



## Wear Test: asics Forster Tri



Thanks to a really great Isetan Chinese New Year Sale, I finally got reacquainted with asics. Other reviewers called it the bubble gum shoe. The concept of the shoe design makes perfect sense to me, so let me digress a little. This model is a 2005 release designed specially for triathletes. In case you think that I'm hopping onboard the tri wagon, hold your horses. Triathlons are serious stuff in Australia where this shoe is geared to - 60% of triathletes competing in Australia don asics shoes ([Read the article here](#)). So what business do I have with a tri shoe? Read on.

These babies are built like the [Lexus](#) (yup the ones that come with [Mark Levinson audio system](#)). If you've been following the asics' development - and they've got very good websites on this (see links below) - you know that like typical Japanese firms, they're bent on innovation. The top of the line Gel Kinsei was awarded the 'Best Innovation Award' during the second [annual International Editor's Award Ceremony](#), held by the global editors of Runner's World® magazine. So you can expect their performance trainers and racers are given the same treatment as well.



### Early Encounters

I owned 2 or 3 asics before when I was in my 2nd Running Renaissance (I'm now in my 4<sup>th</sup>) and the shoes I had were the Gel 123 and the Gel Lyte 125. They weren't so expensive then and I remembered how comfortable they were, with the Lyte almost sock-like. They were very durable too.

### The Sale

While there were plenty of models on sale in Isetan that day, most of them were of size US8 and below and I was disappointed that the Gel Cumulus VI and the trail oriented Trabuco were of smaller sizes. To make things worse, only the women's 2006 Gel Nimbus were available. But I persisted

and dug around and found the garish Gel Forster Tri.



#### Visual Rundown

These shoes are just plain loud. You'd either love it or double over with laughter. They look like your 2-year old had gone over them with 4 different-coloured highlighters. I remembered reading about it in [The Lonely Runner @ Sukaimi's blog](#) sometime back. There's red, yellow, green, black, silver and orange all over the place. Need sunglasses? I don't blame you at all. I was spotted from a distance by my friends during my first 2 runs in the shoes. Even after sundown, the patches of yellow fluorescent were visible.

#### Philosophy Behind The Design

With the shoe being geared for the triathletes, 2 sets of laces (one conventional and another drawcord type) were provided. Then there's the tech loaded into it which mirrors what the successful DS Trainer (pictured below) has - full SpEVA midsole, extended "windlass" Trusstic, the IGS (Impact Guidance System), small Duomax medial post, forefoot GEL and rearfoot "twist" GEL which is supposed to be more efficient in dispersing shock. There's a dual-layered perforated antibacterial ComforDry Sockliner for drainage and breathability. Forefoot outsole is of DuoSole (softer and spongier material) and the heel plugs are made of AHAR® (ASICS High Abrasion Rubber). The upper is meshed and the laces are pulled through loops wrapped around the midfoot area. Overlays are minimal and the fit is sock-like. I'm also



grateful that the tongue is constructed to the shoe's sidewalls to prevent slippage. The shoe isn't a flyweight (there's another excellent Gel Feather on offer) tipping the scales at 10.5oz, which is about the weight of the Wave Rider 8. Fleetfooted 10K specialists may find it a tad too heavy but for the half and full marathoners, this shoe offers possibilities of fast times (with training of course!).

If you're one of those of follow shoe technology, you'll appreciate the Forster's construction. While relatively light, its stability will be needed in the later part of the marathon (as in the running phase of a tri race). With its ultra-breathability concerns about getting the shoe wet will be lessen. The 2-type lacing system will ensure fast and secure wrap-around. For all the thoughts that went into the design and construction of the shoe, the Forster Tri won the Shoe Of The Year award in [220 Magazine's Triathlon Awards 2005](#). Mid to high-end asics shoes are also recommended by the [Sports Medicine Australia](#) and the [International Federation of Sports Medicine](#)



#### The First Few Runs

The Forsters are built lower than the traditional training models but they don't feel so when worn. Out of the box, the shoe's cushioning was good and the forefoot benefited from the softer DuoSole blown rubber. It felt plusher than any performance trainers I've worn and I've to say that my old pairs of Flow K4 and Precision 3 weren't exactly that bad either. But the Forsters take the cake. Transitions were smooth and my footfalls were quiet. I also noticed how stable my footstrikes were, even when picking up the pace. I also ensured that I ran over the wet sections of the slabs and track and I was glad that I didn't end up on the surface - the DuoSole held up quite good.



My feet didn't feel warm even though I was wearing the thicker NB socks the second day. My wear-tests were conducted over the bricked surface as well as the rubberised track of the KLCC park with pace ranging from 6:30 pace to 5:20 pace. Following the runs, there were no soreness in my legs.

#### My Precious

It's obvious that the Forsters are pretty special. For that I'm saving it up for key training sessions as well as for a couple of key races that I've earmarked for the year. asics have since replaced the Forsters with the Noosa Tri (pictured right). Dare you take the fluorescent challenge?



Before discount: RM499

After 60% discount: RM199.60

Lineage: Gel DS Trainer IX > Gel Forster Tri > Gel Noosa Tri 2 > Gel Noosa Tri 3

**Durability:** Yet to be ascertained but I expect the forefoot to be worn off way ahead of the heel

**Ride:** 4/5

**Ventilation:** 5/5

**Forefoot Cushioning:** 4/5 (for a performance trainer/racer)

**Heel Cushioning:** 4/5 (for a performance trainer/racer)

**Wet Traction:** 4/5

**Value For Money:** 5/5 (after 60% discount!)

**Overall:** 4/5

asics sites: <http://www.asics.com.au/igs.asp> | <http://www.asicsamerica.com/asicstech/>

For more asics tech hit this link <http://www.asics.com.au/technology/default.asp>