Soma San Marcos

The Soma San Marcos fits, rides, and looks better than whatever other road bike you're considering.

It was designed by Rivendell's Grant Petersen, with Rivendell lugs and design details. A fine ride on black top and smooth fire roads. While it is not designed for loaded touring, it will probably handle that type of duty even better than the Double Cross (which was Soma's best choice for touring before the Saga came out).

- Lugged Tange Prestige heat-treated butted CrMo steel; butted CrMo rear end
- Rivendell-designed road geometry
- Includes threaded Tange Infinity CrMo steel lugged crown fork
- Rack and fender eyelets
- 2 sets of water bottle bosses
- Headtube pump peg
- Kickstand plate
- 1" size headtube
- 27.2mm seatpost size
- Color: Pearl Blue
- 5 sizes: 47cm to 63cm

The 47 and 51cm are for 650b wheels and designed for 57-75mm reach road brakes. Max tire fit: 38mm.
The 54 - 63cm are for 700c wheels and designed for 49-57mm reach road brakes. Max tire fit: 35mm.
The 59 and 63cm have that Rivendell double top tube to put back the triangulation that's lost in taller frames.

Frame with fork: $900

92202	Pearl Blue - 47cm
92204	Pearl Blue - 51cm
92206	Pearl Blue - 54cm
92208	Pearl Blue - 59cm
92210	Pearl Blue - 63cm

GEOMETRY:

Size: Seat tube (Center to top)	Top Tube: C-C (Effective) [mm]	Top Tube: C-C (Actual)	Head Angle	Seat Tube Angle	Chainstay Length	Standover Height	Headtube	Bottom Bracket Drop	Wheelbase
47cm (650b)	535	518	71	71.5	445	28.8"	145	65	1012
51cm (650b)	550	534	71	71.5	445	30.3"	184	65	1028
54cm (700c)	575	558	72.5	71.8	440	31.6"	174	77	1024
59cm (700c)	590	575	72.5	71.8	440	33.3"	219	77	1038
63cm (700c)	605	590	72.5	71.8	440	34.8"	257	77	1052

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What the designer has to say

If this were 1983, the Soma San Marcos would be called a sport-touring bike—not quite a race bike, not quite a loaded-touring bike. It's the bike any road rider who doesn't race but rides mainly on the road ought to be riding, but few do. It has light tubing, and fits fenders and fatter road tires than the usual dry-road/skinny tire bikes. It has two eyelets on the rear dropouts, one on the front, and hourglass mounts on the seat stays. It fits a rear rack, and is ideal for load of nothing up to about 20 pounds. It's not only fun, it's useful. It's also—probably— the most comfortable road bike you'll ever ride.

Let's talk about comfort

Everybody wants to be comfortable, but most bike makers don't know how to give it to you. Comfort doesn't come from the frame material, anti-vibration handlebar plugs, or even fat, cushy bar tape. Comfort comes from high handlebars, and low-pressure tires.

High handlebars and super comfort come easy on the San Marcos. The top tube on the San Marcos slopes up about 6 degrees, raising the stem's exit point, and letting you get the handlebar higher, easier. That takes weight off your hands, de-compresses your arms, and makes it easy to see without craning your neck. And you won't have to learn forward so much, so your back will relax more.

The San Marcos fits chubbier, cushier, more comfortable tires. I can't stand bikes with so little clearance that they barely fit a 28mm tire. The San Marcos fits up to about 37mm. The higher volume allows lower pressure, so instead of riding around on a skinny tire that requires 110psi of hard air, you can ride a 32mm tire pumped to 80psi, or 35mm tires at 65. The comfort difference is huge.

Comfort that won't slow you down

On rough roads a softer tire is faster, because it deforms over the bumps and rolls right on through them without getting bounced. And when the tires don't get bounced, you don't either. On a smooth road it can be slower, but the difference is immeasurable, and this isn't a racing bike, anyway. A comfortable riding position and comfortable wheels let you put more effort into any ride, and effort, not hardware, is what gives you the speed..

What a nice fork the Soma San Marcos has!

