



### Cycle's test promise

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rides I admired views over hedges that I'd never seen before. The position suited all-day comfort and didn't seem to slow me down.

Off road, it's not as easy to commit its front wheel to a line like you would on an aggressive MTB. The steering is light, not because there's anything unusual about the trail figure but because the front end is higher than on a normal MTB and you have less stabilising weight over the front wheel. But that contributes to its responsive feel, and you quickly get used to it on trails.

The Rove rode even better when fitted with the carbon fork upgrade. Then, at 12.5kg, it was only 600g heavier than my entry-level cross-country racing bike – although that has a suspension fork. That low weight, combined with the tyres, gave the Rove a surprising turn of acceleration.

If you want an adventure bike with more of a traditional MTB feel, the Bridge Club might be for you. You feel securely positioned 'in' the bike. You have a little more stabilising weight over the front wheel than on the Rove, and while the 27.5in wheels are slower rolling than the 29in hoops now found on most MTBs, they feel more playful and help give you a slightly lower centre of gravity.

On the downside, the Bridge Club's price in sterling feels out of proportion to its dollar price, and it has a relatively basic ride for that money. It's an all-purpose bike for town and trail, designed to take whatever abuse you throw at it and haul whatever you want.

### Other options



#### KONA UNIT X £1,599

Good looking, Deore-equipped, bikepacking-friendly, rigid 29er from a classic steel MTB brand.

[konaworld.com](http://konaworld.com)



#### GENESIS VAGABOND 10 £1,799

A drop-bar adventure bike, the Vagabond uses 29x2.35in MTB tyres, Microshift Sword gearing and TRP Spyre discs.

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

I preferred the Bridge Club when I swapped the default 2.4in MTB tyres for some fatter, smoother-rolling 2.8in Schwalbe G-One Allround tyres. They fitted in the frame with plenty of room to spare, and running them at around 10psi gave the bike a floaty feel off road and a plush ride all round.

Both bikes were a pleasure to ride with luggage, and they both felt well balanced. I sometimes used a handlebar roll and seatpack; other times Ortlieb's super-secure Fork Pack and Gravel Pack panniers, along with a rear Quick Rack. The front Fork Pack panniers worked best on the Bridge Club, with its square-on fork mounts. The bar roll worked better on the Rove, as it could sit below the level of the handlebar without any risk of fouling the front tyre. ●

### Verdict

*The thing that turns any bike into an adventure bike is you. But the good news is that you plus either of these practical, assured bikes should be a recipe for many memorable trips, as well as agreeable 'town and trail' riding. The Bridge Club is a solid all-rounder, but I wanted to fall in love with it more than I did. By contrast, the Rove won me over with its surprising speed, comfort, versatility and value.*

*If you don't already have a mountain bike and you want to mix your bikepacking with more technical singletrack, you might prefer the Bridge Club (or perhaps a regular hardtail with front suspension). Otherwise the Rove is an easy bike to recommend as a do-everything machine or an n+1.*