



Quieter, stronger, faster, the Linear Limo 3.0 improves on previous models. That's the bottom line from a 300-mile ride in Western New York.



When I decided to switch to a recumbent bike I was 50 years old and weighed over 230 pounds. Even at six foot two, that's well above a healthy weight. A friend of mine had recently switched to a RANS V2 recumbent and his extreme satisfaction about recumbent riding motivated me to get back on my bike and consider making a switch. I made an 80-mile trip to The Bicycle Man in Alfred Station, NY pretty sure I wanted a RANS recumbent, most likely a Formula 26. After riding about 10 different models five to seven miles each I found I liked the under seat steering (USS) much better than the over seat steering (OSS). The USS touring recumbents that caught my eye were the Longbike and the Linear. After well over six hours at the Bicycleman, I headed home for some more homework before a follow-up trip and some longer test rides.

Although I liked the look and feel of the Longbike Slipstream I decided on the Linear mainly due to the price tag and its slight weight advantage. I took the Linear on a twenty-mile test ride and liked it. My only complaint was the seat pad, so we installed a Sun seat pad (a \$45 option) I felt it was a much better look and ride though it added over a pound, consuming the weight advantage over the Longbikes..

I still wanted to take the Linear on some more substantial hills, but I was getting enough confidence that with some more work on my part, the Linear would be up to the challenge. I already found it taking hills better than the others I rode, with perhaps the exception of the OSS RANS Stratus XP.

When I finally was able to pick up my new 3.0 there were only eight days before the ride. I put about 120 miles on the 3.0 in those 8 days getting ready. We were planning three 100 mile days in a row.

I headed out for the first century on September 8 with six strong riders. The first day's ride was a round about route from Pittsford to Ithaca, New York. I left about 30 minutes before the group, because they normally out-rode me by one or two mph and I wanted to arrive around the same time as them. I rode a steady pace, not trying to break any records, but actually hoping the rest of the group would catch up. The first century was relatively flat with some rolling hills and a couple of climbs, but nothing extreme. I had some flats and rolling hills where I was moving comfortably at a 17 – 18 mph pace, but had some hills where I went as low as 6 mph. I arrived at the lunch stop, about 42 miles into the ride, about twenty minutes ahead of the rest and left about 15 minutes before them for the second leg. They caught up with me about twenty-five miles later and we rode together until about the last ten miles.

On day two the ride started with a long 500-foot climb out of Ithaca. Some nice flats and long inclines followed this. The strong riders pulled away from me on the long hill and then the strongest rider fell back with me and we rode together for about 50 miles, after which we linked up with the rest of the group. At lunch I checked my tire pressure, something I should have done on day one, and found that I was down about 20 psi in each tire. From that point on I stayed with the group the remaining 150 miles. It's amazing what a correct tire pressure can do. Day two took us from Ithaca to Syracuse and the terrain was similar to Day one with the exception of some aggressive hills. The weather was cooler on day two, with a pretty heavy rainfall after about 40 miles. I also got a rear flat, but the tube change was quick and easy.

Day three was a wonderful combination of long gentle inclines, flats and a number of hills, some with some significant grades. For much of the time, we had the breeze at our backs, but even during a long segment with the wind in our faces we were able to draft so well that a couple of us almost felt as if we were being carried up the inclines. Our two strongest riders stayed in front for about ten miles maintaining speeds of 17 – 22 mph. In the end of day three, we averaged 15.7 mph

The Linear 3.0 shifted very smoothly and I was amazed at how quiet the bike was. Likewise, the extra gearing seemed to give me enough range to increase my speed on hills. I'm still not in top shape, but I was able to handle all of the hills of the trip and as I improved on my pedaling techniques and gearing management (I had some great coaches) I was able to improve my hill speeds considerably. At most of the hills, the rest of the group would pass me and get some distance, but there were a number of grades that I was able to hold the lead without the rest of the group holding back.

I liked the fact that I was able to make a number of adjustments on the seat and handlebar positions. The thumb shifters are great and seem to just fall into the right place for a comfortable ride and easy shifting. The rear disk brake is great, stopping on the rainy day was as confident as the dry days. The ride of the 3.0 is very smooth and I took some big hits from some unexpected potholes. Most noticeable is the long chain without any idlers. Some people think this is a mistake that will cause the chain to derail, but I have not experienced that problem in over 1,000 miles on the 2.0 and 3.0. However, there are times when I was in the outer front ring where the chain would make brief contact with my right leg, and sometimes there would be a lot of chain "flop" during hard riding and gear changes. But even in those cases, there was never a problem. Personally, I don't miss the small amount of friction, weight and noise the optional idler might cause.

At about 33 pounds, the 3.0 is no light weight bike and I'm sure that had some bearing on the hills. Packed out, I probably had about 15 pounds extra on the bike, but I am confident that with some more work on my part, I'll keep up on the hills with my fellow riders on next years big ride.

I rode with the standard 1.5" width, 100-psi tires, which I will probably switch with 1.25 widths next year. Other than that, the Linear 3.0 doesn't need much refinement from my point of view. Perhaps, when I have a lot of money, I'll change to lighter wheels but I really don't plan on adding another \$1,500+ to the price to purchase lighter components. As I said in the beginning, I found the Linear 3.0 to be quieter, stronger and faster. It's a bike you'll be seeing me ride for a long, comfortable time. Know anybody that wants a diamond frame TREK?

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