



lack the power and light action of hydraulic discs but would be easier to fettle in the back of beyond, and they too will work with buckled rims.

The test bikes have similar wheels, in that they're built for strength and are paired with reflective-sidewall 35mm Schwalbe tyres with enough tread for towpaths and light gravel. The Spa wheels are hand built by Bobby Stevens, who did a great job on my own Spa Audax wheels. Hand built wheels are an optional extra from Oxford Bike Works.

Out of the box, both bikes come well specced for touring or year-round commuting and day-to-day riding. The Oxford is equipped with full-length mudguards, although the front one doesn't have a quick-release in the event of something being trapped between guard and tyre. Its aluminium Topeak Supertourist rear rack is solid and is compatible with the Topeak's MTX bags and baskets, which slide into rails on the top than click in place.

The Spa D'Tour's SKS guards have the familiar Secu-Clip quick-release feature. The rack is German, too: a chrome-moly Tubus Cargo Classic that has the same hefty 26kg capacity as the Topeak.

**Right:** 40–24 chainset: not so much a sub-compact as an Alpine double  
**Below right:** Disc brakes and thru-axles are arguably today's touring standards



## Ride

With steel framesets and 35mm tyres, both bikes are unsurprisingly comfortable. The Oxford's upright riding position is regal and puts no pressure on your back. It's great for both seeing and being seen. You won't be steaming up hills, but the 18in bottom gear means you won't be pushing either, even when carrying all your gubbins.

The Spa's drop bar puts you →

## Tech spec

### Spa Cycles D'Tour 725 Mk2 11spd Cable Disc

**Price:** £1,795.

**Sizes:** 48, 51, 54 (tested), 57, 60cm.

**Weight:** 14.1kg (no pedals).

**Frame & fork:** Reynolds 725 butted and ovalised steel frame, thru-axle, three sets of bottle bosses, rack and mudguard mounts.

Chrome-moly fork, three bosses each leg, mudguard mounts, thru-axle.

**Wheels:** 35–622 Schwalbe Marathon HS620 tyres, Exal DC19 rims, Shimano 105 R7070 hubs, Sapim Race/Leader spokes (32 f, 36 r).

**Transmission:** 170mm Spa TD-4 chainset with 40–24 chainrings, First Components DX-30 119mm bottom bracket, KMC X11-93 chain, Shimano XT CS-M8000 11–40 cassette. Shimano 105 ST-R7000 levers, Shimano 105 front derailleur, Shimano GRX RD-RX810 rear derailleur. 22 ratios, 16–99in.

**Braking:** Shimano ST-R7000 levers, TRP Spyre cable discs.

**Steering & seating:** Spa Cork EVA Gel tape, 42cm FSA Wing Compact bar, FSA OS-167 90mm stem, FSA Orbit Equipe headset. Brooks Cambium C17, SA SL-281 27.2mm seatpost.

**Equipment:** SKS CAB 45mm mudguards, Tubus Cargo rear rack, two bottle cages.

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Dimensions in millimetres and degrees

