

First look

Thinner-tyred gravel bike with fork steerer suspension that suits smoother trails and tarmac



“An internal spring enables the handlebar (and stem) to move up and down, giving much the same effect as a suspension stem”

Tech spec SPECIALIZED DIVERGE COMP E5

Price: £2,500.

Sizes: 49, 52 (tested), 54, 56, 58, 61, 64cm.

Weight: 9.9kg (21.8lb).

Frame and fork:

Specialized Diverge E5 Premium Aluminum with Future Shock 1.5, threaded BB, internal routing, thru-axle, flat-mount disc, and fittings for rear rack, mudguard, three bottles and top tube bag/box. Carbon fork with fittings for mudguard and two cargo/bottle cages.

Wheels: 38-622 Specialized Pathfinder Sport gravel tyres, Axis Elite Disc alloy wheels, set up with innertubes.

Transmission: SRAM Apex 1x drivetrain

with 40t chainring, SRAM GXP bottom bracket, KMC X-11 11-speed chain and Sunrace 11-42t cassette. SRAM Apex hydraulic shifters and long-cage rear derailleur. 11 ratios, 26-100in. **Braking:** SRAM Apex 1 hydraulic disc brakes, Avid G2 160mm rotors.

Steering & seating: Specialized S-Wrap tape, Specialized Adventure Gear Hover bar with 12 degrees flare, Specialized Future Shock alloy stem and headset. Specialized Power Sport saddle with steel rails, Specialized alloy seatpost with offset clamp. specialized.com

the suspension is for the front wheel. The Future Shock is designed to smooth out bumps in your ride rather than take big hits or track rough trail surfaces like a mountain bike fork. The Diverge comes with a choice of four coil springs so you can adjust how supple or firm it feels.

The Friston takes a more traditional approach to frame design, though with some cues from the mountain bike world. Like contemporary MTBs, the Friston aims for improved off-road stability with a shorter-offset fork (more trail), a longer-reach frame that puts the front wheel further out front, and a shorter stem. Generous tyre clearances enable you to run wider 700C rubber for rougher trails. While the Specialized can take up to 42mm tyres, the Friston can accommodate tyres up to 50mm (2in).

Both bikes feature internal cable and hose routing, although only through the frame and fork, and not, home mechanics will be pleased to note, through the handlebar, stem and/or headset.

Components

Both bikes are equipped with SRAM Apex, with single-chainring drivetrains



Top: It's sold as a 1x bike but there's a front derailleurs mount
Bottom: These 38mm tyres roll well on road and easy tracks but lack off-road grip and plushness

and hydraulic disc brakes, though neither has a full series build. The Friston and Diverge each have a (heavier) Sunrace cassette, presumably as a cost saving, and the Diverge also uses a KMC chain and Avid G2 rotors. The Friston has a non-series chainset: an alloy own-brand offering with a 38-tooth chainring that's slightly smaller than the Diverge's 40-tooth one.

As you'd expect at this price, the finishing kit is all alloy and designed in house. The Diverge uses Specialized's Adventure Gear Hover handlebar with a subtle 12-degree flare in the drops, a Future-Shock-specific stem and a standard seatpost topped with the popular short-nosed Specialized Power cutout saddle.

The Friston has some obvious mountain bike influences when it comes to components, including a very wide handlebar (50cm!) and a Trans-X dropper seatpost with 70mm travel. This is activated using the left-hand SRAM shifter that would otherwise operate a front derailleur.

Both bikes roll on 700C alloy wheelsets, set up with innertubes. The major difference, apart from the tyres themselves, is that the wheels and tyres

