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BAGGIES THAT ARE LONG ON PERFORMANCE, STYLE AND COMFORT



by vernon felton | photo: van swae

ZOIC ETHER PREMIUM \$120

THE ETHER IS AN EXCELLENT CHOICE on hot rides. While the shell isn't quite as light as what you'd find on, say, TLD's Ruckus, ZoiC outfits the Ether with large mesh ventilation panels, which run down the inner thighs and along the waistband. That generous venting isn't immediately obvious, but when you're working up a sweat, you soon realize that they truly bring in some much-needed breeze. That's great in the summer months, but isn't quite so awesome when the mercury drops and the sky is crying.

The Ether features a very nice, detachable chamois and five pockets, one of which, the tech pocket, sports a head-phone cord control grommet and loop. ZoiC outfitted the Ether with both Velcro side-adjuster tabs and an elastic waistband. Accordingly, the Ether does a great job of accommodating wandering waistlines, though I'm not as keen on how the elastic waistband actually *feels*. The inseam on the Ether is a bit shorter than average, which is fine if you don't rock kneepads but sort of unsightly if you do.

TLD RUCKUS \$135

WHEN SUMMER ROLLS AROUND, I invariably reach for TLD's Ruckus shorts due to their light and comfortable feel. The two-way stretch shell is featherlight. While I haven't torn or snagged the Ruckus yet, there are certainly more robust shells on the market. The cut on the Ruckus is damn near perfect. Some shorts feel right when you're faffing about before the ride, but constrictive when you're hunched up on the bike. The Ruckus is the opposite—these shorts are at their best when you're pretzeled up on the saddle.

Troy Lee outfitted the Ruckus with a long inseam (a definite plus if you run pads), three zippered pockets and Velcro'd waist adjusters. At \$135, you'd expect a chamois to be part of the party and, sure enough, the Ruckus also sports a detachable chamois. One nitpick: I'd like to see TLD increase the size of the zippers on the inner thigh vents. The company uses small 'hidden' zippers that are, indeed, unobtrusive, but also a bit annoying to operate when you're wearing gloves.

SHREDLY DSR WOMEN'S MTB LONG \$100

COLORADO DESIGNER ASHLEY RANKIN debuted Shredly in January 2012, and her-shorts have been a savior for female riders ever since. The funky patterns are a refreshing splash of color in a world of drab options and the fit and style are spot-on. I've tested the short and long versions, and prefer the cut with an added 3 inches to the inseam. If you wear kneepads, you'll want the longer length too, which falls just below the knees.

This year, Rankin changed the waist-tightening system from Velcro adjusters to an elastic band sewn into the waist with eight button slots on either side that adjust the fit. I prefer this version because I find that Velcro tends to come undone as I'm moving around on the bike (or maybe I should stop eating so many burritos). Other touches include the Velcro closure with two snaps, two thigh vents and a nice, deep pocket on the right leg. One downside is they're a bit spendy for a shell only—Rankin sells a comfortable chamois separately for \$45—but part of that price is due to Shredly's commitment to U.S. labor; all shorts are sewn in San Diego. —Nicole Formosa