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PART 2 **16**

**2013 PHOTO
CONEST WINNERS**
10

**QUÉBEC'S
ROUTE VERTE**
24

**FUJI TOURING
ROAD TEST**
32





GREG SIPPLE

Josh Tack endured rigorous research methods during the writing of this column.

ONE UP SINGLE-WHEEL TRAILER ROUNDUP

by JOSH TACK

→ WHEN IT COMES TO SCHLEPPING your gear around on a bike, there's no one right way to go about it. Your options include panniers, frame bags, trailers, or an extremely loyal friend with a van. You can even mix and match among those selections to your heart's content. Anything you decide on will have its pros and cons. At the same time, anything you decide upon will also get you from point A to point B successfully.

Through years of touring experience, I've managed to create an

ironclad system of deducing the proper gear-hauling solution for any rider. The first step is research. You need to know what type of terrain you will encounter, how easily the equipment can be maintained or repaired in the field, how much weight you plan to carry, and how that weight will affect bike handling. From there you can start looking at price points, and how this all fits into your overall trip-planning budget. The final step is realizing that the start date of your trip is less than two weeks away and you need to purchase whatever is



JOSH TACK

Topeak Journey

most readily available.

While this system has never let me down, there's a lot to be said for better planning. In many cases, the bike you own dictates how your equipment is carried around. There are a lot of people out there with road or mountain bikes lacking eyelets for racks, and while touring may not have been their initial intent when purchasing a bike, the adventure bug has bitten them just the same. For this crowd, bicycle trailers are an excellent choice, offering a relatively low investment for breaking into bicycle travel when compared to buying a new touring bike, racks, and panniers.

When it comes to trailers and touring, the single-wheel variety of trailer is what I've spotted out in the wild the most, and this isn't by accident. They handle well on a wide mix of surfaces, including gravel roads and singletrack mountain-bike trails. They also tend to be built specifically with touring in mind, and because of that, they have a durable construction. By no means do I intend to put down double-wheel trailers, which reign supreme in more urban settings for uses such as grocery getting and shuttling children around, but Nathan Ward covered these in the October/November 2011 issue, which you can find in *Adventure Cyclist's* archive (adventurecycling.org/archive), so we'll stick to the one-wheel variety in this article. Over the past year, I spent a lot of time testing out five different single-wheeled bicycle trailers. This is my take on each of them.

Topeak Journey

(\$499, topeak.com, 800-213-4561)

Topeak is a familiar name in the bike industry and has established a good reputation for making quality tools and accessories such as pumps, racks, and bike bags. Although their Journey trailer takes up just a small corner of their catalog, its design was well

executed from top to bottom.

It shares some similarities with the BOB Yak trailer in that it mounts to a proprietary skewer, has a similarly shaped and sized carrying compartment, and a 16-inch wheel. The mounting system consists of a bolt-on rear skewer that is compatible with both 130 mm and 135 mm rear dropout

pretty impressive when you consider the trailer itself tips the scales at a scant 10.7 lbs. thanks to its 6061 aluminum construction. Included is a custom dry bag that fits snugly into the trailer and velcros down to stay secured. The trailer also comes with a fender, safety flag, and a rear light that attaches to the fender. It's compatible with road bikes,



Extrawheel Voyager

spacing. The trailer's fork arms attach to the skewers through a spring-loaded slide-lock system. To attach the trailer to the bike, pull the slide locks on the ends of the trailer fork back to reveal an opening that fits over two tabs on the skewer. Set it into place and release the slide locks as they snap securely around the skewer tabs. It's a system that takes some getting used to and is easier to do without any weight in the trailer.

The slide-lock system does have a fair amount of plastic on it, which I initially thought might be a durability issue. I put the trailer to the test on some rocky singletrack terrain and steep twisty descents, and it held up strong. If it's something you're concerned about, Topeak offers replacement parts that you can pack along in your tool kit.

Again, you've got a 70-pound carrying capacity so load it up! This is

26-inch, and 29er mountain bikes.

Handling is nearly identical to the BOB Yak with a slight edge in agility, thanks to its lighter construction. Once you get out of the stop-and-go traffic and hit the open road, you almost forget it's behind you. The shaped tubing gives an aerodynamic appearance, but I didn't manage to break any land speed records during my testing period.

