



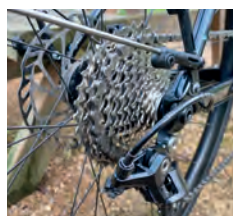
Bike test

Liv Avail AR 1

Road bikes like the Liv Avail have moved away from their racing roots to become all-rounders. **Hannah Collingridge** is pleased

The Liv Avail is described as an endurance road bike more suited to the female form. While I regularly ride a cyclocross bike, I was dubious about how my ageing body would cope with longer road rides. Let's just say I had a lot of fun and was perfectly comfy.

It's not particularly light or racy (neither am I), which means it's actually a really practical bike for a great number of people. There are a goodly number of sensible features to make it suitable for a lot of styles of riding. First, it's disc braked so there's good braking in all conditions, even in the wet or on long descents. There are eyelets for mudguards – essential for winter riding – and a rear rack. Put a couple of bags on it and you could easily go touring.

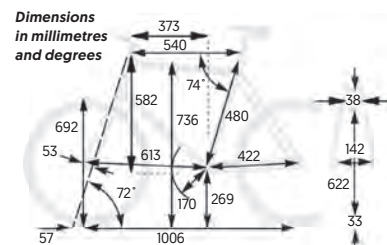


Top: Bottom gear is 34/36, which is low for a road bike
Bottom: Non-standard seatpost and clamp (eye-roll)



There's nothing flimsy or vulnerable feeling about the setup. There's a pretty good range of gears – a compact double (50-34) on the front with a 11-36 cassette on the back. For a road bike, that's quite low gearing for hills without losing high gears.

Tyres are 32mm to give a little more comfort, and they come set up tubeless. There's clearance for up to 38mm, and Liv says the bike is suitable for taking unpaved short cuts. I tested this claim on unsealed roads, gravel tracks, dry, earthen singletrack and a random pump track I came across. It's as comfy as any rigid, narrow-tyred bike is going to be off road and will cope with a great deal. It's more of an all-roads bike than a gravel bike; the gearing is a little too steep off road for my tastes. But it handled well on



Tech spec LIV AVAIL AR 1

Price: £1,899.

Sizes: XS, S, M (tested), L.

Weight: 9.73kg/21.5lb (no pedals).

Frame & fork: 6061 aluminium frame with threaded BB, thru-axle and fittings for rear rack, mudguards, two bottle cages. Giant Overdrive tapered carbon fork with thru-axle.

Wheels: 32-622 Giant Gavia Fondo 2 tyres set up tubeless on Giant P-R2 disc wheelset [22mm-wide alloy rims on Giant cartridge-bearing hubs with 24 Sapim spokes].

Transmission: Shimano FC-RS520 chainset with 50-34 chainrings and 170mm cranks, KMC 12-speed chain, Shimano

105 12-speed 11-36 cassette. Shimano 2x12 105 hydraulic shifters and 105 derailleurs. 22 ratios, 26-124in.

Braking: Shimano 105 GS levers with 105 hydraulic flat-mount callipers and 160mm 6-bolt Giant rotors.

Steering & seating: Liv All Condition bar tape, 400x31.8mm Liv handlebar, 90mm threadless stem, integrated headset with 1 1/4in lower, 1 1/8in upper and cartridge bearings. Liv Approach saddle, carbon D-shaped seatpost with a proprietary wedge-type seat-clamp.

Equipment: Giant Speedshield RGX mudguards (+£54.99)

liv-cycling.com/gb

the varied terrain I rode.

Long-term maintenance looks good. The only non-standard parts are the D-shaped seatpost and the proprietary wedge to hold it in place. It seems an unnecessary complication on a bike like this, and if something does go wrong you'll be hunting for specific parts from Giant not bunging on something you've got in your workshop. I loved the saddle, however, and promptly bought two. ●

MERIDA SCULTURA ► ENDURANCE 400 £1,750

Also aimed at endurance rather than racing, with 2x12 Shimano 105, disc brakes and wider tyres. Has mudguard but not rack mounts.
merida-bikes.com



TREK DOMANE AL5 ► GEN 4 £2,000

Designed for all-day comfort and an ability to cope with most surfaces. Again, 2x12 Shimano 105, disc brakes and tubeless ready. Takes a rear rack.
trekbikes.com



Verdict

It's a sensible and versatile bike that's suitable for many styles of riding. As well as winter training, club rides, audax rides and sportives, it's also fine for pottering around and exploring, even a bit of light touring. It handles predictably on all terrain yet remains fun to ride.