THINGS TO CONSIDER...

1

STRAIN GAUGES

You can't see them but these thin strips of metal are bonded in place to a structural part of the meter. As force is applied to, say, the crank, it deforms by a microscopic amount and the strain gauges deform with it, allowing a calculation of force, and ultimately power.

2

COMPATIBILITY

Power meters can be built into pedals, cranks and hubs, and your bike(s) may influence your choice. For instance, the Stages isn't yet offered for Campagnolo; the Infocrank and Rotor only come with a 30mm spindle; both pedal systems dictate that you use Look Keo cleats.

3

WEIGHT

The lightest of these systems adds just 30g to your bike; the heaviest nearly 300g. If weight really matters (ie, you have a sub-7kg bike, sub-7% body fat) then weight should be part of your decision, but otherwise we think it is secondary to performance, as with most things.

4

BATTERY

Nearly every meter now has a user-replaceable battery, usually a coin type. You should travel with spares because Sod's Law dictates the battery will run out on day one of that foreign trip you'd been training for ages for (it's happened three times to us in a year, but we were prepared).

5

MANUAL ZERO OFFSET

This is a simple pre-ride calibration check that most power meters say you should do. A few say it isn't necessary but it's still good practice. If you keep your bike indoors and it's cold out you may also need to repeat the calibration 10 minutes into your ride.

VERVE INFOCRANK

★★★★★ **£999** > New outfit's crank-based system

Weight 831g (689g cranks, 142g rings) **Left/right** Yes **Range** 110BCD, 170-175mm cranks
DIY battery swap Yes **Battery/life** LR44/claimed 500hrs

WE SAY
Newcomer delivers excellent performance and runs the biggest names very close

Verve is the newest name to the power meter market and came in swinging, claiming the Infocrank is the most accurate meter available, with twice the fidelity of an SRM. It's a true left/right system, with four strain gauges in each crank arm. A key difference is that these cranks were designed from the outset to be a power meter, so the strain gauges are placed in the precise load path to avoid data corruption by twisting forces. Verve claims its data is accurate to within 1% across the full measurement range of 0-3000w, and says there's zero temperature drift or need to perform a pre-ride manual calibration – and our tests back that up. This is a true get-on-and-go meter.

The Infocrank comes with specific bottom bracket cups and has a 30mm axle so should fit most frames. Infocrank uses a magnet and reed switch for cadence but has a clever magnet bracket that clamps over the bottom bracket. Infocrank says a magnet prevents data corruption from poor road surfaces.

HIGHS
Accuracy, consistency

LOWS
TA rings, chunky looks

The 110BCD crankset comes with Praxis rings in 50/34 or 52/36, or TA Syrius rings in 53/39. Our test set came with the latter and we noticed a small decrease in shifting performance. The five-bolt pattern does mean you can use other chainrings.

There are two LR44 batteries on each side under a bolt-on cover. They're readily available, quick to swap and are claimed to last 500 hours. Fans of marginal gains may sniff at the above-average 195g weight penalty over a Dura-Ace 9000 crankset, and even the aero implications of such broad and square cranks, though only high-level hill climbers and time triallists should give it a second thought.

When it comes to the crucial stuff, delivering clean and accurate data, the Infocrank excels. Throughout testing it was faultless. Verve suggested that it might read lower than other meters but we found it tracked alongside. We can't say if it's accurate to 0.5% or 1%, and for all Verve's claims and unique design it didn't do anything better than the SRM or Quarq, but they don't leave much headroom anyway. The Infocrank is an excellent power meter.