

Reviews

Gear up

COMPONENTS, KIT, AND MEDIA SELECTED
AND REVIEWED BY BIKE JOURNALISTS AND CYCLING UK STAFF

Put to the test

Is there a product that you think needs reviewing?

Write to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

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Pros & cons

- + Simple to use
- + Visible screen in all conditions
- Expensive



Wahoo

Elemnt Roam GPS

User-friendly GPS unit with great on-the-fly navigation

£299.99 uk.wahoofitness.com

When my Garmin Edge Touring died, I asked friends and the internet for advice on a replacement. The Garmin had taken a long time to get to grips with but with understanding had come (grudging) acceptance. Should I get another? No, I was told: ditch Garmin, go Wahoo.

My needs for a bike computer are straightforward: clear navigation for both on and off-road multi-day international riding; long battery life; a clear, visible screen that I can read without my specs in all light

conditions; how far/high/fast I am; and, what I used to think impossible, the ability to change the route easily on the go.

All signs pointed to the Elemnt Roam with its 2.7in display and 17-hour battery life. I'm suspicious of products that drop vowels to stand out, but put my misgivings aside and made the purchase. It took some soul searching: £300 is a lot of money to spend on a bike computer. Having used the Wahoo for more than a year, the financial sting has gone and only pleasant memories remain.

Unlike my old Garmin, you do

need a modern smartphone with Bluetooth and the Wahoo app to get the most out of the computer. I've also linked it with my Komoot and RidewithGPS accounts, which means I can access all the routes I've designed, and even better adjust them on the fly. Setup was self-explanatory and took only minutes, and it's been easy to use ever since. The display is fully customisable via the app, but the factory-set displays give you most things you need.

My first real ride – an off-road route in Sardinia – was a baptism of fire but it worked like a dream. At one point my route was barred by a gate my mapping software had failed to recognise. A few taps on my phone, a beep on the Wahoo, and I had a workaround.

Are Garmin's days done? I doubt it, but Wahoo's a contender I'm happy to stick with. ●

Sam Jones

Other options



GARMIN EDGE 830
£349.99

More costly and not so user-friendly competitor to the Elemnt Roam, which relies less on carrying a smartphone and more on its own impressive computer.

garmin.com



WAHOO ELEMNT BOLT GPS **£249.99**

Wahoo's newest computer is smaller, cheaper, has less battery life but more memory than the Roam. Geared at roadies over tourers.

uk.wahoofitness.com

Verdict

A game changer for tourers who want the security of GPS guidance and the flexibility for spur-of-the-moment changes to the itinerary. I'm glad I made the switch.



Cycle's test promise

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Brooks

Scape Seat Bag

Sway-free seatpack from the heritage brand

£115 brooksendland.com

The Scape Seat Bag is part of a new bikepacking luggage range from the brand best known for its leather saddles. Brooks has been making panniers, backpacks, and traditional saddlebags for some years now, so the move into the bikepacking market isn't surprising.

The seat bag is made up of two parts: an outer holster and a waterproof inner bag with an 8L capacity. The materials used are high quality: the outer fabric is durable 600D polyester while the inner bag has an impressive 50,000mm waterproof rating – much more than most waterproof jackets.

My favourite feature is the

air valve on the inner drybag. You can open the air lock to compress the bag down tightly and then lock it off to prevent further air getting in. The valve is easy to twist even in gloves and is an excellent way to reduce the pack size. Other useful features include the daisy chain for attaching smaller bags or various belongings, and a loop on the rear to mount a light.

The Scape bag fitted securely to my bike's seat post, and there was very little sway when riding – unlike some other seat bags I've tried. There are two velcro straps that latch around the seat post and then two straps that are designed to thread through the saddle rails and clip back

on to the sides of the bag. These worked well and held the bag tight to my bike.

Seatpacks like this need a reasonable amount of room between the saddle and rear tyre. With short legs and a bike with 700C wheels, it's something I'm always conscious of. The Scape bag had only minimal clearance. However, as it remained firmly in position and didn't droop or sway, it didn't rub on the rear tyre. You can improve clearance by tightening the side straps further and compressing the bag, as long as it's not too full. Clearance was bigger on my mountain bike, which has smaller wheels. ●

Pip Munday

Pros & cons

- + Great stability when riding
- + Quality build and design
- Expensive



Verdict

I was very impressed with the Brooks Scape Seat Bag and would recommend it. At £115 it is expensive but the quality is well worth paying for.

Other options

ORTLIEB SEATPACK ▶ £125+

Waterproof bag in two sizes: 11L and 16.5L. Review at: cyclinguk.org/article/group-test-seatpost-bags-bikepacking. ortlieb.com



RESTRAP SADDLEBAG ▶ (8 LITRES) £104.99

Similar design to the Brooks, with a drybag in a holster. Other sizes available are 7L and 14L. Also reviewed on Cycling UK website (left). restrap.com



Continental Terra Trail 47-584

Lightweight, low-drag
gravel tyre for on/off
road usage

£37.95 conti-tyres.co.uk

After testing it last year, Continental's Terra Speed became my favourite winter commuting rubber thanks to its reassuring grip on local lanes mud-layered by farm tractors.

At only 400g in the 40-584 size, the Terra Speed was also the lightest of the four gravel tyres I tested. Continental's broadly similar Terra Trail is the same weight despite being wider (47-584 or 27.5x1.75in).

This is surprising for a couple of reasons: the Terra Speed is supposed to be the 'fast' model in the 'cross gravel' range; and the narrower, 40-584 version of the Terra Trail is heavier at 430g (albeit with a different casing). So this particular 47-584 Terra Trail model is something of a standout in the line up.

Like the Terra Speed, it uses a tread pattern of small, roughly hexagonal knobs – widely-

spaced over the sides of the sidewall carcass and clustered more closely around the centre line. The design minimises mud clogging and helps keep the weight down, thanks to the small amount of rubber in the knobs. Fitted to 24mm rims, the Terra Trail measured exactly 47mm in width.

I ran the tyres tubeless to take maximum advantage of the potential performance. Installation was quick and trouble-free on non-tubeless rims fitted with Stan's No Tubes rim tapes, and the tyres were still holding 20psi four weeks after their last ride.

Inflated to 40psi front and 50psi rear for the road, they give a sumptuous ride on all but very smooth tarmac, where the slight whine from the knobs reminds you that this is not the ideal surface on which to use them. Chipseal, however, is dispatched

with disdain.

That 400g weight means that acceleration and climbing mirror the narrower Terra Speed, although the softer inflation pressure (by about 10psi) means the Trail feels slightly less communicative and sprightly. Off-road, the fatter tyre is, predictably, much the better performer, allowing you to blast rock-strewn farm tracks that need a more considered approach on narrower rubber. ●

Richard Hallett

Verdict

This version of the Terra Trail may be the fastest in its class, rolling so well for a knobbly that tarmac sections can be enjoyable, while making short work of muddy tracks.

Pros & cons

- + Road speed
- + Grip and traction
- + Low weight

Other options



RENE HERSE JUNIPER RIDGE TC FROM £80

Expensive, handsome, all-conditions tyre with tubeless compatibility.

Various casings: extralight, standard, endurance, endurance plus. svencycles.co.uk



PANARACER GRAVELKING SK TLC £44.99

Tubeless-compatible tyre with an aggressive all-roads tread and a puncture resistant belt. panaracer.co.uk