

Gaerne G-Stilo+ cycling shoes review



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VERDICT: Top tier racing shoes straight out of Italy

Montebelluna, north of Venice in Italy has been in the business of making boots for hundreds of years. Formerly the majority of these found their way onto the feet of soldiers employed in the armies of Italy and her allies. However in peacetime the commune's many factories turned their skills and machinery to more civilised uses, producing boots for hiking and other outdoor pursuits.

The Northwave, Geox and Trezeta brands are all based in the region. Founded in 1962 by Ernesto Gazzola, so is Gaerne, one of the few cycling shoe makers to still produce the entirety of its range in Italy.

Coming out of the same factory that has manufactured the brand's shoes for over 50 years, the Gaerne G-Stilo+ cycling shoe is the latest. It's a very light, and very bright, racing model.

The stereotype for Italianate shoes is that they're narrow and pointy. But despite the exterior of the G-Stilo looking pretty svelte, we found a decent amount of width for our flat and wide Anglo-Saxon feet.

In fact Gaerne use a range of different lasts, the wooden models on which the shoes are formed, varying the design between the European and Asian markets.

Furthering the ability to customise the shoe's volume according to the unique peculiarities of the wearer's feet are two Boa IP-1 micro adjustable reels on each unit.

With four guides for each reel, this allows the fit to be varied between the upper and lower half of the shoe.

The result was that we were able to easily match the shoe to our frequently tricky to accommodate trotters. The Boa dials have a rubberised exterior and make ratcheting down the shoe ahead of sprints or climbs easy, while the split between the adjustment means you won't end up squishing your toes when doing so.

These reels and guides are laced through uppers featuring extensive perforations to prevent the shoes from getting clammy, a quality furthered by a pair of mesh covered vents integrated into either side.

Despite pushing them up some extended mountain climbs during the hottest part of the day, our feet remained about the only part not to sweat.



At 295g per shoe in a size 45 the Gaerne G-Stilo+ cycling shoes are light enough, Gaerne claim they could have gone lighter

Instead they've set aside some extra grams to allow the employment of a new injection-molded anatomic carbon heel-cup. It keeps the shoe stable, while an internal non-slip treatment helps lock it to the back of the foot.

The exterior of this features a reflective triangle to add visibility.

The newly designed EPS sole is, as its makers claim, very light and plenty stiff. It's also very thin. This results in the wearer's foot hovering a minimum distance above the pedal, and should make for an efficient transfer of power between the two.

There's also a dedicated model available for users of Speedplay brand pedals.

The sole's front features a minimalist bumper to slow its wear rate, while the heel includes a replaceable hard rubber insert. A couple of minimally sized vents add a modicum of air flow, and should be easy to tape over in colder conditions.

Shoe reviews are a tricky business. The particulars of the relationship between the wearer's feet and the design of the shoe have far greater impact on their experience than any technology or features they might include.

That said, we found Gaerne G-Stilo+ cycling shoes to be some of the comfier fitting shoes we've tried in the last couple of years.

They're definitely pretty light, pleasingly stiff, have a noticeably low stack height, and, with the ability to drastically vary the fit of the upper, are likely to fit a wide range of feet.

They're not cheap, but what is these days. They're also not from a brand that's as instantly recognised in the UK as Sidi or Giro.

But with decades of experience and models as good as the Gaerne G-Stilo+ there's no reason this should continue to be the case.