

**Prorides**  
The bikes of the peloton



# YOUTH WORKER

A small English firm has teamed up with an Italian framebuilder to equip the Continental level Team UK Youth, taking on the giants of bike manufacturing in the process

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◀ Rotor's 3D+ cranks and aero, elliptical Q-rings are a stiff, power-enhancing combination

▼ The all-carbon Reynolds RZR wheels use an extra flange at the rear for ultimate stiffness



◀ Dura-Ace Di2 is now a common sight but it's never yet been integrated this well

▼ Boxy chainstays and slim seatstays provide both power transfer and ride comfort



**D**uring all the years I've been riding bikes for *ProCycling*, I always knew what to expect when there was another beautiful machine from a familiar name on its way to my house. But when I heard that the next shipment would be a WyndyMilla, I had no idea at all what I was in for.

The name sounds fresh and funny and when I opened the big box I found a bike with looks that fit that description exactly. Inside was the all-white, top-end model in their range, the Massive Attack, that belongs to the company's co-owner, Henry Furniss. He's also an elite racer and the bike was specifically built to his needs and measurements.

After the first ride on it I realised that there is someone in England who is pretty much a clone of me. Position, handling and components – everything was perfect for me!

As well as the names of companies that make the bikes I test, I normally

▲ Athletic proportions, a dream spec and can't-go-wrong red, white and blue paint make for a slick bike

know the names of the riders who pilot them too. But this time I needed to find out the story behind the bike and the team, and it's a really interesting one.

The UK Youth Continental team is owned by former Formula 1 world champ Nigel Mansell and my former pro colleague Magnus Backstedt – Mr Cobble Smasher at Paris-Roubaix in 2004. Backstedt rides for the team and, because most pros never get a chance to ride real custom frames during their career, he was fascinated when he found out that the UK Youth Team bikes are all custom built in Italy just outside of Venice.

What's more, WyndyMilla also offers biomechanical fitting, personal training and nutrition advice, so pro riders and

ambitious amateurs alike can get all they need. In this case, the most important thing for me was the bike. While researching the company, I'd seen some aggressively pink WyndyMilla bikes, so I was happy that the one I unpacked was bright white – probably the whitest bike I've ever seen, with a stem, handlebar and saddle in the same matching colour.

With the team logos and comic-style branding all over it, I did not know what to think. It's definitely a unique way to present a bike – and an eye-catching one as well. But looks count for nothing on the road so I didn't hesitate for long before taking off on it.

As I mentioned before, the bike felt like it was built for me. The integrated seatpost made for a comfortable ride and had been cut to the perfect length, and even my aging backside felt right at home on the slim, carbon-railed Selle Italia SLR saddle. The Massive Attack's cornering felt like it was on rails too. I always take the same route when leaving my house

in Majorca with all the bikes I test, as the fast right-hander at the bottom of the steep descent tells me a lot about a bike and its handling.

I hit the corner at more than 60kph and accelerated hard out of it and onto the 12 per cent incline on the other side. The Massive Attack seems to be made exactly for that: a massive attack! I got halfway up the hill with the momentum I was carrying.

I was still out of the saddle and powering away when I started shifting down through the sprockets before throwing it onto the small ring, knowing that I could totally trust Shimano's Dura-Ace Di2. The chain moved smoothly and the little noises from the intelligent front derailleur let you know that it's adjusting to compensate for the chainline. WyndyMilla use a special battery hidden inside the seat-tube which is a great idea because, for me, the sight of the standard battery often spoils the look of a bike – especially when it's

**I HIT THE CORNER AT 60KPH AND ACCELERATED HARD OUT OF IT. THE MASSIVE ATTACK IS MADE EXACTLY FOR THAT: A MASSIVE ATTACK!**

◀ The Dedacciai EDG fork is light, at a claimed 330g, and also very stiff for accurate handling



