

CYCLOPEDIA

Bike finder

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Disc-braked road bike

• **For:** Alan Sheldon, aged 75, from Bedford • **Bike needs:** I've been using a basic hybrid for exercise during lockdowns. I'd now like a road bike to allow me to increase my mileage and fun. • **Must have:** A good range of gears to allow my old legs to cope with hills, disc brakes, and enough space for my 6ft 2in frame. • **Must not have:** It does not have to be super-lightweight or have aggressive geometry. • **Budget:** up to £1,250



Alan Sheldon



Liz Colebrook

Congratulations on getting back in the saddle! My recommendation is the **Boardman ADV 8.9** in XL (£1,100, boardmanbikes.com). It tips the scales at around 10.3kg with a triple-butted aluminium frame, carbon fork, and 'adventure'

wheelset. With the £150 remaining, I'd add lightweight mudguards and potentially upgrade the pedals and saddle.

The frame geometry will suit your departure from a flat bar without too much extra forward lean. Tubeless-ready Schwalbe 700x38 G-One tyres are ideal for our weather-weary roads, and should make for a compliant ride even off road. We can lose some flexibility in our spines over time, so I suggest the shop 'flips' your handlebar stem to raise the front end a little. I'd also suggest a gel pad set under the handlebar tape to absorb road shock (e.g. Fizik Bar Gel, £17.99).

The 46cm handlebar is the 'short and shallow' style where the distance to the drops and reach forward are both reduced. There's a flare to the bar as well, so your hands are a little wider on the drops; the added stability is reassuring on descents. When riding on the brake hoods, Shimano's hydraulic set-up makes braking less effort, and the integrated 'paddle' style gear shifters are also very light action. So they suit older hands.

This leads nicely to your request for lower gearing: the range is super wide (24-118"), thanks to a 2x10 transmission with an appropriate-length (175mm) 48-32 crankset and an 11-36 cassette. Altogether, this mix should deliver plenty of enjoyment per mile.



**BOARDMAN
ADV 8.9**
£1,100



Dan Joyce

Most disc-brake road bikes have the 'aggressive' geometry you don't want, with a steep seat angle that tips you forward onto a handlebar that's low down due to the combination of a short head tube and a carbon fork. They also have relatively high gears. You need a bike whose largest rear sprocket is smaller than the smallest chainring (i.e. under 27").

Gravel bikes can make better general purpose road bikes than road bikes. The **Boardman ADV 8.9** that Liz describes is one we both picked, having written our initial responses independently. I'd swap the tyres – perhaps for 700x35C Rene Herse Bon Jon Pass (£80 each!) – and, like Liz, fit mudguards.

Alternatively, some 'endurance' road bikes could be suitable. They tend to have taller head tubes and slightly shallower frame angles. The **Sonder Colibri** on p60 (£999, alpkit.com) is a good example; you'd want the XL size in this. To lower the gearing, fit a SunRace MX3 11-40 cassette (£79.99), a Wolf Tooth Roadlink (£23), and some extra chain links.

The **Spa Cycles Aubisque** (currently £1,150, spacycles.co.uk) ticks all your boxes with no modifications required. Being steel it is heavier, but you say that doesn't bother you. See cyclinguk.org/cycle-magazine/bike-test-four-season-road-bikes for our review. The Aubisque comes with a triple or double chainset. Either can be bought with smaller chainrings, such as a 46-34-24 triple or a 42-26 double, which I think you'd appreciate. You'd likely want the 60cm model (out of stock) but *might* fit the 57cm.



**SPA CYCLES
AUBISQUE**
£1,150