



GIANT TCR COMPOSITE 0

Price: £2,749

Weight: 8.1kg

Sizes: S, M, M/L, L (tested), XL

Frame and fork: Giant carbon-fibre frame with press-fit 'PowerCore' bottom bracket and OverDrive head tube. Carbon-fibre fork with 1 1/8in-1 1/2in steerer.

Wheels: 23-622 Giant P-R3 tyres, Giant P-SL1 wheels

Transmission: Shimano Ultegra 50-34 chainset, Shimano integrated bottom bracket, Shimano Ultegra 11-28 10-speed cassette, Shimano Ultegra Di2 shifters and derailleurs. 20-speed, 32-121 inches.

Braking: Shimano Ultegra sidepulls

Steering & seating: Giant Connect SL handlebar and stem, Giant TCR Vector composite saddle, Fizik Arione mg saddle

Contact: giant-bicycles.com

costs £2,749, while the Composite 1, with the same frame, fork and wheels but a mechanical Ultegra transmission, is a tempting £1,899. That's £850 less, which would buy you a fairly spectacular wheelset. Brilliant though Di2 is, the extra cost is hard to justify.

ROAD BIKE WITH ELECTRONIC SHIFTING

Giant TCR Composite 0

Push-button, battery-powered shifting has trickled down from Dura-Ace to Ultegra. Is it worth it, wonders journalist **Mike Davis**

GIANT'S TCR Composite 0 is the top of the TCR Composite range, with a full carbon fibre frame and fork and race-inspired geometry. While Giant pushes the TCR's race heritage, it's a convincing all-rounder for fast recreational riding (like sportives). And despite the chunky appearance of the frame and deep-section seatpost, it's comfortable enough for the long haul.

My first ride on it out of the box was a century (of the proper Imperial sort) over somewhat mixed road surfaces, and it was fine. The frame clearances are close but not so tight that you couldn't get a 25mm tyre in if you prefer. Unsurprisingly, there are no mudguard or rack bosses.

Sat on the electric fence

The big selling point of this particular TCR is Shimano's Ultegra Di2 electronic transmission, with buttons triggering motorised derailleurs rather than cables pulling them. The derailleurs are both quite bulky, but the system as a whole is neat, with the cables hidden inside the frame and the battery mounted to a pair of bosses under the left-hand chainstay. Di2 takes a little getting used to if

you're coming off mechanical STI. The basic ergonomics are similar, but with fixed brake levers. There's a tall button on the side of the lever blade for shifts to larger sprockets (or chainring), and a smaller paddle behind the lever goes the other way. Rather than having to swing levers and paddles through a substantial arc to shift, Di2 is like clicking a mouse button. It's astonishingly fast and easy, especially at the front. There's a distinct whirr from the front derailleurs, while the rear one is both quieter and further away.

Ergonomically it's not perfect: there's not much of a click so the only sign that you've pressed a button is that it gets easier (or harder) to pedal. And the buttons are quite closely-spaced and can initially be hard to locate when wearing full-finger gloves.

Charging from flat takes 1 1/2 hours and range will depend on shifts, but Shimano claim approx 700km (435 miles). Anyone intending to ride even half that far without access to power probably also wants a lower bottom gear than 32 inches, which is as low as Di2 gets – on standard wheels.

You pay a substantial premium for electronic shifting. The Composite 0



1 The rear mech is effectively silent in use

2 The battery should last about 400 miles between charges

Also consider



1) Canyon Ultimate CF SLX 7.0 Di2 £2,909

A little more expensive than the Giant, but built around a spectacular 790g frame and fitted with Mavic Ksyrium Elite wheels. canyon.com



2) Trek Madone 4.9 £2,600

A couple of downgrades from full Ultegra (chainset and brakes) help Trek bring in a Di2-equipped carbon bike at a more accessible price. trekbikes.co.uk