



Quieter, stronger, faster, the Linear Limo 3.0 improves on previous models. That's my bottom line after 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 a RANS V2 recumbent and his extreme satisfaction motivated me to get back on my bike and consider a bent. I made a trip to The Bicycle Man 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 Longbikes 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 Longbikes Slipstream I decided on the Linear due to the lower price and slight lower weight. I took the Linear on a twenty-mile test ride and liked it.

My new Linear was ready only eight days before our 300 mile ride. I put about 120 miles on the 3.0 in those 8 days getting ready for three 100 mile days in a row. I headed out for the first century with six strong riders. On flats and rolling hills I was moving comfortably at a 17 – 18 mph pace, but on some hills I went as low a 6 mph.

Day two started with a long 500 vertical foot climb out of Ithaca. 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. 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 I stayed with the group the remaining 150 miles. It's amazing what a correct tire pressure can do. I 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. Even during a very long segment with the strong wind in our faces we were able to draft and maintain speeds of 17 – 22 mph. 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 wasn't 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 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 like the adjustability of the seat and handlebar positions; it let me customize the positions for my needs. The thumb shifters are great and fall into just the right place for a comfortable ride and easy shifting. The rear disk brake is exceptional, stopping in the rain 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.

At 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 on next years big ride. For this ride I rode with the stock Kenda Kwest 1.5" wide 100-psi tires. I will probably switch to faster tires next year. Other than that, the Linear 3.0 doesn't need much refinement from my point of view. 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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