


CYCLE SHOP WINDOW

PRODUCT NEWS FROM THE CYCLING WORLD

All the way to 11

 Shimano are to launch an 11-speed version of their Alfine hub gear this September. The gear range is 409%, which is to say: top gear is 4.09 times bigger than bottom gear. That compares to 306% for the existing 8-speed Alfine, 526% for a Rohloff Speedhub, and around 500-550% for a wide range derailleurs set-up for touring or mountain bike use.

The hub is designed for 'on or off-road riding', Shimano say. Steps between gears are about 13%, except for 1st and 11th which have a bigger jump of 17%. Like the 8-speed, there is no direct drive. While there is a ratio very close

to 1:1, you achieve it through spinning hub internals.

Nevertheless, efficiency should be good. The 11-speed uses helical gears, whose teeth should engage more smoothly than the straight-cut profiles of

quicker and quieter shifts.

The hub is 135mm over-locknuts and will come with a disc brake as standard. It's said to be compatible with all existing Alfine components, so we'd expect a sprocket choice of

16-23T. It will definitely come with a 36 spoke holes; possibly a 32-hole hub too. 'Target weight' is

The hub is designed for 'on or off-road riding' according to Shimano

standard gear teeth. And like Rohloff, the internal gears are lubricated with oil rather than grease.


Shifting is via a Rapidfire Plus thumbshifter, like Shimano's mountain bike derailleur shifters. The 'Instant Release technology' it uses presumably refers to the sprag clutches in the hub, which allow

1590g, which is 90g lighter than the 8-speed Alfine.

The price hasn't been confirmed, but we're expecting it to be around £300-£350. That's half the price of a Rohloff Speedhub, for a range that, though narrower, is wide enough for use on mountain bikes or tourers, as well as town bikes. It will be distributed in the UK by Madison: www.madison.co.uk.



Sram gears down

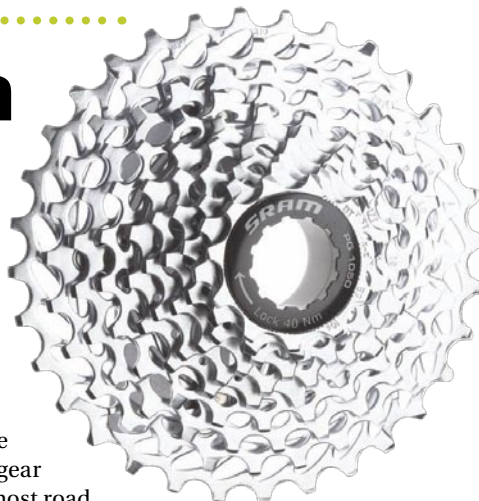
 If you want a cassette sprocket bigger than 27-teeth on your road bike, then unless you use Campagnolo – where 29T is possible – you're out of luck. That's why touring bikes mix and match road shifters with mountain bike rear derailleurs and cassettes. While you could do this on a road bike no one does... which is why you'll see some sportive riders walking up the likes of Hardknott Pass and Holme Moss.

Sram have spotted the gap in the market for easier gears on road bikes and are launching their Apex groupset this spring. It's a rival for Shimano's 105 and it comes

in several different iterations. There's no triple but it is offered with a range of doubles, including 53/39, 52/36 and 50/34.

At the back, the cassette options are 11-23, 11-26, 11-28 or 11-32 teeth. With the biggest cassette and the compact double, you get a gear range slightly wider than most road triples with less weight. This does require the Apex 'mid cage' rear derailleur and not the short cage mech that works with the three smaller cassettes.

Apex will be compatible with



Sram's other road groupsets, and it includes 'mid drop' sidepull brakes. Flatbar shifters will also be available.

More information at www.sram.com and www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk.

PRODUCT NEWS IN BRIEF

CLOSED BOOKS

Bicycle Books, whom we featured in our Dec-Jan issue, have been in touch to apologise for any delay or non-delivery of orders. Their offices have been temporarily shut down. 'We will continue trading once we can find new premises,' said Bicycle Books' Tanya Roberts. Anyone who wishes to cancel an order and receive a refund should email sales@bicyclebooks.co.uk.

'CROSSING OFF NEW NICHES?'

At the annual IceBike trade show hosted by Madison in February, there were more signs that the cyclo-cross bike is being pushed beyond its bike-on-shoulder racing roots. As well as the Genesis Vapour (which we tested last issue) there was the Genesis Croix de Fer, with disc brakes; a singlespeed cyclo-cross bike, the Day One; and a show prototype (that we expect to see sold) with an Alfine hub gear...

SHOWING THE WAY

There's a luminous Buddha on Dan's desk. It's a promo' sample from TraxEye, who make battery-free glow in the dark marker studs. Intended for use alongside cycle paths and suchlike, these studs could also be useful for cyclists with long unlit drives or paths. They don't use radium either, but photo luminescent crystals with the catchy name of GS2000. More details available at www.traxeyes.co.uk