



Atala

by RICHARD JOW

Grand Prix R/T

Atala. That's a name that's been around awhile. I can remember it from when I first became interested in bikes, and that was a number of years ago!

This Italian firm, based in Milano, produces seven models including their track bike for a pretty comprehensive line. The Grand Prix is their third-from-the-top road model currently being offered.

I think this bike is well suited for short recreational trips, commuting and exercise. For this use, the equipment found on the Grand Prix is more than adequate.

Geometry-wise, the frame is set up so it will absorb the shock and discomforts of any type of road surface you might encounter or, for that matter, the absence of any road surface at all. With the bike's 70-degree parallel frame angles, it seems the designer was calculating for the cobble pavements of Belgium. A disadvantage of the shallower angles is that the riding weight is shifted more to the rear wheel than is normal on the steeper angles commonly found on touring and competition bikes. This makes for a more weight-heavy rear end. However, it takes a bit

more to shift the weight forward in a panic stop, thus making it more difficult to skid badly or flip. A forgiving 17 1/4" chainstay length also aids in the comfort of the ride of this bike.

The frame is made of Tullio straight gauge steel tubing and is fully lugged. Stamped fork tips and dropouts are used to retain the wheels. Typical of the Italian design is the bullet-shaped seat stay ends, which are brazed directly to the side of the seat lug. One of the things I like on this frame, and on some other Italian frames also, is the boss brazed on the rear bridge, which

The fully lugged frame has the seat stays brazed to the side of the seat lug in typical Italian fashion. Note the brazed boss for mounting the rear brake.



Typical of many Italian frames, this one has chrome plating on the head lugs and fork crown.



gives the rear brake some additional support.

With the 40/52 chainrings on the steel crankset and the 14-28 tooth Regina freewheel, the rider has ideal ratios ranging from 38.6 inches in low gear to 100.3 inches in high gear. These should prevent taxing the muscles of even the most occasional rider.

All the driving power eventually gets to the ground via the wheels, and on this machine the manufacturer has chosen some of the best wheel components available for a bike in this price range. The Hutchinson gum walls are the high-pressure variety with inflation pressures of about 85 lbs. suggested. With this kind of pressure, rolling re-

sistance is cut down almost as much as is possible on wired-on tires. Fiamme alloy rims and Campagnolo old-style wide flange Tipo hubs with quick releases complete the picture.

I have three minor dislikes. First, I question the durability of the paper decals used on the Grand Prix. It's not going to take much riding in the wet before they soften and either dissolve or peel off. Second, I do wish the Atala would come equipped with cloth handlebar tape, rather than the plastic tape used. Plastic handlebar tape tends to get slippery when wet, and it just doesn't provide the cushioning that cloth tape does. Finally, I think toe clips and straps should be included as

ATALA GRAND PRIX SPECIFICATIONS

FRAME: Straight gauge Tullio steel; fully lugged; chromed head lugs, 4" on forks and fork crown, and 6" on rear stays.

top tube: 22 1/4"	wheelbase: 40 3/4"
seat tube: 22 3/4"	head tube angle: 70 degrees
chain stay: 17 1/4"	seat tube angle: 70 degrees
fork rake: 2 1/4"	weight: 27 lbs.
bottom bracket height: 11"	

CHAINSET: Steel w/ 52/40 chainrings & 170 mm cranks

DERAILLEURS: front: Campagnolo Valentino
rear: Campagnolo Valentino
Both with down tube controls

WHEELS: hub: Campagnolo old-style Tipo w/quick releases
rim: Fiamme alloy clincher
tires: Hutchinson gum wall high pressure clinchers
spokes: Straight gauge — 4-spoke cross lacing

BRAKES: Weinmann 750 centerpull in front; 610 centerpull in rear; hooded levers and quick releases

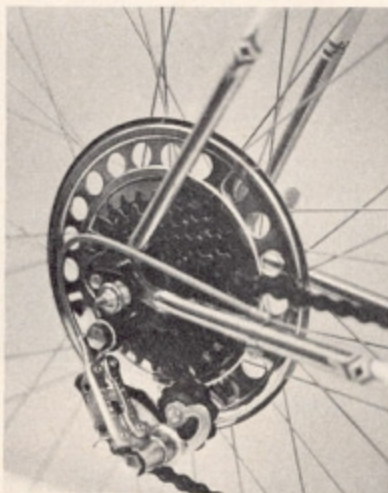
PEDALS: Steel rat traps

FREEWHEEL: Regina 14-28 tooth

SADDLE: Padded vinyl-covered plastic

BAR & STEM: TTT forged stem

COST: Approximately \$154.95



The Campagnolo Valentino rear derailleur changes gears on the Regina 14-28 freewheel.

standard equipment. Although the neophyte rider might do better without them, on a bike of this type they would serve to introduce the novice to one of the more important fine points of cycling.

With import prices rising every day, so much so that Italian and British firms are starting production of their bikes here in the United States, it won't be long before bikes equipped like the Atala will be a thing of the past. At \$155 it's not too bad a bargain.

More information on the Atala is available from Stuyvesant Bicycle Distributors, Inc., 8 East 13th St., New York, NY 10003.