

# Bastion Road Disc review

[Peter Stuart](#) 1 Mar 2017



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If any bike comes close to being a fantasy made real, it's the Bastion Road Disc.

Designed by a team of ex-automotive engineers, it ticks all the boxes for a modern road bike – wide tyre clearance, disc brakes, integrated cabling – but then goes much further.

The Bastion uses 3D-printed titanium lugs, filament-wound carbon tubes and a computer-optimised design offering bespoke geometry and stiffness levels tuned to your preference.

It's also a thing of beauty, and I was eager to see if the reality could live up to the dream.

## Filament-wound

Rather than being created in moulds using sheets of pre-preg carbon, Bastion's tubes are fabricated in Australia using a filament-winding process that offers a high level of influence over the bike's characteristics. It also creates the stunning finish of the carbon tubes.

'The distinctive weave has become part of our design DNA,' says Bastion founder Ben Schultz. 'This wasn't our intention. We'd planned to paint the tubing, but we're yet to have a customer who wants that.'



Holding the tubes together is the showpiece of the Bastion brand, thanks to the unique 3D printed titanium lugs (see The Detail box over the page).

These lugs look normal from the outside, but split them open and inside is a complex latticework of titanium, printed specifically (and asymmetrically) to preserve torsional stiffness while increasing compliance.

It enables Bastion to customise the frame in ways rarely seen in the bike industry.

## **Three-dimensional design**

Before ever seeing the Bastion in the flesh, I was invited to Velo Atelier, its UK distributor, where they mapped out my fit and riding requirements to design a bike to suit me.

It's worth pointing out that, while the bike was designed specifically for me, I don't get to keep it, so my opinions are not being unfairly influenced.

Following a bike fit and power test, we discussed what sort of bike I would most like to ride. I explained that I was a fair-weather racer and generally a lover of speed and stiffness, but that over the years I've been increasingly inclined towards comfort.



During the construction process, each Bastion frame is given an ‘Engineering Report’, which projects the frame onto a scatter diagram of riding and stiffness qualities of other frames for comparison.

Different options are given to the consumer – ‘Regular’, ‘Stiff’ or ‘Extra Stiff’. In material terms alone, my preference seemed to be ‘Regular’, but before construction began Schultz looked over the stats and disagreed.

A written report informed me, ‘Our simulation shows that with your geometry, you could achieve a higher torsional stiffness without compromising the ride comfort greatly by selecting “Stiff”.’

### **Good company**

It was refreshing to see geometry and material customisation working in tandem. The final product, when mapped out onto a scatter diagram, sat between a Cervélo R5, S-Works Tarmac and Focus Izalco Max – three frames I’m rather fond of, which boded well.

Having tested many different bikes with wild and wondrous claims, I've long since learned to temper my expectations, especially when a new brand claims to have reinvented the bike.

So having had every aspect of geometry and construction mapped with android-like accuracy, I approached my first ride with a certain amount of scepticism. The Bastion had a lot to prove.

And sure enough, the first time I went out on the Road Disc I felt I might never forgive Ben Schultz and his team. I was genuinely worried they had ruined all other bikes for me.

The Bastion had a ride quality that filled me with excitement and energy, impressing me in many different ways. It made me want to ride a lot, and to ride hard.



It absorbed bumps with the gracefulness of a titanium frame, while sprinting and descending with the stiffness of a carbon frame.

There was a complex balance between speed and comfort that is an

exceptionally rare quality  
in even the finest bikes.

Riding it, I began to notice a precisely engineered flex that filtered out the undesirable aspects the road, leaving intact the more pleasant resonance of the road surface.

## **Smooth sailing**

Whereas some bikes react to potholes like victims of a mugging, riding the Bastion was like having one's butler calmly inform you that a caller was at the door, who he believed to be a pothole, but that the whole matter had been quietly resolved without embarrassment or inconvenience to either party.

Once my initial infatuation had receded slightly, I looked for weak spots in the Bastion's defences.

At times the 23mm Vittoria Corsa tyres, when run with tubes at around 100psi, proved to be a little robust, almost jittery.

However, when I ran them tubeless the issue was easily resolved. It's worth noting there's room for 30mm tyres here too.



Also, some riders might want to upgrade the stiffness. When I went for a sprint at the top end of my power output, I noticed a small degree of flex, so riders who like to pump out the watts might want to go for the ‘Extra Stiff’ option.

In general, I found the power transfer more than adequate, and I wouldn’t have opted for any more stiffness for fear of undermining the ride quality and handling characteristics. And the handling is where the Bastion really shone.

On Schultz’s scatter diagram, the Bastion sat close to the S-Works Tarmac in terms of agility and handling, and I had to agree with that assessment in practice.

There's a banked descending corner on my usual circuit where normally I have to brake to get around. On the Bastion I felt confident to pedal hard through it, just as I had on the S-Works Tarmac.

The overall build does a fantastic job in complementing the strengths of the Bastion. I had to keep reminding myself that this is a disc brake bike, as it's exceptionally light at 7.5kg and far more agile than most disc-specific frames.

Partial credit has to go to DT Swiss's new ERC 1100 DiCut wheelset, which is light, rigid and aerodynamic. The wide profile allows for big tyres, and I would have happily thrown on a set of 30mm tyres and ventured onto gravel.

## **Modern classic**

Thanks to the technology involved, the Bastion feels modern and exciting, but it also somehow manages to feel classic.

By staying away from suspension systems and crazy tube shapes, it both looks elegant and has an almost nostalgic road feel – a bit like riding steel or titanium.



It's calculated and honed like a performance sports car, and yet I think it has a timeless aesthetic that means it won't ever look dated.

In truth, I was awed by this bike. I'm often asked how a bike that costs this much can be worth the money over a perfectly functional middle-market racer.

For me, the Bastion answers that question.

***Verdict:*** *Bastion's Road Disc is an impressive mix of automotive engineering, 3D printing and a whole lot of ambition in one highly desirable package.*

## Spec

<b>Bastion Road Disc</b>	
Frame	Filament-wound carbon with 3D printed titanium lugs
Groupset	Shimano Dura-Ace Di2 9070
Brakes	Shimano BR-RS805 hydraulic disc
Chainset	Shimano Dura-Ace Di2 9070
Cassette	Shimano Dura-Ace Di2 9070
Bars	3T Ergosum Team Stealth

Stem	3T Arx II Team Stealth
Seatpost	Bespoke
Wheels	DT Swiss ERC 1100 DiCut
Saddle	Brooks England Cambium C13
Weight	7.56kg (size 56cm)
Contact	<a href="http://velo-atelier.co.uk">velo-atelier.co.uk</a>