

GEAR UP

Components, kit, and accessories reviewed by specialist journalists, CTC staff – and you.

This issue: steel frameset, smartphone, & more

REVIEW OF THE MONTH



- PROS**
- + Rugged and weatherproof
 - + Two devices in one
- CONS**
- Limited smartphone & GPS functionality

Memory-Map & Seals MEMORY-MAP SMARTPHONE-GPS

£329 INC. OS LANDRANGER
memory-map.co.uk, sealstech.co.uk

MEMORY-MAP have teamed up with Seals to put OS maps onto a rugged smartphone. While you can run the Memory-Map app on any GPS-enabled Android phone, it'll need protection, whereas the Seals TS3 (TX3 with Memory-Map pre-installed) is approved to US military standard 810G and to IP68, so it'll withstand a two metre drop onto concrete or immersion (also 2m). So once I'd clipped it into the (£25 extra) Quad-Lock mount on my stem, I was ready for the worst of Britain's weather and roads.

Just like a Garmin it isn't. Memory-Map provides only the simplest means of following a planned or recorded track, by eye, and displays only trip distance, time and speed. Other apps can of course be installed, but switching in and out of Memory-Map is fiddly whilst riding.

Display quality is nevertheless up to proper GPS standards. At 50x74mm it shows almost twice as much map as a typical cycling Garmin, making on-the-fly navigation that much easier. The map

can be zoomed by the phone's volume control, which is more convenient than a touchscreen. The included maps can be transferred to a PC for route planning etc, and routes simply emailed to the phone.

As a phone, the TX3 isn't too smart. Its Android software is four years old and its hardware lacks the speed, memory or storage to run many modern apps. I'm not bothered about Facebook but did want to run the Bike Hub route-finding app. I was able to install and use Viewranger, a fully-featured GPS app that's good for all the countries Memory-Map does not reach.

The Seals' battery lasts longer than most phones' batteries when navigating, but not as long as a proper GPS. Expect to recharge at lunch on all-day rides, or to use a dynamo. If you don't want much more from your phone than communications, or much more from your GPS than to see where you are on a map, this could be your ideal two-in-one device. Dimensions: 207g, 125x65x17mm.

Chris Juden

SUBMIT A REVIEW

To submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 3 – for advice. Each one printed wins a personalised Splashmaps map worth £28.99. For more about SplashMaps' weatherproof, washable, wearable maps, visit splash-maps.com



SplashMaps™

Selle SMP Drakon saddle £195

dillglove.co.uk

EVEN AMONG holey saddles, Selle SMP ones are distinctive: the cutaway is wide and long, extending all the way to the droopy nose. They're also concave. The Drakon is meant for sporty leisure cycling and comes in men's and women's models. A leather top covers a padded, carbon fibre-and-nylon chassis, and it has steel rails; the carbon-railed version is £110 extra! The steel-railed Drakon is already astonishingly expensive at £195. For that, I'd want what Jerome K Jerome called 'rainbow stuffed with cloud'. The Drakon does eliminate perineal pressure but so do plenty of other saddles – for example, the Rido R-Lt – and I found that there was a bit more pressure at the top of the thighs from the cutaway's sides. Saddles are personal, of course; for me, the Drakon was merely okay. The good news is that Dillglove offer a saddle hire scheme so you can try one for a fortnight for the cost of postage (plus a deposit). 276x138mm, 310g.

Dan Joyce

- PROS**
- + Eliminates perineal pressure
- CONS**
- Extremely expensive
 - For the price, relatively heavy





Wild Things Pub.

FRANCE EN VELO

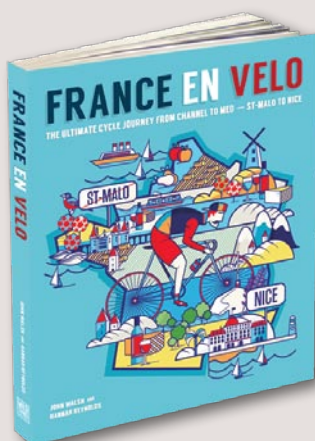
£16.99*

franceenvelo.cc

FRANCE EN VELO describes the route of France's own end-to-end, from St Malo on the English Channel to Nice on the Mediterranean. The ride itself is broken down into 32 stages, covering over 1,000 miles and passing through 19 départements. Schedules for completing the route range from 10 days to three weeks, with suggestions for shorter rides. The stages are described in great detail, with a map and a few options for sleeping, eating and drinking. This is a really well-presented book, with loads of useful information that makes it quite bulky. With this in mind, I'll be using it over the winter to help plan my trip rather than as an on-the-bike guide.

**Note that CTC members can get a 20% discount – see ctc.org.uk/memberbenefits*

Gavin Wood



- PROS**
- + Supremely versatile flat-bar frameset
 - + Good value
- CONS**
- Rigid-fork only, if that bothers you



Genesis LONGITUDE FRAMESET £374.99
genesisbikes.co.uk

GENESIS CALL the Longitude a '29+ compatible, bikepacking/adventure-ready, fully rigid 29er'. It's similar to Surly's Krampus (whose frameset is £600), but bristles with braze-ons like a Surly Ogre. I built it up as a winter singlespeed initially; now it might be the bike I'd part with last. It's a capable mountain bike/flat-bar tourer/monster-truck town bike.

The butted chromoly steel frameset comprises: frame, fork (uncut), seat binder, FSA Orbit Equipe headset, and chain-tugs (not required if you run a derailleur). Genesis include a riser bar with a 20° backsweep. That would offset the long reach – the effective top tube is 611mm on the 17.5in model. Preferring a flat bar with bar ends, I fitted a 60mm stem.

