

Kit reviews

GEAR

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

Review requests
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Lezyne
MACRO
GPS £94.99
 lezyne.com



- PROS & CONS**
- + Simple and intuitive with a clear display
 - + Glove-friendly buttons
 - + Excellent build quality & solid bracket

WHERE DID YOU ride? How far did you go? How long? How fast? Cyclists love numbers and stats, and with the latest GPS units available today, you can get your number fix quicker and easier than ever before.

The Lezyne Macro GPS sits comfortably at the entry to mid-point in the GPS marketplace and offers a reassuring amount of on-screen data to display during rides. You can look at all the usual numbers such as speed, distance, ride time etc. and customise up to five screens to display the information you want. The unit is relatively small 42.9x67.8mm and 27.5mm deep, with a screen size of 31.7x40.1mm. Due to its small size, it doesn't spoil the look of your bike or dominate the handlebar/stem space.

The Macro GPS can be paired to Bluetooth devices such as power meters and heart rate monitors to provide you with additional on-ride data. Even better, if you link the unit with your smartphone (via Bluetooth) you can unlock some advanced features such as turn-by-turn

navigation, real time tracking, and Strava Live Segments. The Macro GPS will also notify you if you receive an email, text or phone call (if you wish this to be displayed – it's optional). Download the free 'Ally' app and you can upload data without having to plug the unit into your computer.

Brackets often let down lights, computers and accessories, but the 'no-tools' bracket for the Lezyne GPS range is secure and needs a reassuring amount of downward and rotational pressure to fasten and release from the bike. Once it was in place, I didn't have to worry about the unit taking an unplanned flying trip when the road got a little rough.

I found the Macro GPS really easy to use, with a clear, readable screen. Scrolling through the screen is done by pushing buttons rather than a touch screen. This might seem a little old school, but it works well and is hassle free when wearing full-finger gloves. The long

battery life (quoted as 22hrs) is handy as I didn't need to worry about recharging the unit after every ride or pack any additional charging cables when on multi-day rides. (Although, handily, it did share the same cable as my smartphone.)

Lezyne have produced a great value GPS head-unit here. It can function as a GPS computer by itself, but when paired with the smartphone in your pocket you get many of the features of high-end GPS units without breaking the bank. The Macro GPS has been my 'go-to' unit as it's simple and easy to use, leaving me free to enjoy my riding.

Jonathan Sharpe

OTHER OPTIONS



1 GARMIN EDGE 25
 £139.99
 Simple GPS computer that tracks route, distance, speed, and time and (strap not supplied) heart rate. Can be used to follow a route too.
garmin.com



2 CATEYE STRADA SMART
 £49.99
 A head unit for your smartphone, which is required for full functionality – although it can be used as a non-GPS bike computer if you add sensors.
cateye.com



**PROS
& CONS**

- + Plush, fast, good wet-weather grip
- + Wide range of sizes
- No 26in offering

Panaracer GRAVELKING 650x37B (27.5x1.5) £39.99

zyrofisher.co.uk

GRAVEL RIDING IS currently the big trend in cycle design, and a useful one from the touring cyclist's viewpoint. The fatter tyres favoured for venturing off tarmac not only reduce the likelihood of a pinch flat from a stone, pothole or root, but have the potential to offer improved ride comfort and faster rolling, especially when laden.

For that potential to be realised, the tyre needs a lightweight carcass and tread of the sort used in high-performance road tyres. Panaracer's GravelKing is available in four 700C and two 650B widths, all made using the same lightweight AX-Alphacord casing and ZSG tread compound with an anti-flat belt sandwiched between them. The 700x23C version weighs a claimed 220g, which is nudging that of a high-end folding road clincher tyre; no question, the GravelKing is made for performance on road or 'gravel'.

The version on test measures up at 650x37B, which is a very useful size; its width makes it eminently usable on rough surfaces (the widest 700C model is a mere 32mm wide) while at 310g, it is light enough to offer a responsive ride on tarmac. This tyre is taken from the same mould used by Panaracer for the Pacenti PariMoto. The Japanese manufacturer, which has done much to enable the rebirth of the 650B tyre format, made the original PariMoto to Kirk Pacenti's specification.

