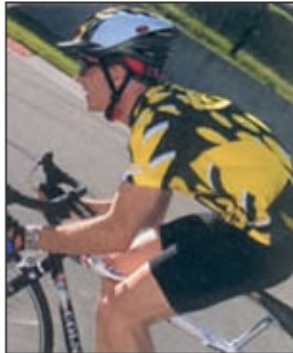


Ratings	
Bike	
Frame	8.75
Fork	7.75
Wheels	7.0
Groupset	7.5
Components	7.25
Looks	8.25
Weight	7.5
Value	7.5



Performance	
Climbing	8.5
Descending	8.0
Cornering	8.25
Sprinting	8.5
TOTAL AVE	7.89

The aluminium version of the prestigious Tecnos steel frame, the Dream Plus boast Colnago's characteristic 'Biconic' flute or ripple-shaped oversize top and down tubes, drawn into that shape specifically by Columbus, the blue-blood Italian tubing company. These two tubes are clearly responsible for the frame's stiffness ? and hence, responsiveness, which combined well with a solidity that, whether climbing or sprinting, was confidence-inspiring. The straight carbon 'Flash' fork (with steel steerer) set it apart from its rivals in the test. This, in association with the short chain stays, made cornering very crisp and direct which took some testers by surprise and would take some getting used to if you normally ride a raked fork. The wide (46cm) ITM handlebar was only well-received by one rider who preferred the wider grip as he said it offered a feeling of greater control. The other three riders said they'd opt for narrower bars. The wheels - 36-hole Rigida Chrina rims, stainless steel spokes and Campagnolo Centaur hubs ? were solid as experted, but certainly not light and no doubt contributed to the overall weight of 9.6 kg, the second heaviest bike on test. The Campagnolo Centaur 10-speed groupset performed faultlessly. If you are a fan of detailed point jobs you'll love the look of the Colnago. A combination of black, magenta, grey and pearl white colours grace the tubes in true Colnago tradition. Colnago's clover-style logo is embossed into the fork crown, emphasising the attention to detail Colnago prides itself on. Ernesto Colnago, a former top Italian road rider, started the company more than 45 years ago and today regards two aspects of his company as unique:



1) Colnago only has one production line which means that the bikes made for the world's top professionals, are made by the same bicycle builders as those you and I can buy anywhere in the world;

2) Colnago sponsors leading professional teams each year which is about the best way of marketing a bike these days, especially considering the significant media exposure cycling gets. Teams sponsored by Colnago in 2001 included Rabobank and Mapei, the latter team including South Africa's Robert Hunter, who will be riding on in 2002.



Verdict:

A solid allrounder that combines fine Italian panache with the latest in technology. An upgrade to lighter wheels will make this a very desirable racing machine.