

## Gear up!

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

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### TOPEAK BIKEKAMPER EXP

£129.99

Reviewed by expedition cyclist Cass Gilbert

If you're planning an ultra-light tour, tarps and bivy bags are weight-saving ways to sleep under the stars. Topeak's diminutive Bikekamper EXP is another. An evolution of the standard Bikekamper, which borrows frame and front wheel in lieu of tent poles, the EXP goes one step further by using innertubes (26in/700c and 16in) and mini, wand-like poles to brace them. This keeps pack size to a minimum, so you can strap the complete tent under the handlebars, thanks to the nifty bag provided. Naturally enough, the midge-proof single skin design doesn't claim four-season protection, and is best pitched in sheltered spots. Once inside, the coffin-like setup is definitely not for the claustrophobic, with wiggle-in-and-out-of-clothes room only.



At 6'1", I didn't have any issues with overall length, although there's little stowage space – and no vestibule either. Quality and attention to detail is great, with plenty of mesh to improve airflow and cut condensation. A neat concept, the EXP is a definitely a notch up from a bare bones bivy bag but still best suited to short and light summer rides, where packing is at a premium and you're not expecting heavy weather. Weight: 1.7kg inc bags and tubes. *Details: [www.extrauk.co.uk](http://www.extrauk.co.uk)*

### PANARACER RAMPAGE 29ER SPORT TYRE £29.99

Reviewed by Editor Dan Joyce



The Rampage Sport is a chunky 2.35in tyre that looks a lot like Kenda's Nevegal 29er. It's £3 cheaper and 100g lighter for a similar size (2.2in). Prominent shoulder knobs provide effective

cornering grip, while the centre tread blocks are shallower. The more open tread doesn't clog with mud like WTB's Exiwolf – another big volume 29er tyre – and the compromise between traction and rolling resistance is good. Schwalbe's much lighter Albert (590g for 29x2.1in) feels faster but doesn't have as much bump absorption as the Rampage. As a general-use off-road tyre, the Rampage is an excellent choice, particularly on the front where the extra pneumatic suspension has more effect and where you'll welcome the confidence it gives that it won't snow-plough in corners. At the back, the large width will mean limited clearance on many 29ers. Weight: 770g. Also available in 26x2.35in for £24.99. *Details: [www.zyro.co.uk](http://www.zyro.co.uk)*

### VIEWRANGER SOFTWARE

£15, PLUS MAPPING

Reviewed by Anthony Cartmell of [ctc-maps.org.uk](http://ctc-maps.org.uk)

ViewRanger displays zoomable maps, and your location, on Symbian mobile phones with GPS receivers. It can calculate 360° panorama diagrams to identify visible hills and places. Maps are available for Britain, Ireland, and nine other European countries. A typical 320x240 smartphone screen displays about six 1km Landranger grid squares with readable labels.



ViewRanger can act as a cycle computer with its customisable 'trip view'. When following a route the system can display the direction and distance to the next waypoint. Alarms can be set if you stray from the route or are near the finish. A beacon mode allows others to see where you are and track where you've been. Maps, routes, recorded tracks and points can be managed by the program. There are more than 80 settings to fine-tune ViewRanger's operation. *Details: info and free trial from [www.viewranger.com](http://www.viewranger.com)*





**LEZYNE V10 MULTI-TOOL £24**

*Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden*

At a bit over 100g, this is probably the lightest multi-tool to include a chain splitter. Without a stiff link removing feature it's not a great chain tool, but will dispose of a broken link. The rest comprise 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8mm Allen keys, Torx 25 & 30 keys and a Phillips screwdriver, all in chrome vanadium steel between aluminium sideplates. No spoke key, unfortunately.

It seems a well made tool: all the bits fit their fasteners snugly, and although the small size limits the torque you can comfortably apply, it fits the hand pretty well and has a neoprene sleeve that not only stops it rattling in transit but can also serve to cushion your grip.

Before picking the V10, check out the full range of Lezyne multi-tools, some of which have stainless steel bits (so they won't slowly rust in your not-so-waterproof seatpack) and do include spoke keys for little more money or weight. Some have carbon sideplates, for little less weight and lots more money!

