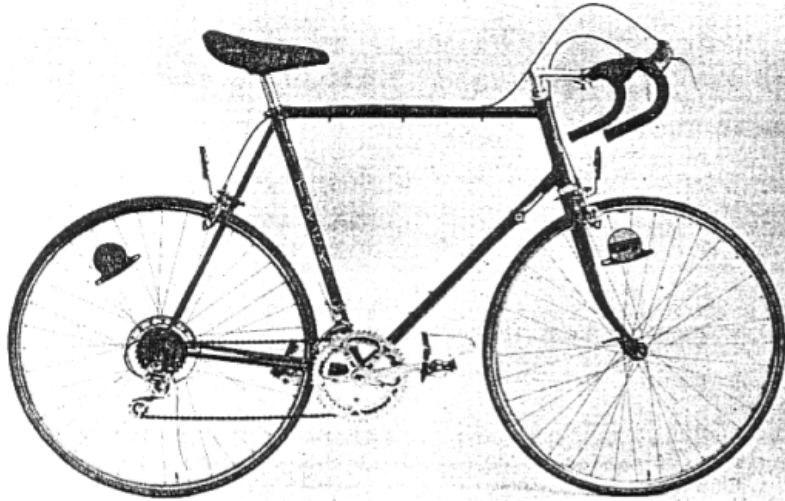


## ROAD TEST



### **Trek 714** **A Taste of the Mystique** **at a Reasonable Price**

If you had your heart set on buying a top-quality European touring bike a decade ago but somehow never got one, you've probably been kicking yourself ever since. The prices, you painfully note, have risen faster than you ever dreamed they would. And today's affordable alternatives just don't have the same mystique as the top-dollar models.

The Trek 714 is as good a throwback to your dated values as you'll find today. For a reasonable price, it offers a taste of the mystique which shrouds the superbike you'll never buy. It's a "sub-\$400 bike" (listing for \$398) with a silver-soldered Reynolds 531 touring-geometry frame, ultra-lightweight wired-on tires, box-section rims and a sensible component selection.

There are, of course, a few concessions to inflation. Some well-known, high-prestige expensive brands of components that adorn your dream bike are conspicuous in their absence from the Trek. The Trek's crankset and pedals have swaged joints in places where more-expensive components are one-piece forged.

But to those of us who think too much picking over components is perverse, the Trek is appealing. You could pay twice its price for a full measure of superbike mystique, but in so doing you would encounter diminishing returns.

#### **Tight Touring Frame**

In today's lexicon of values, the Trek's frame (with 73-degree parallel

angles, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch fork rake and a 41-inch wheelbase) is a somewhat-tight touring frame. Not so long ago, only racing frames came with angles that upright, and many of today's racing frames still use 73-degree angles.

Framebuilders like Trek are putting steeper angles on touring bikes in the belief that roads are getting smoother, not rougher, and that tourists are therefore willing to give up a bit of shock absorption for more maneuverability. That's a very reasonable assumption.

One could easily race on the Trek and not be laughed out of the pack — and, more importantly, not be outmaneuvered. Those semi-steep angles and shallow fork rake give the bike quick, responsive steering, but it gets reasonable road manners and a comfortable ride from its longer chainstays and top tube. Small-flange hubs make the wheels more forgiving on bumpy roads.

#### **Mellow Enough**

The ride is smooth, the bike tracks well and the frame is stiff enough to withstand a mortal cyclist's strongest sprinting efforts without appreciable flexing. In particular, the bottom bracket doesn't sway when you stand on the pedals to get over a steep hill, a sign of a well-made frame. Test riders quickly grew fond of the bike.

The Trek's smooth handling and stiff frame easily withstood the challenge of a full touring load. We did have one easily-corrected criticism: the extra-

long, 125-mm handlebar stem invites steering shimmy whenever you add a handlebar bag.

#### **Extra Instability**

Weight on the steering column does introduce instability, and its effect varies with the cube of the weight's distance from the steering axis. Accordingly, a more normal-sized handlebar stem — say, 95 or 105 mm — would offer noticeably improved steering stability, and it would accommodate most normal-sized cyclists.

