

Open roads...

Touring offers a world of possibilities with a wide variety of touring bikes to match, Cass Gilbert tests four that will broaden your horizons...



On test



Thorn Raven Tour

£1349



Bike Friday Pocket Llama

£1650



Longstaff Touring

£2000



Revolution Country

£399



What makes a good touring bike? Although spare parts can now be jetted out to the furthest locales around the globe, the fully laden touring bike blueprint still errs on the side of caution. So unless you travel fast and light, pry your eyes away from the scales. This means strong, dent resistant tubing on the frame, and clearances to run a range of comfortable or mixed tread tyres too. It means a tubing gauge that's laterally stiff enough to handle all your worldly possessions, but vertically compliant and suitable in geometry to deposit you at your destination in comfort. Expect a lower bottom bracket to improve stability, and make hopping on and off your fully laden machine a little easier. Look for a full compliment of braze-ons, including rack mounts for panniers. Prepare for slower steering too, so handling feels predictable under load. And check for heel clearance - longer chainstays mean no clipping your heels on your panniers. Components should be built to last and serviceable too - nothing too skimpy please.

Then there's the question of wheels, which should be built for the longhaul and suited to load bearing. We've picked three wheel sizes

Thorn Raven Tour

£1349 (as tested), from £1199 (complete), £499 (F&F)

SJSC ☎ 01278 441502,

www.sjscycles.com



for this test, as each has its merits. 26in wheels are found the world over and are inherently strong, with no toe overlap issues for smaller riders. Many prefer the aesthetics of 700c wheels and feel they roll a bit better – but availability is limited to Europe and North America. 20in wheels are a more unusual breed. Spare availability is generally good (they share their wheel size with BMX and children's bike) and their compact nature lends them well to folders – if you do need to carry a spare tyre or tube, it's smaller too!

Our first offering is Thorn's Raven Tour (£1349), reflecting the growing popularity of the Rohloff Speedhub, a 14-speed, precision internal hub that's famed for its reliability. In fact, Thorn have done more to promote it in the UK than anyone else, following the trend in continental Europe where these expensive, German built 14-speed hubs

The über reliable Rohloff Speedhub is German engineering at its best, and improves as it beds in



Bike Friday Pocket Llama**£1650** (as tested), from £1114

AVC ☎ 01225 442 442,

www.foldingbikes.co.uk

are more widely accepted. We were impressed with Thorn's first generation of Ravens, and this one sees several refinements, including upgraded tubing and a simpler, more appealing finish.

Shrinking down in wheel size, we have Bike Friday's Pocket Llama. Born in the US, it's found a perfect niche among multi-modal tourers, and can be folded to the size of a standard hardcase for a plane – which can even be towed along later too! Ours came rigged for more rugged duties though, with a full complement of racks and wide tyres to match – at a price of £1650.

If you've always hankered after the style and elegance of a traditional British built touring bike, cast your eyes over

the Longstaff. Built for the American Handbuilt Bike Show where it caused a considerable stir, it represents our most classic offering. Fully custom, it's been specced with choice components and rings in at £2000.

If all this is starting to sound like a bit much cash, you could remind yourself that bike touring often makes for a cheaper holiday. Or you could try Revolution's Country – at £399 it shows you don't need to spend a fortune to get a properly equipped, capable touring bike. First tested under the Edinburgh Country badge in 2001, last year's model sold like hot cakes. This year's follows a similar bargain price formula, albeit with an aluminium frame.

