



## Whiz Kids

*The new generation of performance rides are faster, more comfortable, and more capable than ever* BY AARON GULLEY

We're witnessing a sea change in what road bikes look like and how they perform. Manufacturers are realizing that consumers don't need the lightest, most aggressive designs used by professional riders, and they're turning out machines that are more versatile and user-friendly. While the racing world has resisted disc brakes, for instance, bike companies are keen on their advantages and are pushing to make them standard. Modern geometries lean toward stability, and smarter tube shapes continue to boost comfort. Tires and rims are getting wider, improving traction and ride quality. And as the gravel market grows—with bikes like our Gear of the Year winner built to handle asphalt, dirt, and even light trails—the roadie is becoming more capable and fun, no matter where your next adventure leads.



## GEAR OF THE YEAR

### Open Unbeaten Path

\$2,900 (frame only)

The Unbeaten Path is the rally car of road bikes: blazingly fast and light (just over 17 pounds with skinny tires) yet muscly enough for gravel and slickrock trails. This carbon machine gets the adventure recipe right by mat-ing road geometry with mountain-bike tire clearance. The UP can accommo-

date everything from 700c wheels with 40-millimeter tires to 650b hoops with 2.1-inch rubber—more than half an inch wider than most bikes in this class. Details are spot-on, too, with powerful braking, thanks to 160-millimeter discs; stiff mountain-size through-axes at the front and rear; and four sets of bottle bosses, including one on the top tube for an integrated feedbag. "It's the universal road bike," said one tester. "There's nothing it can't do well." 17.6 lbs