

Bicycling®



Jamis Xenith SL

Jamis's Xenith SL is as singularly race-focused as any bike we've tested. It's also crazy light: Our 54cm test bike weighed 13.69 pounds without pedals. With pedals and cages, it hit 14.31 pounds, a half-pound below the UCI's racing limit. The SL's spec also shouts speed—there's a classic-bend bar, tubular wheels, tapered steerer, BB30 crankset (see related story at left), ceramic bottom bracket and derailleur-pulley bearings, an 11-23 cassette, minimal paint to save weight and a titanium-nitride-coated, hollow-pin, hollow-link KMC chain. The ultrahigh-modulus carbon frame comes in six sizes with tube diameters in each size matched to expected rider height and weight, for a more perfectly tuned ride.

According to Steven Fairchild, Jamis's 700c product manager, the SL's frame received a few updates for 2009. Most obvious is the switch from a nontapered to a tapered steerer and the trade of the traditional threaded BB for the BB30 format. Plus the down tube was enlarged 10 percent and the fork blades increased in strength. In order to ensure those changes didn't negatively affect ride quality, Jamis ride-tested three lay-up configurations before settling on the final version. Overall, the frame and fork weight grew about 40 grams, but, Fairchild says, "on most of our frames, they come in under 900 grams."

The ride? It's absolutely fierce. Sprinters and out-of-the-saddle climbers will delight in the drivetrain and front-end stiffness, which is top-tier. At the same time, Fairchild points out, a bike that's too stiff in the wrong areas can skate in corners. Jamis got it right. Despite exceptionally low weight, an aggressive geometry and quick reflexes, the Xenith SL is confident and surefooted even when you're bombing a curvy mountain pass, and the excellent wheel and tire spec bolster confidence. SRAM's Red group perfectly complements the SL's personality, with a similarly fast and direct feel.

For all its speed, stiffness and ferocity, the Xenith SL lacks that extra bit of refinement we've experienced at the ultrahigh end. But an über-pro peloton machine with tubular wheels often costs \$10,000 or more, and this same Xenith frame and nontubular wheels (Xenith Team) costs \$6,600. Or go frame-only for \$3,100.—M.P.

\$7,900

WEIGHT	13.69 lb. (54cm)
SIZES	48, 51, 54 (tested), 56, 68, 61cm
FRAME	Ultrahigh-modulus carbon, alloy dropouts, replaceable derailleur hanger, BB30 bottom bracket
FORK	Ultrahigh-modulus carbon, 1.5- to 1.125-in. tapered steerer, stainless-steel dropout interface
COMPONENT HIGHLIGHTS	SRAM Red shift and brake levers, derailleurs, brakes, 11-23 cassette; FSA K-Force Lite BB30 crankset (53/39); Zipp 404 tubular wheels; Vittoria Corsa Evo CX tubular tires; 3T Rotundo LTD handlebar, ARX Team stem, Doric LTD seatpost; Fizik Arione CX saddle w/ carbon rails
INFO	jamisbikes.com

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