

NEW  
KIT



UPGRADE

## SPECIALIZED AIRNET

★★★★★ £100 > Aero meets retro

WE SAY  
Stylish, well  
made with aero  
features and a  
very attractive  
price

SPECIALIZED'S LATEST HELMET IS ANOTHER statement of intent from a company that has made aerodynamics its predominant design factor. After all, what other brand has gone to the extent of building its own wind tunnel on the doorstep of its HQ?

But the Airnet also shows the influence of retro headgear as well as aerodynamics – even the name is a play on 'hairnet', the made-of-leather precursor to the modern bicycle helmet. Specialized has taken its ultra-aerodynamic S-Works Evade helmet as the template for the Airnet, which is most noticeable in the rear exhaust ports, though the Airnet's low-volume body is very rounded. One of Specialized's lead aerodynamicists Chris Yu told us that the Airnet is 21 seconds faster than Specialized's own lightweight Prevail over 40km, compared with the Evade's 46 seconds, which is pretty impressive for a helmet that's about more than purely performance.

The continuous front-to-back

hard-shell strips evoke vintage lids, beneath which is a very heavily channeled EPS (expanded polystyrene) core that offers far more ventilation than your usual aero lid. The large base vents at the temple also feature textured grippers to hold your glasses when you're not wearing them, with matching grippers at the rear. The hard shell covers every exposed piece of EPS, which contributes to its 325g weight, but we'd take the extra protection from accidental damage over a few more grams, especially in a helmet as well vented as this.

The padding is made from merino wool for super-soft comfort, with Specialized including a second pad with an integrated cap peak. The fit should suit most head shapes, with the 'Mindset' rear cradle offering plenty of vertical adjustment, and the micro-adjust dial allowing you plenty of adjustability on the circumference. Considering its aero qualities, fit and the overall construction quality, the £100 price is very impressive.

### HIGHS

Fit, finish and construction all hit the right spot

### LOWS

You can find lighter lids at this price

### BENCHMARK



ENDURA AIRSHELL  
£89.99 ★★★★★

A more angular aero design from the Scottish apparel specialist, the very neatly finished Airshell features carbon fibre reinforcing bridges within the EPS core, which is comprehensively covered by the hard outer shell. The retention system and strap placement have been adjusted following feedback from pro riders, with the rotary dial now having three vertical adjustment options. The price includes a spare set of pads and a helmet pod – making the overall package even better value for money.

### Perfect Partner

MUC-OFF FOAM  
FRESH £7

Helmets get sweaty, and if left could get a bit whiffy. Muc-Off's Foam Fresh is a citrus-based cleaner designed for helmet pads and similar soft materials, including shoes and gloves.

### ALSO CONSIDER



MAIN E-VENT  
CATLIKE VACUUM

£79.99 ★★★★★

Another very distinctive-looking lid from Spain's premium helmet brand, but there's method in Catlike's madness, as the elongated vents and internal channelling make the 278g Vacuum a seriously cooling lid.



DIALLED IN  
LAZER O2

£79.99 ★★★★★

Belgium's Lazer likes a bit of innovation. Its O2 has a massive rear cradle that sits below the base of your skull for a very secure feel. Cradle adjustment is handled by a roller dial in the top of the helmet, making it easy to adjust.



TWO-IN-ONE  
CANNONDALE CYPHER

£99.99 ★★★★★

The updated Cypher helmet has a similar shape to the previous model, but with an improved retention system, upgraded straps and greater hard-shell coverage. It also comes with a very neat clip-on aero shell.