



SANTA CRUZ STIGMATA CC

Frame price **£1999** Distance ridden **700km**

CURRENT WEIGHT 7.945 kg (17.5lbs) **FRAME** Santa Cruz CC full carbon disc, PF30, 142x12mm Maxle Lite axle **FORK** Helium SL, 60T-40T-30T HM unidirectional carbon **GEARS** SRAM Force CX1 40T cranks, shifter, mech, chain and PG 1170 11-36T cassette **BRAKES** SRAM Force CX1 with 160/140mm rotors **WHEELS** Easton EC90 SL Disc with Panaracer Comet Hardpack 700x38mm tyres **FINISHING KIT** Zipp Service Course SL 70 Aero 440mm bars, Zipp Service Course SL 110mm stem and Zipp Service Course 27.2mm seatpost. SDG Circuit MTN Carbon saddle, Shimano XT SPD pedals, Zipp Service Course Cyclocross bar tape with Supacaz end plugs



Whether it's an album, a new favourite jacket or a fresh ride, sometimes something arrives that suddenly sours all the other

options you could reach for. That's precisely what's happened in my first few months of life with Santa Cruz's Stigmata CC.

At just under £2k for frame and fork it should be pretty damn special. And just as well – a paint job like this (there's also a tamer black/white option) is likely to get badly bullied if it can't fight its corner. Even among a regular stream of very tasty test bikes, the Stigmata has always been first off the hook at the slightest excuse for the past few months.

At under a kilo for the frame and only a fraction over the UCI minimum road race limit at 6.99kg (15.4lbs) in 'Stig SL' guise – with brutally stiff DT Swiss RC28 carbon wheels and Maxxis tubeless tyres – it's set or equalled all my local hillclimb Strava PBs.

As 'Fat Stig' [1], with 38mm Panaracer semi-slicks that are nearer 41mm on the Easton EC90

SL disc wheels at 25-30psi, it'll happily blast up and down red grade mountain bike trails or float across field-edge bridlepaths like a hovercraft. Then there's 'Zipp Stig' [2], with Zipp's new uber-fast 28mm tyres on Firecrest 202 wheels, which cruises like a limousine in a pack of aero road bikes before punching clear as soon as we hit the steepes.

In short, it rips a grin across my face and keeps it there from the first muscular surge through the SRAM carbon cranks to the final feedback-rich squeeze of the disc brakes, however grim the weather or whatever company or parcours are in store.

Even the frame set-up process was bliss thanks to internally routed brakes and easy cable access under the PF 30 bottom bracket. It comes with open or closed inserts for Di2 or double-chainring running, but using a single ring set-up for multipurpose use has been a revelation. With an 11-28t block, the 40t chainring will spin out at around 55kph but attack a prolonged 1-in-4 without ever being on the ropes. With an 11-36 and fat tyres, it'll hold an efficient

HIGHS
Lightweight, versatile and fun, whatever the course or conditions

LOWS
Bright orange paint job might be too loud for some

TESTER'S CHOICE



SCHWALBE AIRMAX PRO PRESSURE GAUGE
£11.99

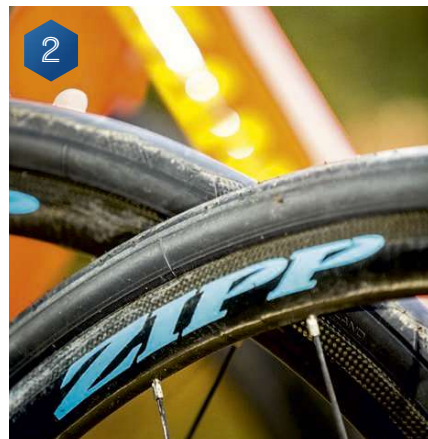
Hyper-accurate tyre pressures are crucial to finding the perfect balance between traction and speed for 'cross racing and my trusty Schwalbe digital gauge is far more accurate than most track pump dials. It's still on its original battery after years of knocking round the workshop too.



SIDI DRAKO CARBON SRS VERNICE
£300

These Drako Carbons are perfect for the Stigmata. The carbon sole and twin dial closures are phenomenally stiff and secure for smashing the steepest road climbs but brass cleat fixtures and aggressive tread make them filthy CX course-compatible.

spin up a heavy cyclo-cross climb without straining your knees. The lack of ring, front mech and left-hand shifter saves weight and makes the Stigmata look super-clean too, and overall it's easily one of the favourite bikes I've ever ridden, with plenty of performance tweaking still planned.



My upgrades

Wheels Easton EC90 SL Disc £2299.99
Tyres Panaracer Comet Hardpack 700x38mm £59.98

Wheels Zipp 202 Firecrest Clincher disc £1825
Tyres Zipp Service Course 700x28mm tyres, and tubes £98

Total spend **£4282.97**