

Bicyclist Magazine reviews Co-Motion's Espresso

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Photos are not from the original review

Co-Motion Cycle's - Espresso

When Reynolds introduced 853 three years ago, the industry was abuzz with the possibilities this new tubing would offer. So why was everyone so excited? In a phrase: air-hardened. 853 is the first application of this top secret material in tubing for bicycles. Sure, the aerospace and automotive industries have had it for years, but the bicycle industry tends not to have much interest in aerospace materials when they come at an aerospace cost.

Co-Motion got its start 10 years ago handcrafting singles and tandems in Eugene, Oregon. In 1995, around the time Tange stopped offering the Prestige tubeset, Co-Motion turned to Reynolds as its exclusive supplier for tubing. In the past Reynolds, like Columbus, had devoted its inventory to complete tubesets, making it difficult for a builder to tune the ride of the bicycle based on size. With the advent of 853, Reynolds not only began offering different tube diameters, but also different wall thicknesses to allow builders the ability to tune the ride of a bicycle almost infinitely.

Builders, like the folks at Co-Motion, who vary tubing diameter and wall thickness to keep the stiffness of a bike uniform through the size range deserve a round of applause. Varying head tube angle and fork rack in order to keep trail constant throughout a size range shows an amazing attention to detail. I've criticized builders in the past who didn't do this. Perhaps a day will come when we expect builders to pay as much attention to their tubing choices as they relate to size as they do the geometry of a given size. Our compliments to Co-Motion for this attention to detail.

Stage Racing Geometry, American Style

A quick look at a Co-Motion spec sheet will quickly show that the company massages every aspect of geometry through the ranges of sizes. Seat tube angle is slackened on bigger bikes in response to the proportionally longer femur of tall riders. Bottom bracket height (27 centimeters on this bike) is raised for bigger bikes because Co-Motion expects that taller riders will use longer crank arms and want riders of its bikes to be able to enjoy the same lean angle in a turn, no matter how tall they are. My 59-centimeter test bike came with a fairly long 59-centimeter top tube.

Before receiving the Espresso, most of my awareness of Co-Motion had come from its reputation as a builder of fine tandems. My test bike came with a terrific blue to purple fade, made all the more trick because the fork blades and stem are painted to match. Tandems remain what Co-Motion is best known for - nearly 80 percent of its business comes from keeping couples together. Judging from beauty alone, its reputation is not undeserved, but it's time to set the record straight: These guys know how to build a rockin' single.

Cruise down a heavily crowned street no-handed and you'll notice just how stable this bike is. You needn't give it any heavy hip english in order to keep it pointed straight. Dive into a corner and with 5.6 centimeters of trail the bike tracks a perfect arc, in part, thanks to the Wound Up fork this bike is outfitted with. The Espresso was just a touch more resilient than the Arrowhead Phantom and found a nice and balance between the sort of stiffness you'd like your bike to have when you stand up to rip off a hard sprint and that extra touch of liveliness which makes a long ride such a gas.

At \$1135 for a frame with a Wound Up fork, the Espresso may be a fair chunk of change, but considering the workmanship that goes into it and the inclusion of the best carbon fork on the market (in my opinion), it starts to smell like a real deal. Frankly, I hadn't expected to like this bike so much.

Price: \$1135 frame and fork

Sizes: 50 to 6cm in 2cm increments, 55, 57, 59

Size Tested: 59cm (measured center to top of seat collar)

Weight: 19lb 8oz (11kg) as tested, 5lb 1oz (2.3kg) frame and fork

Components: Shimano Ultegra

Contact: Co-Motion (541) 342-4583

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Note: For current pricing and specifications, please refer to the [Espresso](#) page.

To request our printed catalog or correspond by email, click [here](#).