





£960-worth of bike coming  
out of California

# Team Marin

**M**arin's designers in San Rafael, California, have worked with their counterparts at the Tange factory in Japan to produce a frame that is both light and strong. The Team Marin has a triple-butted Ultra Light Tange Prestige main frame with Marin's Afterburner rear triangle and their Rock Star cromoly triple-butted forks at the front. Our test bike came in a Champagne Satin colour that seems deliberately aimed at the British market with its penchant for titanium or, as in this case, a titanium finish. The welding looks excellent.

Marin have also thought about details. The cable guides for the front and rear derailleurs are welded onto the head tube rather than down tube. According to Peter Holton, of importers ATB Sales, this eliminates any weakening caused by the welding of the guides onto the down tube. Another beneficial effect, as far as we can see, is that it also prevents the cables chafing the paintwork on the head tube.

Marin's Afterburner rear triangle has been around now for about three years and according to their brochure, it's a unique Marin trademark. What this means is that both the seat and chainstays are made

up of constant diameter tubing and both are double-butted. It also has some very neat investment-cast (a highly accurate casting process capable of producing shapes in metal that may be too hard to be machined) drop-outs.

Marin feel that a constant diameter tube is inherently stronger and less likely to flex than a tapered tube. They also butt the seatstay not only at the junction with the seatpost but also around the brake bosses, again for strength. Ally this with the rigid drop-outs and you have, theoretically, a stiff and tough rear triangle.

Since Marin were so convinced of their constant diameter theory we asked them why they didn't apply it to their rigid Rock Star forks which start big at the head tube but taper down. It's all a compromise between strength and flexibility as far as Marin are concerned. They feel that a constant diameter tube would be far too rigid and uncomfortable, and that their design is a better match between stiffness and flexibility, not to mention light weight and feel.

A number of components stand out on the Team. According to Pete Holton, Marin have increasingly

**This is not Marin County; in fact it's not even anywhere close - Caesar's Camp in Aldershot to be exact. The Team Marin felt at home here as much as it did across the pond which is unsurprising seeing how the Californian-based company sell more bikes here than they do in the US.**



found that the customer is demanding something different when it comes to buying a bike and they are making an effort to fit trick components (that were previously aftermarket purchases) on their bikes from the Palisades up.

The White Industries cranks are 175mm on our 17.5in bike and would cost around £175 (no rings) if you bought them from your local trickno dealer. These OEM versions, however, are made under licence by Sugino in Japan and don't feature the distinctive machined-hollow reverse sides of their cousins made in America. This makes them a handful of grams heavier than both standard White Industries cranks and, say, a Shimano LX crankset. Marin feel the White Industries name is well worth any weight penalty. We can also reveal that these same Sugino/White Industries cranks will be available in the summer for around £125.

The rings are also Sugino. This does not appear to have hindered the efficiency of the chainset and you will still be able to buy spares from bike shops.

Another eye-catcher is the speccking of Avid lookalike cantilevers. Made in Taiwan, these Marin Lite components are teamed up with Ritchey Logic brake blocks and together offer the kind of braking performance that should be mandatory on all bikes. But don't go thinking you're getting Avid; the latter are £130 a pair and have more adjustment, higher quality aluminium and are as stiff as three double malts. Still, the whole package, with the ever-dependable XT levers, felt impressive.

The other notable component is the front hub and again Marin have gone with White Industries. Though there is a suspension option for the Team, this is not a White

Industries Tracker suspension hub. But it is made in America and, say Marin, it's trickier than LX - that's why it's there.

The hubs are laced to what is rapidly becoming the rim to have - Mavic 230 SBPs. Although we're not convinced of their longevity, these and the White Industries hub (the LX rear hub is due to be replaced by an XT soon), WheelSmith double-butted spokes and alloy nipples get a thumbs-up from us. Unlike many examples we've seen recently, they stayed true throughout the test.

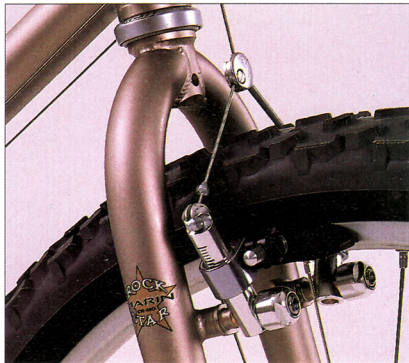
Tyres on the Team are also new to us. Marin's own Kevlar-beaded Quake 7.0s are wet and dry specific and designed by Wilderness Trail Bikes, who previously designed for Specialized. Ride them one way in the wet, the other in the dry. They were impressive. Not only were they comfortable but they also laid down a mega footprint that heaved you uphill and generally kept you glued to the terrain.

