

## RTR Product Review #250



### KHS Milano Tandem

# The Dynamic Duo's Tandem Review

By Lori and Richard Garratt

I have been an avid road biker for nearly 40 years. My wife Lori, on the other hand, has only recently taken up biking after spending many lonely afternoons at home, or rescuing me from flats or pure exhaustion. We decided to become tandem riders in order to spend more quality time together. Best decision we ever made. We have had

some great times together in the last two years. If any of you single riders are thinking about becoming a "dynamic duo" with your significant other, I would say, go for it.

The Tandem we are reviewing is the 2018 KHS Milano in blue velvet gloss, which is their top of the line tandem model. My wife Lori would describe it more as an "electric

*The KHS Milano tandem sports a very nice selection of components for a sub-\$2000.00 tandem. A new team could rack up a lot of reliable miles before thinking about an upgrade.*

blue." My first thought was "who is KHS?" I had heard of the company but knew very little about them. So, being inquisitive, I took to the intranet. KHS Bicycles Inc. was founded in 1974 as an American based company distributing the KHS brand of bicycles. Its mission is to design, manufacture and distribute moderately priced and high-quality bicycles and accessories. Although an American based company, the bicycles are manufactured in Taiwan. KHS manufactures mountain, road and touring bicycles, as well as tandems and cruisers.



The bike was delivered to our house fully assembled and ready to ride, with only a few minor adjustments to the seat posts, handlebars, etc. My wife and I were ready to ride within 30 minutes (minus the wife, more like 10 minutes). My first impression looking at the bike was that it was a sturdy, solidly built bike with adequate components. When I picked up the bike, I was surprised with how light it was compared to the older Santana Arriva Lori and I were previously riding. All the welds were clean and uniform, and the fit and finish were exceptional for a bike in this price range. I was also pleasantly surprised to see that the Milano came fit with disc brakes, front and rear...What I thought would be a huge plus (more on this later).



*KHS spec'd Bengal MB700T, Mechanical Disc brakes with 203mm Rotors for the aluminum-framed Milano. Total weight is under 40 lbs.*



*Above: Bright colors and eye-pleasing graphics are part of the package; KHS-branded chainrings have a precision-machined appearance, 50/39/30 ratios. Below: Shimano Tiagra derailleurs front and rear, 11-32 rear cassette provided easy, reliable shifts and range for our test team.*



**Our First Ride**

For this review, Lori and I did several our usual 30-mile loop with a variation of flats and moderately steep hills. Having ridden this route many times before we thought it would be a great testing ground. Within the first mile, we were both impressed with the solid ride and smooth shifting. On our first steep climb when shifting into the "granny gear," there was no missed gear, or chain

slippage. It shifted confidently resulting in an easy climb. On our first downhill, my wife, who usually tells me to slow down, was oddly silent. (I turned making sure I hadn't lost her). Surprisingly, she was still there and feeling safe and secure! The Milano really descended and handled well at greater downhill speeds. Now, about the disc brakes...I was looking forward to testing the stopping power behind the Bengal MB700T, Mechanical Disc brakes.

The amount of force required on the levers was close to that of other tandems I have ridden with rim brakes. However, entry-level tandem riders who don't have exposure to the many different types of braking systems will likely find these brakes more than adequate. At the end of our ride, Lori and I were in agreement that the Milano had exceeded both our expectations with the bikes overall performance.

**Comfort**

The bikes captain's position fit naturally for my 5'10" frame. Once the seat was adjusted, no other adjustments were needed. It felt natural and comfortable. The seat comfort was adequate, but riders would probably prefer an upgrade on that fairly quickly. The stoker's position needed a bit more adjusting for my 5'7" wife. Once the seat and handlebars were both adjusted it was a comfortable riding position for her. The comfort of the stoker's seat was the same; adequate, but could use an upgrade.

**Seat Posts**

The captain's seat post on the Milano comes standard with an alloy micro adjust post. This allows for adjustment up and down and is a rigid setup. The stoker has an alloy suspension micro adjust post, giving it minimal shock absorbance ability. Better than nothing but not near what Lori is used to which is a Cirrus body float. Yes, she is a bit spoiled. However, seeing that this is an entry-level tandem, it should serve very well for most bums.

**Stability**

Having ridden the Milano over a wide range of road surfaces and terrain, overall it felt fairly responsive and smooth. No unusual negative traits were noted during our trial period.

**Components**

If you're a novice to riding tandems/ biking, the component group included with the Milano will be more than adequate. The shifters were Shimano Tiagra STI's and derailleurs were Shimano Tiagra giving the bike precise and accurate shifting under most all conditions. I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the shifters.

**Miscellaneous**

The Milano is available in two sizes: small, 20"x16" and medium, 23' x 21". Fine-tuning




*Above left: Barrell adjustors for the shifter cables are a nice touch on the Milano; Tiegra brifters and derailleurs give the captain full control of the team's future. Above right: Nothing much more personal and subjective than bicycle saddles, but our test team found the KHS padded road saddles to provided a nice enough ride. Alloy suspension post for the stoker is a nice – and appreciated – touch.*

your fit requires raising and lowering the seat posts and handlebar stems. The model Lori and I tested, the Milano, has a MSRP of \$2099.

**Summary**

Lori and I enjoyed our time on the Milano. We both agreed that the Milano would be an excellent choice for any duos looking to transition into the world of tandems. There

are a fair amount of choices in the tandem market, but many of them come with a hefty price tag. The Milano allows you to get into the tandem world on a more than decent ride without breaking the bank. Once you're hooked and gain experience, you can begin to look at some of the higher priced tandems, but the Milano should serve you well for quite a while. 

KHS Milano Tandem Specs	
BB to BB Distance . . . . .	28.5"
Bottom Brackets . . . . .	Cartridge Power Spline
Brake L e v e r s . . . . .	Shimano Tiagra STI
Brakes . . . . .	Bengal MB700T, Mechanical Disc, 203mm Rotors
C a s s e t t e . . . . .	Shimano CS-HG500, 11-32T, 10-Speed
Chain . . . . .	KMC X10
C o b r e . . . . .	Blue Velvet Gloss
C r a n k s e t . . . . .	KHS Forged, 50/39/30 Alloy
Deraileurs F/R . . . . .	Shimano Tiagra
E c c e n t r . . . . .	Adjustable
Fork . . . . .	Chromoly w/Disk Brake Tabs
F r a m e . . . . .	6061 Aluminum Alloy, TIG Welded
Handlebars F/R . . . . .	Alloy Compact Drop, Double Butted
Headset . . . . .	1-1/8" Threadless
Hubs F/R . . . . .	Alloy QR Disc; Alloy w/Cassette
M S R P . . . . .	\$2099.00
P e d a l s . . . . .	Wellgo Alloy
Rim s . . . . .	Weinmann XC180 Disc, Double Wall w/eyelets
Saddles F/R . . . . .	KHS Road Padded; KHS Ladies Road Padded
Seat Posts F/R . . . . .	Alloy Micro Adjust Alloy Micro Adjust
S h i f t e r s . . . . .	Shimano Tiagra STI
Size . . . . .	Medium 23" x 21"
Spoke Count F/R . . . . .	40
Spokes . . . . .	14G, Black
Stems F / R . . . . .	Threadless 3D Forged Alloy 17D x 31.8; Alloy adjustable
Tires . . . . .	700x28c Maxxis Re-Fuse w/Puncture Resistant Maxxshield
Water Cage Bosses . . . . .	3
Weight . . . . .	39.66 lbs.
Wheelbase . . . . .	68.25"