

GEAR UP

Components, kit, accessories and more, reviewed by specialist journalists, CTC staff – and you.

This issue: mudguards, multitool, MTB pack...

REVIEW OF THE MONTH



- PROS**
- + Fit under short-drop brakes
- CONS**
- Minimal clearance
 - No stay release feature

Giant ROAD FENDERS £29.99

giant-bicycles.com

THESE LIGHTWEIGHT (360g) peep-hole mudguards get around the road bike's clearance problem by leaving a gap wherever a bit of frame or brake comes close to the tyre. See how the thin plastic guard is riveted to a holey metal bracket either side of the brake/frame/fork? And if the brackets fitted higher on the brake-bolt those holes might even help! As it is, however, there's less clearance than there would be if the guard continued right through but wasted less space under the brake etc.

These guards do nevertheless clear the 25mm tyres on the Giant Avail reviewed last month. But only just, in places by less than 4mm, which is the minimum permitted by EN14781, the safety standard for road bikes. I was also concerned by the lack of any front mudguard stay release feature and applied the standard test for safety against front wheel obstruction. It failed with flying

colours, which in practice would be a cyclist over the handlebars!

So I didn't ask Helen or Cherry to test this fender's water-fending properties by riding the bike. Recently, however, I've ridden (over rough and smooth, in sun and rain) with someone who has these guards, and they seemed to work okay for him, so far... They're available from all Giant dealers.

Reviewed by Chris Juden



SUBMIT A REVIEW

If you want to submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 3 – for advice. Each one printed wins a Green Oil Eco Rider Deluxe set worth £34.99.

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John Blake Publishing LIFE CYCLES by Julian Sayerer

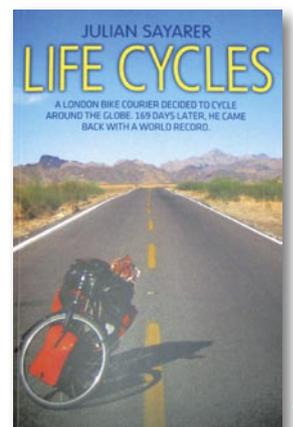
£8.99

johnblakepublishing.co.uk

THIS IS cycle courier Julian Sayerer's account of his 169-day race-touring journey around the world. He did it unsupported, averaging around 110 miles day. While others have since gone beyond this – Mike Hall did nearly 200 miles a day – it's a hugely impressive feat. As an avid cycle tourist and both a writer and reader of cycle touring tales, I expected Life Cycles to be worth my time. And it was. There's all the spirit, thrill and adventure that you'd expect here, but plenty more, including accounts of being stranded without money in the deserts of Kazakhstan, being bitten by a dog in North Carolina, and sleeping under motorway bridges in China. Moreover, Julian adds an interesting slant on the genre, with world politics being high on his agenda.

ISBN 978-1782199038

Reviewed by Bradley Howard





- PROS**
- + Easy to disengage
 - + Integral reflectors
- CONS**
- Could be lighter

Shimano
PD-TD700 CLICK'R PEDALS £69.99
 madison.co.uk

CLICK'R IS SHIMANO'S answer for people who, like me, find it difficult to clip out of standard SPDs. Aimed at commuters and first-time SPD users, Click'R includes pedals and optimised shoes, although I found standard SPD shoes were fine. The pedals have a very light mechanism for engaging/disengaging, and are sold with SM-SH56 multi-release cleats (£17.99 when sold separately). PD-TD700 is the lightest double-sided pedal of the range (457g per pair) and comes with a wide platform and road-legal reflectors.

I tested them pulling a heavy

trailer (U-Plus 2) on hilly rides with two lively six-year-olds. It was easy to clip out at a moment's notice, even for an emergency stop. I've been using these pedals for some weeks, replacing conventional pedals and toe clips. I like them a lot, especially with insulated winter cycle shoes. Clipping in doesn't feel as positive as with standard SPDs, but I got used to it, and I've never pulled out unintentionally. They are a bit heavy and clunky-looking; I'd like to see a lighter 'performance' version.

Reviewed by CTC member Jane Hodgkinson



Nutter
CYCLE MULTI TOOL £39.99
 full-windsorshop.com

THE NUTTER comes in a leather pouch, which can be strapped to your frame or saddle rails. The body of the tool has a tyre lever on one end, a 15mm box-head spanner on the other, and a spoke key and bottle opener in the middle. The other tools - 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8mm allen keys; philips and flat head screwdrivers; Torx T25 - are bits that are inserted into the main body and are held there magnetically. The tool body provides leverage but I found it tricky to use overall. The bits are held tightly in place inside the pouch, and my cold, gloved fingers struggled to extract them. (And there's the risk of dropping one in the gutter and losing it!) As with some other multitools, access to certain bolts on the bike can be awkward; even with the tool-bit extender, I couldn't easily adjust my front derailleur. It's stylish, but there are more effective, better value multi-tools available from the likes of Lezyne and Topeak.

