

CYCLOPEDIA *Bike finder*

Which bike should I buy?
Ask us at cyclinguk.org/bikefinder

RUGGED ADVENTURE BIKE

• **For:** David Tonks, aged 54, from Colchester • **Bike needs:** A robust, reliable bike that requires minimal maintenance and has a low risk of punctures. I want it mainly for off-road tracks, to do Cycling UK routes such as Traws Eryri and West Kernow Way, although I will go on roads when required. • **Must have:** Flexibility. I want one quality bike, not several bikes for different purposes. • **Must not have:** Electric assistance. • **Budget:** £2,000.



David Tonks

GUY KESTEVEN



I was lucky enough to film the recce ride and write the guidebook for both Traws Eryri and West Kernow Way. That means I've got some useful insight into what sort of bike is going to make these challenging but rewarding routes easy and enjoyable. There was one bike

that sprung to mind straight away as I've tested it previously: **Cotic's Cascade** (cotic.co.uk).

With a custom-designed Reynolds 853 steel frame, this fits your description of a quality bike. The Alpaca rigid steel fork means no concerns about suspension maintenance, while still giving a supple and comfortable ride to match the floated frame feel on rough sections. The handling is based on confident trail geometry, so it'll stay calm if things get a bit chaotic, too. Both fork and frame are covered in mounts for bottles, bags and racks so it's perfect for multi-day bikepacking.

The entry level 'Bronze Shimano Deore' version in flat-bar format is just **£1,699**. This is the handlebar setup I think works best for the more technical descents that you'll find in both Snowdonia and Cornwall. Shimano Deore is a fantastically durable and reliable groupset, and the single chainring and large-ratio cassette mean only one shifter and derailleur to worry about while still having plenty of gear range.

It comes as standard with 29x2.1in tyres but can take up to 2.6in for maximum float. Cy and his small Peak District team have a fantastic reputation for customer service and will be able to recommend and fit the right rubber for your needs – or make any other alterations you might want before buying.

COTIC CASCADE FLAT BAR BRONZE SHIMANO DEORE

£1,699



DAN JOYCE



Do you want a drop-bar or flat-bar bike? If you prefer drops, a drop-bar 29er like the **Genesis Vagabond 10** (**£1,799.99**, genesishbikes.co.uk) is better suited to the rugged riding you describe than a typical gravel bike. Its wider tyres

(2.35in Maxxis Ikon) are more comfortable and

capable, and its slacker head angle and taller front end will make technical descents less challenging.

If you prefer a flat bar – and I'm with Guy: the more technical the terrain, the more a flat bar makes sense – then I'd suggest the **Spa Cycles Rove** (from **£1,465**, spacycles.co.uk), one of which we're reviewing next issue. It comes in two versions, steel and titanium. The latter starts at £215 above your budget but the Reynolds 725 steel model is available in various builds for less than £2,000. All Roves come with 2.35in tyres by default and will accommodate ones up to 2.6in.

I'd recommend hydraulic disc brakes over mechanical ones because they're more fit-and-forget and you say you want to avoid maintenance. You can make punctures less likely in two ways. Option one, which I'd choose, is to go tubeless; the Rove's wheels and tyres are tubeless ready. Option two is to fit tougher tyres, such as **Schwalbe Marathon Plus MTB**. They're slower rolling and heavier (1,390g each for 60-622) but shrug off sharps effectively.

A multi-use bike benefits from a handlebar with multiple hand positions. You could add bar ends but I think a swap to a **Surly Moloko** or similar would be better still. Spa Cycles will provide component upgrades for the difference in price.

SPA CYCLES ROVE 725 2x10SPD DEORE HYDRAULIC DISC

£1,545

(FRAMESET £595)

