

## Merida Scultura Endurance 300

This £1,500 road bike lives up to the long-ride aspirations of its name, but some components will be divisive. Guy Kesteven tested it

Merida's Scultura Endurance 300 is a good example of a modern 'all-rounder' road bike, complete with wider tyre compatibility and internally cabled, clean lines. It's a sleek, alloy-framed equivalent of the 'clubman' road bike of yesteryear.

### Frame and fork

Merida is a Taiwanese manufacturing giant that's been building excellent alloy and carbon bikes for decades. The brand has never been shy of idiosyncratic innovation, and the finned 'radiator', heat-dissipating disc-brake mounts of the Scultura 300 definitely sit in that category.

Looking beyond acronyms and buzzwords, the triple-butt, pressure-shaped frame uses smoothed welds, blended stays and curved profiles to give a 'carbon if you squint' aesthetic. There are two bottle mounts, as well as discreet mudguard/rack mounts.

Merida says there's space for 32mm tyres with mudguards and 35mm without. I think that's over cautious – which is lucky as the 32mm Maxxis tyres it comes with actually measure 34.6mm. Yet there's still several millimetres between the tyre and the closest parts of the frame. There's even more



room in the full carbon fork, which also gets mudguard mounts.

There are two issues likely to cause consternation among long-distance riders. The first is Merida's decision to feed brake and gear lines into the frame through the headset. This keeps things tidy but means upper headset bearing replacement will require a disconnection of the controls. It also creates tight turns in the gear cables, which adds friction even when new.

The second issue is the PressFit bottom bracket. To be fair, interference-fit bottom bracket bearings seem to be more reliable now, and the wider shell does help give the Merida its generous tyre clearance. But a threaded bottom bracket will always pose less risk of irreversible frame damage from a worn bearing or clumsy insertion. They're easier to find spares for, too.

### Ride

I found the sizing and shape of the Scultura excellent. The head tube is appropriately tall for comfort,



without leaving you at the mercy of headwinds. The tapered fork steerer inside is stiff enough to escape the flex and vagueness that can plague a lot of endurance-category bikes on 'sporting' descents.

Merida has kept the handling angles sharp and the fork offset racy, so it feels responsive and able to make the most of the enhanced traction from the chubby tyres. You do need to actively pilot the Scultura more than a slacker, more stable bike, and this can be tiring as ride times or speeds increase. You'll also need to be wary of toe overlap if you've got larger-than-average feet, especially with mudguards.

**Top photo, this page:** Internal cables mean clean looks – and headset nightmares  
**Smaller photo:** Quirky mounts by the brake callipers are there to help vent heat