

FRANCE, SCHMANCE

YOU WON'T SEE THESE BIKES IN THE TOUR DE FRANCE, BUT THEY'RE NOT AFRAID TO GO LIKE HELL.

While our attention this time of year naturally focuses on the bikes beneath our favorites at the Tour, there are far more high-performance bikes available than those currently touring France. In fact, there is something sweetly satisfying about outsprinting or outclimbing the guy on the *maillot jaune's* replica. And because of the UCI's equipment restrictions, we can go to the shop and pick up a lighter, faster bike than the racers can ride. Here are six fast bikes you won't see on the Champs-Élysées that'll give you some sweet speed without any champagne hangover.

KESTREL RT700

The RT700 returns Kestrel to its heritage, the aerodynamic road bikes it built 20 years ago starting with the revolutionary 4000. Sure, the Talon and Talon SL are technically aero road bikes, but Kestrel admits both have found a home mostly with multisport athletes. Not since the 300EMS (which ended production after 2002) has there been a true aero Kestrel for roadies.

The RT700 revives that heritage beautifully. The RT700's tubes weren't shaped with only aerodynamics in mind, however; the seatstays in particular are tuned to dampen road vibration, making the bike a touch more comfortable for long rides than the race-minded Evoke. Geometry is similar to the Talon, with a 73.5-degree seat angle on our 55cm tester.

The modular monocoque construction echoes the Talon, and as paired with a new fork design dedicated to the RT700, this bike is confident on descents and stable under power, but without the stiff ride we've associated with some modular frames. With Ultegra, the RT700 is no bargain ride, but Kestrel takes no shortcuts with parts (the heavier Shimano R-561 wheels are our only concern), and offers standard and compact chainring options. For riders who have been caught between the efficiency-minded Evoke and the aero Talon, this is the perfect marriage of the two.—*Joe Lindsey*

Get efficient speed and an aero advantage with Kestrel's carbon-fiber RT700.


HIT: Aero efficiency without a harsh ride **MISS:** Heavy, 1,800-gram wheels **PRICE:** \$3,299 (\$2,199 frameset) **WEIGHT:** 17.66 lb. (55cm) **SIZES:** 48, 51, 53, 55 (tested), 57, 59cm **FRAME:** Modular monocoque carbon fiber **FORK:** Carbon fiber w/ alloy steerer **COMPONENT HIGHLIGHTS:** Shimano Ultegra drivetrain and brakes, R-561 wheels; FSA SL-K Mega Exo Carbon crank; Hutchinson Top Speed 23c tires; Kestrel EMS Pro/OS carbon bar, RT700 carbon seatpost **INFO:** kestrel-usa.com



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