

## GEAR UP

SUBMIT A  
REVIEW

Rucksack panniers are generally sold singly. The Sci-Con Transalp 2.0 bags are designed as a pair, fitting together as shown below



## ANOTHER 100 GREATEST CYCLING CLIMBS

£8.99

Reviewed by John Storms

Simon Warren describes the follow up version of his great cycling climbs book as 'a voyage of adventure and discovery'. It can be for you too, even if it's just tackling one of the climbs within one of the ten regions the book is divided into. Each climb is packed with detailed descriptions, not just gradient and length but a grid reference (so you will know where to find it) and useful pointers – such as where to expect a junction, a sharp turn or even a bit of a descent. As I read through the 100 climbs, I found myself thinking ahead to the next time I might be near one and how I could find a way to ride it.

Unexpectedly inspiring. ISBN 9780711232655, franceslincoln.com

## SCI-CON TRANSALP 2.0 PANNIERS/BACKPACK

€145

Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden

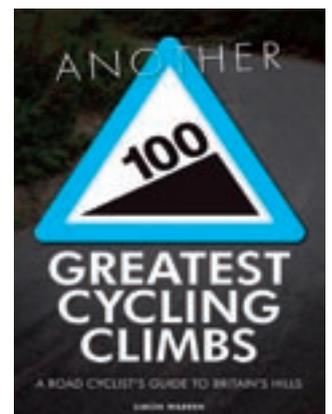
Single convertible panniers are commonplace but this is only the third pair I've seen that converts into a backpack by stacking (and the other two are discontinued). To test the Transalp I took them/it to see the Olympic Road Race, as a 25-mile ride was followed by a one-mile hike up Box Hill with a picnic lunch and camera kit.

As panniers, they are not great, being a simple throw-over design with weak elastic loops at the bottom that don't easily fit some modern carriers. And 21 litres isn't much capacity for a weight of 1.7kg. Their long and shallow shape, with a pocket on both ends, works well when they're stacked as a backpack, but can be awkward on the bike. You need a long carrier and chainstays, and if I used these panniers regularly my cantilever brakes would rub holes in them.

To convert, the bags simply clip together. An extra long rain flap on the top

bag folds back and down to cover both panniers' backs and keep yours clean. Shoulder straps deploy from the top lid and clip onto the bottom corners. There's a chest strap but no hip strap, so this isn't for serious hiking. For a long walk from the bike-park however, it's ideal.

There are much better convertible panniers. Ortlieb's Vario will carry as much and save half a kilo. But if you like to keep things symmetrical on the bike (and don't have a partner to carry the other pannier) Sci-Con's Transalp 2.0 could be for you – if you can find it for sale. Sci-Con is a well known Italian brand of bicycle transport bags and boxes. More information (and online sales) at [sciconbags.com](http://sciconbags.com).





## SEALSKINZ PERFORMANCE ROAD CYCLE GLOVE

**£45**

*Reviewed by CTC Cycling Development Officer Gavin Wood*

These gloves are part of the Sealskinz suite of waterproof products. They're called 'Performance Road' but I tested them on and off-road. The gloves come with a range of features that you would expect from a premium-priced cycling glove, such as a padded, abrasion-resistant palm, reinforced finger ends and reflective trim. They performed well in the wet and kept my hands nice and dry. However, even though these aren't the thermal version (that's £10 dearer) they were still a little too warm for soggy summer riding.

Taking the gloves off was tricky: I needed to be careful not to remove the liner. I found the medium glove to be on the small size and I would have also liked an adjustable Velcro cuff rather than the elasticated one provided. But overall, they're well made and do what they claim to do. Colours: grey or red. Sizes S-XXL. [sealskinz.com](http://sealskinz.com)

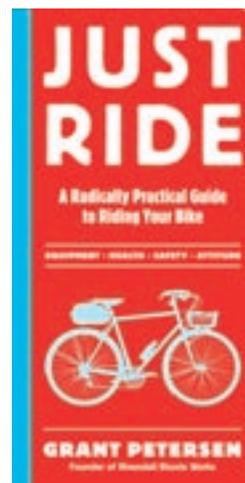
## GREEN OIL EVARIES

*Reviewed by CTC Cycling Development Officer Ross Adams*

The '50s style labelling is attractive, as is the wholesome fruit smell when you open the bottles, instead of the chemical odour of other bike cleansing and lubricating products. Green Oil is environmentally friendly, hence the name.

The true test is the application. I found the products a mixed bag. The bike cleaner didn't disperse the dirt from my muddy mountain bike as well as the market leader, and the super dry chain wax caused a squeaky chain even in summer. The other chain products were excellent. The chain degreaser worked very well, and coupled with the chain lube provided a very smooth running drivetrain.