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This Sugino-made White Industries crank shares similar features with its £175, made-in-America big brother, but it's not from the same mould. It's forged instead of CNC-machined, heavier by about 50g and doesn't get the high-gloss, polished-by-hand finish. More a cousin than a brother.



A lot of people will say these brakes are Avid copies. Well maybe but at least Marin have made an effort spec'ing them. They may not offer the adjustability of the cool, £130-per-set Avids but they stopped us, no trouble. That may also have something to do with the quality Ritchey pads and Shimano levers.



The rest of the components on the bike are either XT (front and rear derailleurs, 8-speed Rapidfire shifters and brake levers) or Marin Lite products. The only exception is the Bontrager aluminium seatpost with which we unfortunately had a problem. Exiting a particularly sharp turn, the seat and clamp decided to carry straight on, swivelling around in the post. Coincidentally, Tech Head had a similar problem with his carbon fibre Titec/Bontrager post last summer. Confronting Keith himself at Anaheim, he learned that insufficient hardener had been used in the glue when bonding the seat clamp to the post. A general recall has been issued on all Bontrager seatposts.

Marin confirmed the problem but a number have already been used on bikes (not just Marins) and distributed. Fortunately, the problem will make itself evident almost immediately and Marin dealers have been alerted, so if it happens to you, contact yours.

Marin Lite components grace the rest of the bike. Alloy components adorn the cockpit, from the 6061 CNC-machined bars to the cold-forged bar-ends and 135mm stem. The last item looks good, with its twin Allen key handlebar, and is the conventional quill and expander bolt type. ATB say that fitting an Ahead-style headset would have saved only 1oz and that the reliability of the Ritchey Expert headset convinced them to go with that.

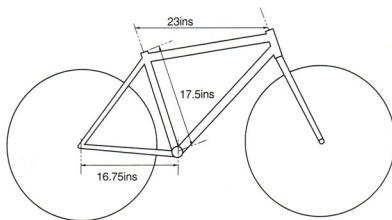
The Force came to a unanimous agreement on the quality of the ride. Not only is the bike very light (24lb with SPDs), but its handling is sound as a pound. It doesn't have any characteristics that force you to adapt your riding style. The combination of the 23in top tube and the 135mm stem was comfortable for all of The Force and the forks gave just the right amount of control and flexibility. The steering was neutral, neither too quick nor too cumbersome, and even the average-looking neoprene grips fared well when it came to comfort levels. The seat also gave a good account of itself, in spite of the swivel post.

And despite a certain amount of 'industry speak', the Afterburner concept did translate itself into a strong, rigid rear triangle. We found that power was almost instantaneously transmitted to the ground.

For £960, the team represents a very appealing package though the price may rise soon. Using their own design of cantis, top-notch cranks made under licence and bulk ordering of hubs, Marin seem to have provided trick bits on a sub-grand bike. Shimanophobes who like an understated, light machine should take a look. **MBI**

TEAM MARIN 1995

PRICE £960  
 SUPPLIER ATB Sales (0424) 753566



<b>FRAME</b>	
MATERIAL	Marin custom Tange Prestige tubing
SIZES	5.5, 17.5, 19, 20.5
COLOUR	Champagne Satin
FORKS	Butted cromoly
<b>GROUPSET</b>	
SHIFTERS	XT Rapidfire
CRANKSET	White Industries
BOTTOM BRACKET	Shimano cartridge
FREEWHEEL	Shimano LX8 8-speed
DERAILLEURS	Shimano XT
BRAKES	Marin Lite

<b>COMPONENTS</b>	
HEADSET	Ritchey Expert
STEM	Marin Lite Alloy
BARs	Marin Lite CNC
SADDLE	Marin Lite leather
SEATPOST	Bontrager/Titec

<b>WHEELS</b>	
RIMS	Mavic M230
HUBS	White Industries front; Shimano LX rear
TYRES	Quake 7.0 & 7.1