

triathlete®

8 UPGRADES TO
MAKE YOU FASTER

FIND YOUR
PERFECT BIKE

BUYER'S GUIDE

BEST GEAR OF 2013

151

PRODUCTS TESTED

**WIN
THIS
\$6,000
BIKE!**

SEE PAGE 77 FOR DETAILS

BEGINNER ESSENTIALS

HOW TO

- ▶ HAVE YOUR BEST TRANSITION
- ▶ FIND A WATCH FOR YOUR TRAINING STYLE
- ▶ SWIM FASTER WITH THE RIGHT WETSUIT





Mavic Cosmic Carbone 80

\$2,700, Mavic.com

The draw: Aerodynamics and ease

Aerodynamic performance is finally at the top of Mavic's priorities. These rims are similar to the shape of the brand's aero standout, the CXR 80, but have a more traditional rim and tire interface instead of using the Blade bumper to fill the gap between tire and rim. As a result, changing a flat is easier with this pair, eliminating one more thing to worry about on race day. And Mavic's hubs are smooth and reliable, never needing an adjustment over a long-term test.

3T Mercurio 60 LTD

\$2,400, 3tcycling.com

The draw: Aero rim shape without an excessively familiar badge

At less than 1,400 grams, the Mercurio 60 LTD is one of the lighter wheels beyond 60mm of depth. But it's wind drag characteristics, not weight, that make a wheel worthy of racing in a triathlon. The Mercurio 60 LTD rim is 23mm wide, making it best suited to moderately broad tires, which roll smoother and with less resistance than narrower options. Braking performance is on par with the average for carbon rims.

Zipp 404 Carbon Clincher

\$2,725, Zipp.com

The draw: Thrive on any ride

It takes more than an aerodynamic rim shape for a wheel to be fast. It must also handle well, remain stable in unpredictable winds and brake reliably. Zipp's 404 Carbon Clincher excels at all of these, and is a standout in the wind tunnel as well. Its wide rim not only helps reduce aerodynamic drag, but also reduces road vibration and improves cornering by spreading the tire into a larger form. Whether you want a wheel upgrade for races only or to make everyday rides that much more fun, the Zipp 404 excels in every way.

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Zipp Vuka Alumina

\$175, Zipp.com

The draw: Expansive fit adjustment

These are the most customizable aerobars that we have ever seen, but with this comes a bit of complexity. The armrests are large and have a nice shape to them. Their adjustment range is incredible in all directions. The extensions are interchangeable, and Zipp offers a wide variety of shapes. The best feature of these aerobars is that the armrest height above the basebar is tremendously adjustable; it can sit more than four inches above the basebar, reclaiming a bike with aggressive geometry into something much more realistic for many riders. With their massive adjustability, these bars are a bike fitter's best friend.

Bontrager Race X Lite Carbon

\$200, Bontrager.com

The draw: Comfortable grip and fit

Bontrager recently introduced these clip-on aerobars, based heavily on the successful integrated aerobar system used on the Trek Speed Concept. The arm pads are plush and can be adjusted substantially in both length and width dimensions. The extensions are among the most comfortable we've ever put our hands on and are also easily adjusted. For those of us who can't stand staring at anything asymmetrical, the bars feature a rule to ensure the angle of each extension is the same.



Setting Up a Road Bike for Triathlon

So, you've been doing triathlons on your road bike and, while you seem to be able to hold your own in the swim and run, you keep getting passed on the bike. What gives? You might attribute the difference to training specificity and a lack of aerodynamic equipment, but those tri bike riders up the road are likely working easier and more efficiently than you. A proper triathlon fit not only saves drag, but lets your body get the most out of your fitness level. The good news is that, with a few changes to your road bike, you can take advantage of the huge benefits a triathlon-specific position can offer.

Here are the keys to finding an efficient position when converting your road bike for tri:

- » **Get fit first.** Establishing a comfortable and efficient triathlon specific position is the biggest key to reducing aerodynamic drag and maximizing your power and speed. Find a qualified tri bike fitter and make an appointment.
- » **Add aerobars.** Getting narrower (and lower) than your road position can save time and energy on the course. Adjustable clip-on aerobars that setup low to the bar are often best for road bike conversions.
- » **Shift your seat forward.** If you want to lower your profile to the wind while still pedaling efficiently, you have to keep the angle between your hips and torso open while lowering your back. A forward-oriented seatpost creates a saddle position specifically geared to a tri position.
- » **Lower your bars.** Most riders' optimal tri-specific position will be lower than their road bike position—just don't set it up below your functional range for comfort and efficiency. Finding that sweet spot happens during a fit. — IAN BUCHANAN

