

THE SOMMET PRO / IT'S FRUSTRATING ACCORDING TO ENDURO MAG



EnduroMag's Trev Worsey has just spend a few weeks on board our Sommet Pro. Based in the wilds of Scotland amid some of the best riding terrain that Europe has to offer Trev put the Sommet through it's basis day after day. When it came to handing it back he was left a little frustrated... in a good way!

"As I smash through another corner, hands death gripped onto the bars, grinning like a lunatic, and way out of my comfort zone - I know full well that the *Sommet PRO* I am riding is working on ways to go even faster". We first tested the Sommet back in August 2014 in its more basic VR form, if you want to know how it was designed you can find out here. We were impressed with the bike and knew it had potential, but wanted to know what would happen if it were built up with high end components?

Well, *Vitus's* ears must have been burning as the PRO model is just that, a no-nonsense race bike designed purely to win races (team rider Dan Wolfe will be taking on the EWS on his). So can a bike costing almost half as much as some of the competition cut it as a top end race bike - at the end of the testing we were left frustrated - read more to find out why.

As you may already know, Vitus is the in-house bike brand for *Chain Reaction Cycles*. Working with

the online mega store certainly brings some benefits to the consumer, Vitus has been able to specify some amazing components and keep the price down to just €3689.99 (\$4822.99), a big saving over some of its rivals. The Vitus Sommet PRO is part of the new movement of bikes that deliver kick-ass performance for a reasonable price.

The 2015 *Sommet* frame is a new bike from the ground up, manufactured from 6061-T6 aluminium. The build on the PRO model is all business – from the full *SRAM X1* drivetrain, to the *Mavic Crossmax Enduro LTD* Wheelset, there are no hidden gremlins. We like the *Nukeproof Warhead* 760mm Wide bar and Funn Strippa 45mm Stem, perhaps not the lightest, but the reach and sweep feel great. We know that the *RockShox Pike RCT3 Solo Air* 160mm forks works really well with the *RockShox Monarch Plus RC3 DebonAir* shock, offering high performance and good balance. The brakes are racers favorites – the ever popular *Shimano XT*'s, and with 180mm rotors front and back, deceleration is savage. A *Stealth Reverb* completes the race ready package.

From the moment you sit on the *Sommet* the mechanical wizardry is clear. The falling leverage rate to the sag point means the bike sinks into the sag point with almost no resistance. Once at the sag point the bike is very stable and the progressive rate helps the bike return quickly to a balanced position. This means that the bike is buttery smooth over small impacts, ramping up quickly on big square edged hits.

When climbing the *Sommet* is very composed, almost as swift as its shorter legged brother the *Escarpe*, demonstrating little pedal bob even when the shock platform is left fully open. The active suspension finds grip without wallowing – and when you hammer on the pedals the taught rear end and fast pick up on the *Mavic* wheels makes short technical climbs easy. With ample room in the top tube (600mm in the Medium frame), and a 74.5 degree seat tube angle, the riding position is comfortable and efficient. The *Sommet* is not the lightest of bikes, and lacks the immediacy of some of its top carbon competition (but is almost half the price), but it climbs well enough and is fun to ride on long tours. This is where the fast rolling *Mavic* tyres come into their own, skipping up fire road transfers with ease.



When it comes to the descents, like Chuck Norris in a bar fight – the Sommet PRO knows that it’s good! Point it, hold on and it will plough through anything – or get dynamic and the Vitus will pop and skip its way down the trail, racking up the air miles. It loves to be pushed into the turns and accelerates sharply out of corners. The balance of the bike is sublime and you can feel (and hear) the rear biting into the dirt on hard turns, while the stiff frame ensures that lines are held.

A lot of this precise and immediate feel is down to the excellent lightweight but stiff *Mavic Crossmax* wheelset, the rest is due to the balanced and effective suspension. The 66 degree head angle and the low centre of gravity give it some bite and the rear suspension stays silky smooth under hard braking, it’s an easy bike to enjoy. The *Shimano XT* brakes haul down the speed effectively and the *SRAM X1* drivetrain is sharp and reliable.

So why the frustration – well, as bikes get better and better it becomes increasingly difficult to be objective, and the Sommet PRO is annoyingly good. If you like throwing yourself down the roughest terrain it rides amazingly, it looks great and it’s a good price too! This is a brand new design and very well priced, COME ON....where are all the juicy problems? True, the rear *Mavic Crossmax Roam XL* is about as much use as a chocolate tea pot in the Scottish mud, but it’s a great tyre during the drier months. If you want to win races then rear grip is essential, but for drifting turns and having fun, the *Roam XL* is brilliant. We weighted the bike (with sealant, but without pedals) and it weighs in at a rugged 13.53kg (30.1 lbs) – not heavy by any means, however there are lighter bikes out there.

Bottom Line

The *Sommet PRO* is a truly great bike, fun to ride, undeniably fast and robust. The specification is lifted straight from a racers dream list, and the ride is accurate and engaging. It would have been nice to have seen it 500g lighter, especially considering the lightweight build, but it certainly pedals like a lighter bike. Until now the rule has always been simple, “you get what you pay for”, but things are changing.

If this fully loaded *Vitus Sommet PRO* missile retails for €3689.99 what the hell are we paying for when we buy a bike that costs twice as much?

Want to know more? Click the image below to view the complete #Vitusbikes SOMMET range



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