

This Stuff Works: Selle San Marco Regal-e

By TRP Staff

Your cycling career won't last long if your saddle doesn't fit.

After my first "long" ride—and a prolonged period of numbness in an attention-getting area—and after asking more experienced riders, I went shopping to replace the stock plastic saddle on my then-beloved Schwinn Super-Sport for something, anything. After some primitive product-testing (did I really "pretend-sit" on the saddles in the shop?), I rode home with a black-leather Selle San Marco Concor. Riding became way better.

The Concor was in the first generation of "modern" saddles. Unlike the Brooks, which took months to break in, and unlike some of the Cinellis, which had the contour (and give) of a baseball bat, the Concor was shaped and padded to fit the undercarriages of many racers (including me). Subsequently saddle design has advanced to the point where even beginning riders are aware that the distance between their sit-bones needs to match the effective width of the saddle on their bike. Many shops maintain a collection of demo-saddles so that riders can figure out which saddle best fits them without investing a small fortune.

As frame-weights decrease, there seems to be a trend away from the minimalistic saddles that held sway a few years ago. That, and for riders who want a bit of retro style without the total 'boat anchor' feel of the original Regals, Selle San Marco has redesigned it, and slightly re-named it as the Regal-e. A variety of models are available. I rode a mid-range version with xsilite rails that weighs in at 225 grams—which ain't a boat anchor.

First: this saddle looks really cool, attracts attention, and says "I know my cycling." Second: it's just padded enough. Not so much that it feels like a barcalounger, and enough that it noticeably absorbs road shock. I found myself aiming for rougher sections of pavement to check this out.

But does it fit? Here's where things get interesting, design-wise. Selle San Marco lists the width of the Regal-e as 148mm, which they measure towards the widest part of the saddle's rear-end. (It's also measured at 225(?)mm long, and it seems almost as long as a Fizik Arione). But look at the photo: →

As with the old Concors, the Regal-e favors different riding positions: that 148 width occurs towards the back—where most riders will be when they scoot back on the wider and slightly raised part of the saddle to climb. Most of the time, however, I found myself riding slightly forward in the "regular riding" position. The transition from the 'pelvic support' portion of the saddle to the nose is more abrupt than it appears—and the nose is slightly narrower than many saddles. I like both of these features, because the saddle doesn't get in my way.

As you can see from the second photo, the Regal-e lacks a central cut-out to relieve perineal pressure. It does have different padding, thinner carbon, and a pressure-relief in the saddle-shell. These features worked for me.

I rode the saddle through the usual selection of rides and riding conditions: the saddle looks great and fits. Where it excels is in absorbing road shock and providing at least 3 useful riding positions for different riding efforts.

