjustment and tire pressure."

As Greg readies himself for a new season of downhill and defending his title in Italy, he anticipates many changes to his bike, though rear suspension is not one of them. "I'm all for rear suspension," he says, "but I just don't think that an efficient enough system will be designed by them." Greg will also be promoting the Miyata's limited-production Ridge Runner Team Replica Herbold signature model. It's all part of the job. □