This included the traditional (and very effective on road) mixed file/herringbone tread pattern, which works well on tarmac and hard-packed gravel, but not in mud... That tyre weighs 300g and lacks the GravelKing's anti-puncture belt but is the proverbial 'joy to ride'. How does the GravelKing compare?

Due to the anti-flat belt, the difference is surprisingly marked in terms of ride feel, which is comparatively lacking in sensation. The GravelKing is marginally slower too, although it was not possible to discern any difference while riding. Beyond that, however, the GravelKing stands as a fine tyre in its own right: comfortable, fast-rolling, and amazingly grippy on wet and greasy roads. The test period happened to coincide with the local hedge-timming season, which proved that Panaracer's anti-flat belt is no match for a mature Welsh blackthorn – but then what is? The flints and detritus encountered over 200 miles on wet rural lanes failed to inflict further damage.

The 700x23C model stands out as the least suited to off-road riding but looks a good bet for winter training and fast commuting. Any of the other five sizes would make a fine touring tyre, and the fattest – 650x42B – a prime candidate for bikepacking and adventure riding. The only thing missing is a 26in model suitable for old-school MTB size wheels.

Richard Hallett

OTHER OPTIONS



1 PACENTI PARIMOTO £45
Made by Panaracer using same mould. Wonderfully fast, smooth and grippy, but a bit delicate. velovitality.co.uk



2 SCHWALBE G-ONE ALLROUND £49
Tubeless-ready tyre in many sizes with off-road/gravel tread. schwalbe.com



- PROS**
- + Excellent coverage, even with 29+ tyre
 - + Compatible with a dropper post or seatpack
 - + Stable and durable



Mudhugger 29ER REAR MUDHUGGER

£27.50

themudhugger.co.uk

YOU'D THINK mudguards would be a no-brainer for mountain biking in the UK. You get less filthy and cold; you can walk into a pub for a post-ride pint; and they pay for themselves in reduced washing machine wear. But while I've always used some kind of front guard, rear guards have been disappointing. They've skewed around, snapped off, or sat too far from the tyre to block spray effectively. And they've often been too short, because I've had bigger wheels (29er since 2006, 29+ for the last couple of years) before the mudguard manufacturers offered products to suit.

This 29er Rear Mudhugger looked promising, however. It's long (635mm) and wide (approx 100mm) and it sits closer to the tyre, as it attaches not to the seatpost but the seat stays; heli-tape is provided to protect the paintwork. It's not advertised as suitable for 29+ wheels, only 29er and 650B Plus. Offering it up to the bike, it was wide enough for a 75mm-wide Panaracer Fat B Nimble tyre but the bigger wheel radius meant the mudguard buzzed the tyre.

I bored an extra couple of holes in the Mudhugger and cable-tied it to the top of the seat tube first, making it easier to fit it securely right at the top of the seat

stays. Then I cable-tied it to the seat stays as normal, which is all you'll need to do with smaller wheels. I didn't bother with protective tape as the frame is titanium.

On the bike, the Mudhugger is stable and secure. The recycled plastic it's made from is sturdy, and there are no straps or brackets to come loose or snap off. Since it sits closer to the tyre, you don't accidentally kick it when mounting or dismounting. As it doesn't attach to the seatpost you could use a dropper post – which would be far less likely to seize up, as it'll stay fairly clean. Alternatively, there's room above the guard for a large seatpack for bikepacking.

In terms of mud protection, it's the most effective rear mudguard for mountain biking that I've used, irrespective of wheel size. It didn't keep me completely clean but its performance more than justified its cost and 206g weight. The only real downside is that it's a bit fiddlier to fit than other guards, particularly if you've got a cable or brake hose on one seat stay and not the other as you need to ensure it sits centrally.

Shortly before Cycle went to press, Mudhugger announced a 'Boost 29er' model (same price) for tyres up to 4in...

Dan Joyce



Above: Unlike seatpost brackets, which can rotate or snap off, cable-ties stay put, making the Mudhugger stable and secure

OTHER OPTIONS



1 CRUD RACEPAC 29ER SET £22.99

The original seatpost-fixing mudguard. This 29er version is five inches longer than the standard one. A front guard is included. crudprodcuts.com



2 ZEFAL DEFLECTOR RM29 £18.99

Similar to the Mudhugger in that it attaches to the seat stays, albeit by integral plastic straps. It's narrower too. zefal.com