We were pleased with most of the components, notably the Rigida AL 1320 rims, IRC Roadlite tires, Shimano Uniglide chain and Sun Tour Cyclone derailleurs. The Shimano 600 headset, however, seemed like a poor choice.

On the plus side, the Shimano headset is well-shrouded against dirt and has easy-to-maintain caged bearings. But on the minus side, it demands a special spanner for adjustment, and in a hurried moment we were reduced to using a pipe wrench and marring the aluminum locknut's finish. Why isn't Shimano satisfied with the hexagonal 32-mm locknut that everyone else uses? Besides, the washer that isn't supposed to rotate does.

But the headset is the hole, not the doughnut. Our sample Trek was well-made, nicely finished and a fine choice for touring or club riding. It's especially suitable for those of you who might try racing someday. Just add tubulars and a corn-cob freewheel.

The Trek's gearing was something of a disappointment. The combination of the 42-52 chainwheels and the 14-28 freewheel results in several redundant gears. We would recommend switching the 42-tooth chainwheel for a 47-tooth. This new combination results in a fine day-tripping half-step, with a low gear of 45 inches and ten distinct gears.

For touring with a load, the gearing operations are more complicated. The simplest possibility would be to replace the freewheel with a 14-16-19-24-32; this gives a touring crossover with fairly evenly-spaced gears dipping down to 35 inches.

Trek will ship 7,000 bikes and frames from its Wisconsin factory this year, and twice that many in 1980. The young company sells only through its 300 franchised dealers, and it's slowly spreading beyond its primary marketing areas in the Midwest. When Trek reaches your town, the mystique bikes from faraway countries will nervously shiver in their toe clips.

## Schwinn Le Tour IV

**MANUFACTURER:**  
Schwinn Bicycle Company  
1856 North Kostner Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60639  
312/292-2900

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$186.95; available in frame sizes 21, 23 and 25 inches, and in women's frame sizes 19 and 22 inches; bike tested: 23-inch frame, serial number L921225; total weight: 30 pounds, 13½ ounces.

**FRAME:** lugged and brazed 1020 (medium carbon) steel tubing; frame size measured 23¼ inches; wheelbase: 41 inches; top tube: 22½ inches; chainstays: 17½ inches; head tube angle: 72°; seat tube angle: 72°; bottom bracket height: 11 inches; fork rake: 2 inches; trail: 2½ inches; Schwinn headset; frame weight: 8 pounds, 12½ ounces with fork and headset bearings installed.

**WHEELS:** Schwinn steel rims, 850 grams (1 pound, 14 ounces) each; 36 spoke holes; front hub: Schwinn-approved, made in France with quick-release; rear hub: Schwinn-approved, made in Japan, with axle nuts; large-flange hubs; 4-cross, 14/16/14-gauge spokes; Schwinn HP Sports Touring 85-pound, 27 x 1¼-inch tires; Schrader valves.

**DRIVETRAIN:** Schwinn Twin-Stik friction-style handlebar-stem shift levers; Schwinn-approved Huret front derailleur; Shimano 400 rear derailleur; Sedis chain; Super Maxy cotterless crankset with 170-mm crankarms and aluminum chainguard; only inner chainwheel interchangeable; Schwinn-approved (made in France) splined gold freewheel.

**COMPONENTS:** Schwinn-approved rat-trap pedals (will accept narrow-mount toe clips); chrome-plated steel seatpost with standard seat clamp; 200 mm (7¾ inches) long, 25.4-mm (1-inch) diameter; Mesinger hard nylon saddle with foam padding and vinyl cover; saddlebag eyelets; SR forged 80-mm (3¼-inch) handlebar stem and engraved alloy Randonneur handlebars (42 cm or 16½ inches wide); black cloth handlebar tape; Schwinn-approved Dia-Compe centerpull brakes and levers with "assist" levers and quick-release.

**GEARING IN GEAR INCHES:**

	<b>39</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>14</b>	75	100
<b>17</b>	62	83
<b>20</b>	53	70
<b>24</b>	44	58
<b>28</b>	38	50

## Ross Super Gran Tour

**MANUFACTURER:**  
Chain Bike Corporation  
200 Cascade Drive  
Allentown, PA 18103  
215/264-5521

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$239; available in frame sizes 21, 23 and 25 inches; bike tested: 23-inch frame, serial number 0379503558; total weight: 29 pounds, 5½ ounces.