Prices are comparable with rival products. Chain lube is £5.99/100ml, chain wax £6.99/100ml, ecogrease £5.99/100ml, bike cleaner £7.99/1 litre, chain cleaner £3.99/100ml. [green-oil.net](http://green-oil.net)



## JUST RIDE

**£8.99**

*Reviewed by Dan Joyce*

'My main goal with this book is to point out what I see as bike racing's bad influences on bicycles, equipment, and attitudes, and then undo it!' So begins Grant Petersen (of Rivendell Bicycle Works in the USA) in his practical, myth-busting compendium. Aimed at recreational and transport cyclists, *Just Ride* echoes a lot of what you'll read in *Cycle*. Petersen is in favour of mudguards, sensible gearing, pannier racks, comfort, and practicality. The section on health is a bit weak but the rest is refreshing, well-written and wry. Required reading for new cyclists in a sport-dominated cycling country like Britain – or the perfect gift for the racer you want to annoy. ISBN 9780761155584, [workman.com](http://workman.com)

## DZR DICE SPD SNEAKERS

**£89.99**

*Reviewed by Editor Dan Joyce*

Utility cycling is most convenient when you can jump on your bike in whatever you're wearing. But bike shoes that you can walk in are just as valid a solution as street shoes you can ride in – more so if pedalling matters more to you than pedestrianism. These Dice low-tops look like trainers yet will accept any two-bolt MTB style cleat. The sole flexes but further back, so provides pedalling stiffness without forcing you to walk like a Thunderbird puppet.

The Dice shoes are more expensive than the Polaris Bojo (Aug-Sep '11), which I've come to like a lot, but they're slightly more comfortable through the sole and the velcro-strap over the laces

means these don't get oily or snagged.

The heel is reflective and weather resistance is better than from sportier bike shoes. This black version is vegan friendly, being a sort of synthetic leather; a genuine leather option, in tan colour, costs £119.99.

The Dice became my default footwear and made me think that my last bike with flat pedals – a Brompton – would be better off with SPDs. Sizes: men's 41-47. Similar women's options available. [fisheroutdoor.co.uk](http://fisheroutdoor.co.uk), [dZRshoes.com](http://dZRshoes.com)





## CYCRAGUARD ROAD

**£29.99**

*Reviewed by Chris Juden*

Cycraguard is known for its minimal MTB guards. Can this firm provide the more complete protection demanded by commuters and tourists? Plastic moulding is Cycraguard's speciality and you've got to admire their ingenuity in avoiding metal. Apart from nuts and bolts even the stays are plastic, in two parts that clip together at any length.

Cycraguard Road come in two widths: for narrow tyres up to 28mm and the 37mm variety that I tested on

a trekking bike. This has generous clearances, which are needed as the plastic fittings are thicker than steel. Cycraguards look chunky yet are still a bit floppy. But they don't usually rub the tyre and at 350g for the pair they're nearly half the weight of chromoplastics.

The front guard has safety release fittings that work, and its smooth inner surface channels water away with no bridges to divert the stream onto your feet. I'm quite impressed.

[cycraguard.co.uk](http://cycraguard.co.uk)

## ON YOUR BIKE: HAMPSHIRE & THE NEW FOREST

**£8.95**

*Reviewed by Sarah Walker*

This book is both reassuring and reliable, with an endearingly nostalgic view of bicycle touring in the wonderful county of Hampshire. CTC member John Edwards's writing is an evocation of time past, with 20 well described circular rides ranging from 16-27 miles, in a layout that will appeal particularly to those who are new to the area or who are looking to build up confidence to improvise their own routes. The sketch maps are detailed and easy to follow. While some of the tips seem a little dated, there is no doubt about the warmth of the book and I can personally vouch for the routes, which include all my local favourites. ISBN 9781846742682, [countrysidebooks.co.uk](http://countrysidebooks.co.uk)



## KONG BLINDER

**£34.99**

*Reviewed by Editor Dan Joyce*

Not quite, although if you accidentally look right at it when you switch it on you will see spots. Knog claim an output of 44 lumens, which for a red LED light is dazzlingly bright, outshining Light & Motion's Vis 180. There are four LEDs, angled up slightly to compensate for the fact that the lamp straps to your seatpost. (And only your seatpost, so you're stuck if there's a saddlebag in the way.) It has five light modes: steady (burn time 3 hours) and four different flash modes (50 hours for any of them).

It's waterproof, at least as far as rain and spray is concerned. The stretchy silicone seatpost strap also has a neat metal cam lever, so you can fix it firmly in place – more so than Exposure's Flare. It's powered by a lithium polymer battery that you recharge via USB; the Blinder has an integral, fold out USB plug. The lump of lamp attached to the plug can make it awkward to fit into a USB port, but once home it charges from empty in 5 hours. It weighs 43g and as you have to hold the recessed button for two seconds to switch it on it shouldn't blink in the bottom of your bag all day. Among the increasingly numerous USB-chargeable LED lights out there, this is a good one. It's just a shame there aren't more fixing options for it. [todayscyclist.co.uk](http://todayscyclist.co.uk)

