

Reviews

Gear up

COMPONENTS, KIT, AND MEDIA SELECTED
AND REVIEWED BY BIKE JOURNALISTS AND CYCLING UK STAFF

Put to the test

Is there a product that you think needs reviewing?

Write to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

@cycle@jamespembroke
media.co.uk



Pros & cons

- + No punctures or kinks from cobbles
- + Easy-to-fit tyres
- Slight rolling feel in corners

Other options



HUNT 4 SEASON WHEELSET £319

These are fit-and-forget wheels for year-round use with a slightly aero rim and 24 front/28 rear spoke count.

huntbikewheels.com

Mavic

Ksyrium UST wheels

£409/pair mavic.com



Mountain bikers were quick to adopt tubeless tyres but now roadies are fast catching up, as the benefits for comfort, rolling resistance, and puncture protection have been accepted.

The Ksyrium UST wheelset combines Mavic's dependable Ksyrium wheels with the manufacturer's own Yksion Pro 25mm tyres, which are worth £60 the pair – something to factor in when comparing with other tubeless wheelsets. They can be ridden with tubes, should you tear a hole that the sealant won't

fix, but are designed to be ridden tubeless. The rim is wider than a standard road rim – 19mm wide internally – so the 25mm Yksion is closer to a 28mm size when fitted. The Ksyrium's I tested were the entry-level model with brake surfaces and standard quick releases, but the range is broad, including full carbon rims and disc brake and thru-axle options.

At this price, they're never going to be the lightest but they're well finished, with the rim machined between the spokes to reduce excess weight and the brakes surface machined flat to

offer assured braking. The spoke count is 18 in the front, radial, and 20 in the rear, two-cross. They weigh 1,650g for the pair, a saving of 250g compared to the stock wheels on my £1,400 road bike. They're rated for a load of 120kg (rider plus bike).

The wheels came with tubeless rim tape and tyres fitted. You must then remove the valve core and insert the sealant with the plastic syringe supplied, before inflating, then rotating to distribute the sealant.

It was surprisingly easy, and the tyre snapped into place against the rim with a reassuring 'clack'. In reverse, the tyre was equally easy to deflate and 'massage' to break the seal with the rim.

I used the wheels for the cobbled Tour of Flanders sportive (see page 34) and they were more comfortable and reliable than similar-width tyres on traditional inertubed wheels. ●

Matt Mallinder



SHIMANO RS500 TUBELESS CLINCHER WHEELS £469

This mid-range Ultegra-level wheelset features a narrower rim than others here and a 16/20 spoke count. shimano.com

Verdict

They rode very well and comfortably over rough ground and cobbled surfaces, without lateral flex or punctures, and they're still true.



Cycle's test promise

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Pros & cons

- + Effective
- + Unobtrusive
- Limited size range



RedShift ShockStop suspension stem

£149.99 redshiftsports.com, ison-distribution.com

No, it's nothing like the Girvin FlexStem from the 1990s. That suffered from excessive 'travel' and sloppy pivots, creating a tenuous relationship between handlebar and front wheel.

RedShift's stem is different. Vertical movement is limited to about 20mm in the case of the 120mm example on test, with shorter versions offering less since they travel through the same arc. The ShockStop uses pivot-bearing technology borrowed from current mountain bike rear suspension design, using sealed, full-complement cartridge ball bearings to eliminate play and ensure friction-free movement and a long service life. Lastly, the elastomer blocks that provide the suspension medium are

hidden inside, so the ShockStop looks much like a regular stem on casual inspection.

Installation is as for any threadless stem, once the correct hardness elastomers have been fitted. (Two are needed out of the five supplied; a chart indicates which to use.) This can only be done with the stem mounted on the bike, as it allows downward pressure to unload the elastomer compression wedge inside, which is vital to avoid damaging the long, slender bolt that secures it. It's a fiddly process, but not an overly demanding one.

The Shockstop fits a 1 1/8in threadless steerer and 31.8mm diameter handlebar, and can be used with handlebar shims or a quill adapter. It can be flipped for a + or - 6° orientation (+/- 30°

is available for 100mm only) and is offered in 90, 100, 110 and 120mm lengths. The 120mm one is 298g, the others a little less.

Riding was a revelation on anything but the smoothest of surfaces. I tested the stem with fat 650B tyres, which themselves soak up bumps and vibration, and still found a noticeable reduction in both. Vibration damping is particularly impressive, as is the way the stem feels otherwise much like the rigid example it replaced.

Steering precision is unaffected, there's no bounce, only the slightest sensation of 'dive' when braking, and no bobbing or flex when riding hard out of the saddle. Impressive. I'll be riding it a lot to see how it lasts. ●

Richard Hallett

Verdict

The ShockStop stem is an effective way to dampen road buzz and attenuate bumps. It's beautifully made and looks at home on modern bikes.

