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REVIEW By Warren Rossiter & Cycling Plus
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Bell Zephyr MIPS helmet review £200.00

All-new top-flight lid with added safety

BikeRadar score ★★★★★ 4.5/5



Bell's Zephyr MIPS helmet (David Caudery / Immediate Media)

BikeRadar verdict

"The Zephyr offers added MIPS protection without compromise"

- Highs:** Brilliant adjustability and airflow, MIPS protection
- Lows:** Pricey, some exposed EPS on the lower edges
- Buy if:** You want a MIPS helmet that doesn't compromise on the cooling
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The aero-optimised Star with its integrated eye shield tops Bell's range, and while impressive its sole purpose is wind cheating for aero-focused riders. For the more endurance-orientated, the Zephyr has a focus on comfort and safety.

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The helmet features 18 large vents, which perforate a wind tunnel-optimised shape, and a hard skeleton between base and top layers of EPS foam for strength.

The fit is excellent thanks to its slightly rounded shape and new float-fit retention system that offers 22mm of vertical adjustment. This makes fitting the cradle to your occipital lobe (visual processing centre of the brain, located at the rear of the skull) easy and comfortable. Neoprene pads bonded to the cradle further enhance the great fit.

MIPS (Multi-directional Impact Protection System) is a patented design that uses slip plane technology designed to reduce rotational forces that can come from angled impacts, so the helmet slides relative to the movement of the head.

Helmet companies don't legally claim that MIPS is safer than a standard helmet but the company behind it – MIPS intellectual designs are licensed to helmet manufacturers – has certainly done its research, and anything that should make things safer is good with us.

The downside to MIPS is that it's usually an additional part inserted underneath the retention system, which can compromise cooling, but this is where Bell has been clever.

By working in partnership with MIPS, Bell has integrated its brilliantly adjustable cradle system with a skeletal design MIPS roll cage so the Zephyr doesn't have any such cooling compromises. It feels as light and airy as a 315g (large) helmet should.

The minimal but well placed and washable X-Static pads add to the flush and free feel of the Zephyr, making this one of the finest road lids I've ever tried. The lightweight straps sit flat, the finish is clean and very neatly done and the mix of flat matt colours and gloss highlighted understated logos all add to the quality.

The Zephyr is also offered in a fully reflective 'Ghost' colour option.

There are a few areas of exposed core on the lower edges, so you'll need to be careful not to drop it, but that niggle aside this is one of the best performing lids around.

This article was originally published in Cycling Plus magazine, available on Apple Newsstand and Zinio.

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'By working in partnership with MIPS, Bell has integrated its brilliantly adjustable cradle system with a skeletal design MIPS roll cage'

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Warren Rossiter
Senior Technical Editor
Twitter

Approaching two decades of testing bikes, Warren can be found on a daily basis riding and exploring the road and off roads of Wiltshire's Salisbury Plain in the UK. That's when he's not travelling the world to test the latest kit, components and bikes.

Age: 44
Weight: 92kg / 203lb
Chest: 112cm / 44in
Height: 188cm / 6'2"
Waist: 86cm / 34in

Discipline: Road
Preferred Terrain: Big, fast descents and rough surfaces like cobbles or strada bianca
Current Bikes: Decade Tripster ATR, Dedacciai Temarario, Cannondale Synapse, BMC Granfondo Disc Di2, Genesis Day One CX, Parlee Z Zero Custom, Storck Scenario Comp Custom, DMR Trailstar, Bianchi Pista, Cube SUV 29er e-bike
Dream Bike: Bianchi Oltre Disc, Bianchi Specialissima, Cannondale Slate, Buffalo Bike
Beer of Choice: Brew Dog Punk IPA
Location: Wiltshire, UK

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Eugene Chan · a day ago
I think the closest comparison besides the Stratus is the Giro Synthe, perhaps not by coincidence since Giro and Bell operated out of the same building. I found both helmets very comfortable around the top of my head, maybe because of the suspended fit preventing the top of my head from touching hard EPS. General shape and size is also the same. Not mushroomy with decent occipital protection in the back. Some competitors like the Lazer Z1 have more temporal protection. As far as aesthetic details, I like the Zephyr more than the Synthe mostly. Perhaps ironically, the Synthe reminds me of the old Bell V-1 Pro with its retro-modern styling. The Zephyr's main visual flaw is the jagged outline around the ears.

Norman Saunders · a day ago
Looks ugly and like it's made of plastic.

IndependentThinker → Norman Saunders · a day ago
What exactly do you suppose helmets are made of? Finely grained teak?

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