The fork is unusually short for a 29er: 445mm from axle to crown. So you can't swap in a suspension fork without spoiling the handling. And it handles well. The 68° head angle and 50mm-offset

fork provide stable steering downhill and over bumps. Yet it doesn't feel unwieldy or wandery elsewhere; the short fork and long reach mean your bodyweight isn't all at the rear, like some long-trail bikes.

Comfort is good for a rigid bike. The Longitude uses a 27.2mm seatpost and tapered steel fork legs 10% narrower than the norm. But mostly it's the facility to use fatter, lower-pressure tyres. Three-inch tyres will fit, given suitable rims and gearing choices. With ordinarily wide tyres (eg. 2.4in), mud clearance is enormous. Alternatively, there's room – and fittings – for full mudguards (eg. SKS Bluemels 700Cx65mm). Pannier racks will fit front and rear, as will multiple bottle cages and/ or Anything Cages for bikepacking.

Sizes: 16, 17.5, 19, 20.5in. The 17.5in frame weighs 2.34kg. The Longitude is available as a complete bike for £999.99.

Dan Joyce

XCP Professional GREEN ONE £6.49
xcp-protection.com

Like other multi-function sprays, this '99% bio-based ingredients' one lubricates, cleans, protects, loosens stuck components, and displaces water. I found the liquid very thin, so the spray ran off components and I needed to use a lot of it. I tried it on a seized seatpost but it didn't loosen after several overnight soakings. It did other jobs well enough, although not as effectively as some of the specific lubricating, cleaning or loosening products available. Still, it cuts down on costs and the number of products in the toolbox. 500ml.

Ross Adams

- PROS**
- + Convenient, green
- CONS**
- Not the most effective
 - Green-Oil is greener





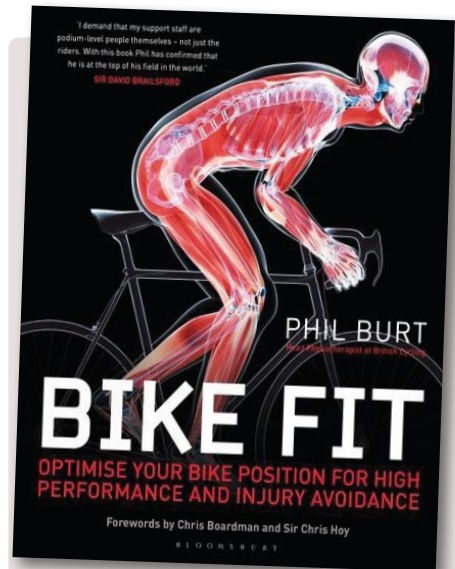
- PROS**
- + Very bright
 - + No separate battery
- CONS**
- Brackets merely OK



C & B Seen
CITY SLICKER LIGHTS
£107.99 PLUS £4.23 P&P
candb-seen.co.uk

THESE DAYS, you get a lot of light – in both senses of the word – for your money. The City Slicker front light, which is a bit like a budget version of a Cateye Volt 1200, emits up to 1250 lumens via its twin Cree XML L2 LEDs; the rear, which also uses twin LEDs, emits up to 500. While there are no fancy optics, the front light has a lip to help stop light spraying upwards. Better yet, a single button press takes you from ‘full-beam’ high power to low-power. (Two more presses take you back to high, via medium.) So it’s usable for commuting without dazzling other road users. It’s powerful enough

for mountain biking too, and it’s weatherproof to IP65 so can be safely sprayed with water. The clamp works well on a 31.8mm drop bar. On a flat bar that tapers from the stem, it can work loose. The rear light’s mount is its weak point too. The bracket fits to the seatpost with an O-ring and is not vertical-angle adjustable, so it projects a beam of red light onto the road. For the money, however, this is a good, bright light set. Both have integral Li-ion batteries and are USB rechargeable. Burn times: 3.5-18 hours. Weight: front 334g, rear 106g. Available separately.
Dan Joyce



Bloomsbury Publishing
BIKE FIT £18.99
bloomsbury.com

WRITTEN BY British Cycling Physiotherapist and Team Sky Consultant Physiotherapist Phil Burt, this is a thoroughly sensible book about bike fitting. ‘There isn’t a magic formula,’ Phil says. Instead he talks about a ‘fit window’, a range of contact-point dimensions within which each of us can be comfortable, and that will vary depending on the cycling we’re doing. He stresses the importance of ‘dynamic fit’ – pedalling on an adjustable jig rather than measuring your inside leg – and isn’t afraid to say ‘we don’t know’. It’s skewed towards performance cycling and the Retül system used by Sky and BC. If you’re comfortable already, this is interesting but non-essential reading. If you’re about to spend £100 or more on a bike fit, read this first.
Dan Joyce

SR Suntour
SE XC CANTILEVER
REAR BRAKE £5.10
sjscycles.co.uk

PERHAPS BECAUSE of the compact frame making the cable run to the brake hanger less than ideal, I have struggled to get usable rear braking on my old Dawes Horizon. That was until I got this Suntour Self Energizing rear brake. It’s fantastic: lots of power and lots of modulation, and at a bargain price. It is unusual to set up but not particularly difficult; instructions can be downloaded from the SJS Cycles website. The brake takes old-style cantilever pads. Whilst this brake might be a niche product that has been largely overtaken by V-brakes etc, it’s well worth considering if you need better rear braking and can’t fit V-brakes (or don’t want to). It doesn’t come with a straddle cable, but that’s available for another 99p.
CTC member Chris Reed

- PROS**
- + Bargain price
 - + Progressive braking
- CONS**
- Straddle cable extra

