

PORTLAND PRIDE

A 'cross bike that's meant to be

Sage Bicycles is one of the industry's newer bike companies, having been founded in 2012 by David Rosen. With a direct focus on titanium, Sage has pushed to resurrect the metals of old and remind riders that there is more to frame design than the "average carbon machine." Cyclocross has been growing in popularity in North America, especially in the Northwest and the PDXCX is Sage's cyclocross bike designed specifically for the rigors of racing in the Pacific Northwest. Although we lack the loam that the rainy climes of Portland have in abundance, we put this 'cross ripper to the test in the Southern California drypack.

THE GEAR

Helmet: Lazer Z1

Jersey: Nalini '70 Linea

Bib: Giordana

Shoes: Sidi Tiger

Socks: Giant

Glasses: 100% Speedcraft





Added triangulation helps diminish any brake-induced flex.



Top tube cable routing is key for cyclocross.

THE FRAME

The American-made PDXCX was designed for cyclocross racing, but has a certain level of versatility with clearance to run up to 42c tires for gravel and adventure riding. The geometry is compact, with our size-54cm feeling a touch smaller than other CX bikes we

have tested. Sage uses 3/2.5 titanium for the frame tubing for a comfortable balance between weight and stiffness. While some companies have gone with the harder and stiffer 6/4 alloy for certain tubes, Sage opted for more compliance. Cyclocross courses can be filled with sand, water and other

grit that can wreak havoc on bearings and require more maintenance, but Sage uses an English threaded bottom bracket to help increase longevity.

Sage uses oversized tubing and a bi-ovalized downtube to increase frame stiffness and responsiveness. Up front is a 44mm

head tube for better handling and stability on the CX course. External cable routing with Sage's patented Cable Clip System (CCS) that runs the shifter cables along the top of the top tube help maintain a clean, classic look while keeping them out of the muck. The CCS system allows riders to run mechanical or electronic drivetrains by simply removing the clip. We also liked the hidden fender mounts, which are the perfect touch for wet-weather commuting.

One of the most unique aspects of Sage is their ordering process. Everything is done online, and riders have the option to choose from several different Shimano and SRAM drivetrains, along with wheels, hard parts and bar tape to build a custom bike. After picking the frame size and drivetrain, Sage offers several different decal kits for a level of personalization.

THE PARTS

There are plenty of drivetrain options when building up your Sage. Our test bike was built with a SRAM 1x Force Hydro kit. The cassette was oriented for 'cross racing with an aggressive 11-28 range. The HED Ardennes Plus LT wheels came tubeless-ready and were easy to set up with the Clement tires. Sage offers a carbon 3T and Enve cockpit, but for the sake of keeping the price a little leaner, we opted for an alloy setup. Wrapping up the build was an Enve fork and external Chris King headset.

THE RIDE

Swinging a leg over our test bike, we noticed that the geometry and cockpit were a little more compact than we were expecting, but we were still able to find a comfortable fit. We dropped the stack height down and could've gone with a slightly longer stem than the 100mm that came stock. Once we hit the dirt, the compact geometry felt playful and lively, responding to our every command. We ventured out onto longer adventure and gravel rides and were comfortable during the longer hours.

The Sage provides a seriously smooth ride that comfortably glides over rough terrain. The compact geometry allowed us to shift our weight effectively and confidently to take more aggressive lines. At high speeds and out-of-the-saddle sprinting, the front end was precise and responsive. We never felt that the Sage wasn't stiff enough, especially when climbing. The oversized tubes

did create a bike that is responsive but not harsh on rough terrain.

THE VERDICT

The Sage PDXCX is a very purpose-built machine with plenty of spunk to convert any type of rider to titanium. While we were plenty impressed with the overall ride quality, the progressive ordering process that Sage provides is a value-added added bonus. ■

PUNCH LINES

- Comfortable and lively
- Stable handling
- Customizable ordering process

STATS

Price: \$2900 (frameset), \$6,812 (as tested)

Weight: 19.25 pounds

Sizes: 50, 52, 54 (tested), 56, 58, 60, 62

www.sagetitanium.com

