

# Vitus Zenium SL Pro Disc £1,350

Ultegra and disc brakes at this price? It's true!



### About the bike

Vitus's widely lauded Zenium SL Pro has picked up disc brakes for 2016, and pulls off the pleasantly surprising trick of being on budget for this test while sporting a Shimano Ultegra groupset. Vitus claims the SL Pro's hydroformed aluminium frame is superlight, and that its endurance geometry offers a balanced ride that reduces fatigue. It even has a front bolt-thru axle to complement its 160mm rotor disc brakes, to eliminate flex and further enhance handling and braking performance. Can it really be all these things?



### SPEC

**FRAME**  
Triple-butted 6066 alloy frame, T700 carbon fork

**GROUPSET**  
Shimano Ultegra

**BRAKES**  
TRP Spyre mechanical disc, 160mm rotors

**CHAINSET**  
Shimano Ultegra 50/34

**CASSETTE**  
Shimano Ultegra 11-28

**BARS**  
Vitus compact 6061 alloy

**STEM**  
Vitus forged 6061 alloy

**SADDLE**  
Vitus

**SEATPOST**  
Vitus UD carbon

**WHEELS**  
Fulcrum Racing 5 Disc; bolt-thru axle front, QR rear

**TYRES**  
Continental Grand Sport Race 25c

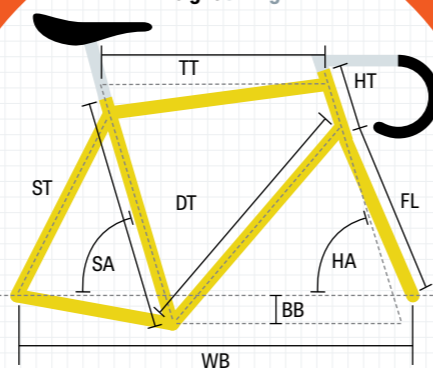
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### GEOMETRY

	Claimed	Measured	Head tube (HT)	145mm	145mm
Top tube (TT)	545mm	540mm	Head angle (HA)	73°	72.7°
Seat tube (ST)	500mm	490mm	Seat angle (SA)	73°	73.4°
Down tube (DT)		630mm	Wheelbase (WB)	979mm	979mm
Fork length (FL)		374mm	BB drop (BB)	70mm	72mm

Size tested 54  
Weight 8.12kg



### The frame

The Zenium SL Pro's hydroformed 6066 triple-butted alloy tubes feature an anodised finish that Vitus says is ultra-durable and weight-saving; we found it marks easily and we're not keen on the almost rubberised finish of the decals. While the welds are largely very tidy, the Vitus frame can't match the Specialized Allez for quality of finish and glorious tactility. A T700 high-modulus carbon fork

with integrated tapered headset is aimed at removing harshness from the front end and contributing to assured handling. Gear cabling is external and the seatstays remain unbraced (disc brakes remove the need for a bridge between them) to help dampen vibrations. Meanwhile, the base of the seat tube flares as it meets the bottom bracket, with the intention of adding lateral stiffness in this area to facilitate power transfer.

At first glance, the geometry looks to be a compromise between racy and endurance, which should keep fatigue to a minimum. And although the Continental Grand Sport Race tyres fitted to our test bike are 25c, Vitus claims there's clearance enough to run 28s. What remains to be seen is whether the frame can live up to the promise of the groupset, and if the steps taken to remove the natural harshness of aluminium have paid off. ➔



The TRP mechanical disc brakes are the only deviation from an otherwise all-Ultegra groupset

## Components

No, you're not seeing things, the Zenium SL Pro is running a full Shimano Ultegra 6800 groupset (with the exception of TRP's excellent mechanical disc brakes, identical to those found on the Giant Defy Advanced 2, and a KMC chain). This is thanks to the unique business model available to direct-sell bikes; Vitus is one of internet giant Chain Reaction's in-house brands. Unlike the Allez Comp – the other aluminium bike in this test – the Vitus has a carbon seatpost, though sticks with alloy for the stem and handlebars. The own-brand finishing kit is unexceptional, yet effective. The bars are swept back slightly, bringing the hoods 10mm closer than an equivalent compact road bar. This makes Vitus's choice of a 110mm stem (longer than usual on bikes this size) a smart move. At the business end, there's the ubiquitous 50/34, 11-28 gearing combination, which makes it perfect for tackling Britain's lumpy terrain.

## Wheels

Fulcrum's Racing 5 disc-specific wheels are secured by a 15mm bolt-thru axle at the front and a standard quick-release at the rear. The benefits of a bolt-thru axle are that it better resists the forces created by the disc brakes when compared to quick releases, and it should ensure a perfect fit of the disc rotor between the brake pads. The wheels and tyres weigh in at 3.12kg, 180g lighter than the Giant Defy's disc-equipped wheels (20g of this will be the difference between a 105 and Ultegra cassette) but still fairly chunky. The other bikes on test all roll on own-brand tyres but Vitus favours Continental Grand Sport Race rubber. It's a sensible choice, known to be good value for handling confidence and puncture resistance (although not quite to the level of Continental's top-end GP4000).

## The ride

As you might expect, the Zenium's Ultegra shifters, mechs and chainset are a harmonious combination; shifting is slick, quick and without fuss. Claims of a balanced ride, however, don't ring 100% true. The front end feels very stiff and provides stacks of feedback from the road, while the opposite is the case at the rear. Even with 25c tyres the harshness of the front end meant that we were constantly



changing hand position to relieve our wrists. The carbon seatpost is almost surplus to requirements as the Vitus saddle is so deeply padded it caused us to adjust our usual seat height by 5mm. Seats are always a matter of personal preference, but give us a thinner-padded but anatomically thought-out race saddle any day. The ride backs up the claims for the Zenium's geometry. Long chainstays (420mm) aren't suited to sprinting for signs, but over longer distances the Zenium's wheelbase is puts it somewhere between the relatively stately Giant and spritely Specialized. Strangely, our road rides caused our thoughts to deviate from tarmac. Of all the bikes here, the Vitus is the most naturally suited to what you might call 'all-road' riding. With some CX tyres on its alloy clinchers, it would make a relaxed gravel ride. In brief, we'd have settled for a 105 groupset and a slightly better frame. 🚲



## RATING

### FRAME

Harsh at the front end but with intelligent geometry

### COMPONENTS

Shimano Ultegra is an amazing spec at this price

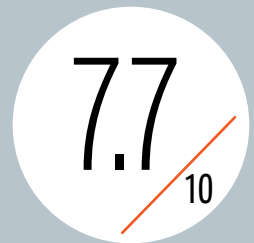
### WHEELS

Fulcrum Racing 5s are a dependable choice

### THE RIDE

Well mannered but neither especially zippy nor comfy,

## OVERALL



With some CX tyres on its alloy clinchers, it would make a relaxed gravel ride



The Zenium SL Pro Disc comes specced with 25mm tyres but has clearance to fit 28s

