

**130 KILLER DEALS!**  
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**Outside** SUMMER 2011

# BUYER'S GUIDE

SUMMER'S BEST GEAR

**325**  
TORTURE  
TESTED  
PRODUCTS

**HOW TO BUY  
SMARTER**

Waterproof  
**Cameras**

GPS  
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**Running  
Shoes**

All-Terrain  
**Mountain  
Bikes**

Ultralight  
**Jackets**

High-Def  
**Sunglasses**

Go-Anywhere  
**Daypacks**

Family-Friendly  
**Kayaks**

**2011**  
**Outside**  
**GEAR OF THE  
YEAR**



**+**

**The Only  
Survival Kit  
You Need**  
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## mountain bikes

**4. TREK TOP FUEL 9.7** \$4,400

**THE SELL:** A cross-country racer as light as it is luxe. **THE TEST:** "This bike climbs like a monkey on meth," raved one reviewer, after taking the redesigned Top Fuel on a long, steep uphill. More unexpected was the performance on choppy, technical descents, where the new tapered headtube kept the front end tracking and the combination of the four-inch Reba fork and RP2 shock were astonishingly smooth. "This is the most comfortable bike I've ridden," remarked one tester. Our only gripe was with the SLX components. While they performed just fine, many testers felt they didn't quite measure up to the frameset. **THE VERDICT:** "You can't buy a 26-inch race bike without taking a hard look here," concluded one tester. 24.3 lbs; [trekbikes.com](http://trekbikes.com)  
**CLIMBING:** 4.5  
**DESCENDING:** 4



4.

**5. TOMAC SUPERMATIC 120 2** \$4,200

**THE SELL:** Goes up as well as it goes down. **THE TEST:** Bridging the gap between speed and suspension, the Supermatic, with its swoopy carbon lines and nearly five inches of cushy travel, is one of the best all-around bikes we rode this year. "Nimble in the techy stuff, fun on the fast and flowing, and all-around comfy—even in the rocks," one tester wrote. The relatively slack headtube angle and low weight made our test loops' short, steep climbs a breeze, but despite the Fox RP23 rear shock, a few testers found the single-pivot design a touch bouncy on the descents. Kudos to Tomac for the full XT component group, which in our estimation is the sweetest blend of price, smooth shifting, and reliability. **THE VERDICT:** Does it all—really well. 25.5 lbs; [tomac.com](http://tomac.com)  
**CLIMBING:** 4  
**DESCENDING:** 4



5.

**6. SPECIALIZED S-WORKS EPIC 29ER** \$9,900

**THE SELL:** The ultimate big-wheel rig. **THE TEST:** As blindingly fast and seductive as every S-Works Epic before it, this top-shelf, race-ready 29er should end the debate over whether big-wheelers are sluggish. The carbon Rovals were incredibly light and rigid—"stiffer than my 26er wheelset," noted one rider—and laced in a sexy asymmetric color pattern. The four-inch Brain shock and fork are better than ever, keeping the bike as firm as a steel frame until you need them to activate. And the SRAM XX components are sleek, fast-shifting, and accurate. The only (but not insignificant) drawback: you'll have to choose between the bike and a good chunk of your kid's college fund. **THE VERDICT:** "I wish I had never ridden this," lamented one reviewer. "There's no going back." 22.1 lbs; [specialized.com](http://specialized.com)  
**CLIMBING:** 5  
**DESCENDING:** 5

**High-end carbon-fiber wheels**, like those here, are stiff and surprisingly durable. And unlike many of their lightweight aluminum counterparts, there's no rider weight limit. Which is why they cost as much as some complete bikes.

**XTR ENTERS THE TEN-SPEED GAME**

Shimano's new XTR group offers the same configuration—two chainrings up front and ten cogs in back, an efficient racing setup—as SRAM's paradigm-changing XX, which debuted last year. But it isn't just a copycat. In addition to the 2x10 option, Shimano offers a more climbing-friendly 3x10 Trail group, which weighs almost the same as the 2x10 but gets you top-shelf performance with a granny gear in front. Takeaway: SRAM XX is still the lightest option. But XTR gives you more choices (two wheelsets), super ergonomics (we love the trigger shifters), and the most reliable disc brakes we've ridden. —A.G.



6.