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## BIKE REVIEWS

### ROUNDTAIL

## Delia Hybrid

MSRP : \$1299.00 Weight : 25 lbs 13 oz Issue : Nov 2012



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### EDITORIAL REVIEW

This bike certainly has a distinctive look. Instead of the time-tested and proven rear triangle, it has a circle. The "round tail" is designed to do more than visually set the bike apart; designer and cyclist Lou Tortolla thought a deviation from the usual triangle shape would reduce the amount of road vibration traveling through the frame, alleviating the amount of discomfort and fatigue experienced by the rider. The result—conjoined seat- and chain stays—replaces the traditional rear triangle with a rear circle. The company claims its tests show that, compared with a standard rear-triangle frame, the Roundtail is 10 times more vertically compliant than a traditional bike, and absorbs 60 times the amount of road vibrations. The design is available in three versions: the Shimano Deore-equipped Delia we tested; the San Massimo, a 26-inch mountain bike; and the Campitello, a 29er.

On the road, it feels pretty good—more so than I expected. My first impression was that the ride feel was pretty "normal;" my subsequent impressions grew increasingly positive. The frame feels very stiff, zippy and efficient. It's speedy and quite rigid-feeling, with responsive handling. On my initial ride I was even tempted to try out a local cyclocross course—it has that kind of ride, the kind that will tempt you into foolhardy behavior. I didn't get that far (I was wearing the wrong shoes), but I did pedal my bike down a gravel and dirt path. The stiffness that turns leg power into motion on pavement became a little jolting on the sections dominated by gravel, but otherwise it felt good with the light off-roading. The positioning is somewhat upright, making it a fabulous commuter or errand-runner. The disc brakes are a smart touch for this bike's likely usage, and add nicely to the round aesthetic. At 25.8 pounds, it's a little heavy, but considering the extra material in the rear, it's very reasonable. Besides, the weight isn't noticeable when you're pedaling, only when you lift the bike onto a hook or your car.

There is not avoiding this bike's unusual aesthetics. My work colleagues were amused by the design, my children were fascinated, and passersby's rubbernecked shamelessly. My husband took one look and rode it off a ramp to test its bounce-deflection. (The Roundtail passed his test.) If you enjoy a speedy ride, and don't mind explaining your bike to random people, this is one bike you should try.—Christine Bucher

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