

# 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

- + Lowered gearing
- + Fit and finish
- Specific BB assembly

## Praxis

# Alba DM-X chainset with Praxis BB M30

Compact double with a good choice of crank lengths, bottom brackets, and chainring sizes

**£185.00** [praxiscycles.com](http://praxiscycles.com), [upgradedbikes.co.uk](http://upgradedbikes.co.uk)

Available in a choice of five crank lengths from 160mm to 175mm and with the option of bottom bracket assemblies to fit a wide range of frame formats –including regular BSA and T47 threaded, BB30/PF30 and even BB Right – the Praxis Alba chainset can be configured as a 50-34t compact, 48-32t sub-compact or 52-36t mid-compact.

The two chainrings are fixed to a detachable spider using 160mm and 104mm BCDs. The spider itself is attached to the righthand crank by two small set screws, with drive torque

handled by a lobed interface. Permanently press-fitted to the right-hand crank, the aluminium axle requires a Praxis M30 bottom bracket. This locates the axle in a similar way to the Truvativ EXP design, with the 30mm diameter axle a sliding fit in the right-hand bearing. It's reduced to 28mm in diameter at the non-drive side end, with the left-hand bearing gripped between the axle shoulder and left-hand crank; the latter is tightened to provide secure axial location.

It's important to pay attention when installing the cranks,

since the bottom bracket, which requires its own specific spanner, is supplied with a wave washer and five different dust covers.

The forged aluminium cranks have a boxy outer face and cutaway inner that keeps the weight of the chainset to around 800g. The bottom bracket adds around 100g to take the total for the test sample – 175mm cranks, BSA bottom bracket and 48-32 chainrings – to just shy of 900g.

Whether under power or in the workstand, the chainset spins freely, with little drag from the bearing seals and nil chainring runoff. The cranks are nice and stiff. With a 148mm tread (or Q factor) they are slightly narrower than the industry 'standard' of 150mm. This, plus the useful 6% gearing reduction the 48-32 chainrings offer over a regular compact, makes the Praxis Alba an attractive choice for road, audeax and sportive riders as well as tourists and gravel riders. ●

**Richard Hallett**

## Other options



### MIDDLEBURN RO2 £400

Expensive, versatile, UK-made chainset with a 46-30 option. We'll be reviewing this later in the year. [mountainbikecomponents.co.uk](http://mountainbikecomponents.co.uk)



### SHIMANO GRX 2x10 £109.99

Gravel-specific chainset with 46-30 rings and four crank lengths. Also available as in 1x11 and 2x11 formats. [shimano.com](http://shimano.com)

## Verdict

This is a good-looking, sturdy and nicely-made alternative to the major manufacturers' offerings, with a useful range of chainring sizes, crank lengths and bottom bracket formats.



### Cycle's test promise

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**Pros & cons**  
 + Should re-fit even the tightest tyres  
 + Unlikely to nip tube  
 – Might not remove tighter tyres



**Tyre Glider**

# Tyre Glider

Unconventional tyre fitting and removal tool that works well on the right tyre/rim combos

**£9.99** [tyreglider.co.uk](http://tyreglider.co.uk)

**T**his compact tool was designed in the UK by Welsh road cyclist Kevin Baker, who had a eureka moment while opening a tin of tuna. Watch the video on the website to understand how it works.

After I'd had my own "aha!" moment, I attempted to remove a tight-fitting tyre. Unfortunately, this shorter than normal and rather chunky tyre lever wouldn't hook under the bead, the essential first step in tyre removal. I tried pinching the tyre together all around the rim but still had no joy. The interface was both too wide and too thick for this tyre/rim combination.

I tried a looser tyre/rim

combination, and that did work as shown. My advice? For tight tyre removal, don't abandon your traditional composite levers with narrow chiselled ends and decent leverage.

Better news on the re-fitting. I warmed up on a loose-fitting tyre whose rim meshed perfectly with the tool, and the procedure was very smooth and rewarding. With the tight-fitting tyre, two problems became apparent. Firstly, the hooked part of the rim (the part that enables the tyre bead to take high pressures by dovetailing with the bead) needs to be no wider than 3.3mm. Mine was probably 3.4mm as the tool was difficult to slot over the

rim wall. I 'persuaded' it, which basically removed 0.1mm of the tool's recycled plastic material.

