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KMX Karts



KMX Karts

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AZUB TRICON 20

Posted on June 20, 2016 by Bryan Ball



By **BRYAN J. BALL**
 Managing Editor

BentRider and **AZUB** are about the same age. I met the guys from the company in my driveway in Germany pretty early on in the game. I still had a full-time job, our web site didn't even have a proper message board yet and the AZUB crew of two showed up in an old Skoda with entirely too many bikes crammed

into it. BentRider has grown to a size I never dared imagine and AZUB has blossomed into a true powerhouse in the recumbent industry. We've both followed the trends of the market and in a way, we've kind of grown up together.

As AZUB has navigated the ever-growing recumbent industry, they've become a trike maker as much as they ever were a bike company. They started out making economically-priced two-wheelers and now they make some of the most well-engineered and most well-built trikes on the planet. Their current top-of-the-line model is the TRIcon and (until the full-suspension TI-FLY is introduced later this year) it is the showcase for what this Czech Republic company is capable of.

They always say that first impressions are important and the TRIcon makes a great one. As is often the tradition with European-built recumbents, the TRIcon is a very solid machine. The aluminum frame uses big fat tubes with beefy welds that look like they could handle a lot more than the trike's 275 pound weight limit. A closer look shows that all of AZUB custom parts such as the handlebars, seat, steering components, exquisitely machined frame hinge and numerous quick releases are also as good as anything you can buy anywhere.

For a few years now, AZUB has been offering a huge variety of colors on their trikes. This year, they've added three hi-viz colors. My test trike came in a shockingly bright color called Banana Yellow. I'm not sure I've ever seen a banana as bright as this! I didn't ask what color the trike was going to be and opened the box in direct sunlight. I thought I was going to burn my retinas out! It's definitely the most high-visibility color I've ever seen on a bike or trike from the factory.

The TRIcon's party trick is its fold. There's maybe one or two trikes on the market that fold smaller but nothing that offers rear suspension and so many factory drivetrain, color and accessory options comes close. It can either be simply folded in half to stow in a car or the rear swingarm can be folded as well to make the package even smaller. The fold is quick and intuitive and the high quality quick-releases that AZUB uses make the entire process very easy. You can get it into a hatchback in less than 30 seconds and if you spend just a bit more time, even air travel is possible. Also, the final folded package is very manageable and easy to carry without it flopping back open or pinching your hand.

AZUB offers a huge variety of components for the TRIcon. You can get everything from a basic 24-speed Shimano drivetrain to a high end 30-speed set-up to the very unique 18-speed Pinion gearbox that I spec'd on my test trike. There are also a few different braking options available.

The Pinion drive is so unique that I'm going to cover it in a separate review but I'll say here that I was very impressed with it. It wasn't loud, didn't feel like it had any more drag than a Rohloff or any other internally-gear hub (IGH) and it offers more gear range than an IGH. Shifting was smooth and solid whether standing still or under power. The 636% gear range should be more than enough and the gears are well spaced.

The Pinion is also exquisitely made. It does add a fair amount of weight and is a very expensive (\$2500 over the basic specification and \$400 more than the Rohloff) but if you're looking for a low-maintenance option, it's a good choice. The cool-factor is also very hard to deny.

Other components on my test trike were Novatec hubs, Remerx Fast Disc rims, Tektro Auriga Tune brakes and levers and Schwalbe Marathon tires. Add in the fenders and four-pannier luggage rack and the TRIcon you see here comes to just a touch under \$7200 and weighed 46.8 pounds on our scale. A lot of that price and weight is because of the Pinion Drive and the accessories. A more basic TRIcon with no options starts at a bit more than \$3100 and weighs about 40 lbs.

I found the TRIcon to be a very comfortable trike. The mesh seat (hardshell is an option) is a little less than 12" off the ground depending on the adjustment and is very breathable and supportive. The seat angle is adjustable between 34-52 degrees. The bottom bracket is only about three inches higher than the seat so the likelihood of problems with blood flow to the rider's feet are slim. The handlebars are also easily adjustable for a wide variety of hand positions.

Like all AZUB products, the TRIcon uses the company's "IPS" system. This means that both the seat and the boom are adjustable allowing riders of many heights to get a perfect fit without compromising weight distribution.

