

INTO THE RIDE #46

A NEW STEED FOR SPEED

by Randy Schlitter



Our new entry into the realm of speedy bikes is not only light and fast, but a beauty too! Also to be available in aluminum.

We have already been informed by the friendly competition that the V3 will never be as fast or as low drag as brand X, but I will wager the minor difference in drag will more than make up for this in the comfort, handling, and confidence factor this new steed for speed exhibits. If ever we form a Team RANS, the chance to prove our overzealous claims about this bike will present themselves. In the meantime we hope a few good engines will be lured by the V3's good looks and solid design to give it a try.

Loosely based on the V2 the V3 is actually a new bike from the ground up. The frame features our now common Y type under frame, set up to run dual 650 wheels. We make no effort to make this bike a Swiss army knife, like the V2 with all its wheel and brake combos. This bike is made for the single-minded mission of going fast.

Of course, how fast is the V3? Our tests show significant increases in average speeds; I have turned in my best-ever averages on this bike (18 to 19 MPH, and 20 MPH on those feel great days!). The V3 has some very special design features that let this happen:

1. No power side idler. This makes for a NOTICEABLE increase in speed. We have experience in this area, the original Stratus was sans a top idler, the current XP is also without, and also a very fast bike! Anything other than a straight line for the power side of the chain on a high performance bike is now not acceptable.
2. The least amount of chain for a given wheel base; the V3 does this well, and with less chain there is less power needed for a given speed.
3. Rider position is important in high performance riding; the V3 places the rider in what we feel is the best position to ride hard, comfortable, and still feel like you are master of the bike. It does "give up" a tiny bit to drag because your feet are not as high as per say on an F-5, but the position is a better for power transfer due to how the abs and arms can be engaged. This is very apparent in the climb mode,

where so many bents just do not perform well. You will be happy with the way a V3 climbs, in either the titanium or aluminum frame. This pays off big since you will spend less time climbing!

4. A stiff frame for power transfer, but a supple frame for the rider. Having the BB against the head-tube does this, and yes there is a trade off: the crank will hit the brake (brakes that mount to the fork aft side are being tested), but you have to be turning sharp, riding slow, and pedaling. In all of our testing this has never tripped us up. It was a big concern, but we liked the idea of the BB being locked by the head tube in torsion, and the overlap is not even close to the trade off high racers have with heel to wheel overlap.

5. Compact in wheelbase as possible and not be a short wheelbase; this was important to us because we could get the bike lower. Seat height is 22" allowing the "not tall" to ride. It also adds to the speed and handling, being lower is less drag, and allows much faster cornering that you can do with a high-racer.

6. A super-light frame is possible with this layout, and the V3 in steel (we made several before taking the torch to titanium) was less than 5 pounds. Alloy frames are 4.1 and titanium weighs in at 3.1.

7. We made the frame road-component compatible. Lighter wheels, cranks, brakes, and derailleurs are available for road bikes. These fine components have found their way onto the V3.

8. Choice seats. We equipped the V3 with the M-5 seat, generation 2 Zephyr seat (with narrow or standard carbon pans and featherweight cushion), or the Formula seat (the standard RANS mesh seat with a carbon pan and feather weight cushion). A seat that allows you the best power transfer and comfort adds greatly to the speed; having a choice of 3 at no additional cost allows you to fine tune your bike to you.

V3's in alloy and titanium will be in stock in March, some early releases may happen as frames start stacking up. Both bikes are top-of-the-line for components, all of which we have carefully considered and tested. However, we do not expect everyone to agree with our taste in high-end components and will have frame sets available. Please work with your favorite dealer to secure your V3. I must admit it was hard keeping such a performer under wraps, and a great relief it brings to finally get this program on the road. Some have asked if this means the end of the Formula 26 or even the Formula 20 x26, both which are based off the venerable V2. The answer is no! We have a good supply of Formula frames; the bike is a solid performer and has a much versatile frame. In fact we have a new offering of the Formula rated for 325 lb riders, which further attest to the bikes "Swiss army" knife nature. What the V2 started will continue for at least another year or more in the Formula's and beyond that I am sure we will see the V3 get even more interesting. Until next time ride safe and stay into the ride!

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