The tyre did go on, however. As I did the final push, the second problem manifested itself. The tool snagged some of the extraneous tyre rubber around the bead, which although only cosmetic is something I wouldn't want a customer to experience. Next, I tried re-fitting a notoriously problematic Schwalbe Marathon Plus tyre. Again the tool worked perfectly as the rim was compatible.

All in all, this is an interesting design concept that favours a strong, dextrous hand.

**Liz Colebrook** ●

**Verdict**

*Not a universal tool but if you have a compatible tyre-and-rim, you may be able to ditch your tyre levers!*

Other options

**VAR TOOLS RP-42500 £7.50**

Compact 'bead jack' tool that is effective at getting even tight tyres back on the rim. Has an extra lever for removal. Reviewed April-May 22. [vartools.uk](http://vartools.uk)



**CYCLE-PAL COMPACT £17.95**

Doesn't remove tyres but reliably re-fits any tyre on any rim. Construction is robust and durable. Reviewed April-May 22. [cyclepal.co.uk](http://cyclepal.co.uk)





**Pros & cons**  
 + Comfortable fit  
 + Sweat-wicking  
 – Limited colour options

CycleDiva

# Blue Lagoon Tee

Casual-style sports top for various activities, including cycling. No pockets, though

£45 [cyclediva.co.uk](https://cyclediva.co.uk)

Cycling gear often comes up a bit small in the sizing compared to high street fashions. This top is no exception. I'm a UK size 16 but the XL fitted more comfortably than the L suggested by the online size guide. So it's worth sizing up if you prefer a true-to-size, slightly looser fit.

The t-shirt arrived in recyclable packaging, which is a big thumbs up from me. My first thoughts are on the colour: there are only two choices for this shirt, 'Pink Corals' and 'Blue Lagoon', which I'd call baby blue. Both are a bit too gender-reveal to me. I'm not a fan of pink cycling kit but the blue is inoffensive and nice and bright. More varied colour options would be nice.

The shirt is very comfortable, doesn't rub on the seams, ride up

anywhere or cling to your body. It fits well. Being a lighter colour, you'd think it would be a little transparent, but you couldn't make out what colour sports bra I was wearing underneath, even a dark red one. That's a relief because I rarely wear matchy-matchy gear.

I initially wore the shirt on my five-mile commute over the top of some bib shorts. On sunny days, when the temperature was 14+ degrees, it kept me cool and comfortable. It was also fine for off-road rides when paired with leggings, keeping sweat at bay. And it works for layering under a jacket or windproof for summer evenings, or for wearing while using an indoor trainer.

There are no pockets so you'll have to make sure you can carry any kit or your mobile phone

in saddlebags etc. I had my panniers for my commute and I use a bum-bag when I'm off-roading so that wasn't an issue for me.

There are cheaper alternatives on the market, of course, but at £45 it sits in the middle price-wise for a sports top. It's made from 100% recycled plastic bottles, is fully recyclable, and isn't too lycra-looking. If those are your main concerns when choosing gear, it ticks all the boxes.

**Lauren Purdy**

## Verdict

*For something that's ethically made and doesn't leave you clammy like a cotton t-shirt (my usual go-to), it's decent cycling kit for someone who wants a more casual look.*

## Other options



▲  
**ROCKRIDER  
 WOMEN'S  
 SHORT-SLEEVED  
 MOUNTAIN BIKE  
 JERSEY ST 100** £14.99

Made from recycled fabric that is soft and breathable yet resistant to snags from vegetation. Features a zip-up phone pocket.

[decathlon.co.uk](https://decathlon.co.uk)



▲  
**FINDRA MAISIE  
 MERINO-LITE TEE**  
 £65

Made from an ethically sourced Australian merino wool blend (87% wool, 13% nylon), this wicking t-shirt has a longer back and odour resistance.

[findraclotthing.com](https://findraclotthing.com)