



Cervélo EYRE

BY THE TIME

I first took this bike on the road, I was ready to really, really dislike it. There was nothing personal in my dislike, it just so happened that my sample Cervélo Eyre turned out to be one of those bikes that 'will not' go together nicely. You know: nothing adjusts right, one small (but extremely important) part is missing ... So, as I said, by the time I finally swung a leg over the Eyre it was not my most favoured bike. Luckily, the bike fully redeemed itself within one ride.

We first ran across Cervélo bicycles at the Toronto Bike Show in 1995. The company consisted of two engineers - Phil White and Gerard Vrooman - who had a yen to design bicycles (why is a question only they can answer). Gerard had been designing bike frames and HPVs (Human Powered Vehicles) for about 10 years, and Phil does triathlons, so it was a natural progression to using their engineering skills to design their own bikes. The most obvious unique feature of Cervélo frames is the aero tubing which is the company's calling card. The top model, used in the Olympic Time Trial by Canadian team member Eric Wohlberg, is the P2, which features both an aero down tube and an aero seat tube - by the way, Wohlberg just rode his Cervélo to his second consecutive National Time Trial Championship. Other models - the Eyre Tri and Eyre Road (tested here) - come with the aero down tube only.

Now, many people will say that aerodynamically shaped frame tubes are nothing new, and it is true that ovalized tubing has been used for many years. However, that is where Cervélo is different: their aluminium tubing is custom drawn and butted to a precise airfoil shape, not just round tubing that has been flattened. The difference is noticeable as soon as you pick the frame up - it is light, very light. This is something not usually associated with aero-tubed frames; the processes used to produce the tubing (and keep it strong enough) normally require thicker than normal tubing walls and heavier tubing. The Eyre Road frame is under 3 pounds (without fork), and ours built up into a 20.5 pound machine using stock Shimano Ultegra components and clincher wheels.

Back to the frame. Outside of that fancy down tube, the rest of the frame is a mixture of custom drawn aluminium and Easton Elite aluminium (Easton is used for the top tube and seat tube of the Road model), expertly welded together for Cervélo by Devinci Cycles of Chicoutimi, Quebec. The road model is a fairly standard geometry, with 73.5 degree head tube and seat tube angles. The bikes fit relatively large - my 60 cm sample was 62 cm to the very top of the seat tube collar - with top tubes slightly on the short side. This follows from their heavy emphasis on aerodynamics - they expect that prospective owners will be using full aero equipment, including tri bars, giving a very forward position. One other noteworthy feature of the design are the short 15" chainstays.

As I might have expected, I felt most comfortable on the Cervélo when on the drops powering along in time trial mode. The bike was very smooth, with neutral handling and only minimal bottom bracket flex. The ride was less harsh than I had expected, given the

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Marinoni LEGGERO

WHEN WE STARTED

to put together a list of all the Canadian companies who we wanted to include in this "Focus on Canada" issue, it rapidly grew to the point where we needed to publish a book, rather than magazine. Unfortunately, that wasn't in the cards, and we had to start paring down the list. While it was extremely difficult to decide who would (and who wouldn't) stay in the issue, one of the names that was guaranteed to make the cut was Marinoni.

If you have been involved in Canadian cycling for any length of time, particularly road racing, then Guiseppi Marinoni is a name that you are sure to recognize. When I checked with them, prior to writing this article, we calculated that their small Montreal workshop had built approximately 30,000 frames in 20-some years. In the late '70's and early '80's I remember going to bike races both here in Canada and in the United States and counting literally dozens of Marinoni's on the starting line.

So what makes this brand of handbuilt bike so popular? It boils down to two words: reliability and affordability. To put it bluntly: Marinoni's aren't the sexiest bikes on the block, but they work. Look at it this way: if you are an aspiring racer, cash strapped (a given) and looking for a bike that you don't have to worry about when you throw it in the back of the car, stuff it in a bike bag to ship on the plane, or crash it (another given), then wouldn't you want a bike that is always going to be there when you need it? That is the strength of this brand - it is a workhorse.

Now before you get visions of a plodding drafthorse of a bike (and before I get a phone call from Montreal screaming abuse at me), such speedy riders as national champion Czeslaw Lukaszczew and Olympian Eric Wohlberg have ridden Marinoni's during portions of their careers. I mean workhorse in the sense that you know that you are never going to have to baby this bike, that it will never let you down and always be ready to respond to your wishes.

