

# Kinesis AITHEIN

£1,380  
kinesisbikes.co.uk

It's an unashamedly racing-focused British-designed bike

**T**HE BRITISH-DESIGNED Kinesis Aithein is unashamedly aimed at racing, with a focus on its tube and frame design being ultimate stiffness and power transfer. Is this the holy grail of performance aluminium we've been searching for? It's available as a £649 frame-only option or can be supplied with a choice of road build kits. The bike you see here is spec'd with the firm's Shimano 105 kit give or take a few notable substitutions.

### FRAME AND FORKS

The Aithein features what the firm calls a "Superplastic Formed" alloy frame with tapered carbon fork. This process of tube construction requires the aluminium to be heated above 450°C, allowing the manipulation of the material to achieve more complicated tube shapes in a thinner construction. Evidenced in the slab-fronted seat-tube, it's proof that

Kinesis is serious about stiffness; it anchors the frame and allows the rest of the tubes to be very light in order to achieve the goal of a responsive yet lightweight race-ready bike. Power transfer is increased further by a BB86 bottom bracket at the base of this rock-solid seat-tube. Stout, splayed chainstays compound the overall impression of instant power, while a tapered head-tube, now de rigueur on many road bikes, allows for a biddable front end. One area in which this frame is bettered by the other two on test is the neatness of its welds; the Trek and BMC's tubes have much neater junctions.

### THE KIT

So here's where the Kinesis has another advantage over the other two. The most important difference between the Aithein and its rivals is the use of the firm's own Racelight wheelset. A £300 upgrade, it's very welcome, shaves a little weight off the total bulk of the bike and spins up more willingly than the BMC's Shimano



"Make no mistake, the Aithein lives up to its billing as a bike to race on"



Tektro long-drop brakes are solid performers.



Super-stiff seat-tube is at the heart of the Aithein's frame.



Kinesis Aon saddle is the comfiest of the bunch.

wheels. The Racelight hoops, like the Bontragers of the Trek Emonda, are tubeless-ready. Their 25c Continental tyres can be run at lower pressures than the 23c tyres of our other two bikes, for a bigger contact patch and lessened rolling resistance. The groupset here uses Shimano's dependable 105 series for the majority of its parts. The shifters, plus front and rear derailleurs and cassette are all 105 equipment, and the 11-28 spread of ratios is very well matched to a 52/36

five-arm, non-series Shimano chainset. Not using a 105 chainset helps keep the price of this build down.

### THE RIDE

Make no mistake, the Aithein lives up to its billing as a bike to race on. Your purchase decision comes down to whether you're looking for the most direct, responsive bike for circuit racing or whether you need a bike that blends this urgency with a smattering of manners. Out of the saddle

sprints reveal a peppy acceleration as a result of the über-stiff frameset and lighter wheelset, but we did need to have our wits about us as the Aithein's rear end was almost twitchy at times under hard efforts (not a problem on super-smooth tarmac, but given the state of most of the UK's backroads, worth bearing in mind).

Taking the 25c tyres down to 85psi increases ride comfort and if you're looking to spend all day in the saddle,

you'll not find a more cosy perch among these three bikes than the Kinesis Aon saddle; it's gentle upward curve at the rear makes it a good choice for long-distance rides.

Precision from the front end is consistently very good, and a measure of vibe-reducing compliance is provided by the tapered carbon forks. Special mention also goes to the effective Tektro brakes; they have plenty of bite and consistency.

| PROS                             | CONS  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| + Genuinely ready to race        | - Sometimes stiff to the point of jarring                   |
| + Easily the best wheels on test | - You'll need to sharpen your reactions to match the bike's |

**VERDICT**  
**PERFORMANCE VALUE OVERALL**  
Definitely a bike you could race, and for a fraction of the cost of a high-end carbon bike. A sharp performer that rewards hard efforts.