

INTO THE RIDE #37

A Second Dual 26" LWB From RANS!

By Randy Schlitter

An ovation to the Stratus XP, winner of the BROL 2005 Bike of the Year, is not the reason for the Formula 26. It is however, a very successful attempt at creating an exciting new bike, that becomes performance and handling enhanced by swapping the 20" front wheel with a 26".

The Formula LE in the 20 x 26 is still offered, accommodating the shorter set with its lower seat height. But for only a few bucks more you can get the bike in dual 26" format. If you are short legged, look at the seat heights between the bikes (see chart below - only .2" difference) and you decide. I would encourage the dual 26 in every case possible; it is that much more of a bike.



The fast version is set up with 26"x 20mm tires, T-Bar, and the M-5 seat, for a seriously fast ride.



Model/Size:	V2 Dual 26" STD	Stratus XP STD	V2 Formula LE
Wheelbase	65"	67.95"	64"
BB Height	25 1/16"	16.25"	22.45"
BB Aft from Ft Wheel	16.2"	19.8"	14.2"
Seat Height Fwd	22.1"	17.375"	21.9"
Seat Height Aft	20.3"	20"	19.375"
BB ID Aft most rail	33.625"	33.1"	33.8"
Head Tube Angle	57.3"	56.9"	60.5"
Overall Length	89.5"	92.95"	86"
Tire Size	650 x 23	26" x 1.6"	Ft:20"x1.5 Rr:26"x1.5"
Wheel O.D.	24.5"	25"	19.5" 25.5"
Rail Range	11.125"	9.3"	9.3"

The Formula 26's wide mission range could change your mind about how performance bikes should be built, less specific and more versatile. This is apparent in the range of handlebars, seats, wheels and tires that can be mounted. The frame will work with 650 x 20mm tires, to 26 x 2.3 Big Apples.

To run the Big Apples you will need to drum sand the fork on the inside of the crown until it clears. There can be a few thousandths of inch interference. Also to mount fenders on such big tires, a split fender arrangement will be needed.



All wheel sets require disc brakes. Because of an adaptation of a frame, there is crank arm contact if rim brakes are mounted. With rim brakes and 650's in a tight turn while cranking will cause contact. There may be a long reach road brake that will work, none to date though.



Big Apples give the F26 a very fun and inviting look that works too. Such tires were never meant to go this fast, they sing nicely.

The 3-way Chopper Bar is standard; I am testing the T-bars, and finding them to be OK, but still prefer Choppers. If equipped, the bit of wind protection the fairing provides is nice. We will set them up with the T-bar on request; otherwise they ship with the 3-way Choppers.

Our RANS stock seat provides the original mount, but some will want the M-5, or Z-seat, both which will work fine. Only the M-5 may require more reach on the bars if you are tall with short arms, and leaning the seat way back. Make sure you have enough bend in your elbows to control the bike, do not set it up where you are over reaching to steer, which is no fun, nor safe.

To get the M-5 seat to work you will have to cut off 2-3" of sprint braces. The braces in my case ended up very small and light.



If you adapt the M-5 seat you will need to trim down the sprint braces to get the angle desired.

RIDING THE F26

Like the Stratus XP, this bike has a totally satisfying kind of ride, but a ride of its own. The BB height will always keep these two bikes distinct. Start up will be pretty standard. Depending on handlebar type and width, you may get a little low-end wobble. I mention width, because wide bars and less tiller dampen low-end quirks. Both width and tiller can be added and subtracted with the Chopper Bars.

This is a stiff ride too; the passive suspension of the Stratus XP is not to be found. Be prepared to feel the road (unless you have mounted the Big Apples). The speed is addicting on the skinny tire version. Keeping up with inner city traffic is a snap. It's typical to cruise at 20 to 25 MPH and faster (for those actually in shape). This bike encourages you to go fast, and rewards you with the light chore of keeping it up there.

Speed is nothing without handling, and the Formula 26 has the secure feel. And for a very good reason; the low seat height and longer wheelbase make you feel secure. Add to this the big wheel out front, and you will notably change your perception of how you should feel a bike.

When switching to the fat tires be ready for a surprise. It will still move along impressively. With this tire size speed is not the thing, but the road play becomes total fun. I seek out the cobbled brick roads that were avoided with the 20mm HP tires. The more I ride the Big Apples the more I love them, and the kind of riding they afford. And oh the look! Admit it, there won't be many bents in the area that sport the look the Formula 26 has with the big fats. It just looks like the kick-A fun rig. Big Apples can be traded for everything in between, too. The exact tire size that works for you best could only be a size up or down the range.

ROLL YOUR OWN

You can make a dual 26" from your V2 or Formula 20 x 26. It requires some careful work, such as cutting .7" off the bottom of the head tube, re-facing and reaming. Then add the fork and wheel of choice and away you go. Sounds easy, but do not attempt unless you are good at this sort of thing. A good square cut off saw that handles metal makes short work, but if you have time and patience, mark .7" from the end of the head tube and hack saw it off. Use masking tape to provide protection and a line square with the end. Your local bike shop should have a reamer/facing tool that will true up the

cut off end. On the alloy frames expect to take about 30 minutes spinning the tool to ream out the ID to fit the cup.

...OR NOT

We will modify your Formula or V2 frames. You can order forks, front wheels and tires from your dealer or us.

Whether you modify or buy the bike, either way you will be the owner of a riding machine that will provide you with a whole range of riding, and a bike that I believe is closer to the final form of what bents will melt down to someday. The other is the Stratus XP of course. Until then you will be riding ahead of the curve and please until next time, ride safe, and stay into the ride.

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