

The feeling of standing climbing on the Adroit is wild! It's kind of a three-part deal. 1: Instant power transmission. 2: Rapid forward motion. 3: Your jaw dropping to your chest in amazement. It moves. But what'd you expect from a 23-pound bike?



Mountain
BIKING
PRODUCT TEST

KLEIN ADROIT

Any rider who's beyond (circle one each) his/her Fred/Fredette stage knows that Klein frames are made of aluminum, right? Well, after a glance through the new (and very slick) Klein catalog, you'd hardly get that bit of info reinforced. Oh, there's a cursory mention of the material, but nothing major. They prefer to talk more about precise mitring and alignment, or high-penetration welds, than spend time in discussion of the frame material.

But do you know the difference between a regular Klein Attitude frame (though it's hard to call one regular without cringing a little bit) and Klein's Adroit frameset? Anyone?



Well, we *did* know that they'd done some fairly substantial weight trimming in the frame and fork, mostly by using more double-butted tubes. This had dropped the complete bike weight down to a hair over 20 pounds (with their Ultra Light component group in place), but to be perfectly honest, we hadn't realized that they'd then gone back and reinforced key stress areas in the frame with a mix of boron and carbon fiber epoxy. What was

The Klein Mission Control banister combo is awfully nice, and amazingly light. The frame is filled with double-butted aluminum tubes, and both the frame and fork have been reinforced in key stress areas with boron and carbon fiber epoxy.

Adept, wily, masterful,
and crafty . . . not evil, wicked,
mean, and nasty

this? Some kind of well-kept secret? Just about any other company would be busily aiming spotlights to grab attention, or be busy producing mass quantities of printed material with graphs and charts (or at the very least, lots of marketing hype), in an attempt to show that their bike was superior to everyone else's. Or maybe they'd have an unpainted frame surgically opened to show exactly how they'd done it. Not Klein.

But when we called the folks there after receiving our test bike, you could almost hear the smiles in their voices. All they wanted to know when we called was, "How did it ride?"

TALES FROM THE SADDLE

The ride of the Adroit is something totally different from nearly anything we've tried. After three straight months of testing really lightweight bikes (the Ritchey P-23 Comp, Merlin, and now the Adroit) we'd gotten used to the somewhat different rider attitude required to make them hum. For example, rocks that don't even faze a heavier bike cause the lighter ones to ping around a bit on downhills. Bunny-hopping and climbing are much easier on the feathery bikes, and the ability to more easily change lines in corners is also enhanced. Of course, all this good stuff doesn't come without some cost. They definitely require more attention from the rider. You have to focus on what you're doing, and it's like being on call full-time. They're a pleasure to ride, but they're not a pleasure cruise.

You'd think with similar numbers at weigh-in, they'd have a fair amount in common when it came to ride characteristics, right? Wrong. They're about as similar as a scoop of chocolate ice cream on a sugar cone, and a dirt clod in a cup. The Klein is an instant-feedback machine. If you ride over an ant, you can tell if it was red or black. On either the Ritchey or Merlin with their respective chromoly and titanium personalities, you probably wouldn't be able to make that distinction (even though it's a 50/50 guess). And this is with a pair of big, pillowy 2.35 Mega-Bites mounted on board the Adroit to soften the ride.

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All this sounds like we're leading up to saying that the frame's harsh, right? Well, yes . . . and no. The Adroit is designed to be Klein's elite race bike. The same one that the team riders use. Klein's current pro racer, Tinker Juarez, is an absolute animal. Hard riding in the big gear is his calling card. This bike is intended as a pure performance vehicle — perfect for guys like Tinker. That must be why, while in cruise mode, the Adroit is a bit of a hard case. But unlike plenty of other bikes we've ridden that start out harsh and only get more uncomfortable as the terrain gets rougher, it's when you really start to push the Adroit that things start clicking. The fact is, the harder you ride it, the better it feels. Nearly every other bike we've ridden has gone 180 degrees in the opposite direction. They either get nastier, transmitting more harshness back to you, or go completely mushy, leaving you with one very imprecise handful of a bike.

FRAME TALES

A big chunk of this phenomenon has to come down to what Klein calls their Ride Control System. This includes their Supersized headset, fork, bar, and stem. Oh, and unofficially, a whole bunch of very oversized frame tubes. The down tube is a very hefty-looking two-incher, while the top tube measures 1-5/8 inches, and the seat tube is merely 1-3/8 inches. The seatstays are of the 7/8-inch non-tapering variety, and the chainstays start as one-inch



The internal cable routing is about as sleek, sneaky, and to the point as you could ask for. The fillet-style welds are unusual for aluminum, and are extremely nice.