This was the first time that I've gotten to spend any appreciable time on a TRIcon. I've always been impressed with AZUB's handling on their trikes but many people (including dealers) have said that they felt that the TRIcon was one of the best handling trikes they'd ever ridden. My experience with other AZUB trikes and my short test rides at shows didn't make me doubt those statements but I was eager to get out on the road and really put the TRIcon through its paces. It did not disappoint.

The TRIcon has a very light and easy steering feel but is still very stable at high speed. There's virtually no brake steer or bump steer. The turning circle is also pretty good but not as tight as some others. Where the TRIcon really shines is in hard cornering. With the short and stiff rear swingarm, it just doesn't tail-wag at all. Rear end flex while cornering is sometimes a thing that I think gets a bit overblown in the recumbent trike industry, but when you ride a trike that doesn't do it at all, you can tell a difference. My test trike had a 20" rear wheel but if you opt for the TRIcon 26 with its 559mm drivewheel, you can also click the box for a wider hub and rear axle. With these options, it doesn't flex at all either.

That stiff rear end also helps the TRIcon accelerate very well. The weight was undeniable when climbing but the suspension is efficient and power delivery was good. The overall performance was exactly what I expected for a rear-suspension touring trike.

If you look closely at the photos, you'll see that the TRIcon I reviewed has a rack for four panniers. Only HPVelotechnik and AZUB offer this option. It's extremely handy for not only handling all of your gear, but also for keeping the weight distributed properly during loaded touring. AZUB also offers a ton of other accessories such as fenders, bags, dynamo lights, side bag mounts and headrests. Basically, there's almost no adventure you couldn't spec a TRIcon to handle direct from the factory.

The TRIcon is available in such a wide variety of configurations that it's almost impossible to review it as one trike. But after spending some real time on one, I can say without reservation that it's a great machine no matter how you configure it.

