

Mason Resolution

British-designed and Italian-made, the Resolution aims to be all the bike you'll ever need



Words JAMES SPENDER



THE SPEC

Model
Mason Resolution
Ultegra Di2 Hydro

Groupset
Shimano Ultegra Di2 6870

Deviations
Shimano R785 Di2
hydraulic disc brakes

Wheels
Mason x Hunt 4Season
Disc Road

Finishing kit
Deda Zero100 alloy bars
and stem, Mason Penta
carbon seatpost, Fabric
Scoop Pro saddle

Weight 9.27kg
Price £4,195
Contact masoncycles.cc

Dom Mason is obviously not a believer in the principle of $n+1$. While the rule states that the correct number of bikes to own is one more than you currently have, Mason prefers the idea that one bike can do it all – that one bike can be right for all situations in all conditions. That's his Resolution.

Optimally primed

The Resolution might equally have been called the Transformer, because with the right accessories it can turn its hand to pretty much any road-based discipline.

Hidden all over the Columbus steel-tubed frame and Mason's own Aperture disc-specific carbon fork is a plethora of neatly tucked-away bosses to secure mudguards and pannier racks. At a glance you wouldn't notice them, but check the inside of the fork legs or at the back of the chainstay bridge and you'll find bolt holes ready to accept the necessary mounts to turn the Resolution into anything from winter hack to full-on

touring rig. Clearances are generous, with space for up to 28c tyres (with mudguards), suggesting the Resolution wouldn't mind a spot of gravel riding to boot, yet strip it back to its bare essentials and the geometry is just about racy enough for someone who wants to mix it on a crit circuit.

Dom Mason, Mason's founder and formerly the engineering brains behind Kinesis UK, calls the Resolution a '4 season' bike. That is, it's a year-round bike, and not just in terms of weather. Mason believes it's just as up to the task of a competitive blast around the park as it is for an eight-hour sportive in the Alps. In fact, the Resolution's alloy stablemate, the Definition (with the same geometry and ethos), took British rider Josh Ibbett to victory at the Transcontinental Race this year – a 4,000km epic from Belgium to Istanbul. Ibbett says he chose the aluminium Definition as it was lighter than the steel Resolution but still comfortable enough, which implies that the Resolution is a little heavier, yet comfier. ▶



FINESSE

A huge amount of thought has gone into the Mason Resolution. Mudguard and pannier bosses (top and bottom of seatstay) are as neat as can be, leaving the Resolution's lines resolutely 'racy'. A chain-hanging tab is a blessed old-school touch to stop the chain dragging on the chainstays when the rear wheel is removed. You don't want to scar paint this good.



◊ At 9.27kg for this build, the Resolution is certainly no lightweight, but there is a lot of bike here, including the sturdy Hunt wheels that come in at a claimed 1,585g for the pair, plus disc brake rotors. The question is whether it can deliver on its promise of a comfortable ride.

Refined petro-chemical lovers may disagree, but in my experience steel frames – good steel frames – just ride better. The top carbon bikes can almost match this, but I've yet to find one that outstrips the best steel machine in terms of that wonderful intangible feel. Ironing out the road, absorbing the harshness, whatever you want to call it, steel frames make everything just feel a bit soft, like an out-of-focus camera in a dream sequence, or like a big bicycle hug. The Resolution, I'm pleased to say, delivered a particularly warm embrace, even if it was a little stilted. You see, this is actually a pretty stiff bicycle.

To keep with the all-seasons theme, Mason has stuck to a traditional threaded BB shell, citing reliability and dependability when stacked up against the often creaky press-fit brigade. From experience I'd agree threaded shells, if properly maintained, will endure for decades. However, in comparison such a shell sacrifices surface area on which to join tubes, which in theory can limit stiffness because larger tube diameters and junctions normally equate to more rigidity. It's therefore testament to Mason's design that the Resolution displayed plenty of stiffness for efficient mile munching, if ever-so slightly lacking that knock-out punch for top-end sprinting.

Long and low

The geometry on the Resolution is on the relaxed side, with the bottom bracket a touch lower than you'd find on an out-and-out race bike and the wheelbase slightly longer. The result is that the Resolution is very stable at speed due to its low centre of gravity and elongated, planted stance.

In most instances this was welcome, and would be especially so if the bike were laden with panniers. It did mean, however, that the Resolution sacrificed nippiness on winding roads. It was great in long, fast corners, but more technical sections required me to wrestle the Resolution to follow tight lines, as opposed to coax it. ◊

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FRAME INSERTS

Dom Mason hasn't just gone to great lengths to design a versatile frame – he's pushed the envelope in terms of detail too. Special 'Multiport' frame inserts flip-flop to accommodate mechanical or electronic or hydraulic routing and elsewhere, under the bottom bracket, Mason has even made a custom 3D-printed cable guide.





► This isn't a deal-breaker – in fact it was rather fun at times, giving me the sensation that I was actually having to drive the bike, that it needed me as much as I needed it. Plus, this handling characteristic is not so extreme that a rider won't be able to adjust to it. It did leave me questioning the '4 season' billing, though.

The perennial question

Can you ride this bike year-round in all manner of ways and weathers? Most certainly, yes. But will you want to? From a personal perspective, the answer is no. Despite having the option to fit mudguards or panniers, for me the frame is just too pretty for those add-ons. The finish is exquisite, and if I owned it I would want to show it off in its best light on every ride. At nearly £4,200 it's also an expensive piece of kit to use as a winter bike. If it were mine, the first time it got a stone chip in the paintwork from a gritted road, the Resolution would be back inside and wrapped up in a blanket till spring.

On a summer's day when the roads are clear and the sun is warm, you won't find a better companion than the Resolution. It is the perfect bike for an all-day cruise. Yet there are other days when you want to blast your bike around, not just on the flat, but up hills and down dales. You want that dynamic feeling, where every muscle in your body is focused on the task of producing all-out speed. You want your bike to feel like a rocket, and the Resolution, no matter how hard I pushed it, never did.

The truth is that, while Mason has produced a very versatile bike, it's not the only bike you'll ever need. Something more expendable would be required for rotten conditions, and something lighter and stiffer would be needed for the days when all that matters is speed. But for those days when you want serene riding pleasure aboard a beautiful machine, the Resolution fits the brief perfectly. 🌸



WHEELS

Mason has teamed up with new UK outfit Hunt to help create the Resolution's wheels. Like the rest of the bike, hardy, all-year versatility is the objective.

The detail



Shimano's range-topping stoppers, the R785 hydraulic disc brakes, are nothing short of awesome, although a word to the wise: their organic disc pads are highly susceptible to contamination from oil (in most instances that's curtains for the pads), so be extremely careful when cleaning/oiling drivetrains or bleeding the system. Disc performance can be hampered by mounting hardware however, particularly up front, so it's testament to the Mason Aperture carbon fork that no shudder was apparent under braking, that hoses run neatly and internally and that even the graphics (check the gold 'M' on the fork) augment the disc system's looks. A lesson in well-considered design.