### Specifications

- ▶ **FRAME:** WyndyMilla Massive Attack
- ▶ **GROUPSET:** Shimano Dura-Ace Di2
- ▶ **CRANKSET:** Rotor 3D+
- ▶ **BRAKES:** Shimano Dura-Ace
- ▶ **CHAINRINGS:** 53/39
- ▶ **CASSETTE:** 12-25
- ▶ **WHEELS:** Reynolds RZR carbon tubular
- ▶ **TYRES:** Continental Competition tubular
- ▶ **HEADSET:** FSA
- ▶ **STEM:** SpectraTec Cursus alloy
- ▶ **HANDLEBAR:** SpectraTec Obvious
- ▶ **SEATPOST:** Integrated carbon
- ▶ **SADDLE:** Selle Italia SLR, carbon rails
- ▶ **FORK:** Dedacciai EDG
- ▶ **BOTTLE CAGES:** Lezyne
- ▶ **WEIGHT:** 6.5kg (as tested, no pedals)
- ▶ **PRICE:** UK £9,500, US POA
- ▶ **WEB:** www.wyndymilla.com



mounted on the downtube just underneath the bottle cage.

The bright white cockpit components and the soft, grippy handlebar tape provide the perfect connection to the bike for your hands. The stiffness and ergonomics of these parts are great and even the little flat section on the drops feels good when sprinting.

I have always been, and I still am, a fan of classic round and slightly oversized frame tubes, and the Massive Attack featured the perfect mix of these along with almost square chainstays and comfort-increasing flat seatstays. The big round tubes form the perfect linkage to the massive bottom bracket, providing the stiffness for efficient power transfer to the back wheel. Meanwhile, the flat seatstays take the harshness out of the ride. Together they form the ideal mix for any ambitious rider.

The further I rode on the WyndyMilla the less I felt like going back home. The smooth sound of the Reynolds carbon tubular wheels every time I got out of the saddle and the feeling of effortless gliding were just too good to be true.

And, in part, it was too good to be true. I'd left home with a slight tailwind and easily averaged 35kph on an undulating road. Then, the shape of the island forced me to turn left. Even with the sidewind, which turned into a headwind another 10km further along, I was still having fun but it was just at a lower speed.

The stiff Rotor 3D+ cranks and the matching Q-rings certainly helped with this, giving me the feeling that I was able to push the bike a bit harder and didn't need to shift to a lighter gear so soon. That might allow you to stay in the front group instead of getting blown out the back but riding bigger gears can also cause knee and other trouble. It has happened before: ask the riders from Cyrille Guimard's Castorama team about riding the extremely ovalised 'plateau harmonique' chainrings. ▶

▲ Marcel particularly appreciated the handling benefits of the stout headtube and Dedacciai fork

THE FURTHER I RODE THE LESS I FELT LIKE GOING BACK HOME... THE FEELING OF EFFORTLESS GLIDING WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

## The Inside Track

Talking with **Henry Furniss**, owner of WyndyMilla bikes



**Few pros get the privilege of custom frames from Italy. Why are your riders this spoilt?**

**HF:** The boss of Natures Way Foods, Robert Langmead, came for a fitting with

us and loved what we were doing so he decided to help fund the custom bike project to help WyndyMilla and to support the UK Youth charity. The riders are lucky but then so are we. As a new brand, working with Nigel Mansell's UK Youth team has pressed fast forward for us by five to 10 years - the response has been amazing. It helps people understand the unique nature of our bikes. Otherwise people assume we have just put some bright paint on an open mould frame from the Far East. Lastly, a 'Magnus Backstedt' is the best piece of bike testing equipment on the market!

**This bike is under the 6.8kg UCI limit. How do you make the team bikes legal?**

**HF:** The Massive Attack you rode was hovering around the limit depending on what pedals you use. It can be a bigger problem on the smaller frames but the race bikes are rarely more than a power meter or a standard Di2 battery from being legal.

**Great idea to hide the Di2 battery in the seat-tube - how does the charging work?**

**HF:** The composite battery is 50 per cent lighter and lasts 50 cent longer than a standard battery, so you only need to charge it two or three times a year. We can put a neat charge point into the base of the seat-tube with a watertight cover. It looks very cool as you charge your bike like a mobile phone. We prefer to keep holes in frames to a minimum, though, so because the need to charge is so infrequent, we recommend removing the seatpost.

