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TRADE SHOW SNAPSHOTS

The early part of the year is when distributors show new products to bike shop owners and journalists. **Dan Joyce** was among them

1. 26IN WHEEL TOURER

Designed to be durable, the forthcoming Ridgeback Expedition will have a Reynolds 520 chrome-moly frame, 26-inch wheels, and Ultegra bar-end shifters working Alivio derailleurs. This prototype has cantilever brakes; the production version may have V-brakes. And Ridgeback have another new tourer, the £600 Tour. ridgeback.co.uk

2. DUAL-PISTON DISCS

Unlike hydraulic disc brakes, mechanical discs usually have one fixed and one moving piston. TRP's new Spyre brake pushes both pistons as the U-shaped lever rotates. It's not the first mechanical disc to do this but it's neat and compact. Will it outperform Avid's BB7? We'll let you know. upgradebikes.co.uk

3. PACK 'N' PEDAL

Thule's new luggage system is a development of Freeload racks, which the company acquired recently. The racks (£85 rear, £75 front) fit to the seatstays and fork, using allen-key tightened straps, adding luggage capacity to bikes without eyelets, such as MTBs. The pannier top hooks can be cleverly concealed off the bike, and there's no lower cleat as the bags are secured by a magnet to the matching rack. thule.co.uk

4. MECH CAPACITY UP

Good news: Shimano's 2013 road derailleurs have, with little fanfare, been tweaked to work with larger sprockets. Sora derailleurs (3500GS and SS) work with up to 32 teeth. Tiagra and 105 go to either 30 (4601SS and 5701SS respectively) or

32 (the GS versions, when used with doubles). Ultegra works with 30-tooth sprockets too, while Dura Ace is still on 28T max. shimano.com

5. SMARTER SHOES

Giro's Republic shoe looks like it's designed for touring cyclists, or perhaps café-cruising fixie riders. It doesn't scream 'bike shoe', so you could wear a pair with normal clothes. And it takes a recessed two-bolt cleat (eg. SPD) rather than a roadie's projecting cleat. No UK price yet; in the US, it's \$150. giro.com

6. FAT BIKE OR FAD BIKE?

Given that we don't have six months a year of snow in the UK, I'm not sure that the market for fat bikes with 4-inch-plus tyres will be anything other than niche. Having said that,

Genesis's Caribou has apparently been designed with trail riding in mind, with a slacker head angle for surer handling. It's £1500 with 10-speed SLX and Shimano M395 discs. genesishikes.co.uk

7. MORE TOURING TYRES

Panaracer have long had touring tyres like the Pasela. Their new Tour series seems to be aimed squarely at Schwalbe's Marathons. There are three models: the Tour (£15); the Tourguard (£25), which has breaker-strip style puncture resistance; and the Tourguard Plus (£30), which has a thick layer of springy rubber under the tread. zyro.co.uk