



### 🏆 Race&

Steppen in Zwolle  
 EK Roeifietsen  
 EK Ligfietsen Leer  
 London-Edinburgh  
 Kievietseieren

### 🚗 Verkeer

Forens, wat let je  
 Snelfietspad  
 Kans op regen 8%

### 🚲 Toer&

Fietseiland Jersey  
 Naar Noordkaap

# Ligfiets&

Jaargang 25

2009-5

Uitgegeven door de Nederlandse Vereniging voor Human Powered Vehicles



# Follow the Nazca Gaucho

Source: NVHPV  
Photos: Hankie Bos  
Author: Jos Hendriks



Škoda Octavia PS  
Bild: Skoda

**For me, Nazca is a bit like the Škoda brand of cars. Both brands stand for trouble-free products without much fuss, for people who are not so interested in image building or superfluous trimmings. What you see is what you get. The Cruiser could be the Fabia; the more luxurious Paseo should be the Octavia. If you're looking for a station wagon, you would choose the Pioneer of course.**

So far, so good.

But that started changing slowly. More and more people were realizing just how good that price-quality ratio was. Sales increased, and along with that, the different wishes. And so Škoda came up with turbo and five cylinders. Nazca rolled out its Fuego. But then Škoda produced the Superb. A car in the top segment with ultimate class: they don't come bigger and more luxurious than this. Would Nazca take up the challenge?

For sure: the Gaucho 28" Ultegra is here. Owner Henk van der Woerd wanted to climb the Mont Ventoux and stripped his Gaucho of everything that was superfluous: bike stand, mudguards, 26" wheels and so on. Then he got hold of all the smart and light parts he could to build 'his' bike: Shimano Ultegra SL crank set, derailleurs and racing brakes, carbon seat, aero steering, 28" Mavic Ksyrium Equipe wheels, 23 mm Continental GP4000s tires, air suspension. And for the rest, nothing at all, actually.

It took a lot of urging, but finally I was permitted to use this bicycle, which is very special to Henk, for an endurance test. The maximum top speed measured was 75 km/h, so it has been well run in. This is one of the two white Nazcas. The other one often turns up as top dog on tracks with a lot of bends and regularly makes things very hard for me. Along with the selection of parts, this Nazca screams speed. And I am not quite used to that. A bit like a Škoda in a WTCC race version. You do believe it exists, but at first instance it looks a little strange. Your neighbor has a Škoda too, doesn't he? One of those grey ones? This is an entirely different thing...

Nazca presents this 28" Gaucho especially as a fast touring bicycle. Nazca won't say the word 'racer' itself, but does emphasize that a 26" or 24" version is better for a touring bike. As far as I can see, no mudguards or stand will be delivered.

I am testing this bicycle mainly on my route from home to work. The route has a couple of small, short but steep climbs. Part of it goes through a built-up area, but in another part you can ride at top speed. There is also a section through a golf course, where the peaceful bike path meanders wonderfully. In other words: a great place to evaluate this bicycle on all of its merits.

## Handling

On the first ride to my work I checked the computer for accuracy. I really flew up the slopes and approached the top speed of my low racer. At first, taking curves was a little tense due to your high position as bike rider. It means you have to travel further sideways when you 'drop' into a bend. A big advantage of sitting so high is that you can often estimate the apex of a bend better, allowing you to ride faster and more safely through the curves. The large wheels combined with the Chromoly frame with air suspension provide a smooth ride over any cobblestones. The bike feels light. A very small detail was that the ever so narrow tires got 'stuck' one time along a longitudinal corrugation, making me lose balance slightly. When you put all this together, it means it is easy to reach high speeds and maintain speed with the Gaucho 'racing' bike. When you are riding a low rider it is not very pleasant to be chasing a moped like a dog hot on the tail of a cat, as the exhaust gases get blown straight into your lungs. You don't have this problem with the high Gaucho, and partly thanks to that fact I have used moped riders several times to get to work earlier. Which is fun.

## Steering

What strikes me straight away is of course the aero steering (or German-style handlebars). Initially I found it a bit strange because I had to flex my upper arms

to be able to hold the handlebars. On the other hand, your forearms are very relaxed and you can make absolutely any kind of steering movement you need to. The bar ends are at the end of the handlebars. That does mean you have to shift your hands to choose a different gear. Thumb shifters and twist shifters can be fitted, but bar end shifters do seem to be the best for these handlebars. Furthermore, you can fit all kinds of accessories. Compared with hamster handlebars, the aerodynamics seem to be just as good. However, a great bonus point is that your arms aren't so jammed up against your chest. Especially if you have problems with the closeness of hamster handlebars, aero steering is definitely a terrific solution. After a few days' riding, steering just feels wonderfully relaxed and comfortable to me.

