

GEAR UP

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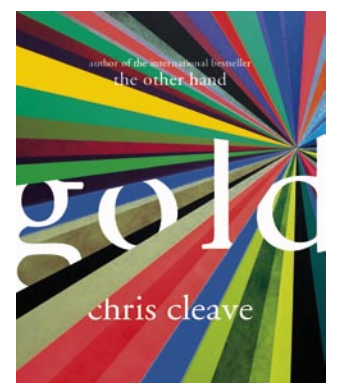
GOLD

£16.99 Hardback

£8.49 eBook

Reviewer: Cherry Allan

In Chris Cleave's novel, track cyclists Zoe and Kate share one ambition – Olympic gold in London – but they're major rivals, profound friends and at each other's mercy. Their story spills from the velodrome into their private lives and their connection to Sophie, a seriously ill child whose endurance matches theirs. This timely novel offers more than a glimpse into racing technique, astute coaching and sporting psyche, but a panoramic view of forfeit, motivation, an Olympian kind of parenting and the value of time. With the pace as spirited as the track, 'Gold' says it will make you cry and be glad to be alive. That's not blurb, it's a promise. ISBN 9780340963432, hodder.co.uk



CARRADICE SUPER C AUDAX SADDLEBAG

£50

Reviewer: Editor Dan Joyce

This saddlebag, until recently called the Super C Barley, was originally made to order for an American dealer, becoming available in the UK last year. It's made of cotton duck, like the Barley, with the same two side pockets and 9-litre volume. A deeper lid makes it slightly higher – 28×16×15cm versus 28×15×15 for the Barley. It has an internal organiser pocket and reflective strips on the pockets, which the Barley doesn't, while the quick-release buckles, plastic D rings, and trim make it look more like a scaled down Super C Saddlebag than a revamped Barley. It is pretty much perfect for audax riding or as a general purpose day bag for any bike. You might even use it for commuting or credit card touring. The side pockets are handy for tools, camera or snacks, and you can strap rainwear etc to the top using toe-straps through the D-rings. A wooden dowel at the top of the bag means it

Two outside pockets are convenient for tools or snacks, the main compartment is about as big as a shoe box (my size 42 shoes just about fit in), and you can strap additional items to the top. It's made of durable cotton duck

keeps its shape okay if you hang it directly from your saddle but it sits away from your legs better if supported by a Bagman (from £28) or SQR support (£29 for bracket and frame); I used the latter. Overall, it's a useful, tough, weatherproof bag that, apart from a stiff internal zip, I can't praise too highly. carradice.co.uk



TUBUS LOGO CLASSIC

£103

Reviewer: touring cyclist Ben Searle

The Tubus Logo pannier rack is neatly built from brazed 10mm diameter, 0.5mm walled Cro-Mo tubing, with a generous degree of adjustment possible through long solid-aluminium alloy connecting arms. It's a more reliable option than an aluminium rack for any combination of extended touring, heavy loads, or rough roads. Steel is easily repairable, should it ever break on tour when you're not in a position to return it under the rack's 30 year guarantee. The black powder coat wears at the contact points, leading to surface rust, but optional protector patches are available. It is very stiff, even under its 40kg maximum stated load, and weighs just 715g.

The Logo's extra rails enable panniers to be fitted 67mm lower and up to 60mm further back than its top rail. It solves heels clipping bulging panniers, especially if your frame has shortish chainstays, or you have large feet. It also makes it easier to strap extra luggage on



top, and the panniers can be accessed or removed without disturbing

this. I found no adverse affects on handling of the more set-back load; perhaps the lower position cancelled this out. The top is narrower than most – 85mm at the front, 100mm at the rear – and quite short, so in this respect, not as accommodating as some expedition racks. The light mounting plate simplifies fitting a light with luggage, and takes those with 50mm fittings. Also available in 29in and titanium versions. lyon.co.uk, tubus.com



CYCLOC

£59.95

Reviewer: CTC's Steve Bailey

Made of sturdy plastic and available in red, green, black, and white, the Cycloc is a pleasing, minimalist design that bolts easily to the wall. It would be ideal for making an artistic feature out of a bike in your living space. So long as your bike is not really heavy, it is an easy, practical form of off-the-floor bike storage, with strategically placed, integrated holes that allow the attachment of a lock.

Enabling storage of your bike horizontally or vertically, or at any angle in-between, each Cycloc unit includes a spacer for bikes with wide handlebars, so almost any bike should fit. You can store accessories in the Cycloc too, although that could clutter the unit's simple elegance. It's not the cheapest bike hanger available but it's functional and neat and doesn't make your studio flat look like a garage. upgradebikes.co.uk, cycloc.com



CYCLORAMA

£12.99

Reviewer: Dan Joyce

Billed as 'a guide to outstanding and specialised cycles', Cyclorama reminded me strongly of Encyclopaedia. There are photos and descriptions of an eclectic collection of bikes: some fascinating, like the WorkCycles FR8 family bike; some aesthetically pleasing, like the English Cycles racers; and some seemingly making up numbers, like a Dawes hybrid. Content-wise, I wanted technical specifications and prices for the bikes more than praiseful prose but it is a nice coffee table book. Magazine-style features are scattered throughout. There's also an associated website. 164pp, softback. ISBN 9780957207103, cyclorama.net

