



# Bike test

## LOOK 675



Press-fit BB86 bottom bracket

### Stuart Clapp

French company Look is synonymous with the pro peloton. The 675 is its latest offering, sporting its new integrated A-Stem and is aimed at the sportive market.

What's interesting to note on the 675 is that the new A-Stem and Direct Drive system hasn't gone in at the very top end of the Look range. Instead it's inserted at a more affordable level within the sportive market — the market that appears to be steering bike brands into producing more compliant frames at the upper echelons.

The A-Stem runs in line with the top tube, giving the bike its unique profile. Made from machined 3D forged aluminium, the stem gives the option of -15° and +15° of rise adjustment. A neat half-moon spacer is housed in the handlebar clamp to adjust the reach. Aluminium stems and bars are popular in the pro peloton for their rigidity, and the stem is complemented by a set of 3T Ergonova alloy bars. The

integration continues with a seatpost clamp recessed into the top tube, keeping the line from seat cluster to head tube smooth.

### Go Direct

It's this integration that has allowed Look to apply its Direct Drive concept. The head tube, tapering from 1in to 1 1/8in, has a shortened pivot and does away with the need for headset spacers, giving the 675 the appearance of a 'slammed' front end. The old maxim that looks can be deceiving is pertinent, because this Look certainly is deceiving. It appears far racier than it really is.

A standard 86.5mm press-fit bottom bracket is integrated into the frame, giving a very neat finish. While simultaneously protecting its contents from the elements, the other bonus is that widening the frame in that area creates increased lateral stiffness for better power transition through the pedals.

A new manufacturing process of strengthening the three most relevant zones on the frame — bottom bracket, head tube and

seat cluster — before placing the carbon into the mould, has produced a frame that is stiff and strong. The effects are noticeable on the road, both in comfort and acceleration. The frame geometry gives the bike a tall front end, which provides greater comfort for long hours in the saddle (a Fizik Ardea to be specific). It's a very easy bike to live with, whether you've been riding a road bike for a lifetime or a lunchtime.

Adding to the bike's useability is the Shimano Ultegra Di2 groupset. Balancing functionality with a not-so-out-of-reach price tag, it marries the obedient but performance-driven frame perfectly. The 675 features integrated cable passages for electronic groupsets that allows cabling to run internally through the down tube. The battery mount is beside the BB on the underside of the down tube; an ideal location as the added weight of the battery adds to the heft of the chainset and BB. The compact chainset (50/34) is expected and indeed ideal for a bike of this genre, capable for a variety of parcours

whether attacking the cols or a Sunday club run.

There are options for different wheelsets for the 675, as well as groupsets. The test bike came with Mavic Cosmic Carbone SLR wheels that appeal on two counts: visually their black braking surface and bladed spokes look great, and aurally they make a terrific whizz when braking reminiscent of the flying saucer bearing down in *War of the Worlds*. This satisfying noise is from the Exalith braking surface that Mavic introduced to improve braking and handling. The spokes are Mavic's carbon R2R ('rim to rim') and although a little harsh at times and sometimes problematic in crosswinds, go some way towards explaining the 675's impeccable handling when cornering.

### The rail deal

You can find inspiration in the most unlikely places. If asked to sum up the Look 675 in one sentence, it would be a line from a wholly incongruous film that springs to mind. Because like Richard Gere's silver Lotus in *Pretty Women*, "This baby corners like it's on rails."

The bike arrived for the test at roughly the same time as the snow hit our shores.

To give a bike a thorough test, hours need to be clocked up. It's useful to try to replicate all types of riding such as hills and the odd signpost sprint. For the majority of the time spent on the bike, conditions were far from perfect, but the enjoyment was the same and this is a fact that speaks volumes. A bike that can perform in those conditions should perform when the roads are drier and the weather warmer. When it did brighten up, it didn't disappoint. The ride quality is sublime and with its supreme handling, it's a pleasure to ride



Neat wiring for Di2



Super-adjustable A-Stem

"It's a bike for anyone and everyone"

in all circumstances but one: crosswinds are a bugbear. Deep-section wheels are certainly in demand for their aesthetics as much as their speed-enhancing quality, but think objectively when choosing hoops. Going too deep impairs handling and adds weight. It would have been interesting to see just how differently the bike behaves with a box-section rim. But that's splitting hairs — the Look 675 is a great bike whose aesthetics will divide opinion.

One thing everyone will agree on after riding it is its ease of use: it's a bike for anyone and everyone. Although the 675 may not herald another industry landmark like the clipless pedal, this is another brilliant bike and is certain to become another brand-defining moment for Look.

### LOOK 675

Distributor	Fisher Outdoor www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk
Price	£3,799.99
Frame	Look HM monobloc
Fork	Look 675 carbon
Size range	XS-XL
Weight	8.15kg
Groupset	Shimano Ultegra Di2
Alterations	none
Wheels	Mavic Cosmic Carbone SLR
Bars	3T Ergonova
Stem	Look A-Stem
Seatpost	Look Carbone 27.2
Saddle	Fizik Ardea
Size tested	M

OVERALL RATING

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