



Giro Pneumo \$160

Pro racers get all the good stuff first, which is why you saw pros in this summer's Tour de France sporting a never-before seen Giro helmet. That new Giro lid is the Pneumo, which should be hitting stores in January 2001.

The Pneumo is a very different sort of road helmet, and we're not just talking about the \$160 sticker price, either. Like the rest of Giro's top-of-the-line road buckets, the Pneumo features a rear wraparound retention device, the Roc Loc 4, that cinches up behind your noggin to give a snug fit. It's also got the biggest vents we've seen on a CPSC- or ANSI-approved helmet, which makes head-scratching a breeze as you can practically stick your hand through the cavernous vents. And the Pneumo's newest feature is a bit of a head-scratcher: It's got a visor, the first for a top-drawer road helmet.

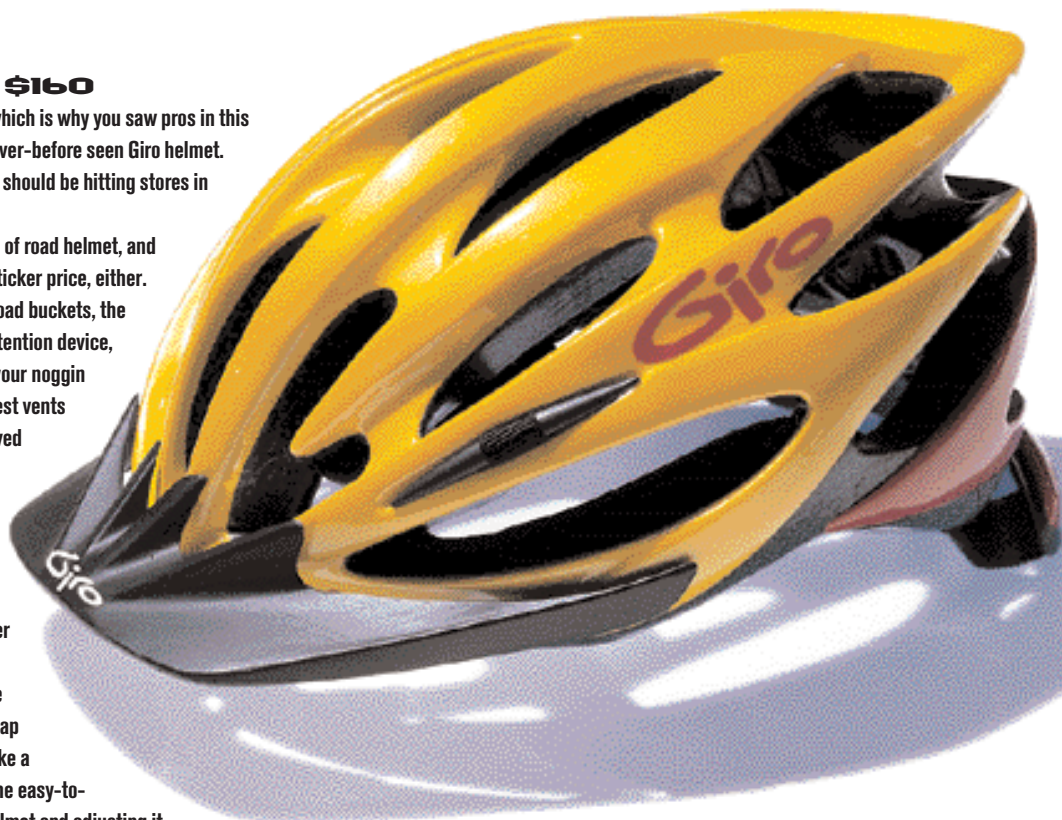
The visor is intended to replace the age-old practice of wearing a cycling cap under the helmet, so it's super-short like a cycling cap's. It snaps into place like the easy-to-position visor on Giro's E2 mountain helmet and adjusting it is as simple as reaching up and tweaking the visor just a touch.

If you don't want to run the visor you just unsnap it from the helmet like a Lego block.

At 240 grams for our S/M-size sample, the Pneumo definitely pushes the limits for lightness and airiness. And it's a supremely comfortable fit. The Roc Loc 4 adjusts with a ratcheting strap so there's no hook-and-loop stuff to mess with, and the lid feels light on the head, stays in place and is all but invisible to the wearer. It's definitely one to buy—if you can see your way around the \$160 price tag.

Giro, 800/294-6098; www.giro.com

—Garrett Lai



ProGold EPX Cycle Grease \$4

Grease and lube are about as essential for your bike's health as food and water are for you. We're big fans of ProGold's ProLink chain lube, so when we found out ProGold is now making a similarly fortified grease for cyclists, we were ecstatic.

Like ProLink, EPX Cycle Grease contains a metal friction reducer that somehow reacts with metal to dramatically reduce friction—much more so than you'd find with a standard grease. We tried it in places we'd normally apply grease: cables, bearings, threaded fasteners, seatposts and stems. And, like ProLink, it definitely reduced friction. By a lot. EPX Cycle Grease is about twice as thick as standard bicycle grease, which makes working with it a messy operation—it's a bit like B'r'er Rabbit's tar baby. In fact, it's so thick that repacked hubs and bottom brackets feel syrupy at first. But after they've had a chance to run for a bit, you'll find that things spin smoothly and freely.

The accordionlike grease bottle doesn't look as high-tech as some of the miniature metal grease guns that come packaged with some grease, but that helps keep the price low. And we're all for saving money wherever we can.

The only caveat we found with EPX Cycle Grease is it's almost too good at reducing metal-to-metal friction—applying it to seatposts or handlebar clamps can make some of these items more prone to slipping, which isn't so good. And since EPX is really designed for metal-to-metal wear, it's no more effective than other lubes when one or both contact surfaces aren't metallic.

ProGold, 800/421-5823; www.progoldmfr.com

—Garrett Lai

