

SCHWINN PELOTON LTD

Schwinn has been using their own proprietary carbon fiber for a few years now and it seems that as each year passes they continue to refine the construction of the Peloton from top to bottom. Last year we featured the same machine that sported the eye-popping lime green color. I was comfortable with the choice, but colorways have a shelf life and Schwinn moved on to a rich, dark red accented with black for the 2008 model. I think Schwinn is always ahead of the visual curve combining the rich tone of red with black, and a hint of dark gold (nearly beige) is testament to that.

The big differences between the construction of the '08 and '07 is that Schwinn stepped up to high modulus carbon fiber, which dropped the frame weight more than 100 grams. They also axed the purely cosmetic 12k top weave which also aided in the drop of weight. Overall it's similar to the previous incarnation including the fork.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

As we all do when we look at a new machine, we pick up the bike and feel for weight. We are all guilty of it, and let's face it no matter how we try not to be, we are all weight-weenies! The Peloton LTD can size up to any machine in its class and even those in the higher price tag level. Sitting at just 14.6 pounds this complete rig is clearly an excellent value for the weight, but it's not just framework on a complete bike. Over the past couple of years Schwinn has snuck up on everyone and have provided some of the nicest specification you will see on high \$3,000, low \$4,000 bikes. The 2008 model is about \$300 more than the 2007, but for the three extra "hundies" you get a lot of bike. The aforementioned high modulus

carbon fiber design is a major player, but stepping up this year to SRAM Force is a major advancement. Last season it was a mix of stuff with a lower-level crank. Ritchey dots the landscape in the stem, bar, and post areas and the Arione is always a nice choice for sitting. Another improvement is the upgrade to the Mavic R-System wheels rather than the Ksyrium ES's from 2007. There is a fair amount of weight savings here too with the R-System wheels tipping the scales at about 1355 grams. Now you see that the \$300 price hike is nothing when you consider all of this.

The geometry of the Peloton LTD breeds comfort. Steer away from the figurative regarding the word comfort. This is not a comfort bike as we have been programmed to think, but instead more of a relaxed geometry that allows for more upright positioning. It's in between the extreme sloping we have seen and the more traditional that is the norm. It's a good fit that would suit any type of rider. I could see both the weekend warrior and frequent racer using this bike.

The weight is the first thing you notice on the Schwinn. From the get-go the power transfer was immediate to the rear. No slop or resistance anywhere to be felt. On the flat, straight line it was a smooth accelerator. The comfortable geometry was certainly a plus in getting things up to speed. No twitching around in any position whether on the hoods, tops or in the drops. Aiding in the clean, quickness was the SRAM Force gruppo. I still don't understand why people write that they find it hard to get used to the "Double-Tap" technology. I think it's a cop-out and a search for something wrong or more words! I haven't used the SRAM group in a while, but I had no issue with operating it even after the long layoff. Where you feel the solidity of the Peloton is when you start hitting some pitches. Again, overall weight is crucial for muscling up short grades, but the

ANGLES

Measurements in centimeters [TT= top tube; SA= seat angle; HA= head angle]

SIZE	S	M	L
TT	52.8	54.6	57.0
SA	74°	73.5°	73°
HA	72°	72.5°	73°

stiffness is crucial too. This bike is stiff but not bone-breakingly so. It responded to even the most feeble attempts of mine when trying to crest a hill in the big ring and a funky gear combination in the rear. Longer climbs are where the Peloton LTD shines. Sit in and find a comfortable combination and the Schwinn will really give you a good show. Weight, geometry and specification are what's on parade here, in those moments when it's just you and the road ahead. All you want is to sit comfortable with a position that will allow you to progress without numbness. The Ritchey bars, as always, were stellar and when combined with the clever, ergonomic design of the Force lever, you could easily sit on the hoods all day.

Coming down was fast, yet safe. Stopping power is good with Force and the sticky Ultrero Schwalbe's gave you the assurance that no matter the variation in the road surface, that the rubber would "correct" itself if necessary. Again, the geometry was a plus in descending. More upright gives you a better view of the road, and the stiffness never caused any nervous moments, but instead gave me the confidence to dive into corners a bit more aggressively.

LAST CALL

It shouldn't surprise me anymore that Schwinn continues to put out top-level bikes at insanely affordable prices. They continue to specify top-shelf parts, keep the weight low overall and provide the latest in frame technology. All of this makes for a bike that can rival just about anything, especially in this price range. *R*

THE LOW DOWN

Price: \$4300
 Weight: 14.6 lbs. (M)
 Sizes: S, M, L
 Color(s): Red with black
 Information: schwinnbikes.com

Chassis
 Frame: 'N' Litened high modulus carbon fiber
 Fork: Black label monocoque carbon fiber

Wheelset
 Wheels: Mavic R-Sys
 Tires: Schwalbe Ultrero

Cockpit
 Brake levers/shifters: SRAM Force
 Brakes: SRAM Force
 Handlebar: Ritchey WCS carbon
 Stem: Ritchey WCS Axis
 Headset: Ritchey WCS integrated
 Saddle: fi'zi:k Arione
 Seatpost: Ritchey WCS carbon

Drivetrain
 Crankset: SRAM Force
 Bottom Bracket: SRAM
 Cassette: SRAM
 Chain: Wippermann
 Derailleurs (F/R): SRAM Force

