



CYCLING FACT SHEET No. 30

What sort of bicycle do you get for \$20,000?

While it is easy to find a comfortable and well-equipped bike for under a thousand dollars, there is a growing number of people who would happily spend ten or even twenty times that amount on their new treadly.

Like most things in life you get what you pay for, although the law of diminishing returns can often apply to these ultra high-end bicycles.

There is an undeniable jump in quality and performance between a \$500 bike and one costing around the \$3000 mark, but the difference between a \$3000 model and a \$20,000 machine is usually much more subtle or cosmetic.

So what do you get for your money? Well, carbon fibre for starters. Frames, forks and wheels made from this revolutionary material create a bicycle that is very light, which in turn means less energy is required to propel it along.

Pinarello, for example, make a range of seamless carbon fibre frames that retail for about \$6000 and weigh less than 900 grams.

In addition to the weight factor, carbon fibre is less fragile than steel or aluminium, can absorb more shock and does not suffer from corrosion.

High-end bikes also boast components such as disk brakes, tyres with silk casings, ergonomic saddles, titanium axles and automatic functioning gears, lights and suspension dampening.

However, with mass production leading to economies of scale, many bicycles in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range are now made from carbon fibre and come with these high-quality components.

While it is possible to make a case for spending \$10,000 on a precision road bike that is being used on a daily basis, it is much harder to justify paying these prices for city or mountain bikes that only get an occasional outing. The return on investment for a rider in terms of technology just isn't there.

The real difference at this end of the price scale may, in fact, be more psychological than technological. For instance, Ferrari's carbon fibre CF2 mountain bike and CF5 city bike, produced in conjunction with Italian manufacturer Colnago, both sell for more than \$12,000. Although these limited production run bikes are high quality, having the famous prancing stallion badge on the frame no doubt increases their price tag.

An ultra-expensive bicycle can actually make riding less enjoyable and more uncomfortable for the everyday person because they are extremely responsive and designed specifically for experienced professional riders, who have a different mindset and physiology to the rest of us.



This fact sheet is one of a series dealing with the use of bicycles for recreation and transport in Western Australia. The series looks at a range of cycling-related topics including ride routes, touring tips, maintenance, safety, road rules, insurance and product reviews. You can find more cycling fact sheets online at www.transport.wa.gov.au/cycling

Cycling Unit
Department of Transport
441 Murray Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel: (08) 9216 8000
Fax: (08) 9216 8497
Email: cycling@transport.wa.gov.au