**FRAME:** lugged, brazed and tempered 1020 (medium carbon) steel tubing; frame size measured 23 inches; wheelbase: 42¼ inches; top tube: 22½ inches; chainstays: 18 inches; head tube angle: 72½°; seat tube angle: 73°; bottom bracket height: 10½ inches; fork rake: 27/16 inches; trail: 1½ inches; Ross Professional headset; frame weight: 9 pounds, 7 ounces with fork and headset bearings installed.

**WHEELS:** Araya alloy rims, 610 grams (1 pound, 5½ ounces) each; 36 spoke holes; Shimano HC-110 large-flange hubs with quick-release; 4-cross, 15-gauge spokes; Kendoa (made in Taiwan) 90-pound, 27 x 1½-inch tires; Schrader valves.

**DRIVETRAIN:** Shimano 600 EX derailleurs and friction-style down-tube shift levers; Union chain; Shimano 600 EX cotterless crankset with 170-mm crankarms; no chainguard; Shimano splined gold freewheel.

**COMPONENTS:** KKT counterweighted pedals with AFA medium-size toe clips and straps; fluted alloy seatpost with standard seat clamp, 205 mm (8 inches) long, 25.0-mm diameter; Kashima hard nylon saddle with foam padding and vinyl cover; no saddlebag eyelets; SR forged 80-mm (3¼-inch) handlebar stem and engraved alloy Randonneur handlebars (39 cm or 15½ inches wide); black cloth handlebar tape; Shimano 600 sidepull brakes with drilled levers, quick-release and gum rubber lever hoods.

**GEARING IN GEAR INCHES:**

	<b>40</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>14</b>	77	100
<b>17</b>	64	83
<b>20</b>	54	70
<b>24</b>	45	58
<b>28</b>	39	50

## Trek 714

**MANUFACTURER:**  
Trek Bicycle Corporation  
268 Jackson St.  
Waterloo, WI 53594  
414/478-3700

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$398; available in frame sizes 19½, 21, 22½, 24 and 25½ inches; bike tested: 24-inch frame, serial number G4K8E54; total weight: 23 pounds, 14 ounces.

**FRAME:** lugged and silver-soldered Reynolds 531 double-butted tubing; frame size measured 24 inches; wheelbase: 41 inches; top tube: 22¾ inches; chainstays: 17¼ inches; head tube angle: 73°; seat tube angle: 73°; bottom bracket height: 11¼ inches; fork rake: 1¾ inches; trail: 2¼ inches; Shimano 600 headset; frame weight: 6 pounds, 9½ ounces with fork and headset bearings installed.

**WHEELS:** Rigid AL 1320 rims, 450 grams (15.9 ounces) each; 36 spoke holes; Shimano 600 small-flange hubs with oil holes and quick-release; 3-cross, 16-gauge spokes; IRC Roadlite 100-pound, 27 x 1½-inch tires; Presta valves.

**DRIVETRAIN:** Sun Tour ratchet-style Power Shifter down-tube shift levers; Sun Tour Cyclone GT rear and Cyclone front derailleurs; Shimano Uniglide chain; Sugino Road VX cotterless crankset with 170-mm crankarms and no chainguard; Sun Tour Pro Compe gold freewheel.

**COMPONENTS:** Kyokuto Top Run quill pedals with KKT large clips and straps; SR Laprade fluted aluminum seatpost with one-allen-key-adjust, micro-adjust clamp; 185 mm (7¼ inches) long, 27.2-mm diameter; Avocet Condor flexible nylon saddle with thin padding and vinyl cover; no saddlebag eyelets; SR forged 125-mm (4¾-inch) handlebar stem and engraved alloy Randonneur handlebars (42 cm or 16½ inches wide); black cloth handlebar tape; Dia-Compe G sidepull brakes with quick-release and drilled levers with gum hoods.

**GEARING IN GEAR INCHES:**

	<b>42</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>14</b>	81	100
<b>17</b>	67	83
<b>20</b>	57	70
<b>24</b>	47	58
<b>28</b>	41	50