**Does all of the team ride the Massive Attack? Can you / do you adjust the lay-up and geometry to tailor the feel for individual riders too?**

**HF:** We have an exciting new project on the way but for now they're all on Massive Attacks. We can adjust the geometry to the millimetre; we don't have the constraints of monocoque construction like the big name brands. We've used special blends of resin and composites to take a Massive Attack SL down to 680g and we've added a 1½-1½ headtube for the team's best sprinter. As for Magnus, we took no chances and put a quadruple composite wrap on the big man's headtube/toptube junction! So far, they have all been wowed by their bikes.

**Do you know the absolute stiffness (Nm/deg) and the stiffness-to-weight ratio (Nm/deg/kg) for this frame in a BB test from the lab tests in Bath and Lyon?**

**HF:** The absolute stiffness of the Massive Attack is 125.2Nm/deg. The testing in Bath and Lyon focused around very extensive testing on a number of frames including leading monocoque brands. We wanted to go much deeper than the just BB test. After much testing, many strain gauges, broken frames and very long reports in French, we have got some fascinating data to use.



Because riding into the headwind on bigger roads is quite boring, I shot down a little winding side road with a steep descent and a few corners towards the end. On this demanding road I became sure that, whoever WyndyMilla's Italian framebuilder is, the man knows his stuff.

The bike felt alive – it handled perfectly and the stiff headtube with the solid Dedacciai EDG fork ensured the highest levels of fun and performance. There might be stiffer frames but usually they feel a bit dull and not so full of energy. I almost wished the downhill could have gone on for hours because with the relaxed yet sporty seating position I felt right at home. Anybody who has ever ridden a custom-built frame that's been properly fitted for them by a professional will know the feeling I am talking about.

I cruised through a wind-sheltered valley knowing, as we all do, that a climb always follows a downhill. Here the Massive Attack's light weight (just under

▲ Thanks to a light and stiff frame and wheelset, the Massive Attack climbs superbly

6.8kg with my pedals) and the low rotating mass of the exotic, all-carbon and extremely expensive Reynolds RZR wheels impressed again. Dancing on the pedals or spinning a lighter gear sat down with my hands on the tops of the bars, the Massive Attack gives a great climbing performance either way.

Reaching the top was easy but, during the last half hour, while riding gently towards home, I noticed a little noise. Whenever I pedalled, I heard a squeaking sound, as if there was a little mouse sitting in the bottom bracket.

I stopped and spilled a bit of water over it but it didn't silence the squeaking. Then I tried a few drops of energy drink but that had the same result. Even applying some chain oil back at home didn't stop it. Judging by the sound, it must have been a gasket between the crank and the bottom bracket. This can happen to anyone and any bike, so it didn't change my mind about the Massive Attack.

Unfortunately, the UK Youth team urgently needed the Reynolds wheels (and Henry his bike) back, so I had to pack it away after this last ride and ship it back to England. The funny thing with the brand is that no one who sees the bike would think of handmade Italian

frame craft – rather a fun orientated bike with a flash paintjob (which can also be customised along with the spec).

Maybe WyndyMilla will be the Rip Curl or Billabong of cycling in a few years – starting for the fun of it but delivering top quality to customers all over the world after the news spreads. Together with the charity idea of Nigel Mansell's UK Youth Continental squad, this story is so full of good things that I hope Henry and his team succeed! 🇩🇪

### Ridden by... Grand tour multi-stage winner Marcel Wüst



**Born:** Cologne, Germany 6/8/1967  
**Residence:** Frechen, Germany; Majorca, Spain  
**Pro Career:** 1989 – 2001  
**First Team:** RMO  
**Career Highlights:** 14 grand tour stage wins (1 Tour, 1 Giro, 12 Vuelta)

During his career as a top sprinter Marcel won stages in all three major tours. A bad crash in 2000 forced early retirement. He now works as a journalist and television pundit, as well as running cycling camps from his base in Majorca, *Casa Ciclista*. He stays enviably fit and pushes every test bike to its limits.

## DANCING ON THE PEDALS OR SPINNING A LIGHTER GEAR, THE MASSIVE ATTACK GIVES A GREAT CLIMBING PERFORMANCE