

Ceepo KATANA ULTEGRA £3,250 velotechservices.co.uk

This surprise Kona favourite shows why it's earning its place in on the Queen Ka'ahumanu highway

F YOU'RE not familiar with Ceepo as a brand then you might be surprised that there were as many Ceepos at Kona last year as Cannondales. Riding the distinctive Katana makes their popularity perfectly understandable.

FRAME AND FORKS

The conventional fork syncs into a scoop on the very broad dropped down tube, which continues it's bulbous profile all the way down to the press fit bottom bracket, which it completely envelops. The chainstays are absolutely vast too, with TRP V brakes tucked underneath and a very neat optional metal C02 inflator bracket on the offside top. Vertical dropouts make wheel removal easier if you puncture too. Curved aero seatstays meet at a carbon coccyx over the top of the tyre with the resulting rectangular wishbone forming a smooth curve into the large volume flat topped top tube. A reversible aero seat post gives

conventional or tri style fast forward seat angles and there are bolted mounts for a bento box and down tube Di2 battery.

THE KIT

Our Ceepo came equipped with a conventional cable operated Ultegra shift set up upgraded with distinctive hollow armed Rotor cranks complete with elliptical Q rings. Otherwise it's definitely a functional rather than fancy spec. Mavic Aksium wheels and Continental Ultra Sport tyres are workaholic training partners but not really race quality. The Deda bars and stem are acceptable rather than aspirational too, but the extensions are fully position adjustable and the arm pads are decent quality. The compact 50/34 tooth chainrings and wide range 11-28 tooth rear block are optimised for beginners pins rather than pro rider's pistons too. It's a sign of just how light the Katana frame is that the bike is the lightest on test despite the cost effective rather than 'money no object' kit list though.



Big frame tubes can handle big power without flinching but they still ride smooth and stable on rough or windy roads.



Rotor's elliptical Q rings feel weird at first but they create a smooth power surge sensation once you're used to them.





The comfortable, confident tuck position means you won't be spending much time on the cheap, uncomfortable base bars.

THE RIDE

It's been a while since we've ridden a Ceepo and it's always interesting riding a bike that you've got no frame of reference for. However, the more we unsheathed the Katana the more it glinted brightly in the summer sun. The big deep main tubes and chainstays had us concerned about comfort levels but as the test miles added up we realised that just because it looked muscular, it doesn't hold a rigid body builder pose that'll rattle

your bones and knock you off your rhythm on rougher roads. You definitely need to pay attention to potholes to avoid a wallop, but as long as you're not on the bruisingly uncomfortable base bars it's a perfectly acceptable place to spend 112 miles and still feel okay for a marathon. Thankfully the easily balanced handling means you're rarely on the base bars anyway and while the tri bars are relatively simple, the overall bike position means you'll feel

relaxed and calm in a tuck. The bulged main tubes have no obvious wind characteristic either, staying stable and predictable in cross, head or tail winds and coping fine when we switched onto fatter deeper wheels to check its upgrade suitability.

While the complete bike price might seem steep for the spec, the frame should definitely be seen as a wise long term investment and you'll get similarly good returns if you dig deep to



KONA BIKES

*l*ou'll get good returns if you dig deep to invest all your power in it"

invest all your power in it too. Relatively heavy wheels mean it doesn't snap up to speed in a flash, but any wattage you can push from your legs or pull from your shoulders will go right to the road. Plus the cranks are certainly stiff and the smooth surge of wattage syncs well with the sustained charge character of the Katana. It all creates a bike that consistently delivered serious speed with a remarkably casual and composed character that's ideal for the long haul.

PROS	Smoothly balanced handling, wind stability and acceptable comfort.
	Serious power surge and speed sustain is confidently delivered.
CONS	Complete bike prices look high compared to the competition.
	Definitely deserves better wheels to make it really pop under power.
VERDICT	PERFORMANCE
5	Easy power surge and speed sustain on the road mean the performance sum easily outstrips the parts.