

315 PRODUCTS TESTED



Outside

BUYER'S GUIDE

SUMMER 2010

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Ironman in Training

Rudy Project Genetyk 3-Lens Competition Kit \$350

With this three-lens set, racing-bred Rudy takes the high ground—high performance, high quality, and, yes, high-end pricing that's still sensible after you figure what three ultra-premium sport shields would run. Two of the three snap-in, single-piece lenses are photochromic: Clear took us from no light to pretty bright, but as the day lightened up we switched to red. The third option is a mirrored deep gray that does full-blast sun. For toughness, we could find none better than Rudy's ImpactX lens material, certified for shooting and military use. Though the style is Giro d'Italia, the featherweight, streamlined Genetyk shines in any kind of human-powered racing. Considering the investment, it's for those in it to win. Rx-able with snap-in diopter (\$80). e-rudy.com

Value: 3.8

Sport/Street Crossover: 1

All-Day Cyclist

Ryders Swerve Pro \$70

Makes sense that a sunglasses maison in Pacific coast Canada, where sunlight gets fuzzed up with airborne moisture, would get the tint right. Orange photochromic poly lenses destroyed mist and punched up depth in low to medium light. We preferred this slender wrap on a road bike: The helmet-friendly frames are flattish on top, with adjustable nose pads so the Swerve Pro sits just right in head-down riding position. The bikiest feature is the nonpolarized lenses, which let slick pavement show and contain cutouts at the top for defogging ventilation at speed. Way out front in value. Not Rx-able. ryderseyewear.com

Value: 5

Sport/Street Crossover: 1.5

Eco-Resorter

Smith Touchstone \$199

You can just about taste Smith's grapey Ignitor lens tint, in delicious polarized, photochromic, optically ground glass. Pinkish in low light, like rosé wine, it deepened to pinot in bright sun. Acuity was as good as it gets: easy on the eyes, for all-day wear. The Touchstone was easy on greener consciences, too, with some frame material sourced from castor bean plants, of all things. The style statement is big, solid, macho. All-around excellent frame, but also a slight puzzle: The reddish tint screamed action and speed, but the glass said no. So we went easy, while looking really hard—and were especially wild about the Touchstone for training runs on quiet streets. Rx-able. smithoptics.com

Value: 3.5

Sport/Street Crossover: 4.6



Red, like other warm tints, sharpens and punches up views by blocking blue light, at the high short-wavelength end of the visual spectrum, which is hard for eyes to bring into focus.

Sunglasses

Stylish Jock

Giro Splitter \$90

Split the difference between performance eye gear and streetwear—and between too cheap and too pricey. There's lots to like here for less than \$100. Brown-tint poly lenses, by optics meister Zeiss, revealed detail and depth and were exactly as big and wrapped-back as they needed to be for all-around coverage and protection. Cutouts on the temple pieces, right where they hinge into the frames, promoted air circulation behind lenses to prevent fog. The Splitter was apt for casual cycling, sure, and great for road and trail running, but maybe too relaxed for serious roadwork and racing. Stylewise, this Giro was up to weekending anywhere—and ideal everyday wear in outdoorsy towns like Bellingham. Rx-able. giro.com

Value: 4.6

Sport/Street Crossover: 4.5

Driver/Hiker

Serengeti Larino \$159

Hit the highway, then hit the trail. Serengeti brings its signature superfine optics for driving into the realm of outdoor exertion with these sporty poly Polar PhD lenses in a wide wrap design that looks upmarket and uptown. Gray-tint polarized lenses showed the world sharp and bright. A big *oooh* for the layered white frame, plus temples that taper to translucent red edges, with grippy rubber right where we needed it. Nice coverage and security, but the Larino was a mite too hefty for serious speed and rough stuff, and the gray tint was less than optimal for big action. It was the way to go, though, for appearance-conscious weekend warriors. Rx-able. serengeti-eyewear.com

Value: 3

Sport/Street Crossover: 4.5

Mad Multisporter

Oakley Jawbone \$195-\$260

The Jawbone is available in multiple lens options that include vented, polarized, and photochromic. We loved the polarized persimmon seen here, but our favorite was the vented copper-mirrored Fire Iridium, which offered crisp, hi-res views and made this big wrap look like it might bite, with its toothy lens cutouts. (The vents are a smart design feature: As you move, the airflow keeps close-fitting shades from trapping moisture and fogging up the lenses.) Oakley's smart interchangeable lens system opens wide and chomps down hard, literally. Pull the nosepieces down to release hinged frames that gape, jawlike, to free the lenses, then relock them as solidly as any fixed-lens sunglasses. The only clues to the mechanics are hinge pins at the corners of the frames—and they only add to the loud, lethal look, which also speaks to the strong coverage and security of this piece. Rx-able. oakley.com

Value: 3.7

Sport/Street Crossover: 1.2

Low-light red lenses are killer all day long, in any kind of fast, furious sport.

