

MERIDA SCULTURA SL TEAM WORLD CLASS IN THE SIGHTS

Currently, the world's best road machines are often created when the developments of German engineers meet the know-how of Asia's best carbon manufacturers. Some examples are Cannondale, Canyon or Storck. And Merida - because the bikes of the Asian giant are created by Juergen Falke (Head of Design) and his German R&D team members who want to attack the world's road-racer elite with the new Scultura SL now. The chances couldn't be better: From the outset, the new top-of-the-line model cycles in one league with the world's best frames!

This is enabled by an impressively

high level concerning all criteria which are relevant for a modern frame-fork set: The Scultura set has a very low weight (1.260 g) and is impressively stiff. At the same time, it offers evenly high damping characteristics. On the road, it presents itself as an inspiring road racer! Right from the first crank turn, all test pilots were impressed by the racing machine's merciless hunger for propulsion and the precise/direct handling. This is enabled by technical solutions such as the still-young bottom bracket standard BB386Evo - a combination of the 86 mm Shimano bearing clearance and the oversized

BB30 bearing diameter. Result: An extremely stiff bottom bracket. The very short chain stays (400 mm) are responsible for the agile steering performance; nevertheless, the running smoothness is also high. Thanks to the moderated relation between top and head tube, the seating position is sporty without being unpleasantly stretched. Together with the perceptibly high damping comfort (achieved by the R&D team e.g. via the utilization of flax fibres in rearstay and fork blades), the Merida cycles in the top flight - not only with regard to sprinting, but also during marathons or the long stages of a bike race. All

those who consider the tested top-ofthe-line variant as too expensive for themselves can look forward to many other Scultura model versions with technically identical configurations at comparatively lower prices.

Compact test summary

On the road, the new Scultura SL inspires like just very few other road bikes: It's lightning-swift and direct but also comfortable and calculable enough for long stages. Technically seen, the frame ranges among the world's very best!