

The March 15 Tale-o'-Two Cranks the old standby & the new blue upstart

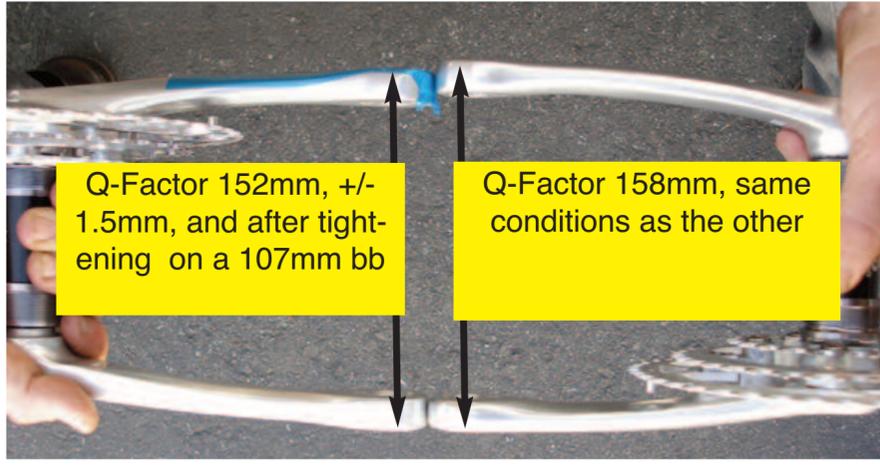
It's not really blue, that's just plastic on it, and we left it on during the photos for good looks. The bluey is the new Sugino Mighty Tour, earlier versions that were either slightly different or exactly identical have been called various names. About 3 or 4 years ago Sugino had planned to introduce it as the "Cospea." Since back then-at-the-time it was being made not exclusively for us, but with some pressure from us, and since we'd planned to sell it, we said something on the order of, "Hey man, 'Cospea' sounds weird, means nothing to anybody, so call it the 'Alpina,' please, and then it was--for a while. We got in 100 sets of them and found what seemed to be a flaw that I don't want to talk about here, and returned them. Sugino wasn't sure our assessment of it was correct, and Sugino may have been right, but I don't think so. At that point it seems we still wanted the crank, by any name, but it went to Sugino with the rejection/return, and there was no progress made for months. In the meantime, the cranks we'd nixed showed up on the web, and I'm sure people've been happy with them. During subsequent years, Sugino showed versions of this crank at trade shows, including a triple version in which the inner chainring was attached with spacers and bolts—which to our way-o-thinkin' was ideal. Curiously, they said, "it won't be like that in

production; we're doing it as a double." And they did, and then to triplize it, you use a special middle ring (made by/for IRD) onto which you bolt the inner ring. Thass way in the photo below, the "face" of the crank has four eyes straring at you where the inner ring bolts on. The Sugino XD has a built-in shoulder for the inner ring, so triplizing it doesn't require the special middle ring. The special ring is no demerit, just a clever solution. Shimano does something similar on the Dura-Ace triple (or used to, don't know the current situation). Another thing: There's been talk&speculation and hubub about how the XD-2 (below left) is made, and of what. We're told and have every reason in the world to believe and non to doubt that is cold-forged of 6061 T6 aluminum. This is a high-grade aircraft aluminum and makes a good crank. But the New Blue there is 2014 T6. Each is stronger and more costly than 6061, and the more costly part accounts for some of the price diff. The rest is taken up by a fancier finish. In the current ranks of high-end cranks, the new blue seems like a good value, even at \$300. I mean, pan back and survey the crank landscape and you'll see that. But it underscores how much of a rockemsockem value the XD-2 is, at \$110. Both are good deals, and we talk about them below, with pictures.



Sugino XD-2, our standard, good-for-all go-to crank.

Sugino Mighty Tour, aka "Ol' Blue Arm" set up as a triple, but comes as a double. You triplize it with a special middle ring.



Q-Factor 152mm, +/- 1.5mm, and after tightening on a 107mm bb

Q-Factor 158mm, same conditions as the other

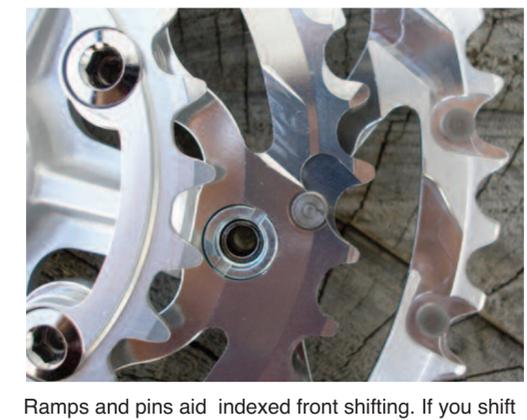
Q stands for Quack, because ducks have a wide foot-stance (Q-Factor). In a crank, Q-Factor is the outside to outside dimension, and it is one of several factors that affect how far apart your feet are when you pedal. The others being the bottom bracket spindle width (but that should be matched to the crank, as opposed to shortened or lengthened to hit a Q-Factor target)...and most especially, how friggin-far apart you put your feet from the pedals. If you break the bank to buy a super low-Q crank and then you pedal with your foot an inch away from the crankarms, it's like drinking out of a dribble glass. In Q, narrower isn't always better. If you pronate, a wider stance can help level out your foot. If you're knock-kneed, wider can fix you up some, too. But all things equal, narrower-to-a-point is generally fine. The small difference between these cranks, I'd say, can't be significant.



Left is the XD-2 with a slightly less lustrous finish than the New Blue-arm whateverit's called crank, show above. In a real way, it is irresponsible to show such close photos, because it suggests the difference in finish is as visible in the cranks as it is in these photos (not true); and that it matters. They're both nicely finished.



Plain rings, no ramps or pins. Works perfectly with friction shifting, which all sane front shifting is.



Ramps and pins aid indexed front shifting. If you shift friction in front like yotta, no feeeeeelable benefit.



Not sure why we're showing this side. They both look fine, no problems. This one is simpler--visually. Who cares?



The different and no less bad or good look of the Blue-Arm Cospea-Alpina-Mighty Tour.

Weight: Well now, here's a surprise. El Cheapy weighed 26.2 ounces, and Mr. Blue weighed 26.8 ounces. Is six tenths of an ounce worth worrying about? Not in this land!

On another note entirely but still bike related, here's customer Dan's Sam before racks and baskets. This was shot with a 32 megapixel camera, and the shots above were shot with 25 fewer megapixels. The web probably doesn't care, but this is an especially nice-looking photo.

