

Cervélo P2 vs Valdora PHX

This month the Cervélo P2, from one of the most successful tri brands of all time, goes head-to-head with the lesser-known Valdora PHX.

Rob Jarman referees this battle of the red-blooded, tri-specific bikes →





When the terrain's smooth and flat, the Valdora can really unleash its raw power



The PHX uses a SRAM Red groupset that allows for both rapid and exact shifting



The combination of Profile base bars and aero bars permits a natural riding position

Valdora PHX £2,699.99

Valdora was introduced in 2004 as the premium brand for manufacturing company Olsen. It has since specialised in tri/TT-specific frames, the PHX being their latest full carbon monocoque offering.

The build

The PHX on test is built around a SRAM Red groupset that, although not as commonly used as Shimano and Campagnolo's alternatives, provides an exceptional level of performance with precise, super-fast shifting. The Profile T2 Wing base bars are coupled with Profile Cobra aero bars to provide great comfort and riding position up front, while the Valdora Tri-Gel saddle is surprisingly good for an own-brand component. Shimano provide the wheelset in the form of a pair of WH-RS20s that, as they're entry-level wheels aimed at the 105-based set-ups, are somewhat of a let-down. Valdora may be expecting an upgrade to some deep-section aero wheels for racing, but they could've tried harder to leave us with slightly more top-end training wheels.

Just like the frame design, the componentry on the PHX has been well

thought-out. With an aero upgrade for the wheelset, we could be looking at an absolute weapon.

The ride

The PHX frame (available as frameset only for £1,499.99) is a stunner with all the right bits in all the right places – aero tubing, tucked in rear wheel, horizontal drop-outs... the whole shebang. But if you believe the hype, there's also something special going on here.

Where Valdora really stand out is that they haven't just taken a standard set of angles; they've gone back to school to find out what makes a good tri bike. In the real world, it's no use having a bike that doesn't like steep hills or cornering or the slightest bit of worn tarmac. As this is what the majority of us will have to contend with, why not get a bike that can handle it?

With that in mind, we wanted to hit these bikes with everything we could throw at them and were amazed by the versatility of the PHX. It tackled some real steep climbs and trouser-changingly scary descents almost with the ease of a regular road bike. Perhaps

unsurprisingly, the PHX came into its own on the flatter, smoother sections where it was nothing short of a dream at high speed.

Valdora has given the PHX a relatively high head tube and quite a low bottom bracket. This elicits an open hip angle, leading to a more efficient line of pull for the hamstrings and a great aero body position. The set-up also gives awesome acceleration, coupled with a planted, stable feel compared to others.

However, the most impressive aspect has to be the comfort levels. Its carbon monocoque frame deadens any road vibrations and the roomier front end means a perfectly natural position that at no point feels strained or awkward.

"The PHX tackled some real steep climbs and trouser-changingly scary descents almost with the ease of a regular road bike"

The PHX really is a triumph for Valdora and for the smaller manufacturers who have the confidence in their own frame design skills. They don't just follow the big boys' lead; they produce a genuinely unique option. Hats off to Valdora and their impressive PHX.

THE SPEC

Frame	Valdora PHX-1 Pearl
Forks	Valdora V1
Groupset	SRAM Red
Wheels	Shimano WH-RS20
Cockpit	FSA OS stem; Profile T2 Wing bars
Seating	Valdora Tri-Gel saddle
Weight	8.24kg (18.2lb) without pedals
Sizes	51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63cm
Contact	Bikesales4u 07914 354989 www.bikesales4u.com

VERDICT

Handling	8
Spec	8
Value	9
Comfort	9

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The rigidity of the Cervélo's frame ensures it boasts tremendous acceleration under power



The angle of the P2's seat tube can be easily altered whether you're riding tri or TT



Built around Shimano Ultegra, Rob's delighted to find that the shifting is "buttery smooth"

Cervélo P2 £2,745.80

Cervélo arrived in 1995 when a couple of engineers broke free from the shackles of the corporate machine, stuck it to the man and produced some truly breathtaking feats of aerodynamic engineering. The company is now one of the most recognised names in TT racing.

