



KOGA SIGNATURE TRAVELLER KS-TR 28

BY JOSH TACK

→ THERE'S an undefined number of years — or maybe it's miles — that a person needs to spend in the saddle before they begin to develop an understanding of exactly what it is they want out of a bike. No matter what style of bike you ride, as soon as this limit is reached you can't simply waltz over to your local shop, grab a stock bike, swipe your credit card, and ride off content. You have to tinker. Handlebars, stem, saddle, pedals, seatpost, and wheels are all subject to change. Accessories? Those are absolutely going to pile up in a hurry.

This dance is played out with every subsequent bike purchase, and while it's all part of the natural process, it can be time consuming and expensive. What if there were a bike company that allowed you to tweak the build kit prior to making the purchase? You could select your favorite parts and accessories, the bike would be built to your specifications, and arrive at your doorstep ready to roll. What if you could have all this without breaking the

SPECIFICATIONS

KOGA SIGNATURE TRAVELLER KS-TR 28

Price: \$3,088 (plus ~\$360 surcharge for U.S. shipping)

Sizes available: 50cm, 54cm, 57cm, 60cm, 63cm, 66cm

Size tested: 57cm

Weight: 38.1 lbs

TEST BIKE MEASUREMENTS

1. **Seat tube:** 57 cm (c-t)

2. **Top tube:** 58.5 cm

3. **Head tube angle:** 71°

4. **Seat tube angle:** 71°

5. **Chainstays:** 46cm

6. **Bottom bracket drop:** 5.4cm

7. **Crank spindle height above ground:** 28.5cm

8. **Fork offset:** 6.2cm

9. **Wheelbase:** 109cm

10. **Standover height:** 81cm

11. **Frame:** 7005 aluminum

12. **Fork:** KOGA Wide Bone rigid

13. **Rims:** KM21 Xstrong

14. **Spokes:** Sapim silver

14. **Hubs:** Shimano Deore XT dynamo front, Shimano XT rear

15. **Tires:** Schwalbe Marathon 700c x 37

16. **Crankset:** Shimano XT triple

18. **Cassette:** Shimano XT 11-34 10-speed

19. **Chain:** Shimano XT

20. **Shift Levers:** Shimano XT

21. **Brake Levers:** Shimano XT

22. **Front Derailleur:** Shimano XT

23. **Rear Derailleur:** Shimano XT

24. **Brakes:** Shimano XT hydraulic disc

25. **Rotors:** Shimano XT centerlock 160mm front and rear



- 26. Pedals:** Shimano Combi PD-T780
- 27. Seatpost:** KOGA Signature
- 28. Stem:** KOGA Justera adjustable
- 29. Handlebar:** KOGA Riser
- 30. Grips:** Ergon GP3-L
- 31. Headset:** Integrated
- 32. Saddle:** Brooks B-17
- 33. Lighting:** B&M Lumotec IQ Cyo RT front/B&M 4D Toplight rear
- 34. Fenders:** SKS Chromoplastics
- 35. Racks:** Tubus Ergo w/kickstand front/Tubus Logo rear
- 36. Kickstand:** Pletscher Comp
- 37. Lock:** AXA Defender
- 38. Accessories:** Elite Lysso aluminum water bottles (x2), Elite Taki bottle cages (x2), Topeak Road Morph pump, Widek Decibel II Kompas bell.

GEARING IN INCHES

	44	32	24
11	109.3	79.5	59.6
13	92.5	67.2	50.4
15	80.1	58.3	43.7
17	70.7	51.4	38.6
19	63.3	46	34.5
21	57.2	41.6	31.2
23	52.3	38	28.5
26	46.2	33.6	25.2
30	40.1	29.1	21.9
34	35.4	25.7	19.3

Contact: KOGA Bicycles, Postbus 167, 8440AD, Heerenveen, Netherlands, koga.com.



bank? This is generally where I would say something along the lines of “you can’t afford *not* to buy it!”

If this all sounds appealing to you, then you’ll want to check out KOGA Signature’s custom-built bikes. Assembled in Holland, the process begins by heading to koga-signature.com, jumping on their bike customizer, and selecting a frame to build around. The frame sizes are stock, but you have some color options to choose from, and the sky’s the limit with regards to what goes on it. As you add or swap out parts, the price is updated on the fly. This is a great way to make sure you don’t let yourself get too out of control and stay within budget. Even if you’re not looking to purchase a bike right away, this is a really fun tool to play around with just to see what’s possible — and what it would cost.

