

gear



editors' CHOICE 

## Your Next Road Shoes

THESE MIDPRICED CLEATS DELIVER HIGH-END PERFORMANCE AND FEATURES

The best cycling shoes cost about \$450. You get a supple upper, a rigid carbon sole, a refined fit, and a secure yet comfortable closure. But many of these benefits also come just one level down, and at a friendlier price. We picked five shoes that cost about \$250 yet sacrifice only a little on material and weight—and nothing on fit or stiffness—and put them through intense testing. Here are our top choices.

### (OUR PICK) GIRO FACTOR

In its first year of producing shoes, Giro wins with the Factor. It fit the widest range of foot shapes among our testers. The synthetic upper felt snug, yet nearly all of our riders rated it most comfortable, even without breaking in. One tester noted that it, "wrapped my foot in a way that is snuggier and more comfortable than any shoe I can think of." Heel retention was impressive, too, and gimmick-free: "It comes from a refined shape—not squeeze clamps," said another tester. Strap and buckle placement are well-thought-out to eliminate hot spots. The Factor was the lightest shoe in the test, the ventilation was superb, and the mechanical buckle operated smoothly (and, though it got beat up, survived a pavement-scraping crash). The stiff Easton EC90 sole is one of the thinnest of this group, placing your foot closer to the pedal. Editors also appreciated the three included arch supports, which vary in height, to tailor the fit. >> **PRICE** \$280 **WEIGHT** 486g (size 41) **INFO** giro.com

### Also on the podium



#### DMT IMPACT

Praised for its flawless construction and supple upper, the Impact was best for narrow-footed testers, despite a roomy toe box. The insole is tissue-thin, but the shape and construction provide surprising arch and heel support. The look of the stiff carbon sole adds to the Impact's Euro flair. >>

**PRICE** \$250 **WEIGHT** 572g (size 41) **INFO** dmtshoesusa.com



#### SPECIALIZED PRO ROAD

An Editors' Choice winner in 2005, this shoe will please many riders. It's offered in an array of sizes and three widths (the standard width has a roomy toe box). The adjustable top strap lets you fine-tune fit. The sole is plenty stiff and the stock footbed is among the best. >> **PRICE** \$275

**WEIGHT** 573g (size 41) **INFO** specialized.com

