

SPRING TRAINING ISSUE

World's Leading Bike Magazine

MARCH 2010
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WIND-CHEATING
KESTREL TALON,
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THE MAGIC NUMBER

HERE ARE FIVE OF THE BEST BIKES PER DOLLAR YOU'LL FIND AT ANY PRICE

Kestrel Talon Road Shimano 105

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE TALON 105 APPEARS TO BE SOMETHING OF A REFINED TRIATHLON bike, with massive airfoil tubes, a compact rear triangle and an adjustable seat angle. Steven Harad, Kestrel's brand manager, confirms that impression, saying, "We were the first company to focus on the aero road market. We started in 2001 with the Talon, then updated that frameset in 2009, making it one of the most aero road framesets on the market."

The monocoque frame uses 700K carbon, a custom mix of intermediate-modulus and high-modulus fibers, to provide rigidity where it's needed yet keep the frame compliant enough for comfort on long rides. This blend keeps the weight—and the price—low. The stretched-out position suggests a frame that's built for speed, and at higher velocities it slices through the wind, carves a confident arc through turns and ducks into an inside line with subtle rider input. It has an uncanny ability to respond to aggressive climbing and all-out attacks over the tops of consecutive rollers, thanks to a solid pedal platform.

AT HIGHER VELOCITIES THE TALON CARVES A CONFIDENT ARC THROUGH TURNS AND DUCKS INTO AN INSIDE LINE WITH SUBTLE RIDER INPUT.

And the Talon delivers more than just speed; it also offers a comfortable ride for long, easy days in the saddle. Beginning triathletes and time-trialists will appreciate its versatility: The bike features an adjustable seatpost that can move from a slack road-oriented angle to a steeper, triathlon-oriented seat-tube angle. "For 2010, we use a new Kestrel EMS Pro SL seatpost that is easily adjusted to provide an effective seat-tube angle from 73 to 79 degrees," says Harad. "Because we use a slightly longer reach on the frame, you are able to move your saddle into an aggressive position without affecting the handling of the bike."

Tri riders (and those who stick to the flats) will appreciate the standard 53/39 chainring combo, but some newer riders who spend time in the hills may ask for a compact crankset. The Talon is a multitasking joy to ride.—Mike Cushionbury

Top to bottom: An adjustable seatpost makes the change from road to tri geometry exceptionally easy; this rear-wheel cutout is not exclusive to TT bikes anymore; the Talon cuts a narrow, wind-cheating profile.



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| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| WEIGHT | 18.2 lb. (55cm) |
| SIZES | 48, 52, 55 (tested), 57, 60cm |
| FRAME | Kestrel 700K carbon |
| FORK | EMS Pro SL carbon |
| COMPONENT HIGHLIGHTS | Shimano 105 shifters, brakes, derailleurs, crankset, cassette, chain, RS-10 wheels; Vittoria Rubino Pro Slick tires; Profile Aris OS handlebar, stem; EMS Pro seatpost, Pro saddle |
| INFO | kestrelbicycles.com |