CAMELBAK MINI-MULE

£39.95

Reviewers: CTC's David Dowling and daughter

The Mini-MULE offers a little storage and a lot of accessible fluid from a well-fitting and nicely designed child's backpack. The 'fill port' on the reservoir is large so you could add ice but you have to remove the reservoir from the bag to fill it, and water left in the hose tends to warm up. The reservoir holds 1.5 litres although the pack is much more comfortable if you do not completely fill it. This pack is a better fit than the older, more basic hydration-only packs. A chest strap is an excellent addition since shoulder straps tend to slip off smaller shoulders and the hose has been shortened so it no longer hits your child's knees. There is a tap that cuts off the flow, a big advantage if your child sits on the valve in a café. It comes in a range of bright colours and there is plenty of reflective detailing. With two pockets, your child can carry their own essentials while two compression straps let you include a lightweight outer layer for them. zyro.co.uk



RETROSHIFT CX LEVERS

£167 approx

Reviewer: Technical Editor Chris Juden

Perching down-tube or bar-end shifters on Tekro brake levers like this apparently weighs a bit less than the usual set of STI 'brifters'. It could save some money too (even after UK Customs have added 20% VAT and an £8 handling charge). But the important reason for Retroshift is that STIs won't shift the range of gears or work the brakes a lot of tourists want to use. We stick with down-tube or bar-end shifters because these don't index the front shift, so we can use a MTB mech and chainset and get lower gears. These old-style shifters are also more rugged and repairable than STIs. And as the right can also optionally revert to friction, this insures your trip against indexing faults.

I saved about £47 by putting my own shifters on the Retroshift levers. These are Tekro R200A units with a shifter mount bolted on top of the levers, which have been also been polished by Retroshift and etched with their logo. The shifters were easy to fit and their cables loop in front of the bars like brake cables used to, where they don't get in the way



of a handlebar bag (another common STI snag), except they loop lower than brake cables used to, which is a minor inconvenience when accessing contents.

I shift often and tested this setup on a 700-mile tour across France. It was never as ergonomic as STI, not at all from the

Not as neat as STI or Ergopower, but the Retroshift levers work better with the brakes and gears that touring cyclists prefer

drops, but STI isn't an option on this bike and I mostly use the tops anyway. On the plus side: I find it useful sometimes to shift several gears in one sweep and always to see which gear I'm in. Some shifts (e.g. middle to big ring) were more awkward than with the home-made mounts (like Kelly Take-Offs) I'd had these shifters on before, but much better than their historic down-tube location and a slight improvement on bar-end shifters.

Tekro brake levers have attracted criticism for being too sloppy, but these worked well and I had no qualms about squeezing them hard enough to stop a loaded tandem at 40mph! Unfortunately, the Retroshift mounts disable Tekro's useful lever quick-release. STIs don't even have this feature, but that's yet another snag with STI on touring bikes, where cantilever brakes don't have it either.

A lot of us would rather use V-brakes and Tekro have another drop bar lever in their range (RL520) that does pull enough cable. Good news: Retroshift now convert that lever too and sell it as the CXV – at the same price.

Summary: the handiest ready-made shifting option for drop bar tourers. Only available here direct from retroshift.com, tel: 001-503-512-9378.



ENDURA SPECTRAL SUNGLASSES

£14.99

Reviewer: CTC's Seamus Kelly

I wear sunglasses for cycling all year and have used everything from Crane Sport (Aldi) to Briko and Oakley. I wore the orange version of Endura's Spectral glasses – recommended for mixed light – every day for weeks, riding in bright sunshine, cloud and rain. The lens quality is comparable to my Briko glasses and the anti-fog coating and vented nose bridge worked well in the rain. They are lightweight and very comfortable; I have actually forgotten I was wearing them more than once. I don't like the cheap, unlined case supplied but the microfibre carry pouch is fine and can be used as a cleaning cloth. These glasses are really very good and at £14.99 amazing value, I'm tempted to buy a couple of different colours: six are available – clear, yellow, soft tint, orange, blue and smoke. endura.co.uk

ALTURA CHILDREN'S SPRINT S/S JERSEY & SPARK BAGGY SHORTS

£19.99 & £29.99

Reviewers: CTC's Adam Coffman and daughter

There are not many options for high quality child-specific cycle clothing but these are good examples. The jersey comes in a choice of red or yellow and is essentially a smaller version of an adult cycling top. It is made of a high-wicking Lycra-type fabric, has three rear pockets and reflective trim. It fitted my daughter really well but I would have liked to see a longer zip for better ventilation. Coming out of the washing machine, it looked as good as new.

The shorts (black only) were just as well-constructed and had a soft mesh liner for added comfort. The cut did not suit a skinny nine-year-old girl; even though they are meant for ages seven to nine, they were too long and baggy and sometimes caught the saddle. Buy them where you can try for fit. On the whole, though, these are two durable, well-made garments that will suit casual recreational cycling as much as mountain biking. zyro.co.uk

