

THE RIGHT RIDE

We sifted through the 2008 crop of bikes to find our favorite for every budget. (No, the wood one isn't the bargain model.)

by BEN HEWITT, DAVE MERTH, AND JOSH FULMER

GEAR

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

DETAIL:

Renovo claims wood is as stiff as aluminum or steel and actually lasts longer before weakening.



▲ RENOVO HARDWOOD MONOCOQUE BIKE

BEST AT: *Drawing a crowd*

When the Renovo showed up at our office, everyone stared. We stroked the clear coat-glazed grain of the Oregon Douglas fir (one of 15 wood choices available) and inspected the computer-machined, hand-fitted finger joints of the hollow frame. And then we all wondered the same thing: "It's pretty, but how does it ride?" Damn well. The carbon rear triangle effortlessly smoothed nasty pavement, and although we noticed flex at the bottom bracket on climbs and sprints,

the frame (\$3,000 itself) felt responsive otherwise. At between three and five pounds, and decked out in the high-end, go-fast parts here, it can hang with carbon-fiber rivals. It's no glass jaw, either: When a brain-free driver forced us onto a curb at speed, we anticipated carrying home toothpicks, yet the timber never groaned. Still, the Renovo is just too pretty for constant pounding. Order one as your Sunday driver, then turn the page to read the rest of our road bike test.

[frames from \$2,000; renovobikes.com]

\$7,550

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