



VITUS VITESSE EVO TEAM – REVIEW

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Words by **Mike Anderson**

The Vitus Vitesse Evo Team is the race bike of the Continental-level An Post-Chain Reaction cycling team. That means you're getting a frameset that's been proven at the highest level - and we do mean the highest level as An Post rode this at this year's Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne. The kit on the frame may change a bit (they swap out the FSA SL-K stem, bars and crankset for the K-Force models) but the core of the bike - the frame - is the exact same as used by the team.



📷 The Vitus Vitesse Evo Team is a highly-capable, race-ready all-rounder

Specification

Price: £2,999.99

Size tested: 54cm

Weight: 7.1kg

Website: [Vitus](#)

UK distributor: [Chain Reaction Cycles](#)

The frameset

What that means is that you don't have to worry too much about stiffness because unless you're putting out more watts than Josh Edmonson or Ryan Mullen (chances are you're not), then what's good enough for them is more than good enough for you. Or me, for that matter. It didn't stop me doing my level best to put as much stress on the frame as I could, but whether it was sprinting up short rises or climbing out of the saddle, I never felt like I was giving more than the bike could match.

The chunky BB386EVO bottom bracket is definitely a contributor to that, and that's one of the few good things about modern carbon BBs – although there are more standards than you can shake an incompatible set of bearings at – the size of them means they can take a lot of power with comparatively little extraneous movement. It's also worth pointing out that Chain Reaction do a frameset only option for £1,199.99, although it's not in the team colours. Claimed weight for the whole build is 7.2kg, but ours weighed in at 7.1kg which, for an off the shelf bike at this price, isn't that bad and the low weight manifests itself when climbing. With a few upgrades you could easily lose the 300g to get yourself down at that UCI weight limit.

In contrast to the bottom bracket, the seat and chainstays have been slimmed right down to make the back end of the bike as comfortable as possible. The tube profiles include a squared downtube to help maximise stiffness and cable routing is fully internal, as well as being electronic-ready should you want to upgrade.



📷 Internal cable routing keeps things neat and tidy

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Sometimes there can be an issue when meshing together different brands, but front shifting isn't compromised at all by the FSA/Shimano combination ”

The components

The groupset is a funny mix. Shifters, derailleurs, cassette and chain are Shimano Dura-Ace, while FSA provide their SL-K Light crankset and brakes. Gearing is 52-36t semi-compact at the front combined with an 11-25 cassette at the back which, while superb for flat riding, might catch a few less fit riders out on a day in the hills. However, it does underline this machine's racing DNA and the semi-compact should strike a sensible middle ground for riders in that mould, and the cassette can be easily changed if you want something bigger on the bag.

Now sometimes, there can be an issue when meshing up brands when it comes to the drivetrain. For example, Campagnolo shifts best when you pair a Campag chain and rings whereas, for example, I've paired a Chorus chain with Praxis rings in the past there's been a definite drop in the crispness of front shifting. If I had any worries about the FSA rings and the Dura-Ace chain prior to riding, they were quickly allayed as the system works perfectly. In fact, there was little difference if any to shifting with a full Dura-Ace 9000 setup. I was also similarly worried about the brakes. FSA's Gossamer brakes are a popular choice on mid to lower range bikes in preference to Shimano's own calipers, but braking power is definitely reduced. And while the SL-K brakes are by no means as good as Shimano's own calipers, the stopping power they provide is more than adequate. Part of the reason for this is that FSA have moved to a dual pivot design (just like most major brands) with the latest model of brakes, which improves power and modulation.

Shifting at the derailleurs is superb. As anyone who's ever used Dura-Ace can attest (and this goes for Campag Record/Super Record and SRAM Red 22 as well), when you're at the top of the groupset tree, whichever manufacturer you're choosing is producing something pretty special. I still think that the Dura-Ace front derailleur is the best around though, and shifting ever under load is remarkable. You don't even have to be choosy about where in your pedal stroke you shift any more, as no matter what you'll get a sure, powerful shift. If I was being really picky, I'd say that I still find Dura-Ace a little light at the levers. You push across and get a click, but feedback isn't always as positive as I'd like. But that's a personal preference anyway, and in all fairness, the fact that shifting takes minimal effort is a very good thing.



