

# GEARED UP ▶▶▶

## Tonik Melanie Dress, \$85

Multipurpose gear is the key to packing light on a bicycle tour. In December, I was packing for a 12-day tour of Puerto Rico and chose the Melanie Dress by Tonik as a base for one of two main outfits that I'd wear on and off the bike. Sporting a cute sleeveless cut and a back pocket for small things like cue sheets, cash, or credit cards, I layered the Melanie Dress with leggings and a lightweight long-sleeve shirt for airport travel and cycling shorts for riding. It's a little too short for my taste to wear without anything underneath, but the upside is that it's a great length for riding and doesn't ever get in the way.

Though the poly/spandex fabric feels a bit stiffer and thicker than cotton or wool, I felt that even on the hottest days in Puerto Rico (mid-80s) the dress wicked sweat well and dried quickly — and didn't develop any abnormally funky smells! And it never wrinkled. I washed it regularly in hotel sinks and hung it up to dry overnight. —AM



## WTB Sendero Tire, \$60

Let it be known that I have a thing for Wilderness Trail Bike (WTB) tires — they're pretty affordable, have lots of tanwall options, and I've had good luck setting them up tubeless and avoiding flats. Last winter, I was searching for a non-studded "Road Plus" tire with a little more grip and took a chance on the Senderos. With a dirt-focused tread across a 47mm width and dual-compound rubber, I figured they'd be a decent shoulder-season commuter and able to wander off pavement when needed.

Well, the Senderos quickly proved themselves surprisingly adept in snow and ice — so much so that I've commuted on them nearly every day through this winter as well — and nicely predictable on dirt and gravel.

That low-traction prowess comes at a cost, though, and that's dry tarmac performance. On clear roads, the Senderos send an audible rumble up to the saddle and handlebars, and the large cornering knobs get a little squirrely in aggressive turns. If I had a dedicated gravel rig, I'd leave them on all year, but for a bike that sees year-round commuting duty in addition to off-road escapades and light touring, the Senderos come off when the sun starts to consistently shine. What goes on? Usually WTB Horizons. Hey, I like what I like. —AS



### **Selle Anatomica R2 Saddle, \$120**

Even the most devoted leather saddle evangelist must concede that water represents a, shall we say, challenge for owning a cowhide perch. When a shower glides over Adventure Cycling HQ, you can count on a small stampede of staffers sprinting for their bikes, saddle covers in hand.

The new R2 from Selle Anatomica uses the brand's familiar "Series 2" shape but replaces the leather with vulcanized rubber for a weatherproof option. Like the leather, the rubber has adjustable tension via a hex bolt. Unlike the original, the R2 has shorter rails, so those who love Selle Anatomica saddles' considerable setback might find this version unable to achieve their preferred position.

I've spent considerable time on the brand's X1 leather saddle and found the R2 considerably different. Granted, I haven't had a chance to tour on the new model, but over two months of commuting I found it to be comfortable but not nearly as cushy as the leather. I was concerned about the saddle edges creating hot spots (or rubbing holes in pant legs) because of the rubber's grippier texture, but I didn't end up having any issues. Still, the overall texture of the vulcanized rubber was much less slippery than any saddle I've ever ridden. Over shorter commutes and day rides this wasn't a problem, but I could see how on multiple big-mileage days a rider might shift around less than normal without even realizing it, which might not be ideal. Also, the rails sometimes squeaked loudly enough to be annoying.

Still, not having to do the saddle cover sprint all winter is, for me, well worth it. -AS



### **Arkel Haul-It Pannier, \$100**

Panniers are the great do-anything haulers of the cycling world, but they have limits. Maybe you need to take a box to the post office and it doesn't fit in your pannier. Maybe you want to carry a backpack. Or maybe you picked up a banzai tree from the farmers market and you're worried a pannier would smooch it. For all these things and more, there's the Haul-It.

With Arkel's familiar Cam-Lock mounting system, a small zippered pocket to carry a few essentials, and a three-way cinch strap, the Haul-It is a simple and effective carry-all solution. Just toss your item in, cinch up the strap, and off you go. For larger items, there's an included extension strap. When you don't need it, the Haul-It folds up out of the way. I used it for carrying my backpack to work, my laptop, groceries, packages, and more. I even used the Haul-It to haul a load of firewood for an overnight. Arkel doesn't list a maximum capacity, but the Haul-It handled 15 or 20 pounds of wood without issue. I expect it'll take just about anything you can throw at it. -DM