

BMC Teammachine SLR01 Review

By Tedd Jacobson, August 31, 2010

Since I started road biking in 1998, most bikes I've owned have been from the same company. Testing a bike from a different manufacturer was appealing to me. Even better, the test bike is made by BMC, known for its cutting edge technology and top of the line performance.



The model I tested was the BMC Teammachine SLR01 equipped with SRAM's Red groupo, Easton's EA90 SLX wheel set and EC90 handlebars and Selle Italia's SLR XP saddle. I even had a chance to race using the SLR01, more about that later.

One thing I really appreciated about the BMC Team machine SLR 01 which I have not seen on other bikes was the seat post. It was very easy to move up and down. When you have a proper seat height position it was extremely easy to lock in place. The seat post doesn't have a collar like other bikes. It has an internal mechanism that expands and contracts with a quick twist with an allen wrench.

I don't baby my bikes. I push them hard and expect a lot back. My first time out on the BMC SLR01 I practiced high speed corners criterium style. The "course" I picked was in my neighborhood. I hit the first corner about 20 mph and the SLR01 was stable and true so I decided to push the pace a little. I hit a number of corners at 30 mph plus and didn't feel any pushing or skipping. The SLR01 steered easily and smoothly. It wasn't twitchy and I didn't have to muscle it through the turns unlike other bikes I've ridden



By this time, I had an audience of the neighborhood kids. I was feeling good so I decided to throw in some sprints while cornering. Coming out of the corner, I punched it out of the saddle. It felt like the bike launched when I stood on the pedals. I rocked the bike laterally and it was rigid. All the power was distributed directly where it needed to be. I'm not a sprinter but felt like I could be one with the SLR01 under me!

My next test was a section of road where I could ride hard without a break to see how the SLR01 would time trial. I put my power meter on so I could compare the output with other bikes I ride when at my lactate threshold (LT). One thing I had noticed about the SLR01 was how thin the seat stays were. Therefore, I wondered if it was rigid enough. Well, once I hit the throttle, I was surprised how quickly the SLR01 responded. I was at 130% of my LT within seconds I had to back off numerous times to bring it into my LT zone. This was enlightenment for me. It was

easier to ride in my LT zone on the BMC Teammachine SLR01 than with my other bikes. This is a huge benefit to anyone, less energy spent at LT means more reserve and feeling better at the end. The SLR01 has excellent lateral rigidity.

Another day brought me to the climbing/descending portion of my test. The climb was 2.5 miles with grades of 5 - 15%. I started conservatively hoping to increase my speed as I went. I rode in and out of the saddle for extended periods of time. Just as it did on the flat roads, the SLR01 seemed to jump forward when I put more power into the pedals. It surged even more when I stood on the pedals. It seemed effortless as I stood and moved forward.

The SLR01 wasn't sluggish even on the steepest grade. I had a great ride to the top and felt really good. After I hit the top, I thought now the fun really starts. I headed down the way I went up. I started at about 20 mph and quickly increased into the high 40's with a max of 49 mph about half way down. I was really impressed with how the SLR01 descended. It seemed to take off on its own. I again have to describe the feel of the BMC road bike as stable, smooth, and effortless. There wasn't a bit of frame chatter or head tube shaking.



There was only one more test I could do with the BMC. I was generously offered the opportunity to race with the SLR01! The Rockerville Gold Rush was a 60 mile road race with over 4,000 feet of climbing. What was I thinking? A race! Everything I had put the SLR01 through was in the race course: short steep climbs, flat roads, long technical descents and long climbs. I felt great and was in the lead pack for the first 40 miles. The last 20 miles were brutal with a long climb and steep rollers the last 3 miles. I was cooked but the SLR01 didn't let me down. It responded efficiently to what power I could muster. I just didn't have legs and finished in 7th place (5 seconds back from 4th).

Overall, I would rate the BMC Teammachine SLR01 near the top of my list of bikes I have ridden. It might even be #1. The SLR01 can do everything you ask for in a high end bike by performing above average in all areas. It handled well at high speeds, cornered like an Indy car and was responsive while out of the saddle in climbs and sprints. It dampened road vibration. The SRAM Red component group works well with the SLR01.

The BMC Team Machine SLR 01 also has very distinctive look being primarily black with red accents. In addition to the cool color scheme, BMC has placed its logos in highly visible areas on the top tube, down tube and chain stays which often catch your eye. I would recommend this bike to anyone who wants a high end bike that is lightweight and super responsive. If you would like more information about the BMC Teammachine SLR01 road bike, visit www.bmc-racing.com.