The bike Friday's mignon size makes storage easier thanks to two quick-releases

FRAME
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Longstaff 9 Revolution 8

With its steerer tube spacers stacked up like casino chips, the Raven Tour's a little gawky at first sight – though the steerer would normally be cut down to customer requirement. It's certainly tidier than the Mark 1, finished in a choice of tough, powder coated paint with pleasingly understated decals. Compared to its predecessor, the Mark 2 uses even stronger, heat treated double-buttressed seamless 4130 chromoly tubing, and has clearance for Schwalbe Marathon XRs (2.25in), the expedition choice. Similar in grade to Reynolds 725, the end result is a very sturdy frame that should survive even an enthusiastic bash on the top of an Indian bus. Thorn has always provided a considered spread of sizes and the new Tour is no exception, with 13 options



Longstaff Touring

£2000 (custom, as tested),
£875 (F&F inc chrome tips)

Longstaff ☎ 01782 561 966,
www.longstaffcycles.co.uk



featuring both long and short top tubes to suit most body types. An eccentric bottom bracket adjusts chain tension, held in place by two bolts that screw directly into the eccentric shell.

Combined with the Rohloff specific dropouts, removing the rear wheel is as easy as on a derailleurs bike, with two quick-release cables releasing the gear system. As expected, there're mounts for three water bottles, a pump peg and rack and mudguard mounts. The longer twin plated forks feature low rider and a dynamo bosses – it can also be replaced with an 80-100mm travel suspension fork for off road duties. The headset is FSA's excellent Orbit XL II, one of the most reliable in the business. We're nit picking,

The Longstaff is one of the most elegant touring frames we've seen...

Elegant, understated lugs and classic Reynolds 531 touring mark the Longstaff out for the discerning traditionalist

but we'd have liked to see the smoother, forged cable runners used on the Raven Sport, which are kinder on cable housing in the long term.

Bike Fridays are chromoly and built in Eugene, Portland (US). There's an enormously wide range, from TT bikes to tandems – the Pocket Llama is built for more roughstuff touring, with a slightly increased bottom bracket height over other models, beefier tubing, and tyre clearance for 2.3s. With eight top-tube lengths to choose from, fit is pretty

much custom, with a range of adjustable and non-adjustable stem risers available too. There're two standard quick releases – one on the steerer tube to remove the handlebars, the other on the seat tube to fold it down. The initial 'fold' takes just 20 seconds and the full breakdown into a hard case (£100) takes 15 minutes for the well-practised hand, though in this case, you'll need to remove racks too. There's a custom colour option, three bottle mounts, a kickstand mount, a trailer attachment point and rack/



Revolution Country

£399 (complete as tested)

Edinburgh Bike Coop ☎ 0845 257 0808,

www.edinburgh-bicycle.co.uk



mudguard bosses for carriers that are purpose designed by Bike Friday. Cable routing is wiggly but neat, designed to allow the frame to pivot beneath the bottom bracket when folding. With its smaller wheels, the derailleur does hang low, making it more prone to damage from stray rocks when off-roading.

The Longstaff is one of the most elegant touring frames we've feasted our eyes on, from the lustrous British Racing Green stove enamel finish, the delicate cable bosses, the chrome tips, and the classy

Longstaff decals and logo. Which is just as well. Chances are, if you're going to hand over two grand, you'll want it to look right too... The lugs themselves are simple and understated, lifted with elegant gold detailing. Lugs are mainly aesthetic, a chance to be a little ornate and decorative, as their extra weight doesn't translate to extra strength. In any case, Longstaff will build you the frame of your choice, be it lugged or fillet brazed, compact or traditional, with appropriate tubing to suit your weight

Loaded up with 20kg of kit there's no waver in the frame

and riding style. In this case, the bike is built with a mix of Reynolds 531 and 725 tubing, in a sturdier weight gauge more suited to the heavier, or laden rider. There's a pump peg and three bottle mounts too, positioned where you can get to them easily, and where the front mech clamp won't get in the way. The frame will take 35c tyres with mudguards, 38 without. The 1in fork has a deep rake, and rack and mudguard bosses.

