

The Pro Cycling Race & Test Team  
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# Roadtested

Pro kit in the real world

## Engineered Donder

**Price** £1,300 (frameset, £4,200 complete as tested) **Weight** 7.1kg **www.engineeredbikes.co.uk**

THIS ISN'T A pro-issue bike but it is a pure racer and it's very interesting because it's aluminium, or scandium-alloy to be precise.

Engineered is a small British firm local to us in Bristol. The Donder is an unapologetic crit bike conceived to be exciting and fast.

Thanks to the likes of the Cannondale CAAD 12 and Specialized Allez Sprint X1 there's a resurgence of interest in aluminium and its performance potential with modern R&D. The harsh reality is that aluminium earned a poor reputation for its ride quality during its brief moment in the sun between a century of steel and the subsequent focus on carbon fibre. Early carbon frames were poor compared to what we have now so why can't aluminium be loads better too?

Of course, among small frame builders, whose customers tend to want something different, aluminium never went away. The makers of this scandium-alloy tubaset,

Dedacciai, continued to develop the material and frame builders such as Engineered are making the most of it.

The Donder is a very cool bike. The graphics are distinctive and attractive yet understated. This is a bike that speaks softly but carries a big stick, literally; this one has the massive integrated seatpost (MISP?) which is just one of myriad options. Most important of those is full custom geometry for just £150, making this a very affordable way onto a made-to-measure race bike. It's ideal for the irregularly-proportioned competitive individualist.

Without being pushed to excess, the Donder's geometry shows clear intent. The BB is high, the rear triangle is snug and the overall wheelbase is trim. Our test bike came built with a Shimano Dura-Ace group and a stunning Enve Aero Road bar but rolling on no-name carbon clinchers. To

**Below** Engineered can build in any BB you like and paint the frame in any colour



evaluate the bike properly I fitted known wheels (Enve 4.5 tubs) and it was on these that the Donder tipped our scales at 7.1kg.

This bike is up for the fight. It's hugely stiff under power and through the front end, responding crisply to steering input and lunging into corners. It's exciting, eager and – certainly in this lavish spec – it's fast, too. I enjoyed some really quick blasts on it.

That drainpipe of an ISP does result in a firm feel at the saddle but no more so than most aero posts and I'd happily use it for long rides. A carbon fibre seat-tube and ISP are among the options, or you could go for a regular seatpost. But admit it, this looks cool.

If you just want the lightest, look elsewhere, but for individuality, an effervescent character and bespoke fit, the Donder shines. I came away really wanting one, and that doesn't happen often. **Jamie Wilkins**

### PROS

Excitement, value, custom fit and options, individuality

### CONS

Carbon is lighter and smoother

### VERDICT

Alternative bespoke racer with brilliant ride character



IMAGES: Jonny Ashelford