

Prorides

The bikes of the peloton



Lightening the mood

Cadel Evans rode one to a muddy Giro stage win, but can the stiff, light BMC teammachine SLR01 lift the gloom for Marcel Wüst?

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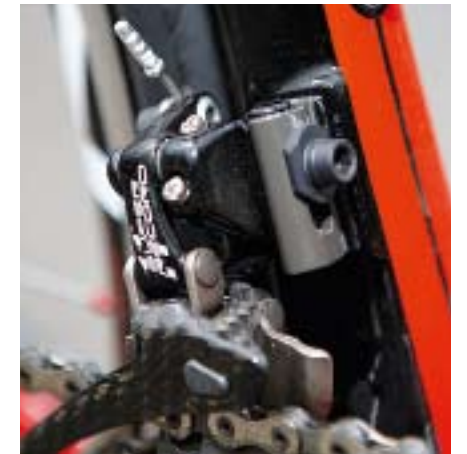
The chance to test the new BMC teammachine has had me excited for quite a while. Though I've been reviewing bikes for the last eight years, this is my first opportunity to ride a new BMC. I'd also been looking forward to tackling it around the sunny roads of Majorca, but plans had to change thanks to the ash cloud from that unpronounceable Icelandic volcano. Neither the bike nor the

photographer could make it out in time, so the decision was made for me to ride it in the cooler – and less sunny – climes of an area of Germany where I used to train as a pro.

These hills, not far from the famous Nürburgring circuit where Alfredo Binda claimed the first-ever world cycling champion title in 1927, are about 50km away from my house in Cologne. After Binda's



◀ Easton's clinchers plus Campagnolo's drivetrain equal smooth speed



▲ Another component that's as light as a feather - the 72g Super Record front derailleur

The seatpost has an oval shape and a reduced section towards the top, giving even more vertical flex and reducing vibration to a minimum. This was really welcome on my ride in the hills because last winter's harsh frost had caused damage to the surface of some of the smaller roads.

To keep warm, I went pretty fast up the hills and, despite the grey skies, really got into it. The Campagnolo Super Record group worked perfectly and I used all 22 gears within the first 15km – the steepest climb was right at the beginning of the ride. I could have taken a different route, sure, but when I trained here with my amateur and pro teams I used to do the 20 per cent-plus incline every time I rode the 'cannibal lap'. The 220km ride was so called because it ate everyone up toward the end, so taking the BMC in my car was probably a wise choice after all.

After shooting down the first bit of the descent – fortunately, the roads were dry and the rain stayed away – I got more and more comfortable with the teammachine's handling. The new BMC fork, with its great steering precision, gave me a secure feeling in every situation. Even when I was only using the front brake there was still no vibration, thanks to a pretty beefy cross-section at the top. Historically, BMC have used a standard Easton fork. Those times are over now, though the wheels, stem and handlebars still feature that signature. The carbon bars have a great shape and are held in a tight grip by Easton's



▶ Marcel is a fan of the BMC seatpost's innovative clamp-free cam-lock design

◀ Thanks to TCC engineering, the SLR01 can boast BMC's lightest ever iSC carbon frame



Specifications

- ▶ **FRAME:** BMC teammachine SLR01
- ▶ **GROUPSET:** Campagnolo Super Record
- ▶ **CRANKSET:** Campagnolo Super Record
- ▶ **CHAINRINGS:** 53/39
- ▶ **CASSETTE:** Campagnolo Super Record 11-speed, 12-25
- ▶ **WHEELS:** Easton EA90 SLX
- ▶ **TYRES:** Continental Grand Prix 4000S
- ▶ **STEM:** Easton EA90
- ▶ **HEADSET:** FSA
- ▶ **HANDLEBAR:** Easton EC90
- ▶ **SEATPOST:** BMC full carbon
- ▶ **SADDLE:** Selle Italia SLR XP
- ▶ **FORK:** BMC TTC full carbon
- ▶ **WEIGHT:** 6.2kg
- ▶ **PRICE:** £2,999.99, \$3,499 (frameset)
- ▶ **CONTACT:** 01293 574905 (UK), 800 819 4262 (US)
- ▶ **WEB:** www.bmc-racing.com

fantastic feat, the 'Ring also witnessed Rudi Altig and Gerrie Knetemann taking the same honours in 1966 and 1978 – the most recent of these achievements being in the year that I started riding bikes.

It felt funny to be packing up the bike and getting in the car to drive south. Since my early amateur days, I'd always cycled to the hills, tackled the 120km loop that includes about 35km of climbing and then ridden back home again afterwards. But for my first experience with the BMC, just the loop itself would do me fine. With temperatures below 10°C and grey, overcast skies to match, it wasn't quite what I'd been looking forward to.

I must admit that I've been a bit critical towards BMC frames in the past, and that's really just been because of their looks. The skeleton-like tubing around

▲ BMC's unusual looking teammachine SLR01 mixes comfort with lateral stiffness and light weight

the seatpost area and the really low connecting rear stays never won me over. But once I was clicked into the pedals and going I couldn't see the frame anyway, so why should I worry about it?

My first impression of the teammachine was a great feeling of combined lightness, lateral stiffness and the most fluid ride I've ever had. The way the bumps were smoothed out as I rode over them was unlike anything I'd ever experienced on a race bike. BMC's engineers have created something that will make any ride great.

WHEN I TRAINED HERE WITH MY PRO TEAMS I USED TO DO THE 20 PER CENT PLUS INCLINE EVERY TIME I RODE THE 220KM 'CANNIBAL LAP'

When I got going on the first steep climb, the fun was immediate and the lightness of the frame was impressive. Even when specified with 'standard' wheels – Easton EA90 SLX in the clincher rim version – the bike turned all my pedal power into speed. When you're used to riding high-profile carbon wheels with tubulars, going back to alloy clinchers can make a bike feel dull and slow, but this was definitely not the case with the teammachine.

