



MASI GIRAMONDO 27.5

BY NICK LEGAN

→ THE MOMENT I saw it, I knew I had to ride it. It was that color. Never mind that I don't like bar-end shifters, nor that it came with a silly handlebar. I'd suffer those items to be aboard so lovely a bike. Little did I know that my relationship with Masi's Giramondo 27.5 would be a bumpy one. Thankfully, it ended in happiness.

A quick look at the bicycle's specs reveals an attractive touring bike. Selling for \$1,050, it starts with a steel frame and fork with all the protrusions you'd expect for touring: loads of bottle mounts (five!), rack and pannier braze-ons, a pump peg, and even a spare spoke holder. The parts hung on that frame look good too. A triple chainring crankset, reliable bar-end shifters, and disc brakes get you rolling and stopping.

Cleverly, Masi offers the Giramondo in both 700c and 27.5in. (650b) versions. When deciding which to review within these pages, the choice was clear: 27.5in. Why? Well, versatility played into it for sure, but so did fun. You see, a 27.5 x 2.1in. wheel is nearly the same diameter as a 700c x 35mm. That's why Masi can use the same exact frame for both Giramondo models. But the idea that you can run a full-sized mountain-bike tire or a super-wide road tire is really appealing, and the 27.5in. model afforded this option. And, of course, it also comes in a lovely blue, called Intense Teal by Masi, which had caught my attention so early on.

MASI GIRAMONDO

Price: \$1,050

Sizes available: S, M, L, XL

Size tested: M

Weight: 28.14 lbs. (without pedals)

TEST BIKE MEASUREMENTS

- **Stack:** 610mm
- **Reach:** 394mm
- **Head tube length:** 160mm
- **Head tube angle:** 72°
- **Seat tube length:** 495mm (center to top of seatpost clamp)
- **Seat tube angle:** 73.5°
- **Top tube length:** 575mm (effective)
- **Chainstays:** 455mm
- **Bottom bracket drop:** 70mm
- **Fork offset:** 50mm
- **Fork trail:** 61mm
- **Wheelbase:** 1072mm
- **Standover:** 813mm

SPECIFICATIONS

- **Frame:** Masi double-butted, TIG-welded chromoly disc frame, five bottle mounts, spoke holder, rack and fender mounts
- **Fork:** Chromoly Masi uni-crown straight blade, IS disc mount, rack, fender, and bottle mounts
- **Headset:** FSA No. 23 integrated sealed bearing, 1 1/8in.
- **Rims:** Brev. M 23mm internal tubeless compatible, aluminum disc
- **Hubs:** Alloy 32h disc, QR
- **Tires:** Kenda Slant Six 27.5 x 2.1in. wire bead
- **Crankset:** Shimano Deore T611, 44/32/24T, 175mm



- **Bottom bracket:** Shimano SM-BB52, threaded
- **Cassette:** Shimano HG500 11-34T, 10spd
- **Brake levers:** ProMax BL-256
- **Shift levers:** Microshift bar-end
- **Front derailleur:** Shimano Deore
- **Rear derailleur:** Shimano Deore
- **Brakes:** ProMax DSK-300R mechanical disc
- **Stem:** Brev.M 3D forged, 25.4mm, 35° +/-
- **Handlebar:** WTB Mountain Drop Bar, 25.4mm
- **Seatpost:** Brev.M 3D Forged Alloy, 27.2mm
- **Saddle:** WTB Volt Sport

GEARING IN INCHES

	24	32	44
11	59.3	79.1	108.8
13	50.3	66.9	91.9
15	43.5	57.9	79.7
17	38.3	51.1	70.4
19	34.3	45.7	63.1
21	31.0	41.3	57.1
23	28.3	37.8	51.9
26	25.0	33.5	46.0
30	21.8	29.1	40.0
32	19.3	25.6	35.1

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Assembling the bike was a simple affair with no red flags raised during the process. It was when I started setting up my position on the bike that the first inkling of trouble became apparent. While I too can wax nostalgic about the original dropbar for off-road riding, WTB's Mountain Drop has, in my opinion, been surpassed by several newer models that offer better hand positions and a 31.8mm clamp diameter. Why do I mention the clamp diameter? Because simply changing the stem on the Masi requires either an adapter or sourcing a stem with the now-outdated diameter of 25.4mm. Most bike shops won't have a 25.4mm threadless stem in stock. Unless you're absolutely smitten with the WTB bar, have your dealer swap it out before leaving with your new bike. I managed to find an adapter and installed a stem that suited my dimensions.

