

## VAN NICHOLAS



NO OF RIDES: 3

MILES COVERED: 88

HEIGHT (FT GAIN): 3,420

LONGEST RIDE: 33

HIGHLIGHT:  
FIRST TIME ON TITANIUM  
FOR THIS RACERLOW POINT:  
EURO TEST BIKE HAS  
BRAKES THE WRONG  
WAY ROUNDSERVICE / REPAIRS  
CARRIED OUT:  
NONEUPGRADES MADE:  
NONE

When discussing Titanium bikes amongst peers, the words 'comfortable', 'endurance' and 'expensive' always seem to crop up, but never 'race', 'fast' or 'cheap'. That is what makes the Van Nicholas Aquilo such an intriguing proposition. Not only is it a race orientated titanium frame, but it also comes in at a surprisingly low price point of 1500 euros. Sounds promising.

First things first; aesthetically the Aquilo is stunning in the flesh. Made from 3AL/2.5V Seamless Optiformed Titanium Tubing, the hand brushed finish, engraved head tube and general craftsmanship is sublime. The beauty of the frame is its simplicity: With the ever growing trend for funky, wind cheating shapes, it is refreshing to see such a sleek, classy frame with minimal graphics. Only the oversized BB shell gives a hint to its intended use in sprint finishes. A wolf in sheep's clothing? We hope so.

Start moving away from the frame and the Aquilo's racing intentions become more apparent. Deep 60mm FFWD F6R-C carbon/alloy wheels offer aero advantage whilst the flagship SRAM RED22 with 53/39 chainset keeps the overall weight down. Finishing kit is an alloy bar and stem provided by Van Nicholas' in-house brand VNT whilst the saddle is the popular Fizik Arione: A solid build kit for year-round riding and racing.

So first riding impressions? Sublime. The lack of road buzz and overall smoothness compared to other 'race bikes' is a welcome characteristic on rough British roads: Instead of fighting the

road surface, the Aquilo just glides over it. However, put the power down and its race pedigree shines through with the stiff BB shell not wasting a watt of energy. It's a fast bike, no doubt about it.

Over the next few months I will try get some longer rides in the saddle mixed with local races to see if the bike successfully combines the legendary comfort of titanium with the snappy, efficient requirements of a race bike: So far so good.

"We believe Titanium delivers a ride like no

other. Take the pinnacle of Van Nicholas racing bike design, the Astraeus. It retains all the strength, rigidity, crisp handling and sharp acceleration you would expect from a thoroughbred racer, but still delivers an exceptionally smooth ride." Van Nichols claim. Over the next couple of months, we'll see if we agree.

Please note Van Nichols offer a custom service, so the Aquilo is available in a number of different variations to suit your budget. There is a custom configurator on their website.

