

QUINTANA ROO PRFIVE

\$7,300 with Shimano Ultegra Di2, Profile Design Svet R/T4+ aerobars, Reynolds Strike SLG carbon clinchers. *By Jay Prasuhn*

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SIZES: 48, 50, 52,
54, 56 (tested),
58.5 cm

DONALD MIRALLE

For the last five years, bikes have diverged into two distinct categories. First are the so-called superbikes, with hyper integration (think Cervélo P5, Trek Speed Concept, BMC TM01). Second are the standard builds using normal stems, forks and brakes that help keep cost down and mechanical ease of use high. The superbikes are faster, but what price convenience when you can't adjust your brakes... let alone access them on the fly?

But there's hope. The last few years, we've seen a new sliver category emerge, one I like to call "junior superbikes." With a bit of craftiness, these bikes retain 95 percent of what makes a superbike super. That other 5 percent? Gone are the hidden brakes and proprietary aerobars that account for just a few grams of aero drag. But with that goes the complexity of hidden brake adjustment, and in many cases, the cost of Shimano Di2 or SRAM Red, opting for a lesser component package. These bikes are easier to pack and build at the races, and cost less—yet are nearly as fast as the big bro superbike.

Enter the PRfive. The junior to QR's top-shelf PRsix (a bike with an integrated stem and bayonet fork), the PRfive removes the tricky front end

in favor of a standard fork-stem interface. The PRfive is nearly everything the PRsix is, but at a lower price and with less mechanical headache. And looking around the room at its competitors, it's pound for pound the best budget-priced junior superbike out there.

To be sure, QR did test against like-level bikes: The Cervélo P3, Argon 18 E-111, Specialized Shiv and Felt DA. It claims to be better than the DA and E-111, (particularly at yaw) and comparable to the P3.

And it's the superbike features of the PRsix that help it attain those numbers. The carbon fiber frame has all the popular requisites: a Kamm-style (they call it Boat-tail) trailing edge tube sets, and QR's Shift+ design (offsetting the down tube toward the dirty-air drive side, making for a cleaner non-drive side airflow off the frame).

It looks after the minutiae as well: option of horizontal or vertical drop-outs, frame clearance for wide 25 mm tires and spec'd with the cost-savvy Shimano Ultegra Di2 instead of Dura-Ace (though the PRfive is also available in even less-expensive iterations, in Ultegra mechanical versions with or

without Reynolds race wheels). In fact, QR's direct mount setup is our preferred choice, but if you wanted to run a standard center post front brake from any manufacturer (or as was our test bike, set up with TriRig Omega front brake, feeding to TriRig's Alpha X aerobar), you can do so. But the Ultegra rear brake is one you don't want to change: it's the best under-bottom-bracket rear stopper on the market.

And fit is made easy as well. The seat post rail has a horizontal fore-aft adjustment with clearly marked 77-, 80- and 83-degree settings. Paired with a short head tube, you can get as low as any superbike out there... and lower still with the right aerobar (as the non-stock TriRig on our test bike presented, versus the stock Profile Design offering).

The bike rides like a superbike, too, feeling stealth on straightaways. It's a little surfy through turns, but then again, it's not a crit bike; it's a tri bike. Despite the offset down tube, there's zero flex at the bottom bracket (thanks largely to the squared Kamm tube sets), making it a wonderfully sprightly climber.

Finally, the value is undeniable. While the Cervélo P3 (\$5,400) has brand and aero cachet, it doesn't come with race wheels, as the PRfive does, with its race-ready Reynolds carbon clinchers. The Specialized Shiv Pro Race (\$5,700) matches up with race wheels, but then again, it's nearly \$900 more dear.

And one interesting note: if you're not sure you want to dive into the PRfive, this may help cinch it: QR makes the PRfive (and other models) available to rent at select Ironman North America events, as well as the Ironman World Championships. Not a bad way to race-test a ride without having to make the big investment ... yet. **A**



ROLL IT: Seeking best bang-for-buck? It doesn't get much better.



RACK IT: Cost is no object to get the lowest drag (or you are mechanically savvy enough to manage tricky hidden brakes).