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Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

Van Nicholas Astraeus

At first glance it might look just like any other titanium bike out there, but the Dutch-designed Astraeus has a few surprises hidden – and not so hidden – under its shiny silver skin...

Dutch outfit Van Nicholas is known for its competitively priced titanium bikes, but at around two grand the new Astraeus sits at the top of its range, twice the price of the next cheapest road frame. And with a frame weighing 1560g it's no featherweight either. So what justifies the Astraeus's price? Quite a few things, it seems...

At first glance the Astraeus resembles Van Nicholas's other bikes – a well finished, neatly welded 3Al/2.5V frame – but on closer inspection you'll notice the differences. Drawing on work carried out at the Delft University of Technology, researching how to optimise frame and bottom bracket stiffness, Van Nicholas's designers have come up with a frame with diamond-shaped tubing. The H-shaped chainstay bridge, increasing stiffness in the bottom bracket area, is also a result of this. But the single biggest development is that the Astraeus represents the first use of hydroformed titanium in bikes. Long used in producing aluminium, this process uses dies and high-pressure fluid to form materials into shapes hard to achieve by other means.

The frame is seamless and double butted, and being titanium it won't corrode. So while it

is expensive, barring crashes the frame should outlast the owner.

You can spec Van Nicholas bikes with a wide variety of kit. Ours came with the company's own-branded stem and handlebars, which are light and well made, and while the welded titanium seatpost proved a bit fiddly to adjust, it looks great and perfectly complements the bike's look. Mavic's Cosmic Carbone SL wheels aren't the lightest around, but they will certainly pay dividends on fast, flat roads – similar to those in Holland where the bike was developed – where the full aerodynamic benefit of their deep sections come into play.

The Astraeus really flies out on the road where, matched with Reynolds' Ouzo Comp fork, it truly inspires confidence. Throwing it into corners, tackling technical descents, grabbing the brakes... nothing fazes this bike's handling. And that bottom bracket stiffness comes into play as it responds to hard efforts in

The Astraeus scores out on the road, where it inspires confidence

a way that we've previously only experienced in carbon fibre bikes. In fact, the Astraeus bridges the gap between titanium and carbon fibre in terms of stiffness more than any other titanium bike we've ridden. True, there are a lot of carbon bikes lighter than our 7.8kg test bike, but there's no denying the appeal that a stylish titanium bike has. **PLUS**



Full 2009 Dura-Ace and Mavic Cosmic Carbone: our Astraeus test bike is a full-on race machine

Strength-enhancing chainstay bridge



Hydroformed down-tube, diamond-shaped at the bottom bracket weld



King's highly rated NoThreadset

SPEC HIGHLIGHTS

Frame: **£1903/€2379**

www.vannicholas.com

GROUPSET Shimano Dura-Ace

WHEELS Mavic Cosmic Carbone SL

COMPONENTS Van Nicholas, Chris King, Fizik

ALSO AVAILABLE A wide range of components, forks, wheels and finishing kit is available from the Van Nicholas website



Van Nicholas Astraeus: stylish and confidence-inspiring

WHAT LIQUID CAN DO TO TITANIUM / AND WHAT IT CAN'T



This is the new Van Nicholas Astraeus frame. It is made from hydroformed 3AL/2.5V Titanium tubing.

Hydroforming is a process in which liquid is forced under high pressure into tubing to change its shape.

This will make it more rigid. And allows for slightly smaller gauges of metal to be used, reducing the overall weight of the frame.

With the right components and rider, this can result in a much faster ride.

And, we believe, a not unattractive bike.

But like every other Van Nicholas Titanium frame, no liquid will ever cause the Astraeus to rust.

This is why, together with complete faith in our designs, every Van Nicholas frame comes with a lifetime guarantee. To see our full range, go to **vannicholas.com** where you'll also be able to locate your nearest dealer.

Who may just, if you're really lucky, have an Astraeus you can see for real.



The Van Nicholas Astraeus, frame-only £1,904. Complete bike starting at £2,718.



Van Nicholas

THE TITANIUM BIKE COMPANY