

'Carbon rims make my 899 turn like a racer'

Massively expensive, but they're one of the most dramatic mods you can make

BST carbon-fibre wheels for Ducati 899 Panigale, £2287

Tested by: Richard Newland

Time tested: 4500 miles

What's good? Everything but the price. And let's be fair here, the price is actually entirely reasonable for the quality of construction, and the incredible difference they make to every mile you ride. But I'm evangelical about BST rims. I've used them on a variety of bikes over the past 10 years, and have never been disappointed. Whether you're on road or track, the significant reduction in unsprung mass is revelatory. My 899 Panigale, already no oil tanker, now feels like a 250GP bike for the road. It turns hard with the barest of inputs, the engine drives with more aggression, and braking forces are much greater. Why? Because there's far less inertia to deal with. There's less mass to accelerate, less rotational energy to decelerate, and because of the lower mass there's also less gyroscopic effect. I hear lots of concern about durability and strength, and can only say that I've never had a problem. I ride in all weathers, and they look like new after a quick wash. I've changed multiple sets of tyres, and never had problems.

What's not? If your bike is already wearing a lovely set of super-light rims as standard, then you'll feel less benefit.

Contact www.bikehps.com

Quality rating ★★★★★

Value rating ★★★★★



Fully spec'd

Your BST wheels come with everything except brake discs and tyres. The beautifully machined hubs will accept your original brake discs, reducing your outlay, and you get a Talon gold sprocket included in the package.

Low drag

If you're happy to pay an additional £148, you can spec your new wheels with ceramic bearings, which will result in 40% lower friction, 60% less rotating mass, 3-5 times the lifespan, as well as cooler, quieter and smoother running.

FIVE KEY BENEFITS OF LIGHT WHEELS

1 They're lighter
Well, obviously. But every kilo you shave off the total mass of your bike will be beneficial, especially when it's unsprung mass - which means wheels, discs, tyres, and suspension components.

2 Less inertia
Your bike's acceleration will be dramatically improved because your engine is having to overcome less inertia. It's like having 15bhp extra output from your engine. You'll feel the benefit in all gears, and especially in the low to mid-range revs.

3 Less gyroscopic effect
A spinning wheel is harder to turn from its axis of rotation, and the heavier the wheel, the stronger the effect. Light wheels equal fast direction changes, making chicanes a joy, and corners much less effort to dive into.

4 Less stored energy
Your braking energy has to overcome your speed, but also the stored energy in your wheels. The lighter the wheels, the less energy there is to dissipate through braking friction as heat. Your pads will last longer as a result.

5 Less tyre wear
Your tyres will also last longer on lighter wheels due to the lower forces being transferred through the tyre. The lower mass of the wheel results in less 'scrubbing' of the tyre as it moves over the road surface.



Lindstrands Comet gloves, £59



Tester: Tony Hoare

Time tested: Four months/1500 miles

What's good? They're short gloves that are very comfortable and work well with all types of textile jackets, making it much easier to put them on and take them off for my 20-minute commute to the office. They're also waterproof and very breathable without being draughty and the suede-like palms give superb feel for bars and levers. The price is respectable considering the build quality.

What's not? Other than the inherent limitations of short gloves - there will be a gap if you wear a jacket with a shorter sleeve - there are no criticisms.

Contact: www.jofama.se

Quality rating ★★★★★ Value rating ★★★★★



Oxford Lifetime X1 tank bag, £29.99



Tester: Alison Silcox

Time tested: One month/1000 miles

What's good? I turn to this little bag when popping out for a quick spin or riding to work. It fits purse, phone, sunnies and other essentials. It's got strong magnets in the base and has a long headstock strap. The magnets make the bag sit firmly on the tank but I always secure the headstock strap as well. With other tank bags this strap can foul the steering lock, but it's not the case with this one.

What's not? It lacks a clear map pocket, but then it's not really designed for touring. I'd be tempted to go for the X2, which is a litre bigger.

Contact: www.oxprod.com

Value rating: ★★★★★ Quality rating: ★★★★★



Daytona Strive GTX boots £369.99



Tester: Simon Relph

Time tested: 4800 miles/13 months

What's good? If you get cold feet and hate getting them wet when riding in the rain, then these are the boots for you. I wore them for the whole of last winter, and on and off through summer. They're beautifully made and padded in all the right places when it comes to safety, but also come with titanium toesliders that gives them a bit of a sporty look. The sole shows very little sign of wear so far.

What's not? I struggle to find anything not to like about these boots apart from the fact they are not self-polishing and they are expensive.

Contact: www.tranam.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★ Value rating: ★★★★★