

Review of Sicasso Wheelset

When I was asked if I wanted to test a set of Sicasso carbon wheels my initial reaction was “Hell yeah!”.

With a new bike on the way that I’d outlaid a ton of cash on, I felt I needed to get across that I was in now way in a position to buy a set. “Just ride them, tell us what you think” was the reply from Michael at Sicasso.

Well then, don’t mind if I do..

My new bike was set to arrive, a Canyon Ultimate CF-SLX w/ Campagnolo Record groupset, and I’d just signed up for my first ever race – the Tour de Bintan. A 2 day stage race on a hot, hilly Indonesian island. I had been training all year, getting my weight down from over 130kg the year before to a lighter 112kg – although my race weight goal would be under triple figures. A new carbon wheelset would be a great way to help kick me along in the race.

My visualising of crossing the line – not winning, but being competitive, all came to a head when I received a call for work. Being a cinematographer by day meant that jobs could often be at various times of the day at any day of the week.

It happened, I got booked for a job for the days of the race.

I launched into work mode for the next months and didn’t touch the bike, let alone mount up the wheels.

Finally during a break in work I took the wheelset down to my LBS and had them change the cassette body to the Campy one that Sicasso had sent. I went home and loaded up my 11 speed Record cassette, pumped the tires and headed out to bed in the brake pads.

By this stage, after months of not riding, my weight had crept north a little. I’m a big guy – 6’6” and can push a lot of watts through the pedals, it’s all about that power to weight ratio. Because of my size I always had ridden on Alu rims. With great success too.. My Colnago had Fulcrums that are still going, and the Mavics that came with the Canyon are superb. I’d always felt I’d managed to secure some pretty bombproof wheels. Hardly ever needed truing, never had a wheel fail me.

I guess this reliance on the Alu dependability had steered me away from riding carbon wheels. Just about every wheel manufacturer will have me outside their weight limit, which always made me a little nervous about Carbon.

I’d expressed these concerns to Sicasso and was assured that they’d tested them for stresses greater than what I could impose on the wheels.

In fact it was insisted that I ride them and really put them to the test.

The first ride.

I took off in the early morning, sticking to a route that was familiar so as to have a comparison.

The first few km’s I was a little underwhelmed.

I thought about it – the Mavics I had *were* pretty lightweight, especially for an alu wheel, the carbon hadn’t floored me. I guess I was expecting a light-blinding revelation; here was what I’d been missing, the final part between me and becoming the fastest in the club.. Perhaps my expectations were too high? After all, I was heavier, I was slower, I was off the bike for a few weeks..

I cleared my mind and forgot about the wheels, I just rode.

It was a pretty un-spectacular ride – conversation pace, enjoying the day, riding the regular roads... It came time to put the hammer down on the one semi-serious climb of the day. I jumped out of the saddle and stomped on the pedals. Hmm, turns out my legs weren’t

completely jello. I spun up the 3 min climb as fast as I could. Quickly dropping my three companions.

Sure I was pretty puffed and burnt by the time I'd reached the top, but as I sat across the top tube and looked down at the wheels I wondered; was there just a bit of that that was in the wheels?

I got home and uploaded my ride into Strava – having been out of condition I was just interested in checking the distances and HR data.

Turns out I'd clocked a PB on that climb. Nowhere near a KOM, but a PB by a good 20 seconds.

As I started taking the wheels out more I found that where I really noticed a difference was on all those climbs. I felt more nimble and able to spin quicker up all those climbs. It *was* the wheels. They could help me climb – and always felt completely secure when descending.

As I rode even more, I started to notice their effect with my sprinting. The Canyon U CF/SLX is an incredibly light bike, but also incredibly stiff. A massive BB area makes sure that every stomp down on the pedals was power delivered – a massive improvement over my older Colnago CLX 2.0 . This stiffness meant all that power was being fed directly into the wheels and those Sicasso carbons felt so strong I never once felt that I was losing *any* power. The never once felt fragile or too light. Just solid freakin wheels that were delivering power by the bucketful!

I'm a MAMIL, for sure. I'm writing this just 4 weeks shy of my 40th birthday. I came into cycling 10 years ago. I've had some great times and some not-so great times on the bike. I'm not a pro, semi-pro or even a competitive club rider. Just an average big guy with a passion for riding.

Since the first testing of the Sicasso wheels I've been dreading the moment that I have to give them back. They've haven't come off my bike once. Some guys will keep their "good" wheels for racing etc. Forget that. I ride these things every day now, all conditions, all roads. Whilst we have some great smooth clean roads here in Singapore, there are plenty of pieces of tarmac that could be best described as goat-tracks. These wheels have handled everything. I don't think about the wheel when I ride, when I hit a pothole, when I climb, when I descend.

Simply put, they are solid wheels that are very, very quick. Bombproof? Just maybe. Given the chance, I'd ride them daily for years, just to find out.

And they look SICK on my bike.