Reviewed by Gavin Wood

Thule
CHARIOT COUGAR 1

£749.99
 madison.co.uk

CHARIOT (NOW owned by Thule) make the only bike trailer/stroller that's fully compliant with UK fire safety regulations, as far as I know. Meeting those standards kept Chariot trailers off the UK market for over a year. The single-person Cougar 1 comes with both a drawbar for towing and a pair of front wheels for pushing. Whichever part isn't being used stows neatly out of the way on the trailer itself. There's also an optional jogging kit with a single front wheel. Construction is lightweight aluminium and plastic: the trailer is just 11kg. The spoked wheels come off and the trailer folds flat for storage. Maximum passenger weight is 22kg and it'll take a child up to 111cm tall. It's not recommended for children under six months, and a small child may need the optional padded seat with extra support. With a two-way mesh or window cover and luggage capacity, it's useful in all conditions. There's also a two-child Cougar 2, but if you're only carrying one then this narrower trailer is convenient; it's under 70cm wide and fits through most doorways. The only real downside of the Cougar is the price.

Reviewed by Mike Davis

- PROS**
- + Doubles as a stroller
 - + Fits through most doorways
- CONS**
- Expensive!



PROS

- + Comfortable on and off the bike
- + Good value

CONS

- Once they're gone, they're gone



Exustar
SS502 SANDAL £45
spacycles.co.uk

WE WOULDN'T normally review a discontinued product, but Spa Cycles tell us they have enough to last many months, all knocked down from £70! I already have a pair I use occasionally (size 41/42, weight 922g) and find them good for riding and walking. I prefer a dark colour and open toes, but can see the sense in shielding your digits from debris. Tastes vary, and in case pastel shades might appeal more to women, I sent a small pair to Marion Guy for her comments...

'I was surprised how comfortable these sandals were on their first outing: firm and not too tight, with three points of adjustment ensuring a good fit. They remained firm when pulling up

hills, and when walking the curve of the sole suited my inflexible big toes. I appreciate a toe-shield to keep out grit. Sizing is generous, as I normally take a 39 and these are 37/38.

'On a longer and warmer ride I wore the sandals without socks, finding them just as secure and though the insoles felt rough to start with, I soon got used to that. My feet kept comfortably cool all day and I look forward to taking them on tour – somewhere nice and hot! But generally I like colourful socks showing brightly through the straps. I've rarely ridden in any other shoes all month.'

Reviewed by Chris Juden & CTC member Marion Guy

Shimano
UNZEN U10 £89.99
madison.co.uk

ONE OF the more annoying things when using a hydration pack is filling the hydration bladder, expelling any air and then wrestling it into its compartment so that you can do up the zip. The Shimano Unzen has a side zip for the bladder to be inserted. It's an easier process, notwithstanding a bit of fiddling with the bladder tube.

It is made of a wet-look stretchable material. The unisex 'Rider Cross Harness' means there are few dangling straps and buckles. It's secure and comfortable as the wide straps don't dig into your shoulders or stomach. It's impossible to adjust while riding, however, and it does feel hot on your back. While nice to wear, it needs some refinements to make it a replacement for my usual Dakine pack. It's available in 2, 6 and 15-litre capacities, as well as 10-litre, and in green, black or blue.

Reviewed by Julie Rand

PROS

- + Comfortable straps
- + Side zip access

CONS

- Hot on your back



PROS

- + Easy to store/transport
- + Fits most bikes

CONS

- Lacks workstand adjustability



OdPod
BIKE STAND £34.95
od-designs.co.uk

THIS SIMPLE tripod design provides a stable support by holding the bike off the ground with a cradle under the bottom bracket. With the back wheel held in the air and with cranks unencumbered and free to rotate, the gears, brakes etc. can be easily adjusted. It folds flat, so it's perfect if you've not got the space or budget for a larger full-size workstand, or want to take it to events for pre-ride adjustment. It equally suits MTB, road and kids' bikes.

The stand became indispensable for post-ride bike cleaning, as I was free to wash the bike from all sides, tune gears and spin wheels to clean tyres and rims. It's now the parking space of choice for the number one bike to keep it away from the pile of family hack bikes in the garage. The model I tried was red, white and blue – it's UK made – but other colours are available.

Reviewed by Matt Mallinder