*Details: imported by upgradebikes.co.uk, tel: 01403 711611.*

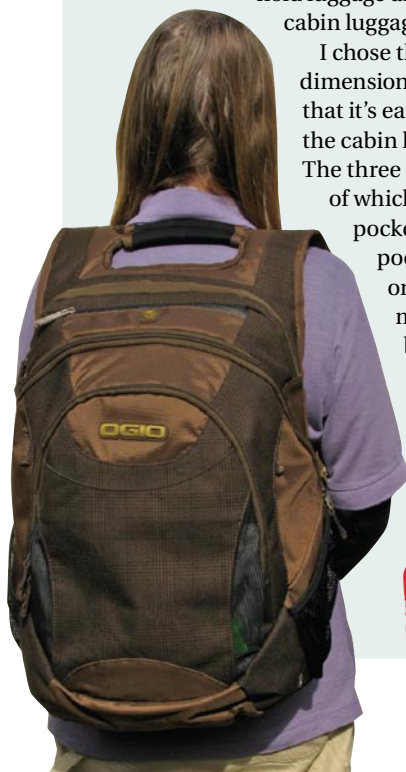
**OGIO POLITAN BACKPACK £39.99**

*Reviewed by audax and touring cyclist Sheila Simpson*

Ogio's 'streetpacks' are designed for the commuter with a laptop but they double as holiday bags. Backpacks like this are fine for riding short distances, to a rail station or airport, for a tour that will include luggage transportation. On a plane, the bike and saddlebag, suitably packaged in a plastic or padded bag, travel as hold luggage and the Streetpack is your cabin luggage.

I chose the Politan because its dimensions (19x13x8") mean that it's easily small enough for the cabin lockers. It weighs 1.8lb. The three zipped compartments, of which two have additional pockets, and three exterior pockets (two elasticated, one Velcro) make management of your belongings superbly easy.

The bag is padded and the shoulder straps well designed for maximum comfort. *Details: distributed by Madison, www.madison.co.uk.*



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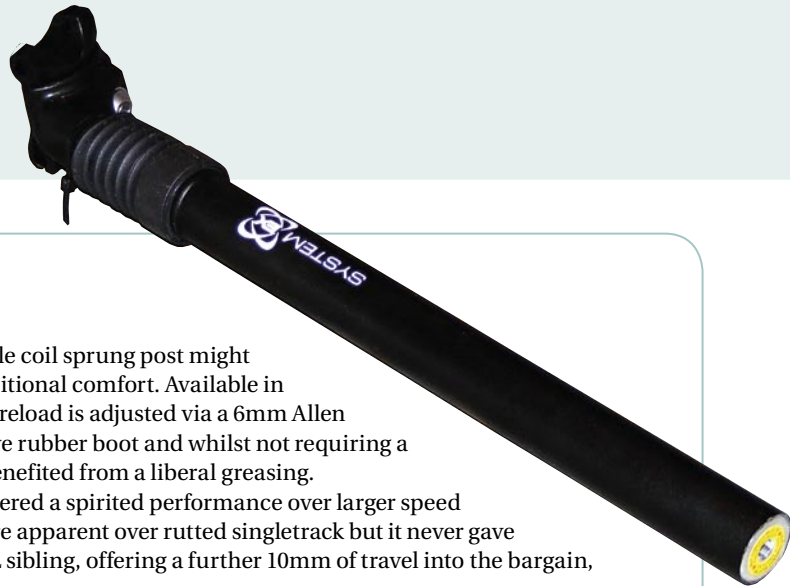
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## SYSTEM EX STANDARD SUSPENSION POST £13.9

Reviewed by touring and commuting cyclists Michael Stenning

Made from 6061 aluminium and offering 35mm travel, this simple coil sprung post might be just the ticket for hack bikes or tandem stokers looking for additional comfort. Available in either 25.4 or 27.2mm, with shims to accommodate other sizes, preload is adjusted via a 6mm Allen key at the base. The internals shelter beneath a crude but effective rubber boot and whilst not requiring a bedding-in period like elastomer/sprung units, our test model benefited from a liberal greasing.

Designed primarily for road use, set up on the firm side it delivered a spirited performance over larger speed humps and more moderate bridle path. Limitations became more apparent over rutted singletrack but it never gave the sensation of being aboard a pogo stick. Its more expensive EL sibling, offering a further 10mm of travel into the bargain, would better serve those seeking more progressive damping.

Details: distributed by [www.extrauk.co.uk](http://www.extrauk.co.uk)

## ANSMANN DIGICHARGER VARIO-PRO £45 APPROX

Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden

Phone, digital camera, GPS, iPod... If you take them on tour, you'll need a tangle of battery chargers to keep them running. Or an Ansmann Digicharger Vario-Pro: one device to charge them all. Its pair of movable contacts can be adjusted to fit most Lithium rechargeable batteries, either 3.7V or 7.4V, or two AA or AAA sized NiCd or NiMH cells. There's also a socket to charge devices via their USB lead, and if you have a spare 7.4V lithium battery you can top up USB devices without mains power.

Upon inserting a battery the Digicharger detects the type, voltage and polarity, then charges it, stopping when it's full. An LCD display confirms the battery type and charge status. Careful tweaking is needed to make proper contact, especially with AA/AAA cells, so this isn't as easy to use as a dedicated charger, but it's fast enough.

