

SCOTT CX COMP

CTC member Simon Fearon tests a £1,000 cyclo-cross bike



Cyclo-cross bikes used to be for carrying up muddy banks in the winter races of Northern Europe. These days many 'cross bikes are being marketed and used more as drop-bar hybrids – versatile bikes you can do a bit of almost anything on.

I wasn't bothered by the CX Comp's lack of rack mounts on the seatstays. The fun and fitness oriented rides I used it for lasted only a couple of hours, so I carried whatever I needed in my jersey pockets. There are mudguard mounts, so as well as an off-road bike or leisure bike, you could use this as a winter bike or a commuter. And, of course, you could race on it.

I normally ride a road bike, so was happy to ride something off-road that didn't handle like a bulky mountain bike. As a roadie's off-road bike it was just right: familiar enough but an enjoyable change. The worries I had about its weight compared to my road bike and that it wasn't a dedicated race bike both went away as I zipped through the wooded trails near my house. The bike handled the soft terrain and tarmac equally well. I loved it, and I'm sure I'll get a



cyclo-cross bike of some kind later this year.

I tested the 58cm XL size, which has a 58cm seat tube and a slightly shorter top tube (about 57cm). The stem had a 6 degree rise in it, and I like a flatter feel so I flipped it over. At 42cm wide the bar was just right, and wrapped with good, thick tape.

The Schwalbe tyres were a fair compromise for on- and off-road usage, and would be fine on drier trails and days. They weren't great in sloppy, muddy conditions. The cantilever brakes are wide-arm ones, so there's more braking leverage than there

is with, say, Tektro's Oryx brakes. Yet I was surprised by the lack of braking bite compared even to good quality dual-pivot sidepulls. If you're used to mountain bike disc brakes (and discs are now race-legal for cyclo-cross) you'll notice the difference even more.

Coming from a road bike, the 46/36 chainset was fine, even though the cassette is only a 12-25T. If you wanted much wider gears, you could retro-fit a mountain bike rear mech and cassette in this Shimano 9-speed set up.

You may want some protective tape to prevent

cables (especially the rear brake) rubbing the paint off the tubes. However, the rear brake cable is out of the way if you shoulder the bike.

NEED TO KNOW

Scott CX Comp

Price: £999

Contact:
scott-sports.com

Sizes available: XS-XL

Weight: 10kg (XL)

6061 aluminium with fittings for mudguards and two bottles. Carbon fork with aluminium steerer

Gearing: 18-speed Shimano Tiagra/105, with 46/36T crankset and 12-25T cassette.

Braking: Tektro CX

Wheels: 35-622 Schwalbe Black Jack CX tyres, Alex Race 28 rims, 32 spokes, Scott front and Tiagra rear hubs

Pros: Versatile. Good fun. Comfortable oversize bars.

Cons: Brakes and tyres could be better for UK conditions.

RIVALS



Focus Mares AX 1.0 Ultegra £1099

An extra £100 gets you a step up to Ultegra and a nicely finished frame. wiggles.co.uk



BeOne Chase £1099

Dutch designed 'cross bike with Shimano 105 throughout. A huge 62cm size is available; the Dutch are tall. chainreactioncycles.co.uk



Genesis Croix de Fer £1099

Reynolds 725 frame with rack eyes. Tiagra/105 gearing and mechanical disc brakes. genesishbikes.co.uk