

3 Unmissable Upgrades to Level Up Your Gravel Bike!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oCJgurCKol

hello and welcome back to the channel now today we are diving into some of the best gravel and off-road products for that I've been longterm testing from race winning shoes worn by lackin Morton Unbound to power meter pedals you can easily swap between your gravel and mountain bike and a gamechanging suspension stem these are products that would definitely level up your gravel bike whether you're racing bike packing or just riding for fun so first up if you want an SPD style power meter pedal you can easily swap between gravel and mountain bikes well look no further these are extremely impressive with almost no downside at all I've been very very impressed indeed and let me give you some pros and cons on the pros they're well priced under £500 direct but that doesn't include import taxes and custom duties but still cheaper than a Gman rally at £850 they're accurate they're reliable the B is good and they look pretty good as well but on the cons they're quite heavy over gam a lot more than a nonp parameter pedal the battery life is not as good as a Garmin the battery also isn't replaceable you need a mil pedal spanner no mil and you can't convert them to Road pedals like you can with Garmin so I've been living with the pedals for several months and I Keen to log as many miles in different conditions and on different bikes before sh sharing my thoughts I've used them for mountain biking cycl cross racing gravel riding bike packing and even use them on a road based cycle tour as well they may be designed for M bike and gravel but they're perfect for road if you prefer the convenience of an SBD pedal and Sole for walking around cafes and other places compared to a road based system and being based in the UK they've been through all weather conditions as well they've been fully submerged in the water at times and jet wash and they are still working as reliably as they came out the box when they first arrived so these are the more expensive dual-sided parameter version so each side is measuring power there is a cheaper single-sided version as well which you can upgrade at a lat date to a dual solid version the Dual solid version gives you more data if you want to really dig deeper into your performance and paired with a garment get really useful and cool pedal Dynamics like power phase and left right Power Balance however you don't need that level of detail I recommend saving some money and opting for cheaper mx1 I swap between these and regular SVD pedal without needing to adjust saddle height as well because the stack height is pretty much the same and The Stance width has no noticeable impact on my pedaling at all and in use they work just like a Shimano SPD pedal clipping engagement and release is just fine you have adjustment from the release tension screw just there so you can cheun them to how you want I found them to be robust for off-road use as well surviving a few crashes and bike drops with no real damage they're showing some wear around the edges but nothing beyond the norm for an SPD pedal when you're riding off-road Rock strikes and all that stuff part and parcel of riding a bike and these pedals Offroad and there still one piece nothing bent or broken so for me based on five months of riding I have no issue around their durability and ruggedness and one feature I like is if you do damage the pedal body it can be replaced as well battery life is claimed to be hours which does align with my experience so far I charge them every couple of weeks and I haven't run them flat yet they are easy to charge