For this current review Marinoni pulled out all the stops, and built me a Columbus EL frame and fork, with a full Campagnolo Record gruppo (you just have to bike-speak Italian for this kind of review). Other Italian components included Campag Atlanta rims, 3ttr bar and stem combo and Selle San Marco Pirelli saddle. Total cost for this top-of-the-line Marinoni Leggero model was about \$4000. Now that is a lot of money, but the Leggero is still the cheapest Record equipped bike in our Buyer's Guide by at least \$500, and it includes the Record titanium cogset (something that is an extra \$\$ option on many brands). You can reduce the cost significantly (\$950) by dropping to the Chorus component group. Still too pricey for your budget? Well for under two grand you can pick up the Ultegra equipped, Columbus SLX Squadra, or even go down as low as \$1300 for a Sprint with Mirage and Columbus Thron.

However, back to the Leggero. Columbus EL is a relatively new tube set, a step up from the traditional SL and SLX models. It offers improved strength and rigidity over the former alloys, meaning that a thinner-walled (and thus lighter) frame can be built with no sacrifice in performance. Being somewhat on the tall side (bike companies curse when I call for review samples), a flexible frame is immediately noticeable. Not a problem here. The Leggero

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short stays and aero down tube - I attribute this partially to the carbon fork the bike was supplied with, and partially to the tubing design (see below). This bike is a stand up and climb bike - the relatively short top tube meant that I was constantly pushing myself back off the saddle for longer seated climbs. In corners the Eyre is extremely well behaved - it tracks very cleanly, with no hint of skittishness.

Excellent behaviour can be traced, in part, to the tubing design work of Gerard and Phil. For the seat stays they used a slightly smaller diameter tubing than many builders, offering a more supple ride. If you look at the chainstays of a Cervélo you will also notice that they are round, rather than the ovalized stays appearing on most bikes these days. Gerard: "What you want is to have a bike that is laterally (side to side) rigid, but that vertically has some compliance for comfort. This offers more rigidity where you need it, but more comfort as well." The theory sounds good, and in practice the Eyre is both comfortable and transmits rider power with no noticeable loss of energy.

The Eyre model frames retail for \$1434 (with Kinesis aluminium fork), \$2500 (Tri) to \$2700 (Road) for a complete Ultegra 9 speed bike. For the P2 add about \$1300 to all of those prices. Sales are fairly evenly split between the P2 and the Eyre models (Road and Tri), and between framesets and complete bikes. By the way, those 9 speed Ultegra bikes are '98 models (as are the prices), but don't worry, delivery of the first run is expected in the fall. If you want more information about where you can get a Cervélo, call their Sales office at (416) 761-1108, or visit their website: www.cervelo.com RJ

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was rock solid underneath me, but not so unforgiving as to punish me on longer rides or rough pavement. Compared to a super lightweight like the Rocky Turbo, the Leggero does feel like it has less zip, however, on an all day ride I know which I'd prefer.

The Campagnolo Record group gets its own review elsewhere in this issue, so I won't spend any time on it here - other than to say it is a natural choice for this bike. One component worthy of special notice are the Michelin Bi-Synergic tires. The first thing people notice about the Michelins is that the centre tread is black, with side strips of blue. This isn't just to coordinate with the fancy blue paint job on the bike - the tire tread is actually a dual compound rubber. Those blue sections are a softer rubber than the black, offering more grip when you are leant right over in the corners. You can actually tell when they are in touch with the pavement because there is this funny noise, sort of like the squeaking a rubber-soled shoe makes on a tiled floor.

Climbing, descending, cornering - the Leggero was smooth and competent at all of them. This is the sort of bike that you would always come back to after brief flirtations with exotic materials; and it would forgive you, and make you feel warm and fuzzy (okay, so maybe I'm exaggerating a "little" (italics) here). The Leggero is not a crit bike, and it is not the lightest bike I've ever ridden (although a portion of that is attributable to the Record group). On the other hand, while I had it, it was the bike I was most likely to grab when I wanted to go out for a pleasure ride - you know, the sort of ride when you have no particular destination in mind; where you just want to ride, and jam on the hills, coast down the descents and finally roll home, pleasantly exhausted. That, to me, is the mark of a bike rider's bike. RJ

CANADIAN CYCLIST WEEKEND

Canadian Cyclist is pleased to announce that we will again be hosting a mountain bike weekend in the Muskokas October 18-19. Participants will stay at the Rocky Crest Resort on Lake Joseph and, in addition to fine dining (always an important point with cyclists), will have the opportunity to ride with the editors of Canadian Cyclist (a selection of trails, from beginner to expert are on site). Mountain biking instruction by qualified instructors will be available, and a number of manufacturers will be providing new '98 bikes and other goodies for you to play with. Two nights accommodation (including breakfasts and gourmet dinners) is \$286 single/\$356 double. There are limited spaces available, so start planning to attend soon. Contact Canadian Cyclist for more details ccyclist@rogers.wave.ca or (519) 442-7905.

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