



CERVELO'S LONG-AWAITED ULTRALIGHT REALLY CAN FLY

Cervélo R3

LUST!

ROAD

DREAM

CERVELO R3 \$2,500 (FRAME, FORK AND SEATPOST); **\$5,600** (AS SHOWN)

With Ivan Basso riding a R2.5 Bayonne to third place at the 2004 Tour de France, why did Cervélo scrap its lightest frame ever? To make the lighter, stiffer and—bonus!—less expensive R3. The R2.5 could get only so light, mostly because of its expensive carbon, which boosted the frame-only price to \$4,500. The R3 borrows much of its design from Cervélo's aerodynamic Soloist Carbon, including the massive chainstays that make possible the R3's wispy seatstays, so thin you can flex them between thumb and forefinger. Not that it matters. Cervélo's testing shows that almost all of the R3's lateral stiffness comes from the chainstays, bottom bracket and down/head tube connection, with the seatstays tuning ride quality. The result, says co-founder Gerard Vroomen, is "the stiffest frame we've ever tested, and the lightest we've ever made." Our 56cm test frame weighed just 890 grams.

On the road, the R3 was stiff, but not at the expense of handling or comfort. During one winter ride, the R3 showed its descending aplomb during a twisty drop on a Boulder, Colorado, road sprinkled with sand and ice patches. A short rise follows the descent and, exiting the corner in pursuit of a faster descender, we stomped on the pedals and the bike leapt forward without the slightest hint of power loss as we closed the gap. The R3 is also one of the most comfortable race bikes we've ridden, with two caveats: It puts the rider in an aggressive, aero position, and the Alpha Q fork steers fantastically but doesn't exhibit the same vibration damping as the frame. Vroomen says Cervélo is considering other fork options. Still, the R3 is that rare race bike that is comfortable enough to be an everyday driver.—J.L.

BUY IT IF: You want a race bike to ride every day **FORGET IT IF:** You can't handle the aggressive rider position **SIZES:** 48, 51, 54, 56 (tested), 58, 61cm **FRAME:** Cervélo Smartwall-C carbon **FORK:** Alpha Q Sub 3, all carbon **WEIGHT:** 14 lb., 15 oz. (56cm, w/o pedals) **COMPONENT HIGHLIGHTS:** Shimano Dura-Ace 20-speed drivetrain and brakes; Zipp 303 carbon tubular wheels w/ 21c tubular tires; FSA OS115 stem; K-Force handlebar and seatpost; Selle Italia SLR saddle **CONTACT:** 866/CERVELO; cervelo.com

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL ROBSON