with a charging cable clipping onto the pedal axle and I leave them to charge overnight so no real hassle in terms of charging them you can't remove the battery and charge it separately that have to be charged on the pedal now let's talk about accuracy and consistency of data and the Italian Company claims these pedals are plus or minus 1% accurate which is in line with most Power Systems on the market these days to see how it compares to another parameter I put them on a bike with a quark dual crank parameter a canyon Grail during an km ride Offroad and both track very closely together with no issues as you can see from the screen shots on screen right now this gives me the confidence that the PS are accurate and consistent at least compared to narrow parameter which are key for training and racing now while knowing your power output is great the company's app on a smartphone unlocks additional pedaling Dynamics though you do need the out running to see the data from the pedals fortunately the brand new Garmin Edge which I've been testing review coming soon also displays this information which is fascinating to look at when you're riding along because a standout feature of a pedal based parameter compared to crank base is that it provides insights like Power Center offset helping you to tune your cleat position by showing how far from the center of the pedal your power is produced so a really interesting way to see how your shoes are set up with the cleat on the pedal it also shows where in the pedal stroke you exert the most power offering plenty of data for those who want to geek out on their pedaling and refine tune and finesse they're pedaling to get better efficiency and better performance which you parameter PS offer overall then these pedals have really impressed me in the time I've been using them they connect easily to any bike computer Garmin Wahoo and a data is always consistent in my experience so the biggest rival is perhaps a growing number of bikes are now shipping with crank based parameters especially Shimano bikes Shimano has been really aggressive in equipping its bikes from Red down to Force and even rival with power meters or power meter ready bikes so making the case for an aftermarket parameter like these hard to make if you have a Shimano group set but if your bike doesn't have a power meter or isn't power already and you have a fleet of bikes like I do and most of you do I think these are a better option I'm also excited to see how the company can apply this new podless technology to the road pedals because they look really cool they look really sleek they work really well so we can get a road version of these I can't wait to see that very very soon indeed so very impressive pedals the market for a gravel manitou parameter pedal is pretty small compared to Road pedal parameters but if you want an off-road solution and lots of you doing lots of riding off-road and we'll take that training from indoor smart training to Outdoors to align your performance and training and all that data and keep data consistent then these are a good option so yeah been very very impressed I've not done anything on these since now because I want to really long-term test them make sure any issues that might happen would hopefully happen by now but so far there's not really much to write home about in the negatives with these they just work really well which is what you want from a product these [Music] days the Red Shift suspension stem here has been a surprising hit with gravel cyclist for the last few years for good reason more comfort with no real downsides other than price and wait but there is a new player in town the brand new USC Vibe stem here I've been testing this brand new stem from the UK company for the last few weeks and based on a 3-day intense bike packing trip in awful condition recently my takeaway is that like the Red Shift it offers more Comfort even when you have big tires at low pressures on your gravel bike but this new stem has one well actually two massive benefits over Red adjustment screws for compression and

rebound on the top and bottom and they I think are a game changer for a suspension stem now when I set off on that bike packing trip a few weeks ago I found the stem a bit soft on the morning of the first day because stupidly I hadn't accounted for the extra weight of the hanar bag with all my clothing and tent and stuff in there it's a bit soft get no bumps and rocks now with a r shift in that situation making it firmer would require taking the stem apart and changing the lmas inside and this new stem although it does use alasas inside just like the red shift which you can tune for rer weight has the real Ace card up its sleeve the compression adjustment on the top meant I simply whipped out a multi tool DED in a few turns of compression adjustment and it fixed the issue straight away this made it a bit firmer with more Force required to get a stem moved moving over rocks and through holes and perfect for the rest of the trip and it's this ability to F tuna stem which gives it the edge OD the red shift the action in use is similar with a hanahar arcing through a travel which the vcum here for all its ugly brotin does remove but you're already dealing with mil travel and it's something you get used to pretty quickly one justifiable concern from the demonstration on screen right now is that it might B around like a pogo stick but that isn't my experience at all sure if you ride in a aggressive manner you can get the stem bounce around quite a bit but it's not designed to be ultra stiff it's designed to move around and offer more Comfort on rough trails and you can if you want add firm alasas and dial in more rebound and compression adjustment to make it even firmer and only work on bigger impacts and while Comfort is definitely improved with this on your bike over a rigid stem it doesn't really improve control when Runing down rough tricky descents compared to a suspension Fork they both offer similar range of travel but the way a suspension Fork works because below the frame compared to above the frame which is is this isolates the body and a rider while this isolates the bike from the bumps and allows a front wheel the track over roots and rocks in a way this doesn't means if you're looking for a real improve Improvement in off-road technical capability from your bike a suspension Fork is definitely way to go but this does help compared to a rich stem definitely gives you more ability to smash down routy Rocky trails and not worry about all the forces coming through the handlebars so definitely an improvement in comfort and also a bit more capability and control as well but back to the positives not only is it lighter than the r shift it's also cheaper £80 compared to and personally let me know what you think down below I think it looks better as well it looks more like a normal stem than a suspension stem I will keep riding it and give a more long-term test in the next months to see whether any issues do uh come out from testing but so far it's been utterly reliable and it's been a fantastic upgrade to a gravel bike especially if you're going bike packing you want more comfort for minimum extra weight and a small price outlay and the red shift like I said earlier has been super popular but I think the USC is definitely a rival and honestly I do think it's better than the red shift which is something I can't believe I'm saying because the red shift has been very very good and even though the vcum does offer better performance it does look like that compared to that so yeah I've been very very impressed indeed so the these are physique latest and perhaps boldest gravel M bik Raco famously worn by Lain Morton dur his Unbound Victory this year and I've been testing them for several months now curious to see if they perform as well as they look there's a mix of good and bad on the positive side they look fantastic I love the bold colors and designs that physique is doing and embracing right now they're fresh fun and even have a bit of '90s vibe going on as well and as somebody who grew up in the '90s I love that about them the fit is good too I've been wearing a size the size are normally wear and they fit true to size neither