Other options

TRANZX ANTISHOCK STEM
~£50

Lightweight, with limited movement that suits vibration damping. 80-120mm lengths, all +/-7°. tranzx.com



STAFast AIRSPRUNG STEM
\$350

Weighty and complex pneumatic suspension stem with lots of adjustment. Only in 95 or 105mm. sta-fast.com



Pros & cons

- + Easy to use
- + Easy to transport
- Expensive



Evoc

Bike Travel Bag XL

£429 evocsports.com

Bikes with plus- and fat-sized tyres are great fun to ride, but unless you're planning on driving your bike to far-flung destinations they can be difficult travelling companions. Bike storage on trains sometimes struggles with a tyre wider than 2in, and unless you're au fait with sourcing cardboard boxes and making your bike aeroplane-ready, the bike bag options have been fairly limited too.

I've always been a little bit in

awe of friends who are happy to pack their pride and joy away with some pipe tubing, tape, and the Cycling UK plastic bike bag. I know it works but when I decided to go bikepacking in Tuscany, I wanted something that could be transported easily without unpacking the bike, and that would be idiotproof to use.

Evoc appears to have been one of the few companies to come up with a ready-made solution: a bike bag to fit all bikes... so long as they're not of the tandem or cargo variety. Designed specifically for plus and fat bikes, I had no trouble fitting my 29+ wheels into the side pockets, nor fitting and securing the frame.

There's a hard block to protect your drivetrain, pockets for pedals and tools, and also a handlebar and fork protection block too. There are plenty of

points to secure your frame and fork, though you will probably want some extra tape and bungees for this. My Surly ECR has Jones Loop H-Bars that measure 710mm. These didn't fit into the protection block, but they're long and unusually shaped so I'm not too surprised.

The bag is large, as you would expect: 143x42x84cm. It does weigh a lot at 9.6kg. Still, when packed with my Surly and some other bits and bobs, I was able to keep it under BA's 23kg luggage limit. The bag wheels along smoothly, and isn't too much of a strain over short distances due to the well-positioned handles. The protective bars are easily removable, which means it can be packed down (143x41x28cm), but you'll still need a large space to store it. ●

Sam Jones

Other options

DAKINE BIKE ROLLER AIRLINE AIR TRAVEL BAG
£350

Similar weight to the Evoc and claims to fit fat and 29er tyres. Fewer handles. hypedports.com



YT BODY BAG
£108.90

The lightweight YT Body Bag comes with wheels and is designed to fit around a cardboard bike box (up to 35x90x134cm). yt-industries.com



Verdict

It is expensive but the cost is worth it for the security of knowing my bike will arrive intact. My off-road touring horizons have expanded thanks to Evoc.

Previews Casuals

TO MARK OUR WOMEN'S FESTIVAL OF CYCLING,
VICTORIA HAZAEL PICKS PRACTICAL KIT FOR LADIES



1 Geek Black Reflective Leather Lace Up Shoes £150

The textile upper of these calf-leather-lined, rubber-soled shoes is reflective, so they shine brightly in headlights. The sole is for flat pedals. traceyneuls.com

2 Weathergoods Imbris Poncho £79.99

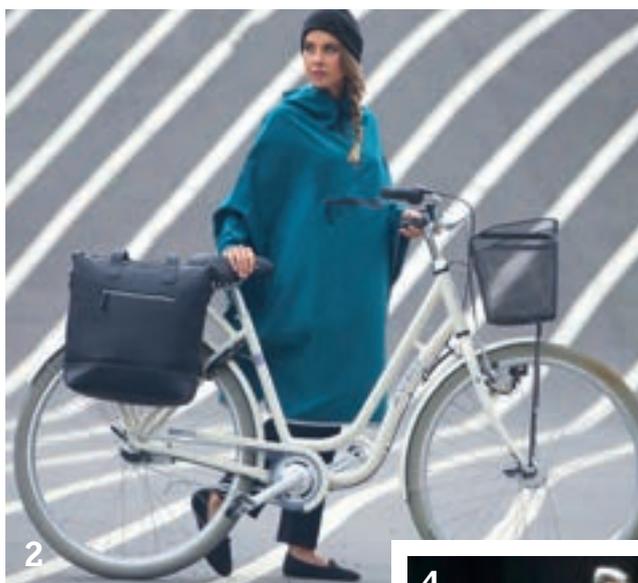
This cool poncho has two hand straps on the inside, so you can stretch it across to the handlebars to keep your legs dry while cycling sweat-free in showers. cyclechic.co.uk

3 Velovixen Padded Cycling Knickers £39

Now available in more designs, Velovixen's popular cycling pants – designed to be worn under normal clothes – have a padded seat. velovixen.com

4 Bobbin Toggle Single Bag £35

Best on flat or riser bars, this day-bag is made from heavy-duty showerproof cotton with leather details. 24x19x8cm. bobbinbikes.com



