

FIRST  
RIDE



## THE LIGHT BLUE ROBINSON RIVAL 1X

**£1499.99** > A British-bred steel machine to tackle the tarmac and the trails



Cambridge-based The Light Blue has, over recent years, specialised in classically styled steel bikes aimed at traditional road pursuits. So the Robinson is a bit of a departure for the brand, as it's intended to be used for the latest road (or should that be off-road?) trend.

Yep, you guessed it: this one's a gravel machine. It's not at the extreme end of the spectrum, like Cannondale's Slate – it's more of a 'gentleman's all-roader', and is better suited to towpaths, gravel roads and byways than technical singletrack and really rough stuff.

The Reynolds 725 chromoly tig-welded frame is finished beautifully and includes mounts for mudguards, a rear rack and even has routing points for a hydraulic hose line under the top-tube.

The geometry is fairly traditional road stuff, with parallel 73-degree angles and →

**SPECIFICATION**  
Weight 10kg (59cm)  
Frame Reynolds 725 steel  
Fork Chromoly  
Gears SRAM Rival 1x, 46, 11–36  
Brakes Avid BB7  
Wheels Halo Devaura 6D  
Finishing kit Genetic Flare bar, Genetic SLR stem, Genetic Syngenic seatpost, Gusset Black Jack saddle, 30mm Schwalbe CX Comp tyres

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Frame flex for off-road stability and comfort means the Robinson can get a bit bendy when it comes to road sprints

### HIGHS

Well equipped with a supple, smooth-riding chassis

### LOWS

Frame is a bit too flexible for fast aggressive roadwork

### BUY IF

You want a very capable all-roader for cruising around on all but the roughest surfaces

a mid-height 180mm head-tube on our 59cm test bike. These and the long, 1029mm wheelbase all add up to a bike that's comfortable to pilot and has stable steering reactions – both of which are ideal qualities for its intended purpose.

The slender steel tubes do allow for a lot of flex, which adds comfort but also makes for a whippy ride. The Robinson does get a bit of a twist on when you're down on the flared drops or sprinting out of the saddle on tarmac – especially the back end, which squirrels around on the fat 30mm tyres.

This softness puts it on the back foot as a quick road machine, but is a boon on dirt. That flex helps the bike to cover ground smoothly, helping the very capable Schwalbe CX Comp tyres to maintain grip and smooth out any ruts.

You do have to ride light to get the best from the chassis, loosening your grip and letting the bike find its own way to some extent. If you're willing to do this, the Robinson is a

very proficient off roader, requiring only the gentlest steering inputs to navigate rocks and roots.

On-road climbing is a little ponderous, mainly due to the bike's 10kg weight and the soft-treaded tyres. Long gravel climbs are also steady rather than sharp affairs but the Robinson's smooth handling lets you pick your line with ease while you're grinding a low gear.

On the subject of gears, SRAM's 1x drivetrain is a good companion for any off-road jaunts. Its narrow-wide chainring and clutch-equipped rear mech combine to keep a tight hold on the chain and stop it bouncing off when you're riding over ruts. The single 46t chainring means the 11–36t cassette has ample pedal-twiddling scope to get you up

steep climbs, but does leave it a bit short on long, fast road descents.

We would have liked to have seen Rival hydraulic brakes matched to the drivetrain, but the Robinson's Avid BB7s are dependable and offer ample performance when set up well – which they were.

The Halo Devaura D wheels have a 24mm-wide rim bed and thanks to their 31mm profile offer a small aero advantage. They're tubeless-ready and impressively stiff, although at 1800g a pair are a bit weighty. Still, they're tough enough to last, and at night-on £400 for the set are a good-value addition to the complete bike.

Overall, the Robinson is a very decent bike for cruising over varied surfaces. There are better steel road machines (such as The Light Blue's own excellent Wolfson) and faster, more aggressive off-roads. But if you want a bike that would make a great commuter, or a comfortable tourer to take off the beaten track, then the Robinson should make your shortlist.

Below Steel-bodied Avid BB7 disc brakes keep the material theme consistent Bottom Harking to the university's boat club colours, The Light Blue company has a strong connection to Cambridge



### THE VERDICT

A classy steel-framed package with all-surface ability and a soft, relaxed ride

★★★★★