The comfort, obviously created by BMC's Tuned Compliance Concept (TCC), was the most pleasing advance over previous bikes. The slender profile of the rear stays below the brake bridge looks quite similar to that on the Cervélo R3. This seems to be one of the secrets behind the enormous amount of vertical compliance that the SLR01 frame offers.



EA90 alloy stem, a very stiff set-up that I enjoyed in the sprints I did during the ride, though my day was more about the climbing.

The next hill was 5km long, with about 20 hairpin turns and a much lower percentage. I climbed in the saddle with my hands on the top of the bars and tried to find a rhythm. The seating position was well balanced and every time I got out of the saddle and moved my centre of gravity forward, the BMC responded nicely with immediate acceleration. Knowing what was still to come later in the ride, I finished the climb at a moderate pace, preparing myself for the second downhill. Here, I used the whole road where possible and got into some angles that were serious enough to bring the Continental tyres close to their limit. As we all know, adhesion has a nasty habit of disappearing very abruptly, so I eased up a bit towards the bottom. Going downhill on such bumpy roads

wasn't a problem as the SLR01 always left me feeling safe and in control – vitally important factors for everyone, not just the pros.

The bottom bracket proved to be very stiff, even with the threaded adaptor necessary to accommodate the Campagnolo crankset. It's true that this bike would be an even better performer if fitted with a BB30-specific drivetrain

▲ The exceptionally compliant frame and seatpost smooth out cobbles and winter-damaged roads



In Action

US national champ George Hincapie rides a special stars-and-stripes SLR01 and honoured both bike and jersey with strong rides at the Tour of California. He was highly active in 250km of breakaways in the final two road stages, earning him the award for most courageous rider on stage 6 and a close second place in the final stage sprint.

The Inside Track

Talking to **Markus Eggmann**
Brand Manager, BMC Racing



How important is the feedback of your pro team to BMC?

ME: It's very important! We design our race-series models to fulfil the needs of top-level professional cyclists and the BMC

Racing Team riders then help us to fine-tune the characteristics.

What's most significant about the SLR01?

ME: Definitely the new Tuned Compliance Concept (TCC), which optimises overall ride quality through carefully selected combinations of shapes and materials. By applying stepped profiles, specific carbon-fibre alignments and different material compositions in key areas, the SLR01's frame, fork and seatpost enable us to increase vertical compliance while maintaining high levels of lateral and torsional stiffness. On the road, TCC provides precise control, reduced rider fatigue, confidence-inspiring handling and efficient power transfer.

How did you get the idea for your unusual frame design?

ME: The form of the SLR01 frame reflects the functional goals of the TCC. Our engineers were challenged to build a frame that balanced exceptional vertical compliance with stiffness and light weight. The resulting tube shapes and cross-sections reflect their calculations, experience and outstanding design skills.

Will internal cable-routing be an option?

ME: While we always consider options for future development, a lighter external cable-routing helped us to achieve our weight targets for the design. Our mechanics also appreciate that the external cable-routing eases daily maintenance.

What's the advantage of your seatpost clamp?

ME: The SLR01 seatpost's angle-lock clamping mechanism complements its TCC shape and material combination for exceptional vertical compliance. Because the post doesn't need to resist the compression forces of a traditional external seat clamp, we can use less material along its length.

from SRAM or FSA. But if Cadel Evans can win an epic stage in the Giro on it with a storming uphill sprint just a few days after my ride, the power transfer must be alright!

Being linked to a team that tackles all the big cycling events worldwide gives manufacturers and sponsors great feedback on their product. If I was on the team, I'd congratulate them for creating the most comfortable frame I've ever ridden. This was definitely BMC's goal: to provide the smoothest possible ride for George Hincapie and his team-mates in the spring Classics. Perhaps BMC had me and my visit in mind... 🚴



What is certain is that the newly engineered seatpost is the icing on a very comfortable cake. As laboratory tests carried out in Germany have shown, it flexes more than any other, easing the impact on the rider's body and lower back significantly. It also has no seat clamp, so there's no need to worry about over-tightening it and damaging the frame. The neat locking mechanism is built into the seatpost itself and, with the twist of an Allen key, everything's locked

▲ The SLR01 provides a feeling of safety, even on fast descents

AS I GROVELLED UP THE LAST CLIMB, THE LIGHT WEIGHT, STIFFNESS AND UNREAL COMPLIANCE COULD NO LONGER HELP ME

into place using an in-built wedge. It's a simple and aesthetic solution.

As I grovelled up the eighth and last climb, the light weight, stiffness and unreal compliance that I'd benefited from so much all through the ride could no longer help me. Earlier in the day, I'd been hoping that I'd meet some other riders, but no one was braving the weather – a fact that I ended up being happy about as the cool temperatures and my ride's Liège-Bastogne-Liège-like profile sucked all of the energy out of me.

I was tired but happy, and when the heated front seat began to warm me up on the drive back to Cologne, I caught myself thinking that the teammachine might just be as comfortable as my car. Well, almost. 🇩🇪

Ridden by..
Grand tour multi-stage winner
Marcel Wüst



Born: Cologne, Germany 6/8/1967
Residence: Frechen, Germany; Majorca, Spain
Pro Career: 1989 – 2001
First Team: RMO
Career Highlights: 14 grand tour stage wins (1 Tour, 1 Giro, 12 Vuelta)

During his career as a top sprinter Marcel won stages in all three major tours. A bad crash in 2000 forced early retirement. He now works as a journalist and television pundit, as well as running cycling camps from his base in Majorca, *Casa Ciclista*. He stays enviably fit and pushes every test bike to its limits.