

Not so much of an all-rounder, but the Sensa is a great ride and fantastic value



# THE VERDICT

**WINNER** > **SENSA ROMAGNA** Stunning spec for the price

**W**hen you're spending three figures rather than four, a £100 price difference is significant. And as this test shows, spending an extra hundred quid doesn't always get you a better bike.

The Whistle Modoc is a case in point. On a silky smooth road surface the American bike's keen cornering and stiff frame shine through, but the Whistle is an unforgiving ride on the rough roads that are a common part of the British riding experience. There's nothing about its spec to justify its £100 plus price premium over the Boardman Race, which Halfords sells alongside it.

If you want a fast, fun machine with a budget-busting spec, the Sensa is it

Choosing a winner from the other five machines is less easy. The Dolan, Pinnacle and Scott are bikes you could happily ride all year round, or treat as second bikes for when your carbon wonder-machine is dodging showers in the shed.

There's something pleasingly old-fashioned about the Dolan Preffisio Apex. The horizontal top-tube and steep angles make this a classic roadman's winter bike. Despite fairly weighty wheels it feels surprisingly lively, and the SRAM Apex brakes are the best here. It's also the only bike with mudguards included in the price, and the flexibility of Dolan's online bike builder means you get exactly the bike you want.

However, the Pinnacle Dolomite Three and the UK-specific Scott S55 score over the Dolan with their greater comfort. For long days in the saddle and regular commuting, we'd take the Pinnacle. With

fat tyres, a thin seatpost and stable handling, it's a great long distance machine. The Scott feels a little racier, but the Pinnacle scores with Tiagra rather than Sora gears.

The Boardman Race and the Sensa Romagna are racier bikes, though the Boardman has more all-round appeal. With clearance for mudguards (but without rack mounts), it makes a great first serious road bike or a winter machine, and at £650 you can't argue with the value.

Although the new-to-the-UK Sensa is nominally the most expensive bike here, its British distributor Merlin Cycles tells us that the discounted price of £754.99 is going to stick around for some time. That makes it outstanding value. Yes, the Sensa Romagna is the most focused bike here, but if you want a fast, fun machine with a budget-busting spec, the Sensa is it.