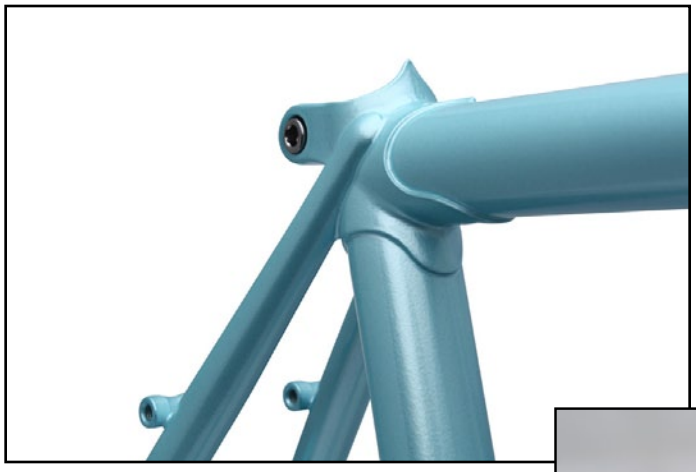
• The fork is my favorite part of any bike, and if the fork doesn't have a crown, and a nice one, I barely even see the bike. The flat-shouldered fork crown with swirls at the sides and the swooping bat-wing on top is the same crown we use on Rivendells. The blades are slender, of traditional steel-fork proportions, and the overall look is pleasing.

• It's a smart fork, too. You can easily fender a 32mm tire on it. Without the fender, you can fit a 37mm tire. This means you can ride the San Marcos in all weather, and on roads that are entirely unsuitable for the common variety modern road bike with 25mm tires.

• The fork is steel, too, and that's the only way to go. A steel fork is safe when it's new, and safe ten, fifteen, even 20 years down the road. Or more.

• Finally, the fork is threaded, too. Threaded forks use quill-type stems that make raising and lowering the handlebar quick and easy. The quill stem worked for a century and should never have gone out of style. There are no drawbacks. But you have to be comfortable riding a stem that's not like the stems your friend use. If you can get over that, great! (Availability is not a problem. Some bike shops don't sell quill stems, but they're still being made, and any San Marcos dealer will have them.)

The best stems, and the ones to get, are made in Tokyo, by Nitto.



I'd put on one of two models: The Technomic Standard (225mm quill) or Technomic Deluxe (180mm quill). Stem extension is always a guess, but women should start with a 7 to 8cm extension; men, an 8 to 11cm. With the bars high enough, a centimeter here and there won't make the difference it makes when the bar's so low.

From frame and fork to complete bike is easy

The San Marcos is compatible with any road or touring group from the past or present. There's nothing you can't put onto it. Work with your dealer to pick the right parts for you, and stick to your budget. A Sugino XD crank and a 107mm Tange bottom bracket is a good start. The complete bike will likely cost you less than $3,000, and a fine $2500 bike is easily possible. Such a bike will feel way better, and be way better, than a typical carbon road bike that costs twice as much, won't last nearly as long, won't fit reasonable tires or fenders, and looks "high-tech generic."

Technical Trivia

All the lugs, the crown, and the BB shell are the same we use on Rivendells. The tubing is Tange Prestige (heat treated, butted CrMo). There was no conscious effort to make the bike compete in weight with carbon bikes, but every ounce on it has earned its spot, and there's no "fat" on it. The frame weighs about 4.5lbs (54cm) and the fork is about 1.6lbs. As a strict percentage, it's a lot more than a 3lb carbon frame and 1lb carbon fork. But put the same parts on it and an engine—that's you—and what began as a 35 percent weight difference for the bare frame and fork, shrinks to about 1.7 percent for the whole bike and rider. That's so small, it's not even worth talking aboutÖand you get a better, more comfortable, more versatile, more beautiful, and safer bike.

The San Marcos rides as well as any Rivendell. I didn't hold back on it. It has benefited from every frame I've designed since 1985.

Grant Petersen of Rivendell Bicycle Works designed the Soma San Marcos. It has the same ride qualities and frame clearances—the important stuff—that Rivendells have, and it rides just as well.

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