

# DIG DEEPER

And find these 4 gems from small builders.

Discovery is one of life's greatest joys, whether you uncover a great band that no one else has heard of, a hole-in-the-wall restaurant, or a bike that none of your friends ride. Like any culture, cycling has a group of builders who—willingly or not—avoid the spotlight. Poke around in the corners and you might be surprised at what you find. Something rare, unique; something that rides better than many bikes you've heard of. The most precious gems are found underground, not just lying on the surface.



Every 3D Racing Road-E frame is made to order. If it's a Ferrari-red powdercoat you want, it's a Ferrari-red powdercoat you get. No questions asked.

## 3D Racing Road-E

**PRICE:** \$1,450 (frame only) **THE STORY:** In 1992, after leaving Yeti Cycles, where he torched frames for a cavalcade of mountain bike racing's early legends for more than six years, Chris Herting started 3D Racing in his garage in Durango, Colorado. A one-man show, Herting produces about 120 frames per year doing everything himself, from answering the phone to laying down perfect TIG welds. **HEAR THIS:** At 3D all frames are custom. Match the beautiful ride quality of Easton Scandium pipes, Herting's favorite, with a perfect-fitting frame, and you'll understand why he's The Man pro riders look to for custom rigs. **HEED THIS:** Some may find custom-frame buying intimidating, and the three-to-four-week lead time might discourage the more impatient among us. **WEIGHT:** 2 lb., 6 oz. (frame only) **SIZES:** Custom **FRAME:** Easton Scandium SC 7000 aluminum **FORK:** (as tested) Easton EC90 SL carbon **COMPONENT HIGHLIGHTS:** (as tested) Shimano Ultegra nine-speed shifters, rear derailleur and brakes; FSA carbon crankset; Cane Creek Crono Ti wheels **CONTACT:** 970/385-7840; 3dracingbikes.com

We wanted a light road frame that climbed like a goat but was compliant enough for long rides in the mountain-studded Los Padres National Forest just north of our Burbank, California, office. To ensure a glove-like fit, we gave owner

Chris Herting the dimensions of an older steel frame that we love (Herting says this is the route most 3D customers choose) for our Scandium-tubed Road-E. Our geometry of choice was neutral, so the bike would be comfortable on long rides, but quick when called for. And you can spec more than measurements: Every made-to-order Road-E frame is also available in Columbus steel and Easton Race Lite aluminum, with scads of options such as carbon seat or chainstays, and an almost unlimited selection of powdercoat colors.

Our Road-E arrived just as we ordered it; the frame's geometry and Ferrari-red powdercoat were both spot on. While there's no flashy tube shaping, the smooth welds and machined dropouts are subtly beautiful and universally appreciated by aficionados of Old-World styling. After a few miles you'll realize the Road-E isn't just another alloy bike. It's smooth riding, almost titanium-like in feel, but still aluminum-rigid at the bottom bracket. Each pedal stroke rockets the bike forward with no sensation of lost power due to frame sway. Combine that powerful feel and stable ride with this bike's bespoke fit, and the whole package comes together for a ride worthy of the 3D reputation.—Ron Koch