



Biketest

Islabikes Janis

The children's bike specialists have launched a range for pensioners. **Dan Joyce** reviews an Iconic road bike

While Islabikes have long had an adult bike in the range, the versatile Beinn 29, they're best known for their benchmark children's bikes. The new Icons range is aimed at the other end of the age spectrum: over-65s who aren't ready for an e-bike.

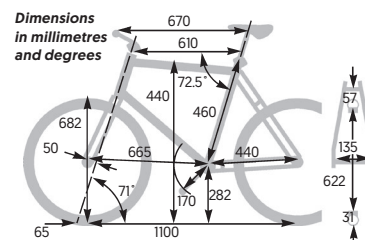
The Janis (after Joplin – you can work out the others) is the flat-bar road bike in the range. It's distinguished by its step-through, mixte-style frame, which makes it easy to get on and off. Most step-throughs – bespoke ones and Moultons aside – are heavy. The Janis is a mere 9.19kg. As with children's bikes, low weight makes a bigger difference the less strength the rider has.



Above: The 11-40t cassette and 30t chainring give a 20in bottom gear – much lower than that of most road bikes

Even on a lightweight bike, hills are hard when you've got less power. This is compounded by road bike gearing, which is arguably too high for anyone who isn't racing. The Janis has a bottom gear of just 20 inches, despite its 1x drivetrain. The cassette is huge (11-40t) and the chainring small (30t). Top gear is smaller too but it's

a fair trade; you can't coast far up hills. Other chainrings are available (26-38t). Most road bikes, even flat-bar ones, demand an athletic position that's good for going faster but not for aching backs or arms. The Janis sits you more upright. Less weight on the front wheel makes the steering feel light initially; you soon adapt.



Tech Spec ISLABIKES JANIS

- **Price:** £1199.99
- **Sizes:** XS, S, M (tested), L
- **Weight:** 9.19kg (no pedals)
- **Frame & fork:** 7005 aluminium frame with fittings for mudguard, rear rack, and (stock models) external dropper seatpost. Islabikes full-carbon fork with 1 1/8in straight steer and mudguard fittings.
- **Wheels:** 30-622 Islabikes Road tyres, Islabikes 'Easy-Tyre-Change' disc rims, 28x3 stainless steel spokes, Islabikes QR disc hubs.
- **Transmission:** no pedals, 170mm Islabikes low Q-factor Sram-fit direct
- mount chainset, 30t narrow/wide chainring, external threaded bottom bracket, KMC X10 chain, 11-40t Sunrace 10-speed cassette. Sram Gripshift control, Sram GX rear derailleur. 10-ratios, 20-73in.
- **Braking:** Sram Level TL hydraulic discs, 160mm front, 140mm rear rotors.
- **Steering & seating:** 600x31.8mm flat handlebar, 80mmx17° stem, integrated headset. Islabikes saddle, 27.2x350mm inline seatpost.
- **Equipment:** Sunnywheel aluminium mudguards. islabikes.co.uk

There are concessions to limited hand strength. The Gripshift gear control is light action. Hydraulic discs transmit little lever effort into lots of braking power. The rims have a less prominent lip, so it's easier to get the tyres on and off.

I've no real criticisms beyond the front wheel being out of true, a potential issue with any bike arriving in a box. But I'd like: a slightly (10mm) lower bottom bracket to make it easier for those who don't fit a dropper post to put a foot down; flared, Ergon-style grips; a front mudflap; and 'more cupholders' – that is, a handlebar bottle mount as standard, not an extra. ●

Verdict

Inspired! A lightweight, low-g geared, step-through sports hybrid for pensioners that would suit riders with mobility issues at any age.

Other options

ISLABIKES JONI ▶ £799.99

A low step-through roadster that weighs 11kg, thanks to its aluminium frame and carbon fork. The 1x8 gearing uses an 11-40 cassette.



ISLABIKES JIMI ▶ £1199.99

The Icon range's mountain bike: a step-through 29er (size S: 27.5in) with a rigid carbon fork. Gearing is 1x10, with a sub-20in bottom. Weight: 9.9kg.