Style counsel

Got a favourite outfit to ride in? We'd love to see it. Tag [@wearecyclinguk](https://www.instagram.com/wearecyclinguk) on Instagram or email your cycling photos to: cycle@jamespembroke-media.co.uk

5 Castelli Rosso Corsa Support Bra £55

The first bra "specifically designed for cycling" supports rather than compresses like traditional sports bras, and is designed to wick sweat. Sizes XS-XL, to fit C and D cups. castelli-cycling.com

6 Weathergoods Urban Tote Bicycle Bag Cognac £79.99

A Scandinavian-style 8kg-capacity bag made from weatherproof PU material. It has a padded laptop pocket, long handles, a detachable shoulder strap, and discreet rack hooks. cyclechic.co.uk

7 Goodordering Picnic Pannier £65

Retro-style pannier with handles and a detachable shoulder strap. The insulated design makes it ideal for food, but it can carry stuff like laptops too. goodordering.com

Get your friends cycling

Read our guide on how to persuade your pals to ride: cyclinguk.org/encouragefriends

Reviews

Books

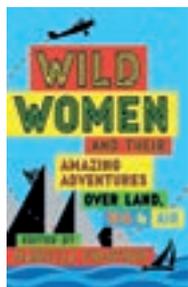
A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST CYCLING-RELATED READS

Print queue

Cycle doesn't feature all books received. Reviewers pick the ones they think you need to know about from the Editor's shortlist. Send review copies to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ



Wild Women



THERE ARE PLENTY of history books about male explorers; *Wild Women* is 'her story'. Journalist and broadcaster Mariella Frostrup brings together over 50 inspirational travelogues from adventurous women.

Divided up by continents into seven sections, the 500-page book is organised in standalone chapters. The anthology is excerpts from books, essays, and letters from 1700 to the present day.

What is unique is the variety of voices, and that it isn't a book written about female explorers – it's written by them. Cycling adventures are sprinkled throughout: Dervla Murphy's journey

Details

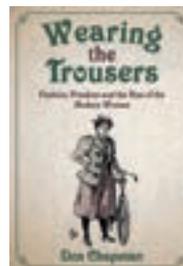
By: Mariella Frostrup
Publisher: Head of Zeus
Price: £25
ISBN: 9781788540018

south from Limpopo by bike in 1993 details her love-hate relationship with South Africa; Josie Dew's chapter gives a snapshot of her 6,000-mile trip around New Zealand in 2006.

Other highlights are Nan Shepherd's poetic descriptions of the Cairngorms, Christine Byl on the importance of mountain paths, and Robyn Davidson's 1,700-mile journey with camels.

There's a small biography of each woman so you can find out more. It's a bit like the grown-up version of 'Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls', the bestselling children's book. It puts women's adventures on the map.

Victoria Hazael



Wearing the Trousers

WEARING THE TROUSERS provides a historical account of 'bloomerism'. Chapman takes us on a journey from the time when bloomers were frowned upon to how they played a pivotal role in women's emancipation, challenging social norms. But what was the driving force behind these women? What was their lived experience? I felt a feminist critique was missing. Don't, however, judge the book by its cover and its author's gender. The historical accounts are fascinating.

Aneela McKenna

Details

By: Don Chapman
Publisher: Amberley Publishing
Price: £16.99
ISBN: 9781445669502

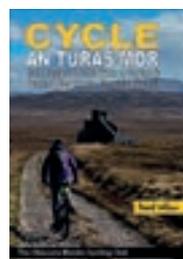


Quondam

IT'S NOT OFTEN you find a self-published book with a foreword by Dervla Murphy. After reading *Quondam*, you can see why she penned these words for her friend John. His spirit of adventure in his 1985 trip are akin to her own 22 years earlier. I read with envy the account of his journey from Egypt to Cape Town through a world on the cusp of globalisation and mass communication. It saddens me that the only way to experience such a journey now is through words, but what a trip!

Details

By: John Devoy
Publisher: Quondam Books
Price: £16.50 (€6.15 Kindle)
ISBN: 9781999601409



Cycle An Turas Mor

AN TURAS MOR is Scottish Gaelic for "the long journey". This is a 384-mile off-road adventure from Glasgow to Cape Wrath on non-technical trails. It was stitched together by the author and like-minded riders who wanted an adventurous route that was rideable (no hike-a-bike sections). What it lacks in the polish of more commercial guidebooks is more than made up for in detail and tone, which is like a friend describing an adventure you want to try. The website is anturasmor.co.uk.

Details

By: David Wilson
Publisher: Obscura Mondo Cycle Club
Price: £14.95 (ebook £5)
ISBN: 9781527217218

Sam Jones

Trouser clip
Find out how 'bloomerism' is linked to Cycling UK's history:
cyclinguk.org/womensfashion1870s