

INTO THE RIDE #110

## Return of the RANS Rocket

by Randy Schlitter

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Everybody loved the RANS Rocket, we sold hundreds of them; then almost like a change in the wind, the sales dropped. We made the tough choice to drop the model, and ever since people have raved about this little dual 20" wheel bike, and asked for its return. What was it they loved about the bike? Many say the 20x20 wheel combo. The small wheels were cause for many remarks about it being compact, with decent seating height, light, fast off a stop, carry only one tube size... the list was long. It seemed that the hallmark aspect of the Rocket was this 20x20 wheel combo. Yet, for all those positives, there was a major issue with the gearing combination being too low using common chain rings. We had to have a custom sprocket made; it was ok, but was not ideal. Without the upper gear inches, the bike lacked top end, and you would have to spin at a ridiculous RPM.

So was it just the 20x20 wheel combo? Or was it simply good timing? The Rocket hit the market as our first short wheelbase, followed by the V-Rex. Both sold well, and seemingly did not compete with one another... but they did! The V-Rex was simply the better bike, having the same great handling and seat height, but with more speed. In fact, the two bikes were very comparable, with the exceptions of wheel sizing and frame style. Each had a style that earned a following, and each had a ride that never went out of style. Sales for the Rocket fell off, but the V-Rex kept on going until 2013. That is when the V-Rex went out of production in favor of the Enduro Sport.

The Enduro Sport is everything the V-Rex and Rocket were, combined into one neat package. It is also an unsung hero in our lineup, a lot of bike for the bucks. I love the Enduro Sport. The low seat height is great for tall and short riders, the 26" rear wheel gives it nice top end, and the handling is 100% RANS Rocket/V-Rex. There is a lot of Rocket/V-Rex DNA in the Enduro Sport.

That got us to thinking: if we had a chance to do it all over again, what would a 2013 Rocket look like? We debated over every aspect of what made the Rocket the Rocket, until one thing became obvious... we should not make a copy of the old bike; instead, it should be a bike with the "soul" of the Rocket. It would be light, compact, low seating, great handling, sharp looks, and worthy of carrying the Rocket name. And all the while, this new bike was right in our midst...

In the end it seemed almost silly how little we had to do... take the Rifle and change the head angle for a 20" front wheel, set up canti-brakes for a 26" rear, and spec it differently than the Enduro Sport, with a road crank instead of the FSA 22/32/44. Suddenly, we had that right combination of things that make a great bike, and that is a couple of pounds lighter than the Enduro Sport. Sure, there were a few tweaks (like a new idler mount), but we now have a new bike that has the look, feel, and flavor of our vision of a 2013 Rocket, with the top end speed that the old Rocket lacked.

Thanks for stopping by, and until next time, ride safe and stay into the ride!

*INTO THE RIDE*