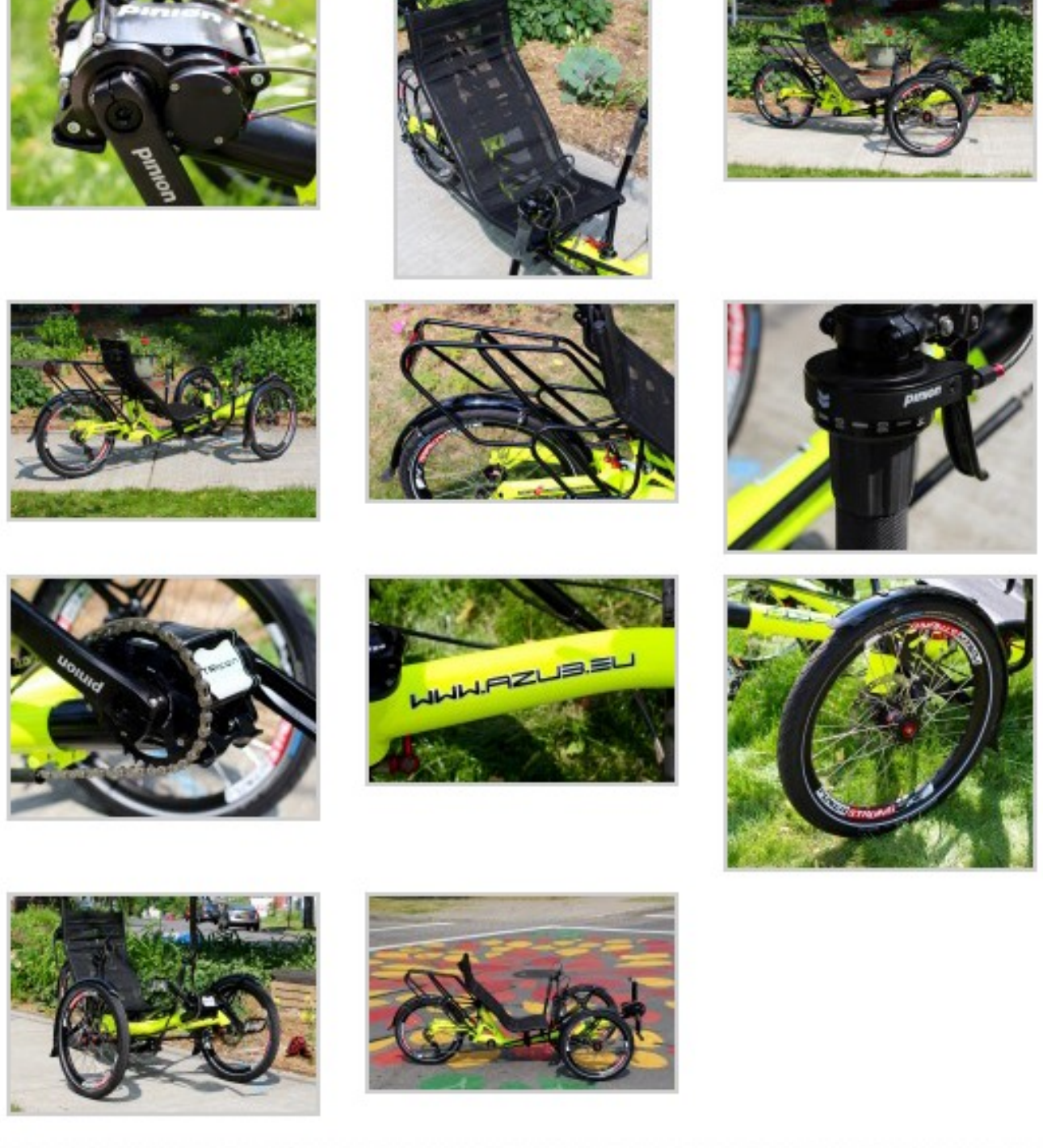
AZUB TRICON 20

MSRP - \$7200 as tested, \$3200 base

Highs - Superb handling, Superb quality, Very small folded package

Lows - Options costs add up quickly

More info - <http://www.azub.eu/azub-tricon-folding-recumbent-trike/>



Folding the AZUB TRIcon Trike

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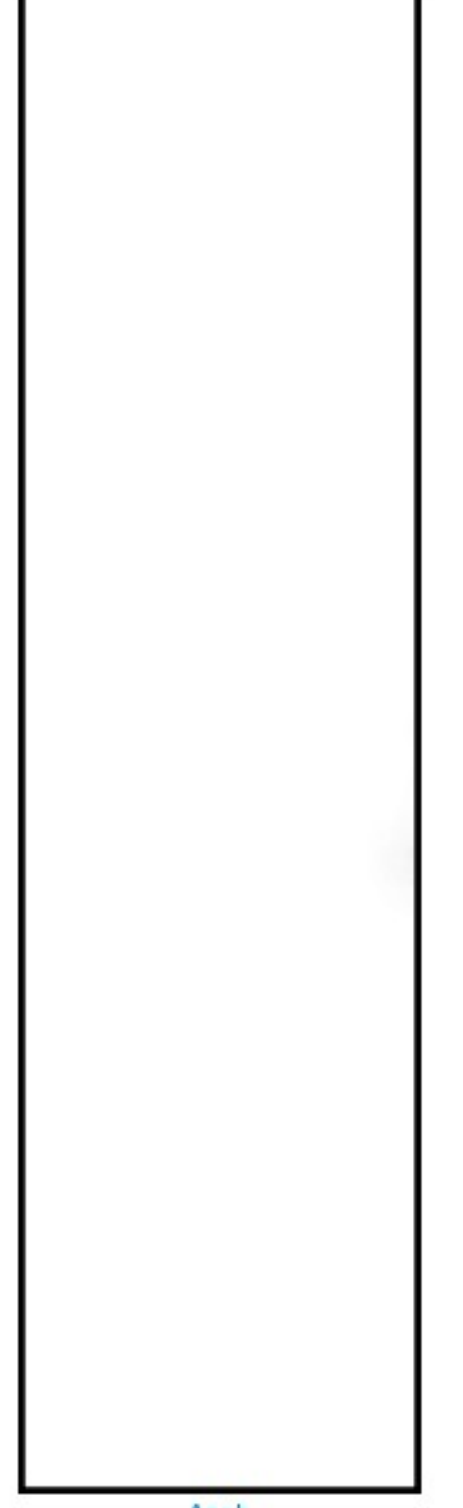
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