VeloReality Software and LYNX Trainer Review

— Actual VeloReality ride footage – Passo dello Stelvio

The landscape of cycling products and technology are ever evolving. Today there's a plethora of cycling computers, wireless sensors, power meters, electronic shifting, training apps and software. However, many of the same issues with training and motivation remain. For those who live in cold climates and are forced to ride indoors, the biggest issue with indoor training remains: Boredom.

With a wide array of ANT+ sensors and devices available, our team has been trying various tools that have been cropping-up. Our riders are looking for valuable training capabilities without being boring, limited, unnatural or difficult to use. Until recently there was a serious a need for a high-quality, reliable, realistic simulation of outdoor riding while remaining flexible and cost-effective.

2013 brought a new player to the table: **VeloReality**, with their Virtual Rlde software and LYNX trainer/simulator.

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- **Training software**, ANT+ compatible (Free).
- **Over 30 HD quality ride videos**, of routes from across the globe for purchase from their online store.
- The **LYNX trainer** offers a true-to-life riding simulation.
- V-Ride software offers resistance profiles for most existing trainers, rollers.
- Software can also *control* Wahoo KICKR and Computrainer trainers.
- On-screen ride simulation and performance metrics (with or without a Power Meter) with video playback synced based on your current power output (real or calculated), weight, incline.
- Software is Windows based but can be run with 'Boot Camp' on Mac.
- Application can be run directly off an external drive, allowing you to use the product on *any* computer, without needing to re-install or transfer the videos, configuration.

The company was good enough to provide us with a LYNX trainer and an external hard drive loaded with the software and all of their current videos so that we could try it out. This would be the same set-up one would receive if buying their LYNX trainer system.

— VeloReality on-Screen footage before the start of the l'Alpe d'Huez climb.

Setting Up the Software

Before we received the LYNX unit, we wanted to try out the software and the sample videos that they had available. It was simply a matter of visiting their website (www.veloreality.com) to create a user account, pick up the free software package and download the two free sample videos.

Before we begin, let's list the basic software requirements:

Requirements:

- Windows 7, 8 (or 8.1), ***64-bit*** *Operating system* ***required***.
- For Mac users, they have told us it will run using Boot Camp (*not tested here*).
- Suitable video capabilities (recommended discrete graphics card).
- ANT+ USB receiver.
- ANT+ on-bike sensors: Speed and Cadence, *e.g.: Garmin GSC-10.*
- Resistance trainer: LYNX, or conventional trainers (*Cyclops, Kurt Kinetic, Minoura, Tacx, 1-Up, others*).

Recommended:

- ANT+ HR strap (*recommended*)
- ANT+ Power Meter (optional)
- Best to use an external USB drive – 500GB or larger. USB 3.0 or eSATA recommended.
- Discrete graphics card recommended. For Windows 8/8.1 users – make sure you configure your machine to use the discrete card with the application and maximum performance settings.

The software is very straight forward – it has no install package at all. Simply extract the file (**v-ride_x64.exe**) from the ZIP package and put it into a location you'd like it to reside. We highly recommend putting it on a removable drive, with at least 500GB free space if you're planning to use the videos.

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You'll need to configure some personal details like: Date of Birth, weight, height, wheel size, bike weight, estimated FTP, etc. Of course, if you're reading this article we'll assume you have great taste, you're naturally young, lean, tall, with a light bike and massive FTP wattage. Enter those exact details into your user profile (certainly you have this precisely recorded in your daily training log). Save your profile and you're ready to get started.

— Configure your VeloReality user profile

The software allows for multiple users, so you can configure your entire team if you'd like.

Configure your ANT+ sensors

With the software running, if you haven't already, plug-in your ANT+ USB receiver into a USB port on your computer. Spin-up the trainer to wake your on-bike sensors (Speed/Cadence, Power). Click the *"Learn"* button on the User Settings screen in the application and it should detect the USB device and the ANT+ sensors.

— ANT+ USB-M Receiver

For users of some of the earlier USB2 ANT+ receivers, it *may* require being within ~3 meters of your sensors. Later versions and newer USB-M versions seem to have a much greater range (~10 meters). If this is a problem, it is possible to buy a USB extension cable from many computer stores or even some dollar-stores. This would let you place the ANT+ USB device closer to your bike without needing to move your computer.