## But what about the bike

As I said, you're off and away the moment you touch a pedal. As soon as you start pedaling, the Gaucho sprints off like a gazelle on the steppe. The chainline is very straight and runs over a chain guide so that all the power from the pedal goes to the back hub. You never get the slightest impression that even a little energy ends up in the suspension. Changing gear with bar end shifters is always fantastic and with aero steering the shifters are at the right position. Because of the large 28" wheels (at last, 'real wheels' in a recumbent bicycle) your heel can sometimes hit the wheel, but really only if you're turning around on the bike path. The short wheel base means that for the rest such strong steering movement is unnecessary. You do need to pay some attention to the fact that the bike reacts immediately if you're coming from a lazy, long wheel base bike but this does fit the concept of the bike perfectly. You look, and your bike steers with you. Just the way it should. Because it is actually a standard Nazca frame, the reclining angle can be adjusted to three settings. >

# Nazca Gaucho





*Flat spokes, beautiful Mavic hub, more nice details*

*Ultegra dérailleur, 10 speed cassette, ultralight chain... nice parts!*

The seat angle is also adjustable, keeping everybody satisfied. The seat never ends up lying as extremely flat as with a low racer, and that makes your average randonneur happy.

Choosing gears means you can pedal all differences in height without any problem. The light wheels ensure swift acceleration. The clear view means you can get around curves nice and fast.

Furthermore, the angle of inclination of the seat allows you to maintain these speeds for a long time.

So there you have it: a great, stiff randonneur that's great to be on. >



*Bar-end shifters,  
so simple can it be.*

## Fittings

In theory Nazca uses the traditional materials to build the bike. Chromoly for the main frame and the back axle. As with all more luxurious models, the main frame is connected by gusset plates to the rear bridge and the back section. The back section consists of two curved, thin tubes that stab diagonally upwards. Normally Nazca would have all kinds of studs for V-brakes, disc brakes, bike stands and mudguards, but this frame has none of that. Functionally naked. The aluminum front fork is black and has nothing more than the race brake and the particularly beautiful Mavic wheel.

The handlebars are also bare because the cables of the bar end shifters run nicely through the bars. Need I add anything at all about Ultegra derailleurs? Just have a look.

I didn't have high expectations of the race brakes, but they did stop me a few times to my great satisfaction (and that of the motorist).

Further, the carbon seat and the Ultegra crank set complete the show. A truly stunning bicycle to look at. In the end the bike still weighs a fair bit at around 14 kilograms. But you don't seem to notice that when you are riding up the mountain, and it is nice to know that your frame is basically just as strong as all the other Nazcas.

## Price-quality

If you are going to fit Shimano Ultegra, carbon seat and Mavic wheels, then you know one thing: this is not going to be a cheap budget Nazca the way the Cruiser is.

In this scandalously beautiful version, the Gaucho is going to cost around €2,600. And perhaps that is a lot of money for a Nazca, but for that money you have a high racer that will have racing bike riders definitely watching you admiringly on non-competitive rides. And that is very nice to know if you want to ride another 240 km with them.

It is difficult to make comparisons.

If you take half a minute to check out the specifications, you will see that the Gaucho 28" is definitely an excellent buy.

The Gaucho 28" seems to be a little cheaper than the competition. But this competition is called M5 and Challenge, and they are definitely brands that have the name and reputation for making fast, beautiful machines.

The Gaucho can certainly be compared with an M5 Shockproof 26". In that case, the Nazca wins on points. It is cheaper and rides at least just as fast. Moreover, it seems to be stiffer.

With the Seiran we can make the comparison with the SL. The SL has no suspension, is much lighter and can even be supplied with aero steering. It is an aluminum bike without suspension and therefore much more rigid. It is a little more expensive but also a lot lighter. Personal preferences about the appearance of a bike, the choice of frame material and weight versus the desire for suspension will have to be the deciding factor here.

## Conclusion

Can Nazca compete with the big names of the high racers? Yes!

As far as I am concerned, with this Gaucho 28" Nazca has produced a very nice racer (yes indeed!).

The Gaucho is an extremely capable bicycle for anybody who actually wants to ride fast but does not feel like flying low. It can mean the transition for racing bike riders who don't want to leave their racing group. Really Ger van Donselaar should have done this test too, in his comparison of various high racers. This Gaucho would have prodded the others into some furious action.

Nazca has proved with this bike that it is right up there with the more expensive, faster brands.

The Gaucho 28" is available at a price that is quite reasonable.

It steers smoothly, reacts directly but good-naturedly and is very suitable for long trips at high speed.

Nazca has therefore delivered superb work.

A proper gift for our recumbent bike riders on its 10 year anniversary. Follow the Nazca rider!

## Reaction from the manufacturer

For me this bike is the counterpart of the classic racing bike – built to go fast and therefore a real racing bike, but in practice used as a fast tourer, just like 99% of the classic racing bikes.

That a very narrow tire has problems with longitudinal corrugations applies to every erect racing bike as well. It is certainly one of the things you have to watch out for, but I don't really experience it as annoying any more. The specifications will say that 28 mm is the maximum width to be used for the tires.

Instead of the aero steering you can also choose the new A-head folding handlebars; low handlebars are not possible.