too narrow nor too wide just right and compare well to City specialized Shimano and other shoes I've been testing over the last few months as well one stand out feature of the new shoes is how lightweight they are thanks to the ultra thin translucent pu lamin mesh which keeps the weight down without sacrificing durability I bash him about against rocks and Roots more times than I can count mountain biking and gravel riding and bike packing and they've held up just fine with no real tears or scars the show for the months of you have had however the downside to the waffer thin upper is there not much in a way of protection from Dey on a few occasions a flying Rock from the front wheel has hit the toe box and that really hurts a really painful when it happens so not quite as rugged and protecting your feet compared to other shoes which have more reinforcing material around the front the mesh panels here does provide excellent ventilation and when it quite warm back in the summer you can really feel the air flowing through your feet which on long hot rides is definitely a nice thing to have the carbon so is another highlight as well it's super stiff with no rule of flex even with me bending the shoes around and comparable with the top end shoes like City or special the tread here offers good grip when walking off-road which I found useful for bike packing and cyc cross and if you need more traction and grip you can fit some studs up front as well you can't replace a tread though like you can with City so when it wears out it's time for a new shoe but the shoes aren't perfect now my biggest gripe is a single B do just here it's just asking too much of a single doll and that thread there to evenly distribute pressure across the top of the foot with no impact on how well it holds your foot in place and as an issue highlighted by the fact I've also been wearing these for the last two years the vento ferox carbon which are more money and perhaps a bit heavy on the scales although my hands they don't feel that different and these are far more successful in securely holding your foot in place with no pressure hotpots because we have a b do lower down and a fcco strap up top so you can get better fine tuning of how tight the shoe is how tight the closure system is on the top of your foot and better tune it to how you want it whereas this you're asking One D to do all the job of a strap and D here and on the right shoe something I'm not experienced in a long long time like plus years is a bit of pressure hot spot across the top right side of my shoe there and that's I think the downside of how much it flexes and how the shoe doesn't really hold your foot securely in place which for race shoe is a big fail in my opinion but RAR back from racing and stamping out the power for a long distance bike packing sort of party pce shoe they are fantastic if you're not really smashing the pedals not asking a lot of that closure system and riding at to more relaxed pace then the shoes do deliver good comfort and good performance but for me if I'm going out on the ride and I'm really going to be hammering the pedals doing a race these are shoes I go for because we have a better smarter closure system than we have here which is a real shame because I love how these look but these for me offer a better closure system and therefore more comfort and more security although they are more money but they've been around for years now so if you shop around I'm sure you can find them discounted but sadly don't look as cool as these do look now I should stress you might just find the closure system find shoes and not have any pressure hotpots at all we are all different and that's why testing shoes is so difficult because we are all different when it com of fit uh that stiffness the efficiency of the closure system makes it very difficult to know whether it worked for you or not work for you based on my experience but based on my experience shoes I would say the bird doll the one bird doll it's a limitation of the performance aspiration of these shoes if these reviews aren't enough for you then here are some more to watch in this video linked up right

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