

BMC RACEMASTER

When the opportunity to test out the new BMC Race Master from Competitive Cyclist landed on my desk I was intrigued. Competitive Cyclist, a bike catalogue company, is a major retailer of BMC and is offering customers the ability to demo, for a full week, the bike at the price of \$300. And if you decide to purchase the frame within two weeks of the demo, the \$300 is applied to the cost. To me, if you are going to drop several thousands of dollars on a bike, it makes sense to take it off the lot and kick the tires a couple of times. So I took them up on their offer and Competitive Cyclist asked for my lengths and measurements for the complete bike and shipped it.

When Mr. UPS driver delivered the bike I was impressed. In the thoroughly taped-up box was the Race Master anchored by its fork and rear drop-out by quick releases which were bolted to a metal plate that ran along the inside of the box. The entire bike came completely swathed in foam to protect it from any damage. Even the carbon fiber water bottle cages had bottles in place solely for the purpose of preventing them from being crushed. They had thought of everything to prevent shipping damage. Thankfully included were directions to re-wrap the Race Master to ship back. And like promised once the bike was removed from the case it was only a matter of minutes before the bike was road riding worthy. The only momentary snag was the installation of the seat post or what BMC likes to call Streampost. There is a wedge bolt at the bottom that needs to be snugged up a bit before being slid into the seat tube and then secured with the locking bolt at the top of the post. The first couple of times I hadn't snugged the wedge bolt sufficiently so when the locking bolt was turned the wedge failed to grip against the seat tube. But I figured it out and the ingenious wedge and locking bolt system of the Streampost was secure. No slippage worries here. Once all pieced together the Race Master, like its cousin the SLCO1, has a very industrial look to it. The top tube, head tube and the top third of the down tube is constructed from carbon fiber, which BMC calls CNT Carbon Arc. The reason for this is that it gives the frame torsional stiffness in gut wrenching efforts and to help

lessen road vibrations. The seat tube, the rest of the down tube and chain stays are constructed from hydroformed, triple butted 7005 aluminum. BMC calls this section the "Aluminum Trident," and aside from the snappy moniker, the aluminum's purpose in this area is to prove unparalleled stiffness in a sprint situation.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

BMC makes no bones about the purpose of the Race Master: it's a stiff bike first, weight considerations second. Now this bike isn't an anchor by any means. Once built up it was still in the 17 pound range with SRAM Force group. And like claimed, the Race Master is a significantly stiffer bike than its weight-weenie cousin the SLCO1. I've sometimes forgotten how a really stiff frame feels as I've been on some sub 900 gram frames recently. On the small risers I pounded on the pedals and the bike surged forward, which surprised me a bit. I was expecting a bit of sluggishness due to the increase in weight. Definitely not the case. Climbing was again very steady with the Race Master in the saddle or out the bike surged forward. For me the 100 gram frame weight penalty was well worth it in the payoff for a stiffer ride. And to clarify, the stiffness is not harsh as the carbon fiber front end of the bike helps deaden road buzz. The money shot of the design is the stiff aluminum rear end. The bike digs in when the sprint is on and leaps forward.

LAST CALL

With the angular and elegantly curved tubes, the BMC Race Master looks like it was designed by the Terminator's Skynet computer. Every tube is designed to be functional and serve a purpose. Carbon fiber is used to deaden road vibration and the aluminum stiffens the frame for efficient power transfer. And while the Streampost is an individual part, once slipped into the seat tube it looks so seamless that you could easily mistake it for being a mast type post. While not really an issue on the rides I took the Race Master on, the frame weight increase might be an issue for some. But with some weight-weenie groupo choosing the complete bike could become UCI illegal easily. [R]

ANGLES

Measurements in centimeters [TT= top tube; SA= seat angle; HA= head angle]

SIZE	49	52	54	56	58	61
TT	52.5	54.5	55.5	57	58	59
SA	74.5°	74°	73.5°	73.5°	73°	73°
HA	71.7°	72.5°	72.5°	72.5°	73°	73.5°



THE LOW DOWN

PRICE/WEIGHT: \$2495 (frame)/17.5lbs.
 SIZES: 49, 52, 54, 56, 58 (profiled), 61cm
 COLOR: Team White, Naked Carbon Gloss
 CONTACT: competitivecyclist.com

CHASSIS

FRAME/FORK: Carbon fiber and aluminum/full carbon fiber

WHEELS

WHEELSET: Reynolds Solitude
 TIRES: Continental Grand Prix 4000

COCKPIT

LEVERS/SHIFTERS: SRAM Force
 BRAKES: SRAM Force
 HANDLEBAR/STEM: Oval Concepts
 HEADSET: Integrated
 SADDLE: fi'zi:k Aliante Sport
 SEATPOST: Streampost

DRIVETRAIN

BOTTOM BRACKET: SRAM
 CASSETTE: SRAM Red
 CHAIN: SRAM 1090R
 CRANKS: SRAM Red
 DERAILLEURS F/R: SRAM Red