

# CANNONDALE SYNAPSE WOMEN'S 105 5

A bombproof, versatile machine for women starting to spend more time on the road.

**GROUPSET**  
Shimano 105 5800

**WHEELS**  
Maddox RD 3.0 rims with  
Formula RB hubs

**WEIGHT**  
8.9kg (Size 51)

**PRICE**  
\$1699

**CONTACT**  
Monza Imports  
[monzaimports.com.au](http://monzaimports.com.au)  
/bicycle

## RIDE IT

For a comfortable, efficient ride, that leaves cash for other things.

## DON'T RIDE IT

If you want to treat every ride like a race.



**I**N THE LATE Nineties, as a teenager getting into cycling, I had a photo of a Cannondale women's road bike stuck to my bedroom wall. I never bought that bike, but one day my local bike shop, knowing how much I dreamt about it, replaced the ripped bar tape on my second-hand Repco with tape they'd saved from a customer's Cannondale. I thought that bar tape was the best thing ever.

I tell this story for two reasons. First to highlight that most cyclists experience Cannondale lust at some point. Second, to point out that this company has been designing bikes for women since before it was trendy.

Cannondale's renowned manufacturing processes and design philosophies from light, high-end alloy bikes trickle down to the Women's Synapse 105 5. They've thought carefully about the intended users of this entry-level model – their hopes, worries and the diverse experiences they may seek.

Rack and fender mounting points make commuting or touring solid options. The SAVE Plus Micro-Suspension in the rear chainstays and carbon fork, and the skinny (25.4mm) seat post, soak up vibration nicely, giving the alloy Synapse a ride feel much closer to what we'd expect from a nice carbon

frame, but for a lower price.

Schwalbe's Lugano 25c tyres are fast rolling without trade-offs in comfort, durability or wet weather control. Shimano's 11-speed 105 groupset is reliable and just a little heavier than its more expensive counterparts. The down-specced Tektro R539 brake callipers lack a little power. If you're likely to ride in all weather conditions or use a rear rack, the disc-brake model (\$1799) is worth a look.

The endurance geometry of our 51cm test bike sits between the race and endurance models from direct competitors, such as Trek and Specialized, but in most frame

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**Cannondale have thought carefully about the intended users of this bike**

## The Finer Points

### BYE BYE VIBRATIONS

The micro-suspension and stable geometry means the bike tracks straight over rough road or small potholes. This does wonders for your confidence when navigating unfamiliar roads.

### OH, HIGH THERE!

The tall front end suits less flexible riders or those wanting a more upright, relaxed riding position. It added confidence while riding in traffic.



sizes, the Synapse has a taller head tube. This provides a more upright or relaxed riding position, while keeping the handling quite nimble. The drawback is that the front felt a little wandery at very slow speeds.

At higher speeds, the Synapse's instinctive cornering matches that of racier designs. The vibration dampening adds a sense of control, especially on twisty descents and it has a nice, light climbing feel, care of

the compact 50/34t FSA crankset.

The frame differences between the men's and women's alloy Synapse range reduce the need for post-purchase adjustments. The women's bikes range from 44cm to 56cm and are slightly shorter in the top tube and standover height.

The Cannondale C3 Women's Compact Wing handlebars are well-matched to shoulder widths and finger reach for riders on a given

frame size. The in-house Women's Road Ergo saddle is comfortable without being remarkable and the only upgrade we'd recommend if you start riding more.

With its light pedalling feel, nimble handling, nice price point and durable build, the Synapse 105 5 is a bike you'll want to ride through the lumps and bumps of city streets on the way to work and take out for longer adventures on other days. The gel bar tape is soft and comfortable too, and like the rest of this bike, reflects nearly two decades of user-friendly features that have come about since I first stuck that dreamy model on my wall. – *Kath Bicknell*