

RANS Rocket Review and Features

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The Rocket, my new favorite (I have a lot of favorites)!

In continuing to manufacture the Rocket I have been intrigued again as I have revisited the design with a critical eye. I find myself asking the “why this” and “why that’s” of the original design. I am again pleased to find the Rocket bears the signature of a master designer, great job Randy! While it is true this is not a new model and it has been reviewed before, this doesn’t mean it should be left in the shadows obscuring the finer points of the design, spec, and ride characteristics from those in search of their next recumbent.

Let’s talk about some of those points:

The frame: Built with 7005 aluminum featuring an oval main tube and formed stays results in a light (4lbs.), strong assembly. It is TIG welded and powder coated right here in Montezuma, KS!

The seat: It really comes down to your preference. I prefer the Sling Mesh but the Standard Mesh works equally well and provides the comfort it is loved for. There are those who are putting the Hoagie seat on it as well with good results.

The riser/bars: I feel it is underemphasized how much the bar/riser configuration changes the personality of a bike, and the Rocket is no exception. I have my preference which is what is listed as stock spec but I full well realize this may not be everyone’s preference. Be sure to talk to your dealer or call us here at the factory so we can guide you through the process of choosing what is best for you.

The wheels: This is where it gets interesting! You get to choose between a 20” rear wheel (reminiscent of the early RANS Rocket) or the 26” rear wheel (more like the V-Rex). The lower rear axle height of a 20” rear wheel results in a steeper frame angle not unlike a high-racer. It could be said it turns it into a low high-racer... sounds crazy, I know. The ride experience of the 20/20 setup is nothing but fun and nimble. It accelerates, well, kind of like a rocket! The 26” rear wheel smooths out the bumps, evens out the seat to bottom bracket heights, and provides that stable, comfortable platform sought after whether touring, commuting, club rides, or just out with the family. The bike is set up with disc brakes only so the rear wheel swap is quick and easy. A common “handling” test I like to put bikes through is a hands free coast down test. The Rocket passes this test well regardless of the rear wheel used!

Changes: Standard spec now includes BB7 brakes and Schwalbe Marathon tires, no upcharge! We also increased the length of the standard frame size. I felt it was a little on the short side. At 6’ 3” I can just fit on the standard length Stratus/Stratus XP but no way could I fit on the old length of the Rocket. It was decided to make the necessary adjustments to the jig and increase the length to bring it more in line with the x-seam ranges of the Stratus bikes. Due to the absence of the indexing seat rail (thanks to the oval tubing) and the new clamp-on cross-over idler mount the range of adjustment is quite large. Refer to the pictures below to see it set up for me (6’ 3”) and my son (5’ 4.5”).

Until next time stay safe and stay “Into the Ride”!





INTO THE RIDE