Drivetrain

With my riding position settled, I eagerly headed out for my first Intense Teal ride. The sun was shining as I climbed up a local grade with ease thanks to the wide gearing range. The Shimano Deore triple crankset and derailleurs all performed admirably, running in near silence. Smiling at the picture of myself aboard Masi's fetching bike, I made my way higher. The Microshift bar-end shifters worked a treat as well, although I still think that a set of Gevenalle or Shimano brifters would improve this bike.

With a low of 19.3 gear inches, you can climb walls on the Masi, and I did. As the road turned to dirt, I took the Giramondo on several light mountain bike tracks, including one with a hearty steep section. No problem. The Giramondo's manners were impeccable, with the stability to inspire confidence and enough spirit to keep it fun.

Brakes

Unfortunately, on the way down, my smile was quickly erased by the shockingly poor performance of the ProMax disc brakes. To call the DSK-300R mechanical disc brakes anemic would imply that a ferrous material was used in the pads. Instead something like hardened oatmeal may have been employed. I'm not sure whether the fault

is in the pad, the caliper, or both. In any case, stopping with any expediency or modulation was impossible. I had hoped that they would improve, as the pads and rotors bedded in as new brakes do. Stopping power increased slightly after a couple of rides, but it never reached an acceptable level.

While I love the \$1,050 price point of the Giramondo, and I applaud Masi for keeping this bike in such an affordable range, I would have preferred to see it retail for \$1,200 and come with a set of Avid BB7s or TRP Spyres.

Tires

The Giramondo comes stock with a set of wire-bead Kenda Slant-Six tires, a nice 2.1in. tire that rolls well while delivering great off-road traction. For touring on dirt roads, it's a great choice. For much of my time aboard the Masi, I substituted a set of WTB's Horizon Road Plus 650b x 47mm tires. This swap is one of the many reasons I love the Masi. With a change of tires, the bike transformed from a capable off-roader

to a spirited road machine. It was really a striking difference, and it once again confirmed my love of wide road tires for general riding as well as touring. With the Horizons installed, the Masi made jaunts to the coffee shop in the next town over significantly faster while increasing comfort. If you're interested in a set of tires that shoots the gap between road slick and mountain bike tough, look to either Clement or Terrene. Both offer their fantastic gravel models in a 650b x 42mm or 47mm.

You can't help your feelings

Although its color drew me in initially, after the first couple of rides, I didn't think the end result would be a good one. I didn't want to fall in love with the Masi, but its quirky personality won me over. Despite the fact that I'm not a fan of the goofy handlebar, the bar-end shifters, or the pitifully weak brakes, I had a blast aboard the Masi. It's a great bike for daily riding, commuting, touring, and even off-road riding. It brings versatility without overlooking fun, and it looks

great doing it. Even if you never load it up for a tour, it will serve general cycling duties exceedingly well after a few component swaps.

If the versatility, affordability, or, heck, even the color of Masi's Giramondo appeals to you, then get one on order. Just be sure to get a set of brakes, a handlebar, and a stem as well. While it's great to see \$1,000 bikes on the market, the Masi shows just how difficult it is for product managers to hit such an affordable price point without sacrificing something important. The Giramondo's saving grace is that you can easily bolt on a better set of stoppers. If the bar isn't for you, quick solutions are readily available. Thankfully, when it came to the geometry of the Giramondo, something that you really can't change, Masi nailed it. And then there's that color, Intense Teal. Does it get better than that? **AC**

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