



IBIS TITANIUM TOUCHÉ

If I Were a Rich Man...

BY JOE KITA

This tandem costs \$8,275. There, now you can laugh and turn the page. After all, that's probably more than you paid for your first car, or nearly as much as the down payment on your home.

Yes, this rig is pricey. But it's to mainstream tandems what a luxury car is to family sedans. If it had a hood you could safely balance a pyramid of champagne glasses on it—so smooth is the ride. If it had a door you could slam it with confidence—so exacting is the craftsmanship. And it wouldn't be farfetched to photograph it atop a Utah butte—so light and nimble does it feel.

Frankly, this is the fastest, lightest, nicest, most comfortable 700C-wheel tandem I've ridden. But I guess it should be when the price is 8 grand. So let's not gush.

There are only 4 makers of titanium production tandems, the others being Santana, Co-Motion, and Serotta. As Ibis' Scot Nicol explains, such properties as strength, durability, lightness, and that magic "compliant stiffness" make titanium a perfect tandem material, if you can develop the right tubing. This he has done with Ti fabricator Ancotech, creating a custom-drawn 7.1-pound direct-lateral frame with a butted down tube and tapered, ovalized stays.



- Lighter than some singles
- Less fatiguing ride
- Delightful details

Distributed by: Ibis Cycles
Box 275
Sebastopol, CA 95473
707/829-5615

Country of Origin: U.S.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8,275 as tested; \$6,015 for frameset, including titanium stems

Sizes Available: 53x47, 58x52 (tested), 63x57 cm, and custom (center to top of seat tube)

Weight: Frame, 7.1 lbs.; fork, 1.7 lbs.; complete bike, 33.3 lbs.

Frame: Welded Ibis/Ancotech custom-drawn 3Al/2.5V straight-gauge titanium tubing, butted down tube, tapered and ovalized stays, 6Al/4V rear dropouts; Tange chrome-moly steel fork

Wheelbase _____ 69 in.; 175.3 cm

Seat tube _____ 21.5x19.5 in.; 54.5x49.5 cm

(center to top of top tube)

Top tube _____ 21.9x27.4 in./55.5x69.5 cm

(actual); 22.4x28 in./56.9x71.1 cm (effective)

Head angle _____ 73 degrees

Seat angle _____ 73 degrees

Chainstays _____ 17.5 in.; 44.5 cm

Bottom bracket height _____ 11.25 in.; 28.6 cm

Fork rake _____ 2.19 in.; 5.59 cm

Trail _____ 1.8 in.; 4.57 cm

Component Highlights: Shimano XTR derailleurs and brakes, 12-32T 8-speed cassette, Ultegra STI brake/shift levers with Third Dimension lever for operating triple chainring, Dura-Ace pedals; Top Line crankset with 172.5/170-mm arms; Specialized alloy chainrings (54/44/32T, 42T synchronizing); Chris King headset; Ibis Raw titanium stems; Scott Drop LF handlebars; Mavic Module 3D Argent rims with 40 WheelSmith double-butted 14/16/14-gauge spokes; Hugi Compact hubs; Specialized Transition A 700x26C tires; Specialized ProLong titanium-rail saddles and Syncros seatposts.

It's astounding how light this tandem is. At 33.3 pounds it can be carried up the cellar stairs or loaded into a van unassisted. And whether it's from this lightness, the design, or the way the metal absorbs road shock, my stoker and I were less fatigued after long rides.

For comparison, we also tried a similarly equipped \$3,285 steel Touché (\$1,865 frameset). The Ti version was 8 pounds lighter but flexed more from side to side. It required more coordination to get out of the saddle and hammer, which in the long run will make you and your partner better together. (Ibis also builds a 26-inch-wheel Ti frame with a stiffening "uptube" from the front bottom bracket to the rear seat cluster. It costs \$7,515, or \$9,775 fully dressed.)

When you pay this much, you expect some special touches. On the Touché you get them with the Hand Job (a tiny fist that holds the rear brake cable), a planned Toe Jam (a foot with a big toe that serves as a pump peg), Raw titanium stems, and KGB dropouts CNC-machined from 6Al/4V Ti to stiffen the rear end.

