

Soar not Sore –

The ISM Adamo Racing Saddle

We recently heard news that Ivan Basso, a major Grand Tour contender and one of the men to watch for this year's Giro has had to pull out from the competition with an, ahem, undignified injury to the primary contact point – i.e. his saddle has wrecked his seat! Uncomfortable saddles have been a scourge of many budding and even brilliant cycling careers, so dialling yours in to be just right is incredibly important.



I have used the **Fizik Arione** for several years on my road bikes for short course racing and absolutely love it, but with the shift to long course racing this year and subsequently moving over onto a time trial bike a change was needed. This is all because of how you sit on the saddle, or more precisely on how your body weight is transferred to the bike itself. On a road bike your weight is further back on the bike

and goes more through your sit bones, so a lean saddle like the Arione works really well for a lot of people. But on a TT bike your weight is much further forward when you're down on the aerobars (which you ought to be all the time!) and goes down through the 'soft parts' onto the nose of the saddle. And, that just isn't very comfy.

Unfortunately, with traditional saddle designs there is a process of trial and error to find the personal preference that will let you put in the regular 5 hour rides that are needed for long course triathlon. I tried the **Fizik Arione Tri**, the **SDG Bel Air**, the **Specialized Romin** and several other well respected and much loved traditional options but none of them really did the trick. Then I took some advice from a pro 70.3 training partner who raved about her new **ISM Adamo Road Saddle** (£143.99), something which I had previously taken for a gimmick – and let's be honest triathlon has enough of those!

Gimmick this is not – odd yes, but it really works. The idea is that if the nose causes pain, riding a noseless saddle should remove a major source of discomfort. It leads to a very unusual looking saddle, but when correctly positioned within your bike fit parameters leads to an incredibly plush ride and has made me much more smiley 4 hours into the long rides! When fitting the saddle it's important to remember to fit according to the reach from the sitting area of the saddle to the bars rather than relative to the bottom bracket as your saddle has no nose to measure from. Also, everything you/the internet know about saddle tilt, in both axis, has to be discarded in favour of finding the sweet spot for you, as leg length discrepancies, bike model and riding style all have to be accounted for. The instructions explain a lot!

The saddle is really nicely made, with neat stitching, a range of colours and a transition hook at the rear which means you can rack your bike by it, but will struggle to fit a bottle cage back there too.

In conclusion, if you're not 100% comfy at the moment and have had a proper bike fit then this unusual saddle may be a good solution for you too, and is well worth the price tag.