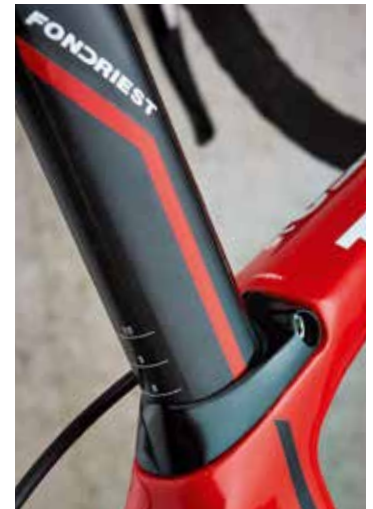




**Below** The neat 'aero' seatpost clamps easily and securely  
**Bottom** Big is beautiful when it comes to the Fondriest's tubing



There's no sensation of softness through the Fondriest's aggressive frame

# FONDRIEST TF2 1.5

**£1999** > Maurizio Fondriest's ultra-flamboyant racer

**T**he words "I've got bike envy!" were the first thing our tester heard when he stopped for provisions during the 80-mile Bike Bath ride. Well, it would have been 80, but he was so busy concentrating on the bike and going as fast as he could that he forgot such fripperies as following the large red signs so he took an eight-mile detour via Frome. And another slight off-route foray past Chew Valley reservoir later on. Never mind, a near-100-mile day in the Mendips, much of it in heavy rain, put this bike through its paces. It did mean the descents,

on unfamiliar greasy, gritty and gravelly roads were taken more gingerly than usual, saving higher-speed descending for another day. Which at least proved that the Shimano 105 brake and Ambrosio rim pairing worked in all conditions.

You can't miss this Fondriest, which is just about the brightest red we've ever seen. If red really was the quickest colour this would be a flyer. As it is, it's a well-thought-out road bike with an aero-look to it, though we should point out that Fondriest makes no aerodynamic claims about its wind-cheating prowess, in spite of a blunt teardrop-shaped seatpost and cutaway for the rear wheel. The

## SPECIFICATION

**Weight** 8.72kg (50cm)  
**Frame** Carbon  
**Fork** Carbon  
**Gears** Shimano 105, 50/34, 11-28  
**Brakes** Shimano 105  
**Wheels** Ambrosio FCS 30  
**Finishing kit** Fondriest stem and aero seatpost, Deda bar, Selle Italia SL saddle, Michelin Lithion 3 tyres

huge 'Monolithic' bottom bracket shell at the bottom of the squared-off down-tube is also slightly misleading, as it houses a standard Shimano Hollowtech cartridge bottom bracket. But the same holds true here as with the Cinelli, and there's no sensation of softness through the TF2's somewhat aggressive, racy frame. The chainstays, wheelbase and head-tube are short, the frame angles are on the steep side, and it comes with the UCI seal of approval.

The Fondriest's race-readiness might give the impression that a more leisurely century on it will leave you battered and bruised. It →



The aero-ish carbon seatpost is more comfortable than a very narrow, wing-shaped seatpost



won't. The aero-ish carbon seatpost is more comfortable than a very narrow, wing-shaped seatpost, and we liked the Selle Italia SL saddle, complete with cutaway. The slim top-tube and slightly arched seatstays probably help to take off any potential harshness too. You could fit wider tyres than the very good 23mm Michelin Lithion items it comes with, but for such an overtly racy ride the comfort is more than adequate. Shimano 105 worked well, and there are other models with higher-spec Shimano builds and different wheels than the Ambrosios on our test bike. You could also buy the frameset for £1699 (from 1 September) and kit it out yourself.

Fondriest may not have the economies of scale enjoyed by many brands, so you might expect to pay well over the odds compared with the big-name manufacturers. But the price is reasonable. We'd like a

**HIGHS**

Super-stylish looks, good quality kit and decent levels of long-distance comfort

**LOWS**

The weight is a little heavier than we'd have liked and the wheels are quite modest

**BUYIF**

You want a bike with panache that stands out from the crowd

little less weight, the Fondriest coming in 700g heavier than the similarly priced Cinelli. And as the Fondriest has a claimed sub-kilogram frame, a big chunk of that difference comes down to the wheels. The front wheel and tyre combo is the heaviest here, and the rear is the second heaviest. Lighter wheels would definitely make more of the frame's taut and aggressive nature, as well as helping you accelerate and climb quicker.

But this is a bike you buy with your heart as well as your head, one to leave your club pals green – or bright red – with bike envy.

**THE VERDICT**

Great looks and a very well-balanced ride, but we'd have liked a little less weight

★★★★★

Also consider...



**FOR A MORE COMFORT-FRIENDLY RIDE**  
**FONDRIEST TF4 £1699**

Shimano 105 groupset, direct mount brakes and an innovative seat-tube/seatstay connection that Fondriest calls VS – 'Vibration Suppressor'.



**FOR QUITE A BIT MORE**  
**FONDRIEST TF1.4 DURA-ACE £4250**

This sub-800g frame will build into a super-light bike with a choice of mechanical or electronic groupsets. →