The build

The test bike was built around Shimano Ultegra – tried-and-tested kit with buttery smooth shifting provided by Dura-Ace modules. Shimano refuse to compromise on performance and the weight savings increase as you progress through the range.

The Shimano WH-RS30 wheels are lightweight and feel bombproof with no discernible flex – great for anchoring this bike to the asphalt, although you'd probably want to ditch these for a set of deep-section aeros. The San Marco seat is comfortable and the PRO Synop stem and bars offer an excellent level of comfort and adjustability.

The ride

The P2 is the little brother of one of our favourite bikes of all time, the Cervélo P3,

so we were mightily chuffed when it rolled in. When a bike as good-looking as this turns up, you feel like you're onto a winner as soon as the box is unpacked. The P2's deep-section aero tubes are decorated with a stunning red and white paint job and black trim that gives the bike a pro look.

The frame itself has a wealth of great features including an aero nose cone, internal cable routing and a tightly tucked-in rear wheel, which is finely adjusted for maximum aerodynamic efficiency by the horizontal dropouts. The seatpost continues the aero theme with both deep-section carbon fibre and the ability to adjust the seat-tube angle depending on your preference for triathlon or TT.

The tri/TT specific geometry is evident on the P2 with its short top tube and steep seat-tube angle, coupled with a reasonably relaxed fork angle, allowing this bike to find a line and stick to it. But the P2 does have a fairly high bottom bracket that makes things scary if you happen to find yourself belting down a steep slope; that said, the higher head tube allows you to use fewer

spacers and is still low enough to get into a streamlined, tucked position.

The aero tubing has stiffness in abundance that allows for both excellent acceleration under power and great energy conservation. Unlike many aero bikes, the P2 is equally comfortable at lower speeds and flat out. More often than not, at anything less than Mach 3, aero bikes can suck the life out of you, making low speeds very uncomfortable.

A high point of the P2, something often overlooked by manufacturers, is the quality of the 3T Funda PRO forks. The 3T provide sharp steering, produce no speed wobbles on descents and also take the buzz out of the roughest road surfaces.

"When a bike as good-looking as the Cervélo P2 turns up, you feel like you're onto a winner as soon as the box is unpacked"

From the excellent frameset (priced when bought alone at just £1,500) to the smooth-shifting and lightweight Ultegra groupset, the P2 is incredible value. There are bikes out there busting the £5,000 mark that could learn a thing or two from this machine.

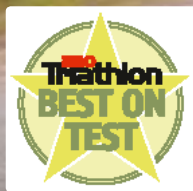
THE SPEC

Frame	Cervélo P2
Fork	Cervélo 3T Funda PRO
Groupset	Shimano Ultegra
Wheels	Shimano WH-RS30
Cockpit	PRO Synop TT Kit
Seating	Selle San Marco Zoncolan saddle
Weight	8.44kg (18.6lb) without pedals
Sizes	48, 51, 54, 56, 58, 61cm
Contact	Madison www.madison.co.uk

VERDICT

Handling	9
Spec	8
Value	10
Comfort	8

Triathlon RATING	9
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Overall verdict

There are plenty of tri bikes on the market offering great performance at realistic prices. Both the P2 and PHX, with their excellent framesets and high-end components, have provided performance you'd find on bikes considerably more expensive. It was difficult to pick a winner but the Cervélo just pips the Valdora for its remarkable handling and excellent value for money.

The Cervélo is certainly the looker here and is definitely the more aggressive machine. Stiffer and more aerodynamically efficient, it's the one to go for if you're after a thoroughbred race bike. Additionally, its highly adjustable nature would appeal to both tri and TT athletes alike.

"The Cervélo is a truly thoroughbred race bike. Its highly adjustable nature would appeal to both tri and TT athletes alike"

On the other hand, the Valdora is no slacker and really gives the impression that this is a triathlon-only machine. You find yourself in the perfect body position aboard the PHX, taking a lot of strain off the quads and shifting work to the hamstrings in preparation for the run leg. This probably isn't what you're looking for in terms of a TT bike but, then again, that's not something the PHX claims to be. ■■■