



There is something I need to get off my chest. I like watching *The Collectors* on ABC TV. There, I said it. For me the fascination is as much about the people as it is about their various collections, and cyclists really aren't any different. I know many cyclists who collect bikes and have more bikes than there are days in the week. In fact I have 'a friend' who possibly falls into this category. Like all good collectors we, I mean they, use all sorts of reasoning to acquire another toy. Track bikes, TT rigs and MTBs are specific bikes that have a purpose and are easy to justify, even an old salvaged wreck or a single speed can be justified for the purpose of a scooter to the shops or a ride with the kids. However, it is when we get into the area of micro specialties that we start to even doubt our own reasoning. A road bike for training, a road bike for racing and a light weight climber for hilly stuff might all seem reasonable to someone with collecting issues. But now it seems that bike manufacturers are trying to take away any semblance of justification we have for squeezing in the few extra artefacts by blurring the lines of speciality between road bikes.

My current test ride, the BMC RM01, is just such a bike. Only a few years ago a sub 7kg rig would be your hill climber, a stiff

ride would be your race bike and a comfy Euro style bike would be your training bike. Well tick, tick, tick, the BMC RM01 ticks all three boxes.

They say that any publicity is good publicity. The folks at BMC may just agree with this statement. In the short space of time they have been involved in pro team sponsorship the brand has certainly received plenty of airtime due to some stellar performances and then even more coverage when those performances came under increasing scrutiny. It does not seem to have affected BMC too badly though, as they are now a well respected brand and have used their ProTour involvement to craft some very fine bikes. Australia's Tour de France contender and recent World Champion Cadel Evans is on board BMC bikes now as leader of Team BMC and BMC have used Cadel's success and the success of their entire team to raise their bike profiles to the next level. Such is the depth of their race bike range that just last season up to four different models of BMC bikes were the rides of choice for various pro team members. This is a fact that I think speaks volumes for the quality of the BMC brand.

BMC are a Swiss brand, as such you could expect Swiss precision, quality and innovation with their bicycles. I mean let's

face it the Swiss gave us Swiss Army knives and Velcro, so they have set the bar pretty high. The designers at BMC integrated the now familiar skeleton seat tube arrangement into their frames, a factor that makes them a little different and enables them to stand out in a crowd. The RM01 (Race Machine 01) looks like the evolution of the previous year's SLX Race Master but in real terms it is probably closer to the SLR in design, function and performance. BMC make no bones about this being a bike aimed at racers and performance oriented cyclists, albeit at a lesser price than their flagship machines. An effective race bike it certainly is, but to pigeonhole it as a race bike only does it a disservice.

▯▯ An effective race bike it certainly is, but to pigeonhole it as a race bike only does it a disservice. ▯▯

# BMC RM01



closer to a typical 54cm, so check with your dealer for sizing before ordering. The head tube is also a little bit taller than some other race oriented bikes out there which allows you to remove all the spacers and get a pro look without needing weekly massages. As I pick it up to wheel it out of the garage, I am again taken aback by the lightness of this bike. I

for the lowered seat stays and the gusset between the top tube and seat tube. The tubes are however, on closer inspection, all shaped quite differently with varying numbers of facets being used to design in the ride qualities inherent in this bike.

It is like the Swiss Army knife of bikes

My first real outing on the RM01 was a 100k plus ride, and for a bike I had just thrown a leg over I was amazed at how easily we became acquainted. The main contact points are the first things you notice and even though I'm generally not a Selle Italia kind of guy, the SL saddle was quite a plush ride and was great for the duration of the test. I assume however that it may be a bit softer than some of their other saddles as it did appear to show signs of compression towards the end of the test. The Easton bars were super comfy when on the tops, but for me the drops just didn't suit. The ergo portion is fine but the transition between the ergo hand hold and the remainder of the bend is very harsh, so if your hands aren't suited to the particular ergo position the grip can be a bit awkward.

The RM01 handles changes of direction with precision, it tracks perfectly and the wheels spun up to speed nicely. When reaching the hills the RM01 was also quite pleasurable, the bike is light enough to give me the assistance I require when going uphill, and was sure footed on the descents.

My race outing the next week gave me the opportunity to see whether in fact this bike was worthy of the title Race Machine. Our criterium circuit has a section where sometimes the rear end can get a bit sketchy if the bike is not well balanced, but thankfully the RM01 stayed in contact with the bitumen through the entire corner, allowing confident accelerations on the exit. The addition of some special wheels for race day

know 6.9kgs is no longer uber-light but it is pretty darn good for a stock bike in this price range. BMC don't quote complete bike weight due to the vagaries of components and build specifications, but the frame weight for the RM01 is quoted as 1,019 grams for the frame only and 1,670 grams for the frame, fork, seatpost, headset and clamp.

