

Gear up

A cross-section of cycling products selected and reviewed by CTC staff, specialist journalists and CTC members



If you want to submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 84 – for advice on how to go about it. Each one printed wins a bottle of 'Cycles Gladiator' Cabernet Sauvignon from Patriarche Wines. Normally £6.99 a bottle, this Californian red is available by the case from www.everywine.co.uk. For more information about the Cycles Gladiator range, see www.patriarchewines.com

» DHB Ladies Amberley waterproof jacket £36.79

Reviewed by Sheila Simpson, editor of Arrivée magazine

This is a nicely designed, high-visibility jacket for those who, like me, prefer not to spend a lot of money on cycling wear – which often becomes irredeemably dirty. The budget factor is the fabric, which is ripstop Nylon with a Teflon coating and taped seams. It is undoubtedly waterproof but not in itself breathable. However, there is a cosy fleece-lined collar and a mesh lining, which isolates your inner layers of clothing from any condensation. There is also a rear vent, just below the shoulders and, for those who like to work hard, venting zips under the armpits. It has some smart reflective piping and a good-sized rear zipped pocket. I don't like the Velcro fastenings on the double storm flap of the front zip and cuffs as, if left undone, my hair can catch in it and, if it flaps, it can damage the jacket fabric. I can't imagine wanting to use the drawstring hem, as the garment is reasonably well tailored to the female figure. Despite any drawbacks it is a comfortable outer layer garment to wear for protection from cold or rain. It is a lightweight 380g (size 14), which doesn't feel bulky and folds up easily into a 220 x 110mm stuff sack (not supplied).

Details: hi-viz yellow/grey. **Sizes:** 8, 10, 12, 14, 16.
From Wiggle, www.wiggle.co.uk



« Revolution Adventure Rack Pack 5L+1 £27.95

Reviewed by touring and commuting cyclist Michael Stenning

Made by Vaude, this pack boasts a large, expandable main compartment which, with careful planning, will comfortably swallow a U-lock, mini pump, basic tools, spare tubes, couple of energy bars and even a lead-acid battery pack for lights. Two, narrower storage pockets make ideal stash points for a mobile phone, change, spare batteries. A small, front-facing compartment holds a day-glow waterproof cover but is ideal for keys and other small valuables. Further storage comes courtesy of a rear-facing bottle pouch and an elasticated cargo net to catch any overspill.

Build quality is excellent. Unlike cheaper designs, the base is heavily padded to insulate delicates from road shock. A box of eggs remained unscathed despite prolonged exposure to rough roads and torrential downpours, although I wouldn't take chances with sensitive camera equipment. Thanks to the Velcro mounts, the pack mounts effortlessly to most racks in seconds and a carry strap means easy portability off the bike. Despite the very subtle colour scheme, reflective Scotchlite logos, panelling and day-glow cover are all excellent safety features and the LED tab rounds off night-time security.

Details: from www.edinburghbicycle.com



» Basta Pilot Steady LED headlamp £25

Reviewed by CTC member Bryan Attewell

I replaced a halogen bulb headlight with this Basta LED lamp (which is in the same range as the more expensive Auto version reviewed in Cycle Feb-Mar '05). It's more effective than the halogen lamp, giving a strong blue/white light that clearly illuminates the forest tracks that I use for my commute. A bracket is supplied, but it bolted directly to the existing mounting. There's a built-in switch and connections for the rear light, while the standlight claims to provide light for four minutes after stopping.

I had some difficulty in sourcing connectors for the rear light; it's a pity that they are not supplied. Another concern is that the mounting bolt is quite small in diameter and there's no locknut. In conclusion, I am very pleased with this lamp. It effectively removes the fear of bulb failure, provides a very good light, a built in switch, and the standlight facility is a very welcome bonus. At £25, it is excellent value.

Details: www.bastagroup.com



TwinSix Argyle jersey »

\$70 (£35)

Reviewed by CTC member Dawn King

There is an unwritten rule of cycling that says that women's clothing must either be decorated with large pink flowers or be unbearably tight and spinny. This was the first jersey I had found that was neither: a white and green TwinSix top, with not a flower in sight. TwinSix are an American company who specialise in quirky designs, and this was no exception: a funky Argyle that would not have looked out of place on the golf course.

The 'race-cut' sizing looked quite small, but the man-made fabric does have a lot of give. I have been wearing it all winter, and it did an admirable job of keeping the sweat off without looking like I had come straight from the gym.

I already have my eye on the black version (with skull prints!) out later this year. Clothing designers take note: girls who cycle should not be forced to lose their sense of style!

Details: sizes S-XXL. Visit www.twinsix.com for stockists. Minx carry some of their lines: www.minx-girl.com



« BBB BCP 13W computer

£39.95

Reviewed by touring and commuting cyclist Michael Stenning

This 15-function wireless computer has all the usual features you'd expect (including current speed, average speed, max speed, trip distance, odometer, auto start/stop, etc.) and some you wouldn't (lubrication and maintenance reminders, plus a handy low-battery indicator). Calibrating the unit is simple, but allow half an hour to familiarise yourself as the instructions can be a little confusing.

The mounting kit allows the choice of stem or bar mounting. Despite being heavily reliant on cable ties, the fork mounting is surprisingly secure – providing precise alignment between sensor and wheel magnet even on oversized blades.

User friendliness and reliability are the major strengths. A single button allows effortless toggling between modes – even with gloves – and clarity of display allows full concentration on conditions ahead.

Readings seem consistently accurate even riding past mobile phone masts and the head unit has survived accidental machine washing without ill effect. For all this, I would prefer a backlight rather than the slightly gimmicky maintenance reminders, and there are many brands offering similar specifications for less money.

Details: available in black or silver. Distributed by Greyville, tel: 01543 251328



DHB Marsden Bar Bag »

£29.99

Reviewed by touring and commuting cyclist Michael Stenning

More from DHB. This waterproof 8.3-litre bar bag is made from TPU-laminated nylon, a treatment that is claimed to provide higher abrasion resistance and lower environmental impact than PVC. The welded seams and rolling Velcro closure system supported by a click-fix buckle have ensured excellent foul weather protection (although in my experience, nothing is 100% waterproof).

The capacious main compartment readily swallows an SLR-sized camera, waterproof, cap, energy bars and anything else you might want quick access to. A smaller zipped pocket keeps keys, passport, mobile phone and other valuables safe, whilst the integrated map holder and Scotchlite reflectives are nice touches.

Build quality is generally good, still looking as new despite a couple of spills and the integral nylon base continues the solid feel. However, the handlebar bracket felt a little whippy when moderately laden and the QR is temperamental, requiring some gentle manipulation to assist the bag's removal. But these are minor niggles given the price.

Details: from Wiggle, www.wiggle.co.uk

