

A close-up photograph of a bicycle frame, focusing on the head tube, top tube, and down tube. The frame is dark grey with yellow and black graphics. Three callout boxes with white borders and thin white lines pointing to specific parts of the frame contain the words 'JAMIS', 'ICON', and 'ELITE' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The background is dark and out of focus.

JAMIS

A budget racer that puts performance up front

ICON

ELITE



PRICE
\$2,700
WEIGHT
18.1 LB
[54cm]

THE BELL ON THE SHOP door trills as the customer pushes it open. Inside, he's welcomed by a gravelly but friendly voice. That's Pete. He's the head mechanic and a great salesperson, and we've known each other for years. Pete has a good read on how to guide a potential buyer to the right bike, a quality I admire each time I sit at the counter with a coffee and watch him work.

"How's it going?" says Pete. "Can I help you with something?"

The customer is looking for a new bike, an upgrade from his 10-year-old Trek.

"Did you have a type in mind, any particular needs?"

A road race bike, something to ride on the Sunday Derby and in the Thursday night crits—our local weekly fast group rides.

"Cool. What's your budget?"

Three grand is the answer, and I think about what a sensible price that is—you get a helluva lot of bike for that these days.

Pete leads the customer to the back and homes in on the Jamis Icon Elite—interestingly, a bike I just finished testing and really enjoyed. It's a good choice by Pete: At \$2,700, the Icon

Elite is an aluminum copy of Jamis's top-of-the-range, carbon-fiber Xenith race bike. It shares the same angles and handling traits but has a bit of a crisper feel due to the slightly less-elastic ride quality of the aluminum tubes. It's equipped with an excellent-performing Shimano Ultegra mechanical drivetrain, a Ritchey alloy bar and stem, and American Classic Victory 30 tubeless-compatible wheels.

As they get set up for a quick test loop, Pete goes over the rest of the features. Keeping up with the trends, the Icon Elite uses 12mm thru-axes to secure both wheels, and has super-reliable Shimano flat-mount hydraulic disc brakes. In testing, I did note the one place where Jamis was behind: The bike ships with 23mm-wide Vittoria Rubino Pros. While you can swap to 25mm tires, that's the max I could clear in the bike's tight stays. It's a bit of an oversight, considering that disc brakes typically add to clearance. But since the Icon Elite is aimed mostly at road racing, and at least gets you comfortably into 25s, this is not a deal-breaker.

Pete gives instructions for the test loop: "Take a left out of the lot and head over toward Second Street." Mentally, I follow along, imagining how

the guy may experience the ride qualities I observed. "When you hit the hill, get on the gas a bit." He'll feel the Icon quickly accelerate, I think, a benefit of the stiff aluminum frame, stout chainstays, and solid connection between rear wheel and frame, thanks to the thru-axle. He'll also see that there's plenty of room to scootch around and get comfortable as he settles into the climb. The bike's fairly laid-back seat tube gets the rider farther over the rear wheel for good traction, and it makes the reach a bit longer, too.

"Over the top, you'll get a nice, five-minute descent with a hard sweeper halfway down and tight 180 at the bottom." In my testing, the Jamis held a line well in these types of corners—it's lenient and easy to control, unlike a stereotypically edgy race bike. And the carbon fork alleviates some of the aluminum's stiffer qualities, for a pleasant, albeit slightly rumbly ride.

The next time I see Pete, I find out he made the sale. I'm sure he will see the guy again for routine maintenance, but that will probably be it for a while. Unless he tries other types of cycling, that rider got exactly what he needed, and won't need another new bike for a long time.—MIKE YOZZELL



What You Need to Know

Aluminum race bike with a carbon fork and hydraulic disc brakes • Full Ultegra group, including the cranks • Tubeless-compatible aluminum wheels, but tire size is limited to 25mm widths in most cases due to frame clearance • Carbon seatpost helps add comfort to the ride [when you're seated]