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JULY 2008
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SOLDIERS KEEP RIDING

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Our Editors' Choice picks for men and women, p. 102



Its extreme adjustability won the Specialized BG Pro top honors.



*Specialized Women's BG Pro Carbon \$225

Our finalists are all built on a women's last, have three-strap closures with ratchet buckles, breathe well and offer top-notch performance. Specialized eked out the win. Its Body Geometry construction shapes the outsole and tilts the forefoot to correct for typical biomechanical flaws and makes the pedal stroke more efficient. Our women testers found the fit most comfortable for their variety of foot shapes. The ankle strap drew praise for fit and adjustability. One tester said, "If your feet aren't typical—and mine aren't—Specialized offers shims for biomechanical adjustments." **WEIGHT:** 549g (size 41) **INFO:** specialized.com

runners-up



SHIMANO SH-WR80 \$250

With a heat-moldable insole and heel cup, fitted by a heat-and-vacuum process at the bike shop, the WR80s have "not a hint of heel slip, not even during steep climbs and sprints." Some testers found the forefoot "ideal for those with medium- to high-volume feet"; while one with "narrow, finicky feet" found the toe box too roomy. The ratchet strap with metallic styling worked "without a hitch." As for looks, testers were divided: One disliked the "elfin" toebox; another quipped, "the color scheme screams 'cupcake'—and I mean that as a compliment." **WEIGHT:** 641g (size 41) **INFO:** shimano.com



SIDI GENIUS 5 WOMEN'S \$247

These "ruby slippers" with their "soft uppers," were the only finalist with a reinforced nylon—rather than carbon—sole, but that was a positive for testers. The Genius 5 "wasn't overly stiff, like some carbon shoes can be," and for one tester it offered the "best balance of stiffness and comfort" while causing "no hot spots." The closure systems, from the easily adjustable buckle ratchet to the High Security Velcro, with its "extra grippers," were easy to use and made it feel "as if you're attaching the shoe to your foot, rather than strapping your foot into the shoe." **WEIGHT:** 601g (size 41) **INFO:** sidiusa.com



We test:

SINGLESPEEDS TO SPICE UP YOUR RIDE

By Loren Mooney

Randy Farrell, 37, of Columbus, Ohio, has a road bike and a mountain bike, but wants another for rec-path riding with his wife on her hybrid as well as occasional commutes to work, 6 miles each way. "I'm thinking a fixed gear with a reversible hub that allows it to be a singlespeed also," he says. "I like the simplicity of this setup." A splash of style is fine, he says, as long as it doesn't push the bike over his \$750 budget.

Our
Pick



Felt Dispatch

STEALTH COOL: The high-tech hydroformed aluminum frame with internal cable routing is a forgettable color that Felt dubs "cement," but that's a good thing if Randy has to lock up outside, as thieves like eye-catching bikes. The carbon fork ably mutes road bumps and includes fender mounts. Felt packs in name-brand parts—an FSA crankset, Shimano Dura-Ace cog, Cane Creek levers and sweet Vittoria Zaffiro tires—while keeping the price down. The overall ride is stable enough for rough roads and paths, and nimble enough for speedy commutes. **SMART GEAR:** The 39x16 gear combo is on the easy side for a fixed-gear/singlespeed, which makes most climbs manageable and will let Randy keep a natural cadence on the rec path without dropping his wife. He'll easily spin out the gear on descents, though—welcome to fixie fun.

BIKE	FELT DISPATCH	SPECIALIZED LANGSTER LONDON	SWOBO DEL NORTE
PRICE	\$699	\$740	\$679
WEIGHT	19.1 lb. (54cm)	19.1 lb. (52cm)	22.1 lb. (53cm)
FRAME	Felt 7005 Superlite custom-butted aluminum	Specialized A1 Premium aluminum	Swobo butted chromoly
FORK	Felt Urban carbon fiber w/ fender mounts	Specialized carbon	Swobo chromoly straight-blade
CRANKSET	FSA 39t Single Speed w/ chainguard	Sugino Comp w/ 42t Zen Messenger chainring	Sugino 42t w/ chainguard
COG(S)	ACS 16t freewheel; Shimano Dura-Ace 16t fixed cog	Shimano 16t freewheel; 16t fixed cog	Shimano 17t freewheel
BRAKES/LEVERS	Dual-pivot, long-reach brakes; Cane Creek Road Aero levers	Dual-pivot brakes w/ custom Specialized bar-mount levers	Tektro, long-reach caliper
WHEELS	Alex R500 rims; Felt track flipflop hubs	Alex R500 rims; Specialized forged-alloy hubs	Alex rims; Swobo hubs
TIRES	Vittoria Zaffiro	Specialized Mondo Sport	Vittoria Randonneur 32c
SUPERCOOL FEATURE	Frame-mounted 15mm socket wrench/bottle opener	Kieren grips; toe-clip pedals w/ straps	Swobo saddle w/ bottle opener; flat/SPD pedals included
INFO	feltbicycles.com	specialized.com	swobo.com

Want to know which bike you should buy? Ask at whatbike@roadale.com.

2
more choices



Specialized Langster London

TRACK STYLE: This Langster's paint job sports a Union Jack, a map of London's subway system and "God Save the Queen" on the chainstay. The track handlebar lets you get low and race with traffic or cruise the rec path with hands on top. The top-mounted brakes can be awkward for quick stops in heavy traffic, but other city Langsters—the New York, Chicago and Seattle—have different bar/brake setups.

ROAD READY: The aluminum frame is close to Specialized's Allez road bike, so rider position and handling feel smooth and swift.



Swobo Del Norte

A BOMBER RIG: If Randy's rec paths are crushed stone, then the Del Norte, with its wide tires and smooth-riding steel frame and fork, may be his winner. The velvety ride instills a feeling of confidence and indestructibility no matter the terrain, except maybe up the hills; the Del Norte is not lightweight. **ADD IT ON:** The frame has fender mounts for rain riding, and the rear wheel can be flopped for fixed-gear riding: Just add a cog and lockring.