



+ **Below** The brakes were one of the Wilier's few disappointments
Bottom We liked the ability to shift across three sprockets with a single lever sweep



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WILIER TRIESTINA GTR TEAM

£1999 > Wilier's brand-new all-Italian endurance machine

Wilier seems determined to confuse us with the naming policy of its new bikes. The standard GTR is in fact the former Gran Turismo, while the GTR Team and SL are both new bikes with all-new frames. Clear? Thought so. The SL is the racier of the two, with the GTR Team we're testing having more of an endurance bias. It flies the flag for Italy, being the only bike here to break Shimano's hegemony, coming with Campagnolo's Athena groupset and Zonda wheels.

Our experience of previous Wilier endurance bikes is that they

didn't always hit the comfort levels offered by many of its competitors' bikes. Yes, the riding position was relaxed a little, but the bikes still tended to adhere to the company's watchwords of stiff and light. This time, however, Wilier seems to have got it right, with the GTR Team's c1kg frame offering excellent comfort, especially at the front.

We rode the GTR over some of our regular test routes' poorest surfaces – which are even worse in winter, of course – and the smoothing nature of the frame and fork was immediately noticeable, smothering bothersome vibrations about as well as anything out there.

SPECIFICATION

Weight 7.9kg (XL)
Frame Carbon
Fork Carbon
Gears Campagnolo Athena 50/34, 11-28
Brakes Campagnolo Athena
Wheels Campagnolo Zonda
Finishing kit Wilier by FSA stem, bar and seatpost, Selle Italia X1 saddle, 25mm Vittoria Zaffiro Slick tyres

The rear end quiets road buzz pretty well too, though it couldn't quite live up to the impressive standard set by the front.

The geometry still isn't that different from Wilier's race bikes, just marginally shorter in reach and slightly taller at the front. This is typically Italian, as the country's designers rarely seem to go for the more relaxed riding positions favoured by many big US brands. But this translates to a thrilling ride and a bike that sprints much better than an endurance machine has any right to. When climbs nudge their way over 10 per cent the GTR's low weight also serves it



This Wilier is swift, handles nimbly, balancing this with a smooth and comfortable ride

HIGHS
Light, lively, smooth and fun

LOWS
Slight imbalance between front and rear vibration damping

BUY IF
You want an exciting Italian take on the endurance bike with Campagnolo components

well, and it ascends very positively. Reach a fast, challenging descent and it proves equally willing, the steering requiring only the lightest of touches, inspiring confidence whatever the road conditions could throw at us.

To find anything other than Shimano at this price point is pretty unusual these days, but we think you should discount Campagnolo at your peril. The shifting is positive and snappy and Athena's ability to shift across three sprockets in a single sweep means you can attack every climb. The Zonda wheels, with their unusual spoke pattern at the rear, look like they'll be prone to flex, but these proved rock solid even under the hardest cornering and the most energetic sprints.

Unfortunately the Athena brakes don't quite match the quality of the drivetrain. We appreciate the idea behind Campagnolo's differential

braking – the more important front brake is designed to be more powerful than the rear – but Campag's front brake doesn't offer the same power as its rivals from Shimano or SRAM. This meant we ended up grabbing at the brakes to control speed, especially in the wet.

Overall, though, the GTR Team hugely impressed us. It's swift, handles nimbly, and it balances this with a smooth and comfortable ride. Even the slight imbalance between the super-plush front end and the slightly less comfortable rear is forgivable when the bike delivers a ride as exciting as this.

THE VERDICT
Wilier's all-new GTR Team offers a beguiling blend of speed and comfort
★★★★★

Also consider...



FOR A LITTLE MORE
WILIER TRIESTINA GTR SL £2399

The GTR SL is at the racier end of the spectrum, and your extra £400 will get Shimano Ultegra and Mavic Aksium Elite wheels.



FOR A LITTLE LESS
WILIER TRIESTINA GTR £1299

This GTR is a new interpretation of Wilier's original Gran Turismo, which combined race and endurance qualities. It looks very well priced too. →