The bike that I tested was built around the KOGA Signature Traveller KS-TR 28 frame. This is a 700c-wheeled workhorse of a bike designed for big adventures. With a triple-buttressed aluminum frame that’s lightweight and responsive, it’s best suited for pavement yet will hold its own quite well on gravel roads. I didn’t actually get to customize this bike for our road test; it was built for one of Adventure Cycling’s 2015 Young Adult Bike Travel Scholarship winners (see page 8). This program is designed to provide young adults, ages 18-25, with an opportunity to participate in an educational bicycle touring course through Adventure Cycling, complete with a new bike. They can then take their new-found knowledge to the streets and perform outreach activities for their community to further promote the activity of bicycle travel.

While I didn’t get to build this bike myself, it wasn’t far off from what I would have done. The KOGA Traveller frame is designed to be ridden with flat bars, and with that in mind it was outfitted with a full Shimano XT 10-speed mountain bike

drivetrain. If you're looking to combine performance with durability, this level of componentry does not disappoint. Shifting was smooth and crisp, while the full package felt strong and stable. Braking power was supplied by Shimano XT hydraulic brakes, which are perfect for stopping quickly and consistently in all weather conditions, even when hauling around heavy loads.

Moving beyond the basic components is where the bike really gets fun. The front wheel was built around a Shimano XT dynamo hub that provides power to both front and rear lights. The lighting system was attached to the included Tubus racks and SKS fenders, which have both earned reputations as long-lasting quality products. Additional add-ons included both front and rear kickstands, which normally I wouldn't choose for a bike of my own, but I have to say I really appreciated using them when the bike was fully loaded. They make parking a heavy bike effortless.

Some really nice small touches rounded out the package, all of which I would consider necessities. For starters, you get set up with a nice pair of Shimano Combi pedals, which offer a SPD clipless option on one side, and a flat platform pedal on the other. For hydration, the bike came decked out with not only a pair of bottle cages, but also a pair of aluminum KOGA-branded water bottles. Also included were a lock, pump, tire levers, and a bell. Just about everything you need to get rolling was there.

Maybe the crown jewel of the full kit

is the personalization. There's a reason this is called a KOGA Signature bike, and that's because the bike arrives with your name painted on the top tube. It's the little things like this that make you smile.

This makes for a solid package, especially when considering the price tag, but the real test is how it rides in the wild. As I mentioned earlier, this is



a bike that features flat handlebars. I've always ridden drop bars on the road, so I wasn't quite sure how I would like this change. Taking the bike out for the first time was an interesting experience.

Unloaded, the bike handling is tuned very nicely so that it feels solid and stable when rolling straight down the road, but also turns on a dime with little effort. I was pleasantly surprised with the upright riding position, which kept me comfortable for hours, and helped keep my head up and focused down the road. When the bike is loaded down with gear, it feels like a tank. I never experienced a case of the wobbles on descents and it maneuvered very well through narrow urban environments.

While the frame is made of

aluminum, the geometry is set up in such a way that it produces a smooth ride. Taking the bike off-road is absolutely a possibility, especially with the wide tire clearance available. I had 700c x 37mm tires mounted up to the beefy KOGA rims, which is more than enough rubber to handle crushed gravel.

As of right now, KOGA Signature bikes are not distributed in the U.S., so you won't be finding these at a shop near you. Instead, you can purchase a bike direct through KOGA and have it shipped to your door. In addition to the retail price tag, you'll also have to take care of shipping costs and value added tax, which came to around \$360 for this particular bike. Expect to wait four to five weeks for delivery.

When the bike arrives, it will be roughly 15 minutes away from rideable. Out of the box, both front and rear wheels are already installed and all you have to do is roll it out, straighten and tighten the handlebars, mount the pedals, and pump up the tires. Even though the bike comes built and tuned up, I would always recommend giving it a thorough lookover. Make sure all the bolts are tight and that it shifts properly. I didn't have any issues with my bike when it arrived, but it's just good practice. From that point on, enjoy the ride. **AC**

Josh Tack is Adventure Cycling's membership manager and "Fine Tuned" columnist for Adventure Cyclist. For questions or comments about this article or your Adventure Cycling membership, you can email Josh at jtack@adventurecycling.org

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