

Enigma Elite

Best known for producing titanium frames, and with well over half a dozen in the range, it would be easy to dismiss the lonely steel frame on Enigma's books. But when you discover each one is handmade and hand-painted to order in Sussex, quite likely by the owner's son — it's no shrinking violet. Working with steel isn't new for Enigma, the Elite has been doing the rounds since 2008, but 2014 sees the Elite get a whole new chassis. The latest version now gets all new Columbus Spirit HSS tubing which has allowed Enigma to use a larger down tube and bottom bracket as it's much thinner than the previous tubing, which combined with a 1 1/8 to 1 1/5in tapering head tube promises a significantly stiffer ride than the previous version.

The new Elite sticks, more or less, to the same compact geometry as previous models, a 55cm frame and corresponding top tube comes with a

“Think all-day performance geometry for sportives”

fairly relaxed 73° seat tube angle and a 15.5cm head tube. If you're looking to pigeonhole it, it's best described as an all-day comfort performance geometry — think sportives, 100-milers etc. Visually speaking, it's a classic traditional looking machine, yet with the tapered head tube and British standard bottom bracket, choosing forks and groupset options to get up and running is easy.

Talking of which, how you go from frame to bike is a real personal preference. The Elite frame alone is £1,155, but ask nicely and Enigma will create a full ready-to-ride bike for you, with the end price depending on spec. Our test bike came equipped with an

Enve fork, Campagnolo Chorus groupset and Mavic Ksyrium wheels for a cool £3,175.00. It's not cheap, but as a British hand-built frame to order, that will probably be going strong well after you hang up your bike shoes, it's hardly a throwaway purchase and potentially offers impressive value for money.

Contact: www.engimabikes.com



Retro steel meets tapered head tube



Campag gruppo? It's your call

Where next?

The built-to-order web-based brand does mean that there's limited opportunity to fondle a real bike before purchasing, but with custom paintjobs, and for a mere £200 price increase, custom sizing available, the Elite can become as bespoke as you want to make it — and most importantly, incredibly personal to you.

