



I profile: bike | *Jamis Xenith Team*



Putting it Together

I've been trying to get my grubby little hands on a Jamis for a long time. For one reason or another a Jamis road bike never cast a shadow on ROAD Magazine's stoop. But just after the holidays I had my own Christmas miracle; a Jamis Xenith Team bike arrived at the office!

The Xenith Team is a monocoque carbon fiber constructed frame. While that type of construction is not remarkable, the method in which Jamis builds the bike is. Often bike manufacturers will produce a monocoque frame with the same amount of carbon fiber regardless of frame size. That means a small frame could ride very stiff and the larger model may have significant flex. Jamis uses three different types of high-grade carbon fiber that is size specific. So a smaller frame is not constructed with the same amount of carbon fiber than its larger counterpart. The same is true for the larger frames; more carbon fiber is applied to the stress areas (head tube and bottom bracket) to achieve the ride Jamis engineers' desire. To ensure it meets their specifications, Jamis stresses the headtube, bottom bracket and seat tube for deflection. If it moves more than 3% it is put on the scrap heap. To reduce this deflection, the top and down tubes are triangulated and ovalized. The carbon fiber doesn't stop at just the frame. Easton's EC90 line-up of stem, bars and seatpost help round out the complete Xenith Team package. One component that I haven't used in a while was the fi'zi:k Arione saddle. I had forgotten how comfortable that saddle was. It was nice to put some long miles with Arione under my posterior. Draive train came courtesy of Shimano Dura-Ace. What more can be said about this group? It works great. Enough said. I've ridden the Mavic Ksyrium ES wheels before so I am familiar with how they roll. They are fast, stiff and continue to be one of the leaders in the field. Although I do think Mavic should seriously consider constructing a tubeless wheel if they want to continue to hold that title.

How Does it Feel?

Many automatically think that monocoque is synonyms with a 'dead feel.' This was not entirely the case with the Xenith Team. My initial feeling was that it rode like, but not as stiff as the Scott LTD. The Scott LTD fit me really well right away. I had the same feeling with the Xenith Team. All I did was screw on my CrankBrothers pedals, adjusted the saddle to my personal measurements and I was off. There was no fiddling with adjustments during my ride. This is my personal nuance with the bike and may not apply to you. What I noticed right away was the sublime quality of the Vittoria Open Corsa tires. Next to the tubeless Hutchinson tires, which I've become a big fan of, these Vittoria tires offered a very similar tubular tire feel. If I weren't racing tubular tires, I'd designate these as my 'race only' tires. When you stuff a bike into a corner, it has a tendency to chatter and come off the line. The Xenith Team did not quite have that chatter and held the turn without having to apply any extra effort. Combined with a geometry that was spot on, a carbon fiber lay-up designed specifically for that size, the frame was obviously comfortable to ride when the hours started to add up. However, it doesn't jump when you pound the pedals like a really stiff bike would. Not a noodle by any means, it's just not a super rigid frame like the Scott LTD feels. Does this mean that the Xenith Team is not a race or criterium bike? Resoundingly no. I would tow the line with the Xenith Team in a heartbeat. For those corners you need to stick at mach 5, the frame won't deviate from whatever line you choose. You need a lightweight bike to help you get over the climbs? The Xenith Team has you covered. My 61cm test bike came in at 16.5 pounds. If you are really a weight-weenie you can drop a little more weight by riding tubulars.

Last Call

With sharp looks and an attention to detail, the Jamis Xenith Team is a road racers delight. All of the components on the Jamis are top notch with no compromises taken. If long hours in the saddle are getting you down; the Jamis Xenith Team could turn that frown upside down.