

**Wilier Imperiale**

**£3779**

ATB Sales ☎ 01424 753566,  
www.atb-sales.co.uk  
www.wilier.it



steel spread across four price points from the super high end, through to the merely high end and down to the relatively mid-range. Italian bikes aren't cheap when compared to similarly performing Far Eastern rivals but you pay a premium for European manufacture not style – that comes free.

Renato Simoncini has, since 1949 produced steel and now aluminium bikes in Deddaciai and Columbus tubing. He enjoys a healthy export market with much of his business being done in Germany where there's a strong demand for frames built with the venerable Columbus SLX tubing. AC5 tested here is in the middle of Simoncini's range of 10 models.

Some Italian manufacturers have been

building all or part of their ranges in the Far East for some time, purists and bike snobs may blanch but now Ernesto Colnago have bitten the bullet and outsourced his Arte and Primavera models to Taiwan. We test the Arte which, with its distinctive cloverleaf

top and downtubes, is still very much a Colnago.

Located in the far north eastern Italian port of Trieste, Wilier are a long-established firm whose frames once sported a translucent gold lacquered finish as a trade mark of the brand. The

**Simoncini Corsa Strada ACS**

**£1659** (complete) **£550** (frame only)

Cycles Clement ☎ 01531 632213,  
www.cyclesclements.co.uk



gold finish is gone and the traditional looks with it, as frame designs of their current range are as modern as the minute. There are 12 models in the range that includes the LeRoi ridden by the Cofidis team and the more affordable

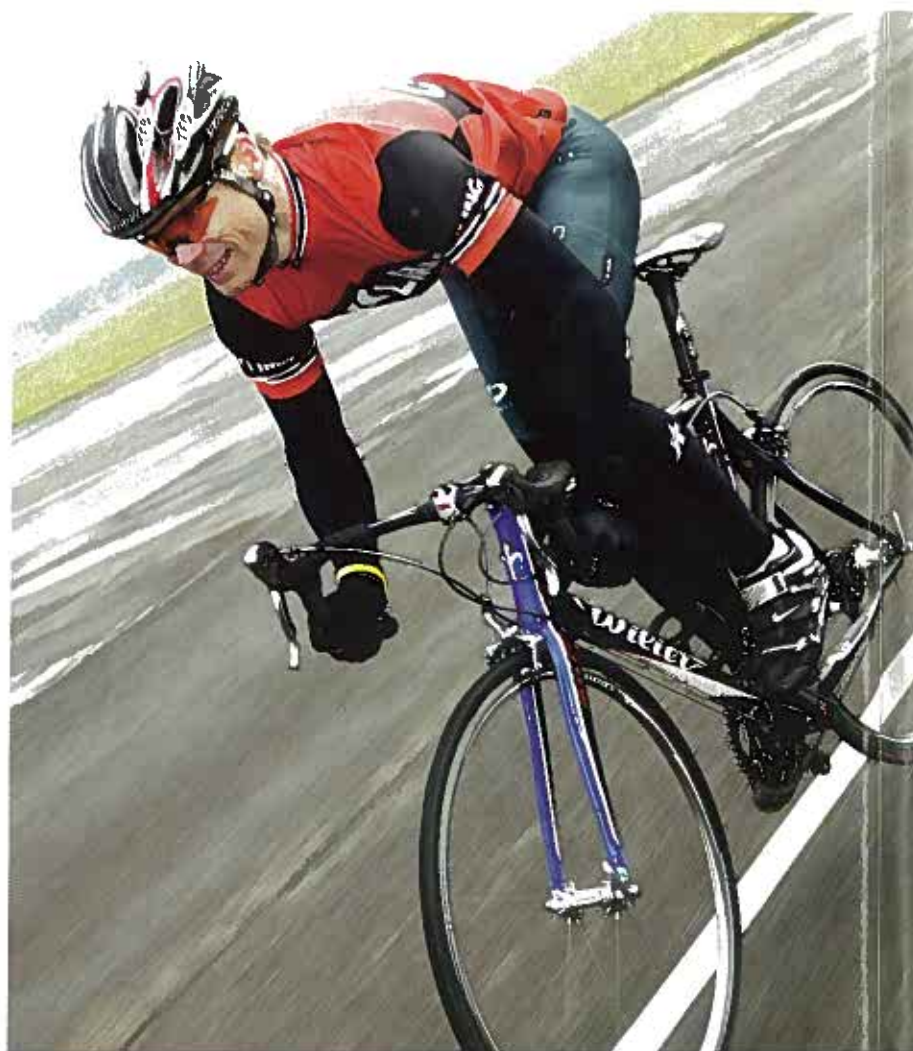
Imperiale tested here.

Pinarello hardly need an introduction as one of the big hitters in the world of Italian cycling and the Paris FP carbon tested here is their range heading model.

Right: a nice frame details on the Simoncini underlines its racing heritage – as does the ACS's faintly retro colour scheme



Note the graphic to remind you that the Wilier's integrated headset has a 1 1/8 top and a 1 1/4 bottom



**FRAME**  
Wilier 9 Simoncini 8 Pinarello 9 Colnago 8

Wilier carbon frames are produced in Italy and the Imperiale is second in the range headed by the sub-kilo LeRoi. The Imperiale frame is built with a less labour intensive and simplified construction method and is available in four sizes ranging from S-XL and with top tubes ranging from 52.5cm-57cm. The 1310g frame weight reflects a conservative approach to frame construction. Wilier also make their own all-carbon fork which weighs just 358g.

The use of a 'super' oversized lower headset bearing should improve strength and stiffness and the gears can be adjusted