



Electric Blue

Giant is first of three manufacturers to offer Shimano's Di2 group in 2009.

By the end of February, 50 electric-equipped, Giant TCR Advanced SL Limited road bikes will have made their way to select shops across the country that pre-ordered the limited edition models. Shimano offered the opportunity to several manufacturers, but only three — Cannondale, Giant and Specialized — decided to circumvent their traditional production schedules and produce special models to highlight Shimano's new Di2 electric Dura-Ace components. The rest of the industry's movers and shakers will likely follow this fall with their own Di2 models.

Giant hasn't traditionally been a risk taker when it comes to incorporating unproven components. The Taiwanese brand wasn't among the early adopters of SRAM's road component groups; instead it waited a full year before introducing a SRAM road bike. Giant communications manager Andrew Juskaitis explained that these components are proven, even if they are only now being introduced to the public.

"Our guys have been riding it previous to its introduction," he said. "They've been riding it for almost two years and they're big believers in it. We had an opportunity to be one of the first on the market with Di2. We knew we could make a special bike that would adapt to it and it was just a really easy decision for us to make."

Giant modified its flagship TCR Advanced SL ISP frameset in two ways to make way for Di2. First, Giant used lessons learned from internally routing SRM cables on Columbia team bikes last year to internally route the electric group's wiring.

"We eliminated any sort of cable stop for the derailleurs," Juskaitis said. "And we had custom wires made for us by Shimano to adapt to [our internal routing]."

The second nuance you'll notice on this frame is where the Di2 battery is mounted. Looking at it from the drive side, you'll barely notice it; it's tucked away behind the bottom bracket hanging off the non-drive chainstay.

"We wanted to make sure it was in the most unobtrusive spot with the lowest center of gravity," said Juskaitis. "We felt that was the best place to put it."

The TCR Advanced SL Limited will be Giant's only electric model for 2009, but the brand aims to wow customers with more than just the Di2 components. The bike features a custom-painted FSA Plasma integrated carbon handlebar and stem, color-matched Nokon cables and Zero Gravity Negative G-Ti brakes as well as Mavic's flagship tubular wheelset, the Cosmic Carbone Ultimate. The bike has a claimed weight of just 13.4 pounds, comes complete with two seat mast clamps (for 20mm and 40mm of adjustment) and a custom bike bag for travel. The package retails for \$13,900.

"We did this because we had the opportunity to flex our muscle and show our full capabilities, and [the capabilities of] our key vendors to make all the custom parts," he said. "We wanted to build an over the top bike; it's only 50 issues — super limited edition — so we figured let's go nuts with it and have some fun."

— MATT PACOCHA



CHAINSTAY-MOUNTED BATTERY



PERFORATED TOP TUBE



CUSTOM ANODIZED NEGATIVE G-TI BRAKES



REDESIGNED SEAT CLAMP



CUSTOM-PAINTED FSA PLASMA INTEGRATED HANDLEBAR