

**ROAD** Before buying, think about how you're going to ride it—cruising bike paths on weekends, racing 100 miles, or something in between. Casual riders should look for more flexible bikes, with a more upright rider position and a wider range of gears. Modern road bikes are made primarily from either aluminum or carbon, with aluminum being generally a bit heavier, less shock-absorbing, and cheaper.

### Giant Defy 3



It doesn't just look fast for the money—it is. The stiff, responsive aluminum frame, racy, sloping geometry, and upgrades like the carbon fork and seatpost help it outperform its price. And you'll laugh at any doubters while spinning effortlessly past them up hills (and still have money left to buy the first round!). **\$810 @ [giantbicycles.com](http://giantbicycles.com)**

### Schwinn Paramount Series 8



At half the price of most thoroughbred racing machines, this bike is a steal—especially considering its sleek carbon frame and fork, high-end wheels, and 10-speed Sram components. Lightweight and comfortable, it's the perfect option for an all-day ride, with enough responsiveness to excel equally on sprints and hills. **\$2,700 @ [schwinnbikes.com](http://schwinnbikes.com)**