

A high-quality clincher tyre with vintage looks for those using innertubes

Other options



**GOODYEAR
EAGLE F1
SUPERSPORT R
TUBE TYPE £59.95**

Super-light tube-type clincher with vulcanised construction in 700×25 and 700×28 sizes. goodyearbike.com/uk



**VITTORIA CORSA
PRO TUBE-TYPE
£79.99**

Handmade cotton casing 'open tubular' clincher with 320TPI cotton casing and Graphene + Silica tread compound in 700×26, 700×28 and 700×30 sizes. int.vittoria.com



CHALLENGE

Strada Pro Handmade Clincher Road Tyre

£63, challengegetires.com, upgradebikes.co.uk

+ FAST,
SUPPLE RIDE
+ GRIPPY TREAD
+ CLASSIC LOOKS

As road tyres get ever wider, it's worth noting that the Challenge Strada Pro in 700×28 format is 1mm wider than the firm's decade-old Paris-Roubaix model. The Strada Pro also comes in 30, 32 and 35mm, as well as 25mm for traditionalists.

The 28mm example tested here tips the scales at around 270g; Challenge says weight can vary by plus or minus 10% for any given size. This potential variation is doubtless due to the tyre's construction, which differs from that used for most cycle tyres and provides a distinctive look and ride sensation.

Instead of using (usually) nylon fibres compressed with rubber that's vulcanised in a mould to form the tyre carcass, Strada Pros use softer, more flexible polyester fibres with a super-fine 320tpi thread count, glued together using 'natural adhesives'. Polyester won't absorb water, unlike the cotton often used in similar handmade tyres, making it less vulnerable to wet weather conditions. But although the sidewalls are coated with latex to keep out grit and moisture, these

tyres aren't quite 'fit and forget' and should be kept clean and dry when not in use. The tread, which uses Challenge's Smartprime compound, is in turn glued to the carcass, while under the tread lies a layer of PPS Ganzo puncture-resistant fabric.

Once inflated, the Strada Pros ride as sweet as they look. They are quiet and exceedingly comfortable, rendering minor road vibration near-imperceptible at the 65psi front/85rear pressures of the test. Nor are they fragile, surviving muddy, thorn-strewn Welsh back lanes without cut or complaint, the fine tread providing grip where a slick would not. Just don't expect the same tread life of the vulcanised competition. ●

Richard Hallett

Verdict

Sublime ride quality and excellent all-weather grip combine with impressive toughness to make a delightfully usable and surprisingly affordable tyre that benefits from careful handling.