



## Felt ZW3

**E**ven without gender-specific frame geometry, Felt's impressive ZW3 is very much a women-specific bicycle.

To wit: Although the geometry is virtually identical to that of the unisex, identically priced Z3, the frame's carbon lay-up is not—because female cyclists are typically lighter than men of the same height, engineers use less material in constructing the frame. The result, says Felt marketing director Doug Martin, **is a bike that uses the same frame geometry and tube shapes as the company's Z line of plush, road-damping bikes, but will deliver ride sensations more similar to the stiffer F-series race bikes when pedaled by lighter riders.** Martin says that most women on the Felt-sponsored Exergy TWENTY12 pro team ride the ZW3 frame, with only the taller riders opting instead for the F-series.

The ZW3 also incorporates female-specific touch points: The bar is narrower than on unisex models, with a slightly shallower drop that's easier to reach. An adjustment on the SRAM Red levers can bring them closer to the handlebar. You also get a shorter stem and a women's saddle from Prologo. The complete SRAM Red group helps make this bike impressively light (15.9 pounds). The ZW3 is competition-worthy (racers will probably want to swap in a standard crank), but it's a fun bike no matter how you ride it.

The ZW3 performed every bit as spectacularly as you'd expect from a pro-level bike; **it encouraged me to push myself harder on climbs**—and felt natural on both seated and standing ascents. Handling was responsive but not squirrely on everything from descents to dirt-road detours. And it managed to do all this while remaining comfortable, even after hours in the saddle.

Aesthetically, Felt often opts for an understated look—“when Jim Felt started building bikes [in the late '80s], everything was pretty much black,” says Martin. But the details—like the matching blue tires, aluminum headset spacer, and headset bolt—add up to a clean, cohesive look.—*Emily Furia*

**Price** \$4,999 **Weight** 15.96 lb. (Tall) **Sizes** Petite, S, M, Tall **Frame** Felt UHC Advanced MMC carbon fiber w/ 3KP weave **Fork** Felt UHC Advanced monocoque, carbon-fiber steerer **Component Highlights** SRAM Red derailleurs, brakes, shift/brake levers, crankset (52/36), cassette (11-28), S27 AL Comp wheels; Vittoria Rubino Pro Slick tires (23c); FSA Orbit IS Carbon integrated headset, VS UHC Advanced DMC carbon-fiber FitWoman bar; Zipp Service Course 7075 aluminum 3D forged seatpost and stem; Prologo Scratch Pro DEA FitWoman saddle **Info** feltbicycles.com **Buy It If** You live for riding fast up hills, with or without a number on your back **Forget It If** You must have electronic shifting—try the Ultegra Di2-equipped Z3 instead



  
For a review of this bike, see p. 77.