



Re:Venge

Pro triathlete Sam Betten gives us the lowdown on his new Specialized S-Works Venge.

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Specialized first released the Venge, their flagship aero road bike, in 2012. The bike's origins stretch back to 2006 with Specialized looking to create a bike that fit between its Tarmac and Shiv models. Essentially, the idea was to fuse the aerodynamic advantages of their innovative time trial bike, the Shiv, with the stiffness and lightweight nature

of the hugely successful Tarmac. The Venge is a pure racing machine with responsiveness and power delivery second to none. It's a bike that leaps forward when you put the foot down and corners like it's on rails.

In recent years, Specialized has made a big push into the sport of triathlon. No doubt you would have seen the 'Test

the Best' program, where you can jump onboard one of these amazing bikes and see what all the hype is about for yourself. Their commitment to triathlon is for me what really separates Specialized from a lot of other manufacturers who only see the sport as a secondary market.

The bike (off the shelf)

The 2013 S-Works Venge is

really something of beauty. The matt black paint job is similar to that of the \$18,000 McLaren S-Works Venge, which is quite possibly one of the most exclusive bikes available. The attention to detail is something else, with little touches such as the custom S-Works logo on the bottle cage bolts proving that the devil is, in fact, in the detail. To be honest, you expect these

SPECS

Frame/Fork: Specialized S-Works Venge (61cm/XL)

Wheels: Roval Rapide CLX 60

Cassette: Shimano 11 Speed 11/25

Components: Shimano 11 Speed Dura-Ace

Cranks: Specialized S-Works FACT Carbon

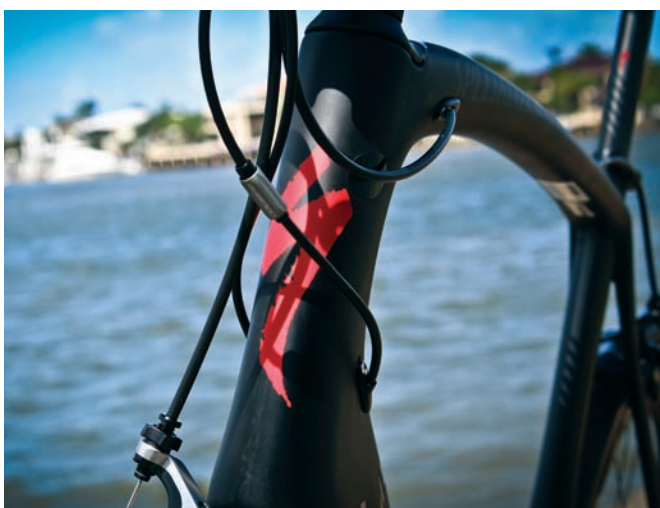
Seat: Specialized S-Works Romin Pro

Pedals: Look Keo Carbon Blade

Tyres: Specialized S-Works Turbo 24

RRP: \$9,999





kind of special touches on a bike at this price point, although it's seldom seen with other manufacturers.

Many bike companies have now added an aero road bike to their range, but few take the time to produce their own components so that everything works in harmony. Specialized has built the S-Works Venge from the group up with their own stem, bars, saddle and bar tape, not to mention the new Roval Rapide CLX 60 wheel set. This new carbon clincher wheel complements the S-Works Venge perfectly both in design and function. The Roval

The added specs (little luxuries)

Usually when I receive a new bike, there are little bits I like to change and customise to better suit how I ride. With the Venge, the first thing I changed were the crank arms, which I swapped from the standard 175 millimetre to 172.5 millimetre. I like to ride on smaller crank arms as I find that it allows me to spin the legs more, which is extremely helpful when it comes to racing on the ITU circuit. It's essential that when I finish the cycle leg of a race, I have the leg speed to start running fast right from the get-go, and the smaller crank length allows me

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Rapide wheels are both painted in the same of shade of matt black as the S-Works Venge frame. Add this to the rest of the Specialized matching matt black components that make up this bike and you have got quite possibly one of the best-looking bikes on the market. Perfect if you're a rider who appreciates a bike that not only rides well but also has the looks to boot. Subtle red sections help to break up the black matt finish so it's not overpowering.

The new 11-speed Shimano Dura-Ace provides silky smooth shifting and dare I say even better shifting than the 10 speed Di2 group set that is currently installed on my second bike, the Specialized S-Works Shiv. Shimano has shown great innovation with the shifting between the big and small chain rings now almost instant. It's a big upgrade from the previous 10-speed Shimano Dura-Ace I was riding on last year.

to do that. I have also added the new Specialized Comp wireless cycling computer, which I use a lot to ensure that my cadence is sitting around 90-to-100 rpm while racing. To allow me to hydrate on the move, there is also a Specialized carbon bottle cage mounted to the frame. Being that ITU racing is only an hour in length, I find that a single bottle is more than sufficient.

For racing, I have replaced the standard tyres for the S-Works Turbo 24s. These are wider than the usual 700 x 23 size and I have found that the Turbo 24s provide greater grip while cornering during ITU racing. I truly believe that tyres play a huge part in your bike's performance and that you shouldn't scrimp here.

The final word

The Specialized S-Works Venge is a bike built for racing. In my opinion, it's the cycling equivalent to racing a Formula 1 car. 🏁