The mains (to 12V) power supply has compact interchangeable plugs for UK, EU and US sockets, so you won't need an adapter. A lead (not shown) is included for use in a car. The Digicharger Vario-Pro is 230g. There's also a cheaper Vario model (no USB outlet or LCD charge indicator).

Details: [www.ansmann.de](http://www.ansmann.de) has a list of UK distributors. Or tel: 0870 609 2233.



## ASPIRING CYCLEWEAR SS MERINO JERSEY £77 APPROX (INC P&P)

Reviewed by CTC Cycling Development Officer Frances Chaloner

Merino wool jerseys are increasingly popular. This one, from New Zealand, is very well made, with a cycling-friendly cut that's long in the back. It looks good on or off the bike. I wore it in zero degree conditions (with a waterproof) and in warm sunny weather in short sleeves. Temperature control was impressive: no sweating through lack of ventilation or overheating in hot sun. The jersey did not smell of perspiration after use. I thought the wool might be itchy, but it was very comfortable. Despite coming from New Zealand, price is comparable with other merino wool jerseys. It's machine washable on a cool wash. Overall, it's highly recommended. I could not fault it. It does everything it says in the blurb. It is highly recommended.

Details: sizes S-L (women), S-XL (men), price \$155 NZ, plus \$14 NZ p&p. From [www.aspiringcyclewear.co.nz](http://www.aspiringcyclewear.co.nz)



## Bookshelf

### PERSONAL BEST £19.50 & £2.50P&P

This a reprinting of the autobiography of Britain's most successful racing cyclist: the late Beryl Burton, who won *everything*, including 25 consecutive Best All-Rounder trophies for time trialling. Required reading for any current or ex-testers, this is an extraordinary story ordinarily told. [www.mercianmanuals.co.uk](http://www.mercianmanuals.co.uk) tel: 01676 533304, ISBN 9781903088470,



### THE LEGEND OF IAN HIBELL £75 & £4P&P

Ian Hibell, who died last year, was an astounding cycle tourist, exploring the globe – including the infamous Darien Gap – for 40 years. This luxurious, limited edition hardback is an anthology of magazine articles by and about Ian. Contact [nic.henderson@btinternet.com](mailto:nic.henderson@btinternet.com), ISBN 9783033016989



### END TO END 4 PARKINSON'S £10.99

Colin Bycroft's engaging account of his solo Land's End to John O'Groats ride is not a guide but rather a very personal diary of his experiences. It's well written and gives a realistic view of what it's like to ride End to End, particularly if you're an average sort of person. Recommended. [www.publishing.vitafugit.com](http://www.publishing.vitafugit.com) ISBN 9780955990205



## Shop window

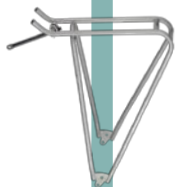
New products that have caught our eye.



### SHIMANO 12-36T CASSETTE £TBA

This 9-speed CS-HG61 cassette for 29er mountain bikes, with a matching high-torque hub, should be just as suitable for heavily-loaded touring. Out: soon.

[www.madison.co.uk](http://www.madison.co.uk)



### TUBUS AIRY TITANIUM RACK £135

Tubus's 200g titanium rear rack will carry up to 30kg. After some production hitches, it's now available. Fits to either seatstays or brake bridge. Out: now.

[www.tubus.com](http://www.tubus.com)

### GOCYCLE £1158

A lightweight (well, 16.3kg), full-suspension electric assist bike with fully enclosed drivetrain that sort of folds for transportation. Out: now.

[www.gocycle.com](http://www.gocycle.com)



### TSCHUS! CYCLING MAC £TBA

A stylish ladies' coat that's cut for cycling, with a vented back, reversible reflectives, and a silk lining. Looks good on or off the bike. Out: imminently.

[www.nightingaleandmetcalf.com](http://www.nightingaleandmetcalf.com)

### POUNDLAND HI-VIZ SAFETY VEST £1

A high visibility vest or gilet is compulsory for cyclists on the Continent as of this year. None comes cheaper than this! Out: now.

[www.poundland.com](http://www.poundland.com)



## BONTRAGER RACE X LITE WHEELS

£569.99/PAIR

Reviewed by CTC Marketing Manager Jon Sharpe

Whether you want to save some time on a summer sportive, such as CTC's Phil and Friends, or just want to upgrade older stock wheels, these Bontrager Race X Lite wheels are worth a look. Once on the bike, it only took a few pedal strokes for me to notice a difference. Being light (1490g/pair) they made the climbs feel easier and the lack of brake rub told me that excessive wheel flex was absent – and that they were true! With 20 rear spokes and 18 front, you could call these wheels 'aero' and they seemed to roll faster than my traditional wheels. I've even used them for cyclo-cross racing. They still look good and run smooth and true.

Details: [www.bontrager.com](http://www.bontrager.com)



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