



It's an impressive achievement to spec 105 on a bike at this price



Shimano 560 callipers cut costs, but do have cartridge pads

SENSA ROMAGNA SPECIAL

£839.99 ▶ Fast and light newcomer from Holland

The name may sound Italian, but the Sensa Romagna is Dutch. On the face of it, the £839.99 price tag makes the Sensa look pricey in this

company, but right now UK distributor Merlin is discounting this bike to £754.99.

Your money buys a beautifully finished hydroformed and double-butt aluminium frame – up there with the Boardman and Scott for showroom glitz with smooth welds and neat graphics. The stout head-tube, near box-section top-tube and chunky down-tube area promise a responsive and efficient ride.

For such a large frame the Sensa has a relatively short top-tube (57.5cm horizontally) but this is offset by a tiller-like 13cm stem on our 62cm test bike. The head-tube is a lofty 21cm.

WE SAY...

▲ **HIGHS** A fast and well equipped bike that's also surprisingly comfortable

▼ **LOWES** With no luggage-carrying capacity or wet weather protection, it'll be a little too single-minded for some

► **BUY IF...** You want to ride fast and stand out from the crowd

Any doubts about the geometry were dispelled in the first few miles. The long stem slows down the steering slightly at low speeds, but the faster you ride the more the Romagna likes it. Wind up the speed and the Sensa livens up without ever feeling nervous. The tall head-tube achieves a back-friendly riding position which suits sportives, while the Supra carbon fork keeps the front end tracking accurately, even when cornering hard on rough roads. Comfort is better than expected from such a thick-set frame, too.

Schwalbe's Lugano tyres aren't the lightest or grippiest, but they don't hold the bike back and we wouldn't change them until they wear out. Combined with Supra RA Comp wheels, they make for the one of the lightest wheelsets on test, spinning up to speed well.

Shifting is courtesy of Shimano 105. We'd be happy to see 105 on a bike

costing almost twice as much, and though a couple of corners have been cut by fitting Shimano 560 brake callipers and compact chainset, that's easy to forgive at this price. Switching between

chainrings was swift and reliable, and though the brakes weren't as positive as the Dolan's, they were the best of the rest.

Although 105 is a step up, the Sensa's single-minded approach won't appeal to

everyone. There are no mudguard or rack mounts, for example, though you could fit clip-on 'guards. If you're looking for a fast commuter you may have to look elsewhere, but if you want a quick sportive or race bike, the Sensa is fantastic value.

WORKSHOP VIEW...

Well assembled. Semi-integrated headset cups prevent damage to head-tube in the event of poor adjustment

VERDICT A great choice for racing or sportives – and outstanding value

CYCLING RATING ★★★★★

SPECIFICATION **WEIGHT** 9.72kg **FRAME** Double-butt aluminium **FORK** Carbon, alu steerer **GEARS** Shimano 105 **BRAKES** Shimano 560 **WHEELS** Supra **FINISHING KIT** Supra bar, stem, seatpost, San Marco Spid saddle, Schwalbe Lugano tyres