📷 The 52/36 chainset at the front combined with an 11-25 at the back provides a great range of gearing, but could catch newer riders out if off for a day in the hills

The Fulcrum Racing 3 wheels are by no means bottom of the line rims, but a bike with the all round quality of the Vitesse Evo deserves better. As with everything though, it's a game of compromises and if Vitus had specced a better set of race wheels as standard, you wouldn't be getting this bike for three grand. Besides, some riders would prefer to slot in their own race-day wheels. Plus, as I said, it's not like the Racing 3s are bad wheels, they're certainly not, they're relatively light at a claimed 1,555g and you could ride this bike for a very long time, in training and racing, with just them on and enjoy it an awful lot. The An Post team spec Vision's Metron 55s on the bike for racing, and with a set of those underneath this bike could seriously fly. Similarly we were a little disappointed with the tyres. While the spec on the Vitus website says Continental's Grand Sport tyres should be standard, the test bike was fitted with bog standard Conti UltraSports which I'd want to swap out straight away for something with a little more pedigree, especially if the weather were to turn bad as grip through corners would become paramount.

Finishing kit is all very nice. FSA's SL-K line might not have the glamour of K-

Force but it has almost all of the function for a small weight penalty. The aluminium stem is a solid choice, and the 42cm SL-K compact bars combine an 80mm reach with a sensible 125mm drop which bears in mind that we're not all as flexible as the pros, and don't have to spend our time stretched out over the frame. The tops have an aero shape, but not to the point where they're uncomfortable if, like me, you prefer climbing with your hands on the tops rather than the hoods.



📷 The Fulcrum Racing 3 wheels are a step up from entry-level clinchers but the bike deserves better, and the Conti Ultra Sport tyres are possibly the first change we'd make to the ride

The ride

The handlebar may have an aero flavour but it's not an aero road bike in the modern sense and if you're after something to make you go as quickly as possible on the flat then the Vitesse probably shouldn't be on your list. Obviously, no bike will make you fast unless you're bringing power to the table yourself, but if you're after marginal gains, then you won't get any aero trickery here. What you will get is a bike that's a very capable all-rounder, as comfortable climbing as it is on the flat, and as stable through corners as it is downhill.

Overall comfort was good. Not great, but good. You can tell it's a bike built with racing in mind because it's just not quite as forgiving as your average rider might want. When you're hammering along on a poor road surface, you'll definitely feel it, and although you can fit up to 25mm tyres, if a highly compliant ride is high on your shopping list, you'd be better off looking for something a little less race-ready. Fit-wise, there are no issues at all, and as long as you check the **geometry** and make sure you get the right frame size for you, there's nothing in particular that you need to be aware of.

The handling is one of the things I enjoyed most. It's responsive and quick, but there were never any moments where I was worried about stability. Sometimes when you get on a new bike you're inclined to feel tentative and take things easy for the first little while, but with this one I felt right at home straight away, and had no second thoughts about how the bike would react if I went barrelling downhill or started to push things through corners. In fact, conscious thoughts about stability didn't even come into it and it was only after the first few rides that I realised how well the bike had behaved itself from the very beginning.



📷 FSA's SL-K brakes work pretty well, though braking is still not on a par with a full Shimano Dura-Ace system

Conclusion

Race-ready is a good way to describe the Vitesse. Yes, you may want to tweak a few things before you took to the start line on it, but it's essentially a bike that's made to be ridden hard. Plus at three grand it's not a bad deal for the package. You'll find a lot of bigger manufacturers that are still spec'ing Ultegra around this price so getting almost all of a Dura-Ace groupset is good value for money. You can see why An Post use it, because while the Vitesse Evo may not specialise in one particular area (there are lighter bikes, more comfortable bikes, and more aero bikes) it'll do everything capably and if you haven't got the luxury of a WorldTour team with multiple machines for every occasion, this one will serve you well no matter what you ask of it.