Although we like to recommend steel frames when it comes to touring, a properly built aluminium frame will do the job too, as testified by the many continental European tourers who crop up all over the world. Aluminium frames are also considerably cheaper to build these days, which helps the Country weigh in at such a reasonable price – and shed a few grams in the process too. There's a replaceable mech hanger – so pack yourself a spare one when you go travelling. Geometry is comfortably upright, with a generous headtube and a short top tube that ensures a soak-up-the-views riding position. There's ample room for a 38c tyre, a sloping top tube for easier getting on and off, and a lower bottom

The Edinburgh's handlebar mounted levers provide comfortable braking on the tops, but are a little underpowered





bracket for stability when stopping – a fully loaded bike can need some taming at the lights. Although tubing is basic, it's been manipulated at the bottom bracket to increase the weld area, and there's an open gusset at the headtube to improve lateral stiffness, which is also helped by its semi-compact design. There's provision for three bottles and there are secure pannier bosses and mudguard eyelets. The fork also features mounts for low riders and mudguards – for the size of the frame, a couple of spacers' worth of extra steerer length might have been a nice idea.

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The Raven Tour is based on the long proven Nomad, with a slightly tighter wheelbase for a more spritely ride when unladen – relative to touring bikes, that is – yet predictable when loaded to the hilt. It's a tribute to the frame's versatility that it can handle heavily laden touring, commuting and even fairly involved off-road riding with aplomb. Ours came specced with a 39T/16T ratio (17.7-91in) for an Mtb-style spread of gears in 14 evenly spaced increments – though Rohloff allow a lower 40T/17T set of ratios too. Like all Rohloff driven bikes, it takes a little getting used to – mainly the need to ease off a little when shifting gears. There are advantages (little maintenance, long service life, durability, shifting at a standstill) and disadvantages (noisier gears

Having put a Rohloff through two hard seasons in the Indian Himalayas, the pluses far outweigh the negatives for loaded, mixed terrain touring

1-8, heavier shifting) to this 14-speed internal system. But having put one through two hard seasons in the Indian Himalayas, the pluses far outweigh the negatives for loaded, mixed terrain touring. There's nothing to beat it for ease of use, while the lack of dangling derailleurs makes it far easier to transport too. But like most things in life, it's not quite perfect. Noise and very minimal drag will bother some, and we have heard of the odd slipping gear – corrected by Rohloff's excellent customer service for no cost. While there's no doubt that the subjective 'feel' is quite different to derailleurs, under loaded panniers (and the inevitable drivetrain of grime) it's far less obvious.

Cast aside those notions of how folders should or shouldn't ride. Everyone who took the Pocket Lama for a spin was immediately impressed by how 'normal' it felt – indeed, Bike Friday will set your bike up to pretty much exactly the riding position of your 'big' wheeler. Small wheels are nimble, fast to accelerate and of course, small – so the whole bike takes a lot less space to store. 20in wheels teamed with a 105 triple chainset and an Mtb cluster provide a good spread of gears. While lighter loads were fine, we did find the rear rack, which can be flat packed, wasn't rigid enough for 20kg panniers – on dirt tracks, it flexed from one side to the other. A standard expedition rack should be better, though the longer stays

and extra leverage will always mean a rack on a small wheel wheeled bike will be compromised. On the downside, small wheels and rough terrain don't make such a good combination. The Halo Twin Rails handled dirt tracks and gravel roads surprisingly smoothly, only struggling on rocky terrain where the greater angle of attack means they tend to bounce off rather than roll over obstacles. We also tried the bike out with Schwalbe's excellent Big Apples, offering a good turn of speed and plenty of comfort too.

In terms of the fold, the Bike Friday is no Brompton either. A quick release on the seat tube and head tube help compact the bike down for the boot of a car in under half a minute – otherwise, it's a 15-20 minute affair to get the bike broken down to the size of its hard case (£100), and you'll need to remove the racks too. These days airlines are becoming increasingly strict, and Bike Friday provide a very viable solution to reaching other parts of the world with your bike in one piece. A soft and light (but ridiculously expensive at £65) Travel Bag can be put in the hold of any coach without a raised eyebrow, and it's light enough to carry with you too.