On the road and a few quick dashes reveals the bike to be quick to respond. The forks are somewhat deceptive. The leading edge of the fork is straight, which usually leads to acute steering and some transfer of road vibration. Likewise the dropped seat stays, large, square chain stays and stiffened BB30 bottom bracket should make for a harsh ride. This is where the Tuned Compliance Concept (TCC) used in the manufacture of the frame and forks come into play. The stepped profile of the rear edge of the fork allows the full carbon fork to soak up the vibrations admirably. The TCC is also incorporated into the top of the seat stays using a different carbon layup to soften the ride. The seatpost is another interesting feature of this bike, BMC have used a square profile seatpost, also incorporating the TCC and a subtle stepping to the rear edge. Since a square profile can flex more than a cylindrical profile, this allows BMC to design in a bit more comfort without affecting the stiffness of the bottom end and is a departure from the disconcertingly thin seat stay that are fashionable on some models. The tube sizes of the RM01 are not huge, nor is the bottom bracket area a mass of carbon. This enables the RM01 to remain a somewhat conventional looking bike, save

A cursory look over the bike while getting the sizing right reveals a very well finished bike. The now extremely popular SRAM Red looks like it was colour matched to this machine and blends in seamlessly with the RM01's colour scheme. My wife commented it looked like a 'sweet ride', as it reminded her of a liquorice allsort. Yep, it's a laugh a minute in the Rox household.

The sizing on the RM01 is not quite typical. Getting a 53cm to test I assumed I would need a lot of seatpost and a longer stem, but its 550mm long top tube makes it

#### SPECIFICATIONS

Frame	BMC ISC Carbon Race
Fork	BMC Full Carbon with tapered steerer
Head Set	FSA 1-1/8" - 1-1/4" with Carbon cover.
Stem	Easton EA70
Handlebars	Easton EC70
Saddle	Selle Italia SL
Seat Post	BMC Carbon
Shift Levers	SRAM Red
Brakes	SRAM Force
F Derailleur	SRAM Red
R Derailleur	SRAM Red
Cassette	SRAM OG-1070 11-26
Chain	SRAM OG-1070
Crank	SRAM Red 53-39 BB30 172.5mm
Bottom Bracket	SRAM Red / BB30
Wheels	Easton EA70
Tyres	Continental Grand Prix 4000
Pedals	N/A
Weight	6.9 kg w/o pedals
Price	\$6,559.00
Distributor	Echelon Sports www.echelonssports.com.au



would lift both the performance and visual appeal of this bike to a whole new level.

A close look over the RM01 reveals that a few components have been down-speeded. The brake callipers are SRAM Force and the chain and cassette are 1070 series. These have allowed BMC to shave a few dollars off the price with only a minor weight penalty and virtually no performance loss. The Force brakes are almost on par with the Red version and are more than suitable for even the most discerning rider. The same can be said concerning the RM01's relationship with BMC's flagship, and more expensive, SLR. The RM01 uses a similar design but incorporates larger section seat stays for added stiffness with a slightly less complex carbon layup, a conventional seat clamp instead of the SLR's wedge arrangement and a few minor touches, for an almost negligible 100gm penalty but at a much more accessible price point.

For a bike that is aimed at racers it's a surprising package, the comfort does not come at the expense of responsiveness or extra weight. The RM01 is a great all rounder, and if I was forced to only own one bike this would certainly be on the short list and the money saved could be used to invest in some race wheels. Well maybe just one more bike for rainy days as the BMC is too nice to ride in the rain on dirty roads. 🚲

#### SUMMING UP

##### Quality

The finish of the RM01 is fantastic. The colour scheme is a nice adaptation on the red black and white theme. The predominantly SRAM Red components performed faultlessly as you would expect, and the down speeded items didn't detract from the overall. The BMC is a quality package, possibly only let down ever so slightly by the wheels.

##### Performance

The RM01 was as capable in training as it was in racing. Uphill or down, the handling was precise and dependable and it is light enough to not be a burden when ascending. Unlike many utility items that do lots but do nothing well, the RM01 is more than capable of doing whatever you ask.

##### Value

A few weeks ago a friend and I were discussing value propositions regarding bikes. He said to me that he thought \$6,500 was the mark where if you could get a reputable brand with top line components then you should be pretty satisfied. Well that is exactly where the RM01 lands. There are a few cheaper SRAM Red equipped bikes around, but the BMC brand still commands a bit of a premium. BMC are confident in the quality of their product, as they should be, and the price tag is a fair reflection of the brand and the quality.

##### Overall

If I had to downsize and own only one road bike the RM01 would definitely be at the top of the short list. It is like the Swiss Army knife of bikes. Whether you race "A" grade or just want a quality bike to train on, the RM01 won't disappoint. Whilst the RM01 would look fantastic leaning up against the wall of your favourite café it is essentially aimed at those who like to get the most out of their equipment and like to test it by pushing it and themselves to the limits. I can guarantee that the RM01 won't be the first one to give up.

