



**Biketest**



**DAN JOYCE**

Until recently, Dan's town bike was a fixed-wheel Ridgeback Solo World. His time trial/turbo bike is a modified Surly Steamroller

# Spa Cycles Audax Mono

Fixed-wheel bikes have fallen out of fashion but still make great commuters, winter trainers and more. **Dan Joyce** tests an £800 model from Spa Cycles

## Other options



**DOLAN FXE ALUMINIUM FIXIE**  
£699.98+

Aluminium fixie with steeper angles than the Spa but still with rack and mudguard mounts. Fitted with a flip-flop 120mm hub and 57mm-drop sidepull brakes.  
[dolan-bikes.com](http://dolan-bikes.com)



**GENESIS FLYER**  
£699

Commuter-focused singlespeed with cable disc brakes, 35mm tyres and a wider rear axle spacing and chainline. Lacks the pep of a lightweight fixie.  
[genesishikes.co.uk](http://genesishikes.co.uk)

**W**hile the fixie fad has long since faded, you still see a fair few metropolitan singlespeeds with bullhorn handlebars and cheap parts. What's far less common is the classic, drop-bar fixed-wheel bike with mudguards – a bike beloved of roadies in search of *souplesse*, experienced commuters and audax riders with a mad gleam their eye.

The Spa Cycles Audax Mono is one such. I planned to test it alongside a Dolan FXE but couldn't get hold of one in time. Aside from the Genesis Flyer, which has turned into the old Day One 10 ([cyclinguk.org/genesis-day-one](http://cyclinguk.org/genesis-day-one)), pickings are thin. Which is why this is, literally, a Mono bike test.

## Frame & fork

Like a lot of fixies, the Audax Mono has a steel frame. It's TIG welded from Reynolds 725 chrome-moly. But it differs in two important respects: it has practical frame fittings, including separate eyelets for a rear rack; and the geometry is more audax bike than track bike.

The head tube is taller and the seat tube is only 72.5 degrees, so you can sit up and back more instead of being forced down into a hand-numbing racing crouch. A shallower head angle and longer chainstays yield a more stable ride,

which is particularly welcome on high-cadence descents. The front-centres distance is longer too, reducing the likelihood of toe overlap. (Note that the effective wheelbase and chainstay length will depend on rear wheel setback.)

I often upsize when choosing road bikes, to win toe room and get a high-enough handlebar. I didn't have to with the Audax Mono: the 54cm model was roomy and tall enough, once I'd added another 5mm spacer – something the longer fork steerer allowed.

The fork is carbon, with an aluminium steerer, on all Audax Monos except the smallest. The 50cm model uses a steel fork, presumably with more offset. All have mudguard mounts.

There's just enough room here, front and rear, for 28mm tyres and mudguards. It's fairly tight, however, as the frame and fork don't utilise all of the space available from 57mm-drop sidepulls. Check out the brake block positions (top right).

As well as black, the Audax Mono is offered in this metallic bronze and in Mediterranean blue.

## Components

For a budget bike, the Audax Mono has nice wheels. Sturdy 17mm cyclocross rims are laced to Sturmey Archer hubs with good-quality, well-tensioned spokes. They're absolutely true and look likely to stay that way.