The chainstays are round at the rear, and square up front for tire and crank clearance — and extra strength. The right side stay is also thicker to handle the greater stress on that side. The bottom bracket is a Klein sealed bearing unit.

KLEIN

Is flickability part of the English language? Well, it is now. The Adroit gives meaning to the word. What's unusual is that this is a frame and fork that actually feels better when pushed really hard.



(Continued from page 68)

round tubes at the rear, and then transform to a smaller diameter square shape half-way through their length. This helps accommodate their double bend configuration, while retaining strength, and gives better clearance to both the cranks and tire. (Though with the 2.35 tires and XTR cranks, there are not *as* of either.)

The head tube is positively huge. It accommodates two aircraft torque tube bearings (which use *roads* of small-diameter ball bearings), and with its flared ends, doesn't require normal headset cups. This setup, in turn, supports the large-diameter steerer of the all-aluminum fork. Well, actually, the fork gets some of the same boron/carbon fiber epoxy reinforcing as the frame, but you get the idea. The fork also matches the overall look of the bike quite nicely. The legs taper throughout their length, from 1-5/8 inches down to 1-1/8 inches at the bottom ends.

Overall balance encompasses a lot of the focus of not just the frame, but the whole package. The new large O.D. Klein seatpost is a 31.6mm diameter (about



Shimano XTR was standard issue on our test bike, but you can also pick from Shimano Deore XT, SunTour LTD Campagnolo Record OR, or Klein's hand-picked Ultra Light group.

1-1/4-inch for those of you who don't speak fluent metric), and it comes in an ultra-long 350mm length. (For riders who want to shave even more grams, get your seat height dialed, allow for a proper amount of seat tube insertion, and then hackaw off any unnecessary length. Hey, heat-treated aluminum doesn't weigh a lot, but this is lots cheaper than spending big bucks for a small bagful of titanium widgets.)

Another component of the frame/fork/seatpost/chassis package is the Mission Control bar/stem combo. Actually, the Mission Control setup is a pretty cool piece by itself. This integrated bar/stem combo has a cool seven-degree bend to the bar and a titanium wedge bolt, it's feather-light (between 340 and 417 grams depending on which of the four lengths or two rise options you're looking at), and we can tell you from our rides that it *doesn't* allow torsional flex. Like as in *some*.

What other goodies are there here? How about internally routed cables (very

(Continued on page 100)



MFG. OR DIST.: KLEIN BICYCLE CORPORATION
198 Klein Rd.
Chehalis, WA 98532
(360) 362-3306

APPROXIMATE SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE (as tested): \$3250

COLORS AVAILABLE: Linear fade

SIZES AVAILABLE: 18", 19", 20", 22"

SIZE TESTED: 19"

FRAMESET:
Head Angle: 70.5 degrees
Seat Angle: 72.5 degrees
Top Tube Length: 22.79"
Chainstay Length: 15.65"
Wheelbase Length: 41"

Bottom Bracket Height: 11.5"
Frame Material(s): Aluminum with boron/carbon fiber epoxy reinforcement
Fork Offset: 1.44"
Fork Material(s)/Construction: Aluminum with boron/carbon fiber epoxy reinforcement
Gross Bicycle Weight: 23.6 lbs (approx.)

DRIVETRAIN:

Front Derailleur: Shimano XTR
Rear Derailleur: Shimano XTR
Shifters: Shimano Deore XTR, RapidFire Plus
Crank: Shimano XTR
Chainrings: Shimano XTR
Freehub/Freehub: Shimano XTR, eight-speed
Gearing: 26/36/48 front, 12-32 rear
Chain: Shimano HG-90
Pedals: Shimano Deore XT

STEERING:

Handlebar/Stem: Klein Mission Control bar/stem combo
Headset: Klein
Grips: Grab-On Foam

BRAKES:

Front & Rear Brakes: Shimano XTR cantilevers
Levers: Shimano Servo-Wave

SEATING:

Saddle: Sella Italia Fitto
Seatpost: Klein, aluminum
Seatpost Binder: Shimano XTR

WHEELS:

Rims: Sun C-16
Hubs: Shimano XTR
Spokes: Wheelsmith
Tires: Ritchey MegaBite WCS 2.35