

Wilier Zero.7

The brand from Triestina has rebooted its lightweight flagship



Words JAMES SPENDER



THE SPEC

Model
Wilier Zero.7

Groupset
Campagnolo Super Record 2015

Deviations
None

Wheels
Mavic Ksyrium SLR

Finishing kit
FSA Energy handlebars, FSA OS-99 stem, Ritchey WCS Carbon seatpost, Selle Italia SLR saddle

Weight
6.7kg (size L)

Price
£7,549

Contact
atb-sales.co.uk

I'm not sure what they teach the kids in Italy, but when I was at school we learnt that you either present a number with all its significant figures or you round to the nearest decimal place. Thus, if I'm given the number 0.799, I can either choose to express it as 0.799 (that's three significant figures, maths fans) or I can round it to 0.8. So when Wilier announced in 2011 that its all-time lightest ever frameset weighed 0.799kg but would be called the Zero.7, I was a little confused.

When its reinvented second iteration came along last summer, still called the Zero.7 and still weighing a claimed 799g, I was a little perturbed. Surely the bike should be called the Zero.8 (or alternatively the Zero.799), and the pedant in me was irked enough to bring up the matter with Wilier product manager Claudio Salomoni.

His response was: 'We officially say that a painted size medium Zero.7 weighs 799g, but in the real world

nearly all size larges are 799g, and the medium is more like 785g or 779g.' Er, that's that cleared up, then.

Seeing the light

Having made a New Year's resolution to stop being such a pedantic mathematical nitpicker, I'll let the Zero.7's slightly misleading name slide. Especially since the Super Record and Ksyrium SLR equipped bike here kissed the *Cyclist* weigh station at a mere 6.7kg. Not bad for a size large.

'We gave the old Zero.7 to the Columbia pro team but we were in trouble with the weight, which was routinely well under the UCI's limit [of 6.8kg] – a limit which is a nonsense, of course!' says Salomoni. 'So although the new Zero.7 is UCI certified, this frame is really for the type of people who ride granfondos, spending eight hours in the saddle and who therefore want a light machine. Going under 6kg is easy if you play with the wheel choice. It is an easy-to-ride bike that won't break' ◀

CUSTOM BUILD

The Zero.7 is available as an off-the-peg bike at £6,499 with Dura-Ace groupset and Mavic Ksyrium SLR wheels, through to a any-part-any-colour bike courtesy of Wilier's Custom Build Programme software. This can be found at wilier.com and is fun to play about on, even if your wallet might not see the funny side.



◊ your back for the people who can afford something special.' Almost as a footnote, Salomoni adds, 'This is not a bike for sprinters,' which, after my first few outings, I'm glad he was honest enough to say.

Stiffness is a tough thing to assess unless a bike is incredibly rigid or floppy, but I was able to determine a certain amount of flex in the Zero.7 frame thanks to the Mavic Ksyrium SLR wheels that it came specced with. The reason is that, firstly, they are a very stiff wheelset and, secondly, their Exalith rim track makes a pronounced whirring noise under braking. The result was that when I went full beans on the bike, it elicited a whirring noise as the frame's rear end flexed torsionally and the brake pads touched the wheel rims – only to a faint degree, but still enough to be noticeable.

For riding's sake

At this point you might be thinking, OK, the bike isn't stiff enough. But don't discount the Wilier Zero.7 just yet.

We're constantly being fed with marketing lines and stats designed to convince us how stiff, light and aero a bike is. If that helps people to choose the right bike for them then fine, but if riding for the pleasure and thrill of it is your thing, ignore the hype. Choose your next bike based on how *you* feel it rides. Only then might you uncover gems like the Zero.7. No

SUPER RECORD

The re-engineered flagship mechanical groupset from Campagnolo is by far its best yet. Upfront shifting is far lighter than on previous generations, with the new four-arm chainset lending the group a pleasingly modern aesthetic. The rear shifting still encompasses the unique five-sprocket shift for a single thumb click – a thing of sheer inspiration.

The ride quality was in evidence on every occasion I rode the Zero.7

it's not the stiffest and it's not explicitly aero, but the Wilier rides and handles impeccably.

Never was the latter so apparent as when I hit a couple of sketchy, frosted sections of road this winter and the Zero.7 somehow kept me upright thanks to the excellent feedback I felt through the controls, and the lightning-quick steering that has all the hallmarks of a top crit bike but without the twitchiness. And as for the former – the ride quality – it was in evidence on every occasion I rode the Zero.7, which might sound a little gushing, but get on board one and you'll realise it's true.

When it comes to the positive steering, I'd put my money where Wilier's mouth is and say it's down to the front assembly. The fork is 'integrated', in that the backside of the crown blends into the underside of the down tube. The result is a proportionally longer head tube (in that it extends further down than it would if ◊



FORK

The integrated fork concept has been borrowed and adapted from Wilier's Cento Uno Air series of aero road bikes, along with an hourglass-profile head tube.



It glides like no other carbon bike, while remaining just about stiff enough

like sandwiching rubber laminates in the handle of a cricket bat. Or, as it happens, in a tennis racket: 'The company that makes the frames for us also produces high-end golf clubs and tennis rackets,' says Salomoni. 'They use this SEI film in the tennis racket frames to dampen vibrations that would otherwise go through the player's hand, wrist and arm.'

It's a sound theory and one that isn't just marketing hype. The Zero.7 glides like no other carbon bike I've ridden, while remaining just about stiff enough. Not stiff enough for a sprinter, but stiff enough for pretty much everyone, and everything, else. And how much sprinting do you really do anyway? ❁

▷ the fork was not integrated), which affords a larger surface area for the down tube to intersect with. With that comes more carbon and ultimately, says Salomoni, a front assembly with more torsional stiffness and hence more responsive steering. However, to achieve the overall level of compliance, feedback and all round smoothness, the Zero.7 is doing something altogether more subtle.

What the deuce?

Adorning the top tube is a host of initialisms that only a very dedicated marketing person could dream up. From the pointlessly descriptive 'IF' (integrated fork – which is plain for all to see anyway) to the almost laughable LIT (Large Inflatable Tube – a manufacturing process that allows more accurate control over the bladder pressure during the carbon moulding process), the Zero.7 finds it impossible to hide its light under a bushel. But there is one technical innovation I think it is entirely right for it to shout about: SEI – or Special Elastic Infiltrated.

The idea with SEI is that viscoelastic film is placed between key layers of carbon sheets, a bit

The detail



The Zero.7 doesn't just wear its heart on its top tube – it has its lungs, kidneys and liver plastered all over it too, such is the amount of TOSH present (Tremendously Over-embellished Superfluous Hyperbole). Joining SEI (Special Elastic Infiltrated) and LIT (Large Inflatable Tube) is In Mold HS; Nanoparticle ZnO treatment; Carbon 60 Ton and IC. Ultimately, knowing what each of these stands for has limited benefits – the ride quality of the Zero.7 speaks for itself – but should you be interested, the full technical intricacies are explained at length on Wilier's website.