Our test model Longstaff was built for heavily loaded touring, so performance on the track was never on its agenda. This said, steering was pleasingly light and involving, while the generous rake in the fork did a good job at ironing out road blemishes. There's a small amount of toe



overlap with the mudguards fitted too – it never became an issue, but if you intend to use this bike for slower speed commuting, you might notice it. When tested with our standard 20kg load – to allow for a mixed weather camping tour – the frame felt flex-free and stable out of the saddle, and it tracked superbly down long and winding Brecon descents.

Although the Country takes a bit of effort to kick up to speed, once there it surprised us by how nicely it glides along. Steering is on the slower, more stable side, as befits a touring bike of this style – if you're new to carrying a week's worth of touring kit, it won't surprise you on a fast descent or a tight bend. Loaded up with 20kgs of kit, and there's no waver in the frame. What's more, it's not even close to having any toe overlap, even with its wide tyres and mudguards. This will suit those new to cycling, and means it translates well to commuting duties too.

Equipment **Thorn 9 Bike Friday 7** **Longstaff 8 Revolution 8**

What the Raven may lack in elegance, it makes up in sheer practicality, thought and attention to detail. As ever, Thorn provide an impressive range of extras to fine tune the setup to your individual needs, such as the all-important choice of crank length and sprocket sizes. Our Raven came with one of Thorn's new Taiwanese EX chromoly racks, an extremely sturdy design rated to 40kg.

Both the front chainring and rear sprocket are reversible for a longer service life – bar the occasional tightening of the chain and drop of oil, there's nothing you need to do. Deore brakes provide excellent stopping power. The ergo riser bars are swept back for wrist comfort, while still providing plenty of room for gadgets. A matching black seat post would have completed the look – ours was just on the limit for long legs. An impressive 100-day money back guarantee offers enough time to see if Rohloff's system works for you.

Bike Fridays are custom bikes, so you can spec what you like, and there is a multitude of options. Ours came with shiny Shimano 105 crankset with outboard bearings. It looks great but wouldn't be our first choice for touring in more remote locations, simply because conventional replacement bottom brackets will be easier to source, and could well last longer too. Our test model came pimped up with matching Easton EA70 stem and seat post, and standard alloy bar and comfortable Cane Creek bar ends. The XT brake and shifter is integrated – we prefer a separate pod, as in the event of a mechanical, there's less to replace. Deore Vs provide good stopping power and the gel perch kept our backsides happy. There's an attractive, powder coated set of racks (£100 each) but as discussed in the Handling section, the rear is too flexible for heavier loads – though it does fold

flat. It's also worth noting that Bike Friday specific extras are very expensive.

Being a bespoke bike, how you choose to build up your Longstaff is pretty much up to you. Ours featured Specialities' square taper 110 BCD Carmina cranks, mated to a set of tough 48/38/26 TA chainrings – with loads of options available. The 10-speed shifters work smoothly – but do require more tuning than the now harder-to-source 9-speed system. At this level, we'd also prefer Tubus over Blackburn in the luggage carrying department, though there's no doubt the Expedition racks will do you a long tour of duty. Three Elite bottle cages keep your water supply secure, and quality SKS mudguards keep you clean. The 3T Morphine handle bars are 45cm outside to outside and have a shallow drop that suits touring. Brook's leather handlebar tape certainly adds a classic look, and should last – they could do with a gel insert (like Fizik's Bar:gel) as there's no give in them. Likewise, the matching honey coloured Brooks saddle completes the look. Unfortunately, it required more than the testing time permitted to offer yin to my backside's yang, so remained rather uncomfortable.

When it comes to the Country, the drivetrain is on the basic side, with a Shimano seven-speed cassette and a Suntour triple. A 32T sprocket means there're plenty of low gears to choose from, and shifting is smooth thanks to the Acera rear mech. A 48T outer chain ring

It's also worth noting that Bike Friday specific extras are very expensive

translates to a higher speed, useful when riding without baggage. We've always found Sora shifters good value for money, with reliable indexing and a solid build. Smaller hands will find the thumb shifter impossible to reach in the drops, but on the hoods (which is generally where you'll be) it's fine. We did find the brakes a little underpowered, particularly the rear. We've used Tektro's Oryx cantilevers before without a problem – using a different pad may help. Likewise, the 'cross style levers on the handlebars take some work. Handy for riding in an upright position, they do get in the way of fitting a bar bag. The seat post is easily adjusted and the comfortable Selle Italia FLX saddle is a good touch too. Elsewhere, there're mudguards, which are fairly rigid and an aluminium rack rated to 25kg, with an integrated bungee that can be removed when riding with panniers. No complaints for the money.

