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KÚ CYCLE TF1

New bikes are a popular theme for triathletes. Be it on your own level or just novelties on the market for professional athletes.
Probably no bike has created so many discussions in recent years as the "TF1" of the Dutch provider Kú Cycle, that has been recently introduced.
The popular term "disruptive" is a perfect match in this case. For Kú this is the case in more ways than one, next to the looks (that need getting use to) is also the sales model: The TF1 is only available from a select few bike fitters and only after a prior bike fit measurement. Only then is the tailor-made frame manufactured in Asia. Here then, existing modules made of carbon are cut accordingly, then glued together and finally painted. The finished product is also available in a custom paint scheme.
The result (according to the manufacturer ten weeks after measurement, can be picked up back at the bike fitter) is then a really unique one, ideally fits like a glove - and therefore is intended only for one athlete. It is possible of course to make the usual modifications like cockpit height changes, seat height changes and little things like width of arm pads and inclination of the extensions. However, that is based then on the platform of the fitting coordinates from athlete X instead of a finished graduated bikesize from XS to XL. The fact the fitter's measurements are very decisive in this process seems pretty evident. That's why Kú only focusses on a small number of sales representatives in the German-speaking areas. Because of that and because of the price (the complete bike is only available in the five-digit range) it will probably at first remain with a rather focussed and exclusive target customer group. On the other hand, if you are interested in a premium bike model, other manufacturers operate in this same price range.
With the TF1, the customer receives a bike however that in addition to the factor, "made to measure" differs from all others. Most obviously next to the extreme flat and therefore somehow compact effective silhouette of the frame in particular is the special fork. Or rather the whole front part of the bike, which is connected to the fork blades. This - another unique selling point at Kú - varies depending on the size of the rider in length by a full 180 millimetres. This means the cockpit moves with an increasing bike-size always further upwards of the rider positioned over the cockpit. Unlike other providers, the extensions and "spacer towers" are positioned very close to the rider. This makes this areas look much more compact than ten centimeter or more spacers between base bars and arm pads. Presumably an advantage in terms of aerodynamics. One idea behind it, from the massive space that the front wheel gains as a result, the frontal air flowing in should be better directed around the frame and the legs of the rider. This is only possible through the use of disc brakes, since braking is only carried out on the hub and no longer on the fork crown and here suddenly there is design freedom. The fact that this has been exhausted more than once on the TF1 is proven by the compressed shape of the front "frame triangle". Here, too, there is an extremely









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large amount of space between the down tube and the front wheel. There currently seems to be a trend that unites all new phenomena: Either there is a lot of space between the rotating wheel and the rest of the bike (like here) or very little like on the rear triangle, just as it is appropriate from an aerodynamic point of view and the current state of technology and computer simulation.

The fact that a lot of simulation was done during the development is due, among other things, to the fact that one of the heads behind Kú Cycle comes from the field of Formula 1. Before Richard McAinsh worked with Alex Bok (the second person behind Kú Cycle), he was responsible for aerodynamics at 3T and before that he was heavily involved in everything to do with aerodynamics and fiber-composites in racing teams such as Ferrari and Benetton.

Because Kú has recognized that the TF1 will primarily be aimed at ambitious athletes and they will probably travel with their bikes more than once a year, a feature has been considered that will especially please frequent flyers.

Thanks to the special fork shape, it can be decoupled from the rest of the bike and positioned around the frame to save space. In addition to a connector, which allows the hydraulic brake lines to be opened without tools, it is also practical that the TF1 packing size is significantly more compact than normal bikes. You can also get on the plane with a second suitcase, instead of a bulky and expensive bike box.

The fact that the TF1 cannot be ordered from the local bike shop or online- direct, but only from selected bike fitters, certainly makes sense here. Because the target group has probably visited these sales channels already more than once on their quest looking for optimization.

Further tests in the wind tunnel, velodromes and outdoors around the world will have to show whether the effort is worthwhile and how good the TF1 really is. We will of course stay tuned in on these developments.

Our prognosis: If the TF1 should bring in the first results with good bike splits, then the sceptics will also think again about how important the looks of a bike optimized for aerodynamics really is.