

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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media.co.uk



Pros & cons

- + Powerful, programmable light
- + 1080p video
- Strap attachment

Cycliq

Fly6 CE Gen2

Easy-to-use camera that doubles as your rear light

£165 cycliq.com

Many police forces now accept video evidence to report dangerous driving. This camera/rear light combo represents a top-of-the-range option for obtaining such footage. Although the Gen3 model is shipping imminently, that should hopefully mean a drop in price for this version.

The light is fantastic. It's powerful enough to be visible in daylight, while handy customisability lets you disable individual settings, saving you from cycling through your less favoured options.

As you'd expect at this price,

the 1080p video quality is equally impressive: you'll have no problem picking out number plates. And its waterproof credentials proved themselves on several rainy rides.

It's also straightforward to use once set up – one click and you're away. The SD card (included) will continuously overwrite old footage unless a segment's been 'locked', which will happen automatically if you're involved in a collision so there's no risk of the memory filling up. (It can also be locked manually.) While regular charging is needed for any such



device, the battery life of up to six hours is adequate. In terms of its core functions, it's very hard to criticise.

The attachment options aren't so good. The Velcro strap that secures the unit snugly to your seatpost showed early signs of wear, and it's awkward to attach elsewhere if your seatpost is occupied by a saddlebag.

I was disappointed to find that the recorded footage isn't viewable wirelessly on the dedicated app. You need to plug it into your computer or transfer the SD card to your phone – which isn't possible on many. The option to overlay Strava metrics is nice but finicky to do.

This isn't a camera for sharing your rides on YouTube. Instead, it's optimised to be left to its own devices, ready to be relied upon when you need high-quality footage of a dangerous incident. ●

Keir Gallagher

Other options



GO PRO HERO 7 BLACK £249.99

Classic action camera packed with features, but lacking lights and bonus cycling features such as Strava metrics overlay.

gopro.com



CROSSTOUR CT7000-FR ACTION CAMERA £29.99

One of a number of budget options on Amazon.co.uk. Also lacking lights etc.

crosstour.co/ct7000new

Verdict

The core functionality is impressive: stable 1080p video, powerful LEDs, and ease of use. Finicky editing and attachment issues detract from an otherwise high-quality device.



Cycle's test promise

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Pros & cons

- + Doesn't sag onto rear wheel
- + Carrying handle
- Harder to mount/dismount bike

Carradice

Bikepacking Seatpack

Large, durable bikepacking bag that doesn't sag or sway

£90 carradice.co.uk



If you own a luggage rack and panniers, you may not give this handcrafted seatpack a second glance. But if you want something lighter (some racks tip the scales at nearly 1kg) or if your bike isn't designed to take one, Carradice have a typically smart solution. In a nutshell: capacity 12-16L; weight 335g; choice of three colours; anti-sway bracket that attaches to your saddle rails; and a day-glow internal liner for extra wet-weather protection.

Carradice have been making bags for bicycles since 1930. They're based in Nelson, Lancashire, and every bag now has a label inside signed by the person who made it. (Thank you for making this one, Zaneta!)

To avoid faff when fitting the seatpack, Carradice include a stainless support weighing

200g. This makes the seatpack quick to take on/off, super stable, and keeps the load away from the rear tyre even on small frames. The underside has a wipe-clean panel that acts as a mudguard.

The pack can be rolled down fully for minimal cargo, or filled to capacity with an extra strap provided to compress heavier loads (up to 6kg). A lightweight, daisy-chain, multiple-hook system means you can adjust capacity to suit. Rear light attachment? There are three loops, so one of them will be in the right spot.

There are two seatpack features unique to Carradice: ample use of 3M reflective strip for side and rear visibility; and up-cycled innertube lining the Velcro strap where it meets the seatpost, for extra grip

and minimal chaffing. There's an elasticated cargo net for stuff you want stashed on the outside, e.g. damp clothing.

Anyone who's owned a Carradice bag will know how durable they are. Here, 1000-denier military grade Cordura is used. If you do ever need a repair, I've always found Carradice go above and beyond, even if you've had the bag for decades. ●

Liz Colebrook

Verdict

Robust, size-adjustable, and intelligently designed. The support bracket and dry-bag included in the price make this excellent value. It gets my vote.

Other options



ALPKIT KOALA
£74.99

Two sizes (7L or 13L), three colours, three fabric types. Exo-rail attachment is an optional extra as is a 10L dry-bag liner. alpkit.com



APIDURA BACKCOUNTRY
£93+

Three sizes: 11L, 14L, and 17L. Top notch all-weather fabric. No support bracket so needs plenty of seatpost for stability. apidura.com



Pros & cons
 + Looks good
 + Lightweight
 - Rim clearance/compatibility



Avid Shorty Ultimate

Lightweight cantilever brake with a largely redundant 'wide angle' option

£108 each sram.com

Avid's Shorty Ultimate offers a choice of wide- and low-profile configurations in one cantilever brake. The cable arm and brake block post are separate components clamped together by twin hex bolts via one of the two pairs of holes that provide the alternative set-ups.

One arm houses a cable adjuster, the other the straddle cable clamp; the brake uses a simple straddle wire with stirrup rather than a Shimano-type link wire. The Ultimate uses replaceable Shimano-pattern road brake blocks in shoes that can be adjusted for toe-in and to match the rim's brake track angle. The retracting springs engage with bosses clamped to the spigots. These can be

turned using a 15mm spanner, once the fixing bolts have been slackened, to ensure precise centring of the blocks.

Avid claim 20% greater power in the low-profile configuration. My test rides backed this up. In wide mode, the brake has a harder feel at the lever, which is indicative of a lower mechanical advantage and less power.

The Shorty Ultimate is a clever-looking design but not without issues. It seems designed for a 19mm wide rim. Mounted on spigots at 80mm spacing, the brake's blocks can be angled to meet a 22mm wide rim correctly, but on a 24mm rim the washer system does not allow enough articulation.

In low-profile mode, the outboard washer fouls the

arm when positioned near the bottom of the slot, limiting height adjustment. The washers can't be swapped to accommodate rim width as the outer one won't pass over the shoe mounting post. The adjuster barrel is drilled for the 1.5mm diameter straddle wire provided; a standard 1.6mm brake cable won't pass through and spares don't appear to be widely available.

Perhaps the Ultimate's designer missed a trick. The shoe post section is offset towards the rim from the spigot centreline but by so much that it can't be reversed to offer more clearance. A little attention here would make the brake the versatile design it aims to be. ●

Richard Hallett

Other options



TEKTRO CR720
 £23 EACH

Basic but competent wide-angle cantilever using slim V-brake-style blocks.

tektro.com



SHIMANO CX50
 £35 EACH

Chunky-looking but highly effective low-profile design with loads of adjustability.

shimano.com

Verdict

Lightweight at 120g per wheel but expensive, complex, and supplied with an unusual straddle cable, the Ultimate works well in low-profile mode on a rim of suitable width.