



Moots Routt

What it does well: This Moots is named after Colorado's Routt County, home to Moots and hundreds of miles of fast-rolling dirt roads through ranchlands and forgotten doubletrack over rolling hills. The Routt was built for exactly that type of riding. It was the favorite bike we tested, not only because it's cut from gorgeous titanium and was tricked out well beyond our means, but because it road like silk. The bottom bracket is lower for a more balanced ride. And the titanium build is incredibly plush without sacrificing durability. The frame could run everything from race tires to 35mm gravel fare.

What it does poorly: Not much. It wails on dirt roads. And as you're doing so you aren't worried that a rock will impale the frame. If you opted for the YBB rear suspension it would make a great cross and rough doubletrack dirt bike, too.

So who's it for? Here's another one bike quiver that transitions for rugged country to endurance road riding based on wheel choice. **\$TK; TK lbs.; moots.com**



Alchemy Aithon

What it does well: Alchemy is a boutique builder from Colorado's Front Range. They bill the Aithon as a Carbon Gravel Racer, and that depiction is pretty much spot on. Our bike was built up with ENVE carbon rims and Ultegra road parts. We found it comfortable and pliant on and off dirt roads—and fast. The carbon just seems to eat up vibrations and small hits and let you stay seated while hammering. There's also a beauty factor here—especially in the wishbone shaped rear triangle and rich, deep finish.

What it does poorly: The Aithon—the name comes from Greek myth—would be our choice for an actual gravel race or whenever the local group ride opts for a day of dirt, but like the BMC, it's no detuned cyclocross bike. We'd keep it off the ragged doubletrack.

So who's it for? If you had two sets of wheels (one with skinny tires and one with some chubs), the Aithon could go from bruising gran fondos and centuries to California style gravel races. **\$5,499 (frame/fork only); TK lbs.; alchemybicycle.com**



BMC granfondo GF02 Disc

What it does well: Some of the bikes we called in are "quiver" builders, meaning you'd buy one as a rough road and nasty weather supplement to your fancy road bike. The BMC GF02, though, is a quiver unto itself. The frame is lightweight aluminum (but so pretty it fooled a few testers into thinking it was carbon) and feels tough even while offering a plush ride thanks to the vertical compliance designed into the seat stays—BMC calls it Tuned Compliance Concept. The compact drivetrain and disc brakes make the GF02 up to the task of climbing and descending steep dirt. And the stock bike comes with 32mm Continental road tires, which is the width we want in order to run lower tire pressures. And that last bit is important: tire selection is key on a road bike. You don't need the deep cyclocross lugs, which are overkill for dirt roads, but you want a tire that's fat enough to offer some cushioning and cut the rolling resistance.

What it does poorly: The GF02's DNA is of the long distance road bike strand. It's not a cyclocross bike with smooth rubber. In other words, we like it for the roads mentioned in the intro as opposed to single or doubletrack.

So who's it for? One road bike quiver shopper who is tired of being relegated to busy asphalt. **\$TK; 20.8 lbs.; bmc-switzerland.com**

OR TRY THIS IF YOU RECENTLY BOUGHT A DISC-BRAKE ROAD BIKE and aren't in the market for a **groadie**, then take advantage of another benefit of those quick stopping discs—easy wheel swaps. Keep your race wheels set up with your skinny tires and consider investing in some rugged carbon hoops like the Reynolds ATR (All Terrain Road). I ran the tubeless ready ATRs on a Scott Solace (their Roubaix style, smooth road bike) and spent the fall and early winter exploring dirt roads. On mountain bikes, carbon wheels are stiffer laterally and corner better. The biggest benefit I felt on gravel roads, though, was vibration damping. Part of that is the carbon. Part of it is thanks to the 24 steel spokes Reynolds builds the wheel with. And part of it is careful tire selection. Since tire clearance is a factor on traditional road bikes, I looked to maximize what the bike could accommodate and ran tubeless Hutchinson