Wheels

Thorn 8 Bike Friday 8
Longstaff 8 Revolution 7

Thorn offer a wide range of rims and tyres available at the time of ordering, as well as various hub upgrades. Ours came with Sun's CR18, a reasonably light yet surprisingly sturdy 26in rim that marks the bike out for lighter, more road-based touring duties, helping to ensure a decent turn of unladen speed too. If your touring vision is more expedition in feel, we'd recommend a sturdier rim, at the cost of extra rotational weight. At the front, a dependable Deore should keep out grime and run smoothly for many a mile, while at the back, the Rohloff, finished in a tough black anodising, provides the gear range too – a yearly oil change will keep things running smoothly. For the tourist, a great advantage of the Rohloff is the fact that in the absence of a cassette, there's no dishing. This allows for a stronger wheel to be built with just 32-spoke rims, which are easier to source, and negates the need for a cassette removal tool while on tour. Double-buttet spokes all-round also provide strength and comfort at a reasonable weight. Pasela Tourguards are a favourite, with a low rolling resistance, strong sidewalls and a reasonable pocket of air for comfort.

The Bike Friday uses standard 406 20in wheels. Ours also came specced with 32-hole Sun SC18s. Their small size gives them an extremely high inherent strength



too, though rim wear will be more of an issue. Wheel size is one factor that might dissuade expedition tourers from the Bike Friday due to availability of quality parts – though low-end kids wheels should be fairly easy to come by. But this hasn't put off Heinz Stucker – world traveller and godfather of expedition tourers – from buying one recently. With 415,000 kilometres to his name, we expect he knows a thing or two about what works on the road. There's a quality Shimano XT hub on the back, and a perfectly respectable Deore hub on the front, both of which have a good touring pedigree. We really rated Halo's Twin Rail tyres (2.2in), which help smooth out the ride, roll surprisingly well both on and off road, and give it a groovy dune buggy look that steals it plenty of admirers. Schwalbe Marathons and Slicks are also available.

We tested a set of double-walled, double-eyeleted DT Swiss TK7.1 rims last issue in our wheels test, and they drew a negative reaction from hoopmeister Harry Rowlands. Maybe he was being a bit of a perfectionist though, as since then, production editor Neil has put them through their paces with a week's laden tour on mixed terrain through Scotland – with no problems at

all. In any case, it's unlikely you'll be having much trouble with the Longstaff built wheels, as they use tandem gauge butted spokes for extra strength. Hubs are Shimano XTs, still our preferred choice for serviceability in the field with their good quality labyrinth seals. Also being wider with a 135OLN and less dishing, they're laterally stronger too. Tyres are also a favourite. Schwalbe's Marathons aren't the lightest rubber around, but with their reasonable volume of air (32c) and 95psi rating, they're comfy and roll well.

The Revolution comes with a set of 36-spoke touring wheels, built up around Shimano's RM40 hubs. But there's nothing wrong with that – with a little TLC once in a while, these cup and cone hubs should be good for many miles. Spokes are plain gauge to bring in the budget, and rims are from Rigidia, who have a good reputation for building solid hoops. Zac 2000s are a mid-weight rim with a double-walled structure. While there're no eyelets on these older models to spread weight (unlike on new ones), the surfaces are plenty thick and there's a wear line indicator.

The Brooks saddle required more than the testing time permitted to offer yin to my backside's yang...

