

## Affordable luxury

*The P2 packs a better punch than many bikes at twice the price*

By Jay Prasuhn



Making its debut this season, the P2 Carbon will retail for \$3,600 outfitted with a Shimano Dura-Ace groupset and Vision Tech cockpit.

**W**hen Cervélo's P3 Carbon debuted a year ago, I figured that with the proven design and high-tech materials used to create the aero powerhouse there would be more than a few on Christmas wish lists—and despite the \$4,500 price tag there were 26 P3Cs on the pier in Kona last year.

Now, Toronto-based Cervélo has launched the P2 Carbon. At \$900 less than the P3C, with much of the same tech, design and aero advantage, the new P2 Carbon could be the next "it" bike, and we were jazzed to test one of the first out of the molds.

Cervélo's attention to detail was apparent even before I took the bike out of its box. Like many top-end bikes, the frame carries a serial number. But it's a nice touch to find a checklist attached to the top tube highlighting each element of the build/quality-control process, from frame check to wheels to fork and headset install—signed by the Cervélo staff.

The centerpiece of the P2 Carbon, of

course, is the new frame, which evolved out of the P2, an aero aluminum bike that Cervélo's Gerard Vroomen and Phil White created in 1996, and which many of today's bikes still endeavor to mimic. Like the P3C, the P2C underwent a slight coning of the nose for aerodynamic effect, and the bike has an anodized and aero-integrated binder for that deep-aero carbon seatpost. The P2C also boasts internal cable routing, a tight tuck-in rear-wheel cowling and horizontal dropouts.

On the road, the P2C inspires confidence and holds a line beautifully, regardless of the quality of the pavement. The bike, like many of Cervélo's other bikes, provides a fore and aft saddle-bracket adjustment ranging from 74 to 79 degrees. Pair that with a short head tube and a properly raked fork, and the steering on the P2C, both in the aerobars and out, is steady and predictable, as expected.

And that's all separate from the fact that the frame is now carbon. Naturally, the high-frequency chatter from pitted roads is

blunted, yet the P2C's deep tubes produce excellent power transmission when you stomp on the pedals.

Steering away from the frame, the P2C's Wolf TT fork merits equal praise. Most triathletes will notice the fork's great stiffness and handling, and, of course, balance. We've seen top bike makers cut corners with the fork, and we've seen people sell their bikes because of high-speed wobbles when heading downhill. Not the case with the Wolf TT, which tracks the P2C smoothly and produces snappy steering when called upon.

All told, there isn't much negative that can be said about the P2C. Is there a difference between it and the pricier P3C? Ride quality, fit and handling are all very similar. Indeed, differences between the two bikes may simply come down to frame drag coefficient, which for many of us is simply splitting hairs. The P2C is going to be faster than most of its competition regardless.

You can find more on the P2 Carbon at [www.cervelo.com](http://www.cervelo.com). ▲