If you find that the software is not detecting your USB stick – make sure you don't have an older 'USB1' version as they are simply not capable of receiving data for live use.

With your ANT+ USB stick picking up your ANT+ sensor's signals, you should be ready to roll.

— VeloReality – User Settings and ANT devices

Virtual Ride software and Videos

The thing that really stands out with the VeloReality platform are the videos. These aren't your average "helmet cam" ride videos. The latest videos from VeloReality are very high quality 1080p footage that they've captured, from a slow moving vehicle with a camera mounted on the curb-side at eye-level. The result? It really does make for some stunning footage. So realistic that, with a good video card and in-front of a large, well placed monitor, you'll find yourself grabbing for the brakes in fast corners and intersections.

— VeloReality ride footage (Ventoux pt.1) – How about climbing Mt. Ventoux today?

There are options to start and stop the routes from various points. The software provides that ability to select the beginning and ending points, down to 1 meter accuracy. Pick your start and end points and you can ride any section of the video that you prefer.

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This multi-ride functionality is a great feature as several of the major routes are broken into several parts, such as the 4 part "Marmotte" route.

If you create a multi-ride using these Marmotte videos, you could create an epic loop that covers the *Col du Glandon (Part 1)*, *Col du Telegraphe (Part 2)*, *Col du Galibier (Part 3)* and finally *l'Alpe d'Huez (Part 4)*. This would be a huge effort (174km) and over 5000m of vertical. Easily 6+ hours of unbroken effort for even the strongest riders..

While the famous mountain passes might be a challenge, the more moderate courses are a blast. We found that our personal favourites are the **Flanders** and **Corsica** rides. They are all very scenic and make for perfect training routes that can also be added together to create fun, multi-part rides through these incredible locations.

With all of these famous rides to choose from, everyone has been asking: *"What's the hardest one?"*. If you're talking about a long effort, then definitely ***Ventoux Route – Part 1***. This takes a 40km ride from Malaucene, up the fabled Bedoin side of the Giant of Provence. Ventoux gets harder as it goes and this ride will take you well over 2 hours to complete.

If you're riding Ventoux, be prepared! Turn on that fan, set up your playlist, grab 4 water bottles and two energy bars – you'll need it. Breaking clear of the tree-line with all of the names chalked on the roadway, cresting the top of Ventoux is amazing. You'll be raising your arms to recognize a personal victory.

Using the simulation *without* the power meter we found that the Kurt Kinetic's published power curve allowed for a close simulation of your 'average' power output. Of course, this doesn't work quite as well at the extremes, such as accelerating quickly out of the saddle or doing strange things like pedalling at a very low cadence. That's because the power curve is based on 'typical' values and the power output is implied based on the measured wheel speed and the Kurt Kinetic's published power curve, assuming ideal tire pressure and minimal wheel slip. This is simply a matter of physics when working with a fixed resistance unit.

With a standard trainer set-up, it's also no problem to run your normal gearing, like a typical road bike with 53-39 / 11-25T. In order to go faster in the videos, you simply need to increase your wattage. Simply: higher power output, yields higher speed, no matter what the incline.

It may be counter-intuitive to be climbing a mountain pass in your big ring, but when it comes down to it, it doesn't make much of a difference when you're on a fixed stationary trainer. By the end of a couple of rides, you become accustomed to simply riding in different ratios than you might in the real world. It's a bit like flat-land training that people do to prepare for climbs when they don't have any in their area.

For the budget minded consumer who wants to continue using their current trainer, adding the VeloReality software and videos is a cost-effective and valuable set-up. The videos make it exciting to get on the bike and keep you motivated to ride when you can't get outdoors.

— Beware: Alpen Cow crossing.

LYNX Trainer

For the full effect of the videos, ride profiles and dynamic resistance the VeloReality **LYNX** trainer is designed to provide a complete ride simulation.

— VeloReality LYNX trainer features a 2HP variable resistance unit, solid frame, a large roller and industrial-grade components with USB connectivity. (Courtesy: VeloReality)