Rivals

Dave Yates Wayfarer	£499 (f&f)
Airmimal White Rhyno	fr. £1375
Robin Mather Cycles	fr. £640 (f&f)
Dawes Horizon	c. £450

Dave Yates Wayfarer (☎ 01526 343322, www.daveyates.co.uk) £499 for a handbuilt frame and fork (£100 extra for fully custom), 26in wheels, clearance for 2.1in tyres, four sizes, complete bike £999. Touring Bike of the Year 2005.

Airmimal White Rhyno (☎ 01223 523973, www.airmimal.com) 7005 aluminium, 20in wheels, take the whole gamut from knobbies to slicks, front (80mm) and rear suspension for super smooth ride. £1375 upwards, and there's a Rohloff model too. Robin Mather Cycles www.robinmathercycles.co.uk. Fully handbuilt, individually considered, steel touring frames with top notch welding,

finish and original, understated lugs – and a whole lot of lovin'. £640 for basic frame and fork, braze ons extra. Dawes Horizon (☎ 0121 748 8050, www.dawescycles.com) great value, 7005 Compact frame, Rigidia rims, rear rack and mudguard, alivio and Sora drivetrain, 43cm to 58cm (four sizes), £450 but we've seen it even cheaper online...

CYCLING PLUS Verdict

For long distance, heavily laden or expedition touring, there's nothing to beat the Rohloff hub – and the Raven Tour frame matches it perfectly. While there may be more elegant bikes, nothing can match it for price and practicality; it's the benchmark against which not just other Speedhub touring bikes should be judged, but derailleurs ones too. Teamed with an impressive versatility, it's the combination of choice for any dedicated bike traveller.

These days airlines are becoming increasingly strict, and Bike Friday provide a very viable solution to reaching other parts of the world with your bike



Thorn Raven Tour

Replacement value £1349 (as tested), from £1199 (complete), £499 (F&F)
SJSC ☎ 01278 441502, www.sjscycles.com

Frame and forks
Size tested: 562L
Sizes available: from 472S to 612S w/ short and long top tubes, and 2 step-through frames
Weight as tested: 14.030 kg/ 30.9 lb, no pedals
Frame Weight: Thorn 969 cromoly w/ reynolds 753 stays: 2810 g/ 6.2 lb
Fork: Reynolds 531: 1160 g/ 2.6 lb

Bike dimensions
Top tube: 61.0 cm/ 24.0 in
Seat tube (c-c): 46.5 cm/ 18.3 in
Chainstays: 45.5 cm/ 17.9 in
Wheelbase: 111.0 cm/ 43.7 in
Head tube angle: 71.0 28.0
Seat tube angle: 72.0 28.3
Fork offset: 4.5 cm/ 1.8 in
Trail: 6.6 cm, Wheel Radius 33cm
B/b height: 29.3 cm/ 11.5 in
Standover height: 79.0 cm/ 31.1 in
Braze-ons: 3x water bottle, f&r mudguard and rack, f dynmo, pump peg

Frame alignment
Head tube: Perfect
Rear triangle: Perfect
Fork: Perfect

Transmission
Chainset: Thorn branded, 39T, 175.0mm
Bottom bracket: Shimano UN53
Freewheel: Rohloff Speedhub 500/14, 16T
Chain brand: SRAM PC48
Derailleurs: n/a
Gear levers: Rohloff Speedhub, Pedals: none

Gear ratio (in)

Chaining		Gears								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
39	18	20	23	26	29	33	38	43	49	

Chaining		10	11	12	13	14
		55	63	71	81	92

Wheels
Front & Rear: Rear: 32H Shimano Deore/Rohloff Speedhub 500/14 (f/r) on Sun CR18 rims w/ stainless triple-butted spokes
Tyres: Panaracer Pasela Tourguard
Wheel weight: f: 1560g; r: 3140g

Other components
Handlebar stem: unbranded, 100mm
Handlebars: Unbranded, 60cm
Headset: FSA Orbit XLII
Saddle: Fizik Nisene CP
Seatpost: Unbranded
Brakeset: Shimano Deore
Accessories: Rear rack, f&r mudguards



