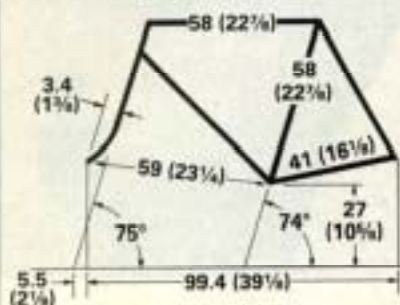


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tense. I will never try it again. There are those who told me that if I came here to Mexico City I wouldn't feel the pedals. I assure you, I could feel the pedals! Nevertheless, I don't regret this choice. I don't think I could ever improve on this record. Yet I am convinced that one day my record will be beaten. That is the law of the sport."

MERCKX HOUR RECORD

Size: 58 cm (center to center)



Total weight: 12 lbs, 1 1/2 oz

Frame: Columbus special record tubing, specially cut pressed-steel lugs and Campagnolo forged dropouts, drilled chainstays, relieved BB shell; semi-sloping pressed-steel fork crown with round-section blades; custom aluminum headset

Rims: Fiamme Ergal, drilled gluing surface

Spokes: Zinc-plated steel, butted 15/16, radial front, cross two rear

Hubs: Campagnolo Record small flange, dust caps removed, hollow axes with downsized nuts

Tires: Clement Seta Pista

Crank: Campagnolo Record (Mexico prototype), 175-mm milled and polished arms, 52 Record chainring with cut-out webbing, custom titanium spindle

Rear cog: 14 tooth, alloy

Chain: Regina Record, custom drilled, 3/32 inside width (road dimension)

Saddle: Selle Royal Eddy Merckx

Seatpost: Campagnolo Record 27.2 x 180 mm, drilled below insertion into seat tube

Pedals: Campagnolo Record SL Strada with cut-down cages and titanium spindles, Christophe steel clips, Binda straps

Handlebars: Cinelli Campione del mondo, 64 drop, 40-cm wide, drilled along trailing edge; custom Pino Morroni titanium stem, 13.5 cm extension, engraved with "Pino" and "To Mr. Pedivella" ("Mr. Crankarm," Morroni's nickname for Merckx)

The Merckx hour record bike was displayed throughout 1990 at Il Vecchio, 140 Lakeside Ave., Seattle, WA 98122. Thanks to Il Vecchio's proprietor George Gibbs for making these photographs possible and for his technical assistance. Thanks also to Merckx's U.S. importer, Giorgio Andretta of Gita Sporting Goods, Ltd., for arranging the loan of the bike.

He reflected further and then wondered if possibly he could have done better if he hadn't started so quickly. If he entertained such thoughts seriously it wasn't for long. Merckx never attempted the hour again.

In 1984, Francesco Moser added over a kilometer to Eddy's distance. While Moser's performance had great athletic merit, it was also assisted by major advances in streamlining. Merckx felt that the record had been devalued, that personal fitness had not been the sole criterion for a new record. After all, he had

beaten Moser in every time trial in which they had met. His disgust was obvious when he said, "For the first time in the history of the hour record, a weaker man has beaten a stronger man."

The technical side of the sport can be controlled but not stopped. The search for more speed will continue by every means. But Eddy's record stands as the apotheosis of human effort on a bike. We may never again be able to judge a rider's ability as we did that of Eddy Merckx in 1972. We knew we had seen the finest cyclist in his finest hour. □