

Bicycle Review: **Giant's Bicycle of the Future...The Prodigy DX**

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SUV or SUB?

When it comes time to select a new vehicle, nobody goes about the process with as much passion and vigor as The Muscleman of Technology. Irrespective of whether the mode of transportation contains four wheels or two, when the final selection is made you can bet it will include a unique mix of stylish attributes, bleeding edge technology, and superb ride. Having recently moved to North San Diego County, the Mecca for bicycle enthusiasts where the surf meets the turf and dedicated scenic bike paths outnumber sidewalks, I decided upon an SUB. Come on—don't tell me you've never heard of a Sport Utility Bike (SUB)! When the dust settled, with research completed, data collated, and test drives concluded, only one model emerged that surpassed the MMOT's stringent requirements: Giant's Prodigy DX, a Sport Utility Bicycle.

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Is it really possible to have luxury performance in a bike? If you've ever ridden Giant's Prodigy DX, which is classified as a Comfort Bicycle or new breed of SUB, your answer would be "Absolutely." I was so impressed by its unique and revolutionary features I purchased one for myself! One would think Giant created the Prodigy as a concept bicycle of the future. It was developed using computer aided design and incorporates the latest in hi-tech materials. The bike starts with a specially formed sleek futuristic AluxX 6061 aluminum-butted frame. Trust me—the pictures don't do the Prodigy DX justice. When you see it in person it's flat-out stunning. Giant custom designed the one-piece (spokeless) cast-aluminum wheels, which are maintenance free. These wheels can take the abuse of city streets and off-road riding. Did I mention this is a full suspension bicycle? Yup, the front fork is an SR Suntour XC Pro-S with 3" of travel, while the rear is a Giant custom-designed air shock with damping adjustment (up to 4.5" of travel). You'll feel like you're floating over the pavement with this well-tuned suspension system. By the way, don't worry about getting a flat. The included Kenda 26" x 1.95" tires are anti-puncture!



Bells, Whistles and More

The Prodigy DX includes an extraordinary ergonomic handlebar. Giant calls it the “I-Bar.” What if I told you the I-Bar included an integrated bike computer, two-beam Halogen headlight, and adjustable headlight housing for precision control and viewing? Well it does and it all works seamlessly. The bike computer is very useful and simple to use. It’s the Sigma Sport BC-401 which includes MPH, trip odometer, cumulative total distance traveled, and regular clock. The large display is clear and easy to read with a single button design for quick scrolling through the various displays. It’s all pre-wired at the factory, but ensure the tech performs a quick calibration check. The headlight runs on four “AA” batteries; you can activate it while riding by just touching the membrane switch. There’s even a low battery warning indicator. But wait there is more! The Prodigy also includes low profile front and rear fenders to keep wheel spray and debris off your body. In fact the rear fender is quite interesting. Not only does it combine an intense red tail light, it has three settings: normal, blinking, and oscillating. What’s really unique about the rear fender, however, is it serves double duty as an integrated luggage rack! Don’t have a need for the rear rack? No problem because it’s designed to be easily removed.

Prodigy DX—Performance First

If you think this bike sounds like a gimmick you couldn’t be more wrong. In fact Giant designed the Prodigy DX with front and rear Avid CPS (Caliper Positioning System) Disc Brakes with 6” Rotors. Disc brakes are a huge safety feature. The CPS system allows for fast and accurate alignment of the caliper to the rotor—no shims or trial and error required! Disc brakes are also immune to wet, oily and moisture laden environments and ensure powerful braking precision for any conditions. Giant also equipped the Prodigy DX with a premium Shimano 27 speed drivetrain to guarantee you trouble-free traveling for off-road trails, intense climbs, or irregular terrain (Shimano Deore XT rear and Deore LX front).

Let’s Ride!

Undeniably, Giant took a big risk on designing and manufacturing the Prodigy DX. 2004 is possibly the last year of this revolutionary bike’s lifespan. In 2003, the Prodigy DX MSRP was \$1799. This year it was lowered to \$1499, and many Giant dealers are selling them for \$1299 (a fantastic value). A standard Prodigy model is also available without the “DX” for considerably less money. It’s missing some of the extra features of the Prodigy DX, but still an awesome value. Rest assured Giant is an innovator when it comes to merging cycling with technology. I urge you to visit Giant’s web site at www.giantbicycle.com to see the complete line of Giant bicycles, and to visit a dealer near you. I’m sure there’s plenty for you to get excited about. And be sure to check out the Giant Revive DX while you’re there! I’m absolutely in love with my Prodigy DX and adore the stares and compliments I get from everybody—I tip my hat to Giant for building the “Lexus of Bicycles.”

Let me conclude by stating cardio exercise is like a trip to the dentist for me. I detest jogging and treadmill type activities. It’s no secret that cardiovascular exercise is the single most important form of exercise for keeping you fit and healthy. Bicycling, on the other hand, is a pleasure—you become in tune with your surroundings with unmitigated joy. I know the Prodigy DX will help me in my quest for eternal fitness and staying young at heart and body.