Bike Friday Pocket Llama

Replacement value £1650 (from £1114)
Avon Valley Cyclery ☎ 01225 442 442, www.foldingbikes.co.uk

Frame and forks
Size tested: custom
Sizes available: custom
Weight as tested: 13.400 kg/ 29.5 lb (no panniers)
Frame Weight: 3200kg/7.1lb

Bike dimensions
Top tube: 57.0 cm/ 22.4 in
Seat tube (c-c): na
Chainstays: 42.0 cm/ 16.5 in
Wheelbase: 102.5 cm/ 40.4 in
Head tube angle: 73.5
Seat tube angle: 72.5
Fork offset: 4.5 cm/ 1.8 in
Trail: 2.7 cm, Wheel Radius 25
B/b height: 30.2 cm/ 11.9 in
Standover height: 53.0 cm/ 20.9 in
Braze-ons: 3x water bottle

Frame alignment
Head tube: Perfect
Rear triangle: Looks perfect
Fork: Perfect

Transmission
Chainset: Shimano 105, 30-39-50T, 170.0mm
Bottom bracket: Shimano 105
Freewheel: Shimano HG70 11-32
Chain brand: Shimano Hg72
Derailleurs: Shimano 105/XT (f/r)
Gear levers: Shimano XT
Pedals: none

Gear ratio (in)

Chaining		Sprocket										
		11	12	14	16	18	21	24	28	32		
30	55	50	43	38	33	29	25	21	19			
39	71	65	56	49	43	37	33	28	24			
50	91	83	71	63	56	48	42	36	31			

Wheels
Front & Rear: 32H Sun CR18 rims on Shimano Deore hubs w/ stainless plain gauge spokes
Tyres: Halo Twin Rail 20, 20x2.2in
Wheel weight: f: 1461g; r: 1909g

Other components
Handlebar stem: Easton EA50, 100mm
Handlebars: unbranded, 20in w/ Cane Creek bar ends
Headset: Cup and cone
Saddle: Fizik Vitesse CP3
Seatpost: Easton EA50, 100mm
Brakeset: Shimano Deore
Accessories: none



Longstaff Touring

Replacement value £2000 (complete as tested), £875 (f&f inc chrome tips)
Longstaff ☎ 01782 561 966, www.longstaffcycles.co.uk

Frame and forks
Size tested: custom
Sizes available: custom
Weight as tested: 13.200 kg/ 29.1 lb no pedals
Frame Weight: Reynolds 531 Super Tour: 2440 g/ 5.4 lb
Fork: Lugged chromoly: 1013 g/ 2.2 lb

Bike dimensions
Top tube: 56.0 cm/ 22.0 in
Seat tube (c-c): 56.0 cm/ 22.0 in
Chainstays: 44.0 cm/ 17.3 in
Wheelbase: 104.0 cm/ 40.9 in
Head tube angle: 72.5 28.5
Seat tube angle: 73.0 28.7
Fork offset: 4.5 cm/ 1.8 in
Trail: 6.3 cm Wheel Radius 35
B/b height: 27.5 cm/ 10.8 in
Standover height: 82.0 cm/ 32.3 in
Braze-ons: 3x water bottle, f&r mudguard and rack, pump peg

Frame alignment
Head tube: Perfect
Rear triangle: Perfect
Fork: Perfect

Transmission
Chainset: Specialites TA, 26-38-48T 170T
Bottom bracket: Shimano UN73
Freewheel: Shimano Ultegra
Chain brand: Shimano Ultegra
Derailleurs: Shimano 195 (f&r)
Gear levers: Shimano 105
Pedals: none

Gear ratio (in)

Chaining		Sprocket														
		12	13	14	15	16	17	19	21	24	27					
26	59	54	50	47	44	41	37	33	29	26						
38	86	79	73	68	64	60	54	49	43	38						
48	108	100	93	86	81	76	68	62	54	48						

Wheels
Front & Rear: 36H DT Swiss TK 7.1 Rims on Shimano XT hubs w/ stainless plain gauge spokes
Tyres: Schwalbe Marathon, 700x32C
Wheel weight: f: 1710g; r: 2180g