Hung with the "deluxe road package," the Touché comes very close to being the ultimate tandem—although at a price that might keep it in your dreams. ■



- Outtasight price

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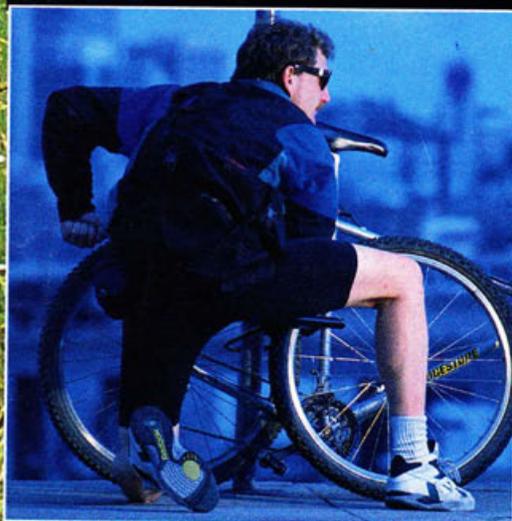
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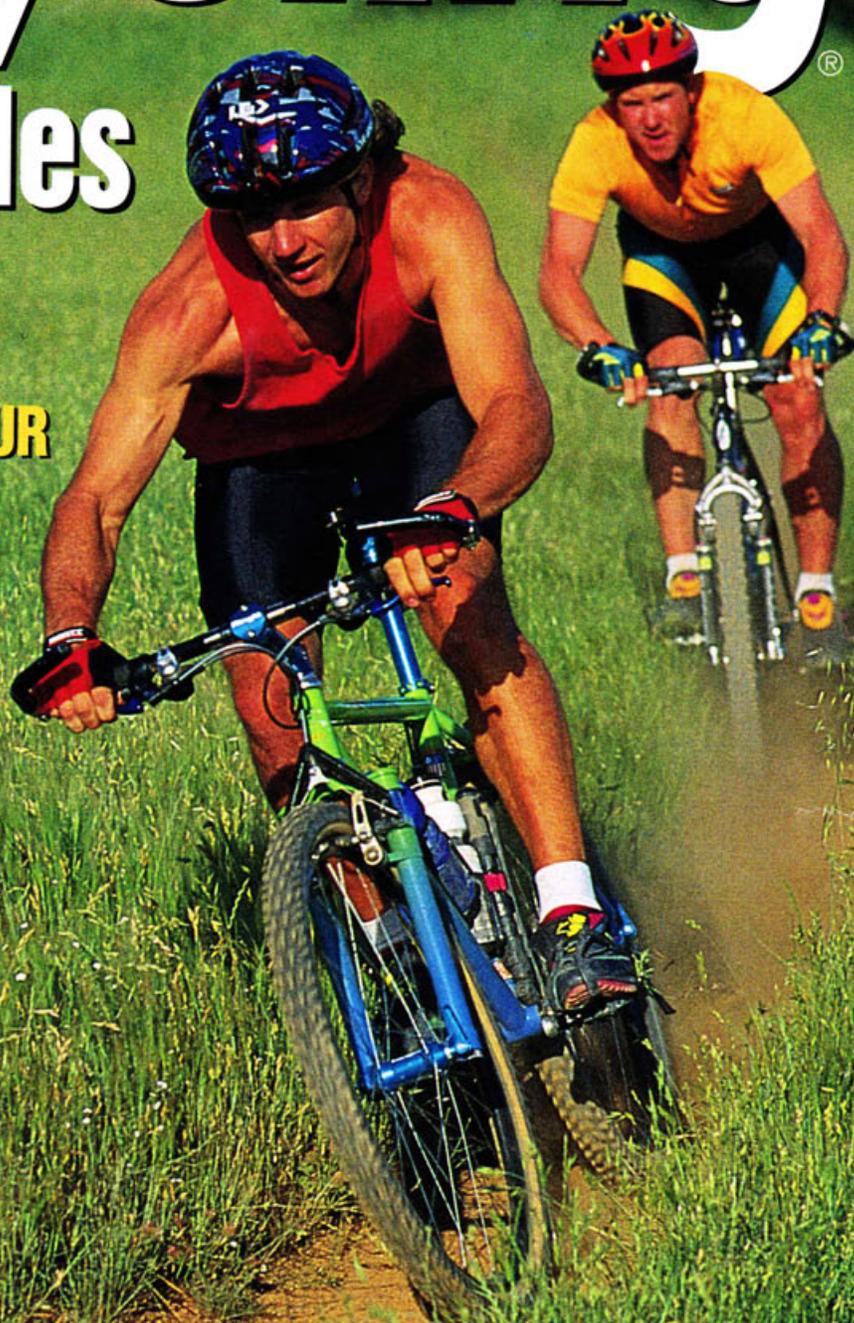
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