



Bike test

MERLIN TiWorks 3/2.5

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MY initial request to have this Merlin was as a race bike. I'd been given a Time VRS (see separate review this issue) for sportive duties and fancied the idea of a more dedicated 'racing only' machine. As the year panned out I found myself dragged more and more towards the dark underbelly of cyclo-sportives with less and less time to race the Merlin. I did contest a load of events early season on it, though, and periodically found myself able to get out on some big group rides during the summer.

The impression it made was amazing; I want one for next season, to use for everything. Races, sportives, clubruns, going down the shops. Anything and everything. Next time I get one of these, I'm never getting off it. It can't really be that good can it? Well, actually, yes. As a frame material, titanium is the 'Mr Versatile'. And Merlin has traditionally been the company when it comes to making quality bicycle frames from it.

As you'd expect from a bike costing close to three grand, it ticks all the performance boxes. Its dynamic response to rider input in both power and handling is breathtaking. The sloping top tube (the bike is available with either compact or standard geometry) on this model, combined with Merlin's own hourglass seatstay design, creates a riding position that is at once comfortable but aggressive under high-intensity effort. The platform for sprints or hard climbing created by the combined frame geometry and design inspires confidence in the bike's handling and response. I haven't experienced any 'dead' spots in the ride under any kind of cornering, or accelerating into the transition between descending and climbing, for example.

Heaven on wheels

Impressive though its drive-power ratio is, it's actually the bike's handling that is most impressive. This is true testament to a frame that is perfectly balanced between its geometry, size and frame/fork materials. Put simply, the individual parts of the package



Shapely: the hourglass stays