Other components
Handlebar stem: 3T, 110mm
Handlebars: 3T Morphe, 46.0cm
Headset: MtPart
Saddle: Brooks
Seatpost: Selcof 54
Brakeset: Shimano Cantilever
Accessories: f&r mudguards, rear rack



Revolution Country

Replacement value £399 (complete as tested)
Edinburgh Bicycle Coop ☎ 0845 257 0808, www.edinburgh-bicycle.co.uk

Frame and forks
Size tested: Large
Sizes available: S, M, L
Weight as tested: 14.170 kg/ 31.2 lb no pedals
Frame Weight: alloy: 2064 g/ 4.5 lb
Fork: steel: 935 g/ 2.1 lb

Bike dimensions
Top tube: 60.5 cm/ 23.8 in
Seat tube (c-c): 46.3 cm/ 18.2 in
Chainstays: 44.5 cm/ 17.5 in
Wheelbase: 109.0 cm/ 42.9 in
Head tube angle: 70.0 27.6
Seat tube angle: 71.5 28.1
Fork offset: 4.5 cm/ 1.8 in
Trail: 7.4 cm Wheel Radius 35
B/b height: 28.3 cm/ 11.1 in
Standover height: 80.0 cm/ 31.5 in
Braze-ons: 3x water bottle, f&r mudguard and rack

Frame alignment
Head tube: Perfect
Rear triangle: Within 2mm
Fork: Perfect

Transmission
Chainset: Suntour SR, 28-38-48T, 170.0mm
Bottom bracket: Cartridge
Freewheel: Shimano HG30
Chain brand: Shimano IG
Derailleurs: Shimano Acera (f&r)
Gear levers: Shimano Sora
Pedals: none

Gear ratio (in)

Chaining		Sprocket										
		11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32			
28	69	58	50	42	36	32	27	24				
38	90	76	66	55	47	41	35	31				
48	113	96	83	69	59	52	45	39				

Wheels
Front & Rear: 36H Zac 2000 rims on Shimano RM40 hubs w/ stainless plain gauge spokes
Tyres: CST Traveller 28x1 5/8x1 3/8in
Wheel weight: f: 1940g; r: 2570g

Other components
Handlebar stem: unbranded, 100mm
Handlebars: unbranded, 46.5cm
Headset: Cartridge Aheadset
Saddle: FLX by Selle Italia
Seatpost: unbranded
Brakeset: Tektro
Accessories: f&r mudguards, rear rack

in one piece. It also makes multi-modal touring with uncompromised riding a whole lot easier too. Ultimately though, the importance of its ability to be transported stress free will decide whether it is the right bike for you – some will be happy simply removing the wheels from their standard bikes. But we'd certainly like to see a more rigid rack available for those planning heavy duty, mixed terrain tours, and would favour using the hardcase trailer (£180) option for tarmac tours.

If you're ever wondered about the merits

of investing in a handbuilt steel frame, look no further than the Longstaff. Simply one of the most elegant touring bikes we've tried, its well-balanced ride is spot on and the attention to detail is superb. Handbuilt frames like these display real craftsmanship – we're glad the spirit of George lives on.

And speaking of benchmarks, the Country confirms itself as the new standard bike for entry-level tourers. But by entry level, we don't mean to undervalue its abilities. This is a bike that gives far pricier models a decent run for their money too and

with improved braking, it would be even better. Aluminium wouldn't be our first choice for touring, and it's sad to see the demise of steel from last year. This said, the 2006 model is strong in all the right places, and for everything bar remote, back of beyond exploration, we can't see this being a real problem for most prospective tourers.

Thorn 9/10
An impressive combo; a well-rounded frame teamed with Rohloff's superb Speedhub

Bike Friday 8/10
Little wheels but big performance; ideal for multi-modal touring

Longstaff 9/10
Simply put: classic, classy and highly desirable

Revolution 8/10
Less than £400 and the world's your oyster. . . Say no more