This is another great all-around trailer that can tackle city traffic and long-distance bike tours on either road or dirt.

Extrawheel Voyager

(\$269, extrawheel.com, 800-717-2596)

Coming to you straight from Poland, the Extrawheel is a complete break from the norm as far as bicycle touring trailers are concerned. There's no basket compartment, no dry bag, and instead of the standard 16-inch wheel that is

typically included, you'll be supplying your own wheel for the trailer. To haul your gear, there are a couple of rails for mounting a pair of panniers, which are not included. As far as carrying capacity is concerned, the trailer can handle up to 66 lbs., however, the volume of space available depends on the panniers you choose.

Among the trailers mentioned in this article, the Extrawheel wins out

two shipments.

To further elaborate on ease of installation, you'll first need to replace your current rear skewer with the Extrawheel skewer that has two rounded nuts on either end. The trailer itself is in two parts, the main body and the fork. Spread the fork with your hands, position it around the skewer,



has a tight turning radius and maneuvers quickly. The larger wheel in back helps maintain good traction when touring off-road. For best stability, try to even out the weight between your two panniers.

The Voyager is not a one-size-fits-all trailer. You'll need to specify

your bike style when making your purchase. They have a standard fork that attaches to 700C and 26-inch wheels, a fork for 29er mountain bikes, and even a wide fork that is compatible with fat bikes.

This is an adventure trailer. It's very packable for travel, low maintenance, and versatile. Use it on its own to travel light or in conjunction with racks and panniers. In the U.S., these are sold exclusively through biketrialershop.com.

Maya Trailer

(\$249, mayacycle.com, 800-830-0948)

At just \$249, this is a budget-friendly trailer, but don't call it cheap. The Maya trailer has some really nice design qualities built in, such as an integrated kickstand and padded handles that rotate around, allowing you to use the trailer as a wheelbarrow. These features are handy around town, making it easy to park your bike, detach the trailer, and tote cumbersome objects around.

You'll find a lot of basic features with this trailer, such as a 16-inch wheel, fender, reflectors, and safety flag. It mounts to a bike through its own proprietary skewer, and there's actually a fair amount of hardware involved in getting the hook-up components

in weight, simplicity, and packed size. The trailer itself weighs just 8.6 pounds, and once it's adjusted to fit your bike, it can be installed, broken down, and reassembled without tools. When packed up, it can easily be tossed into a duffle bag. In fact when this trailer arrived for review, the package was so small that I assumed the full trailer was coming in

and release to let it snap on. The same process will connect the trailer fork to its main body. You may need to adjust the fork's tension over the skewer, which is done through two small hex bolts. Pop your wheel on, add some panniers, and you're ready to roll.

Handling this is a blast. Because it's light and has a very short wheelbase, it



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installed. It's nothing too complicated, and once you get it put together, it's quick and easy to pop the trailer on and off.

For storage capacity, this is a little on the small side. You have 60 liters of space inside the included weather-resistant bag. My gear stayed pretty dry during a few stints of light rain, but I would recommend a tarp or some sort of rain cover for heavier storms. The weight limit maxes out at 66 pounds, which is generous for just about any tour.

What this trailer lacks in size, it makes up for in handling. The short wheelbase and narrow profile make it quick and agile in stop-and-go situations. Out in the open, it has a very smooth and stable feel, even at high speeds. It did just fine on dirt roads, but I got a bit of rattling from the kickstand when it got really bumpy.

This is an everyday trailer, ideally suited for urban environments. It's light, very easy to manage on and off the bike, and a great size for running errands around town. The trailer's build is very durable, making it qualified to handle some touring as well — from weekend jaunts to cross-country expeditions. Just make sure you can condense your packing down to the trailer's dimensions and create a waterproof solution for your gear. The price is right, making it a good choice for anyone wanting to give bicycle trailers a try.

BOB Yak Plus

(\$359, bobgear.com, 888-427-4829)

Standing the test of time, the BOB Yak bicycle trailer has remained largely unchanged since the mid-90s. Its design has been mimicked by many, yet it remains the most commonly spotted trailer in the field. A number of factors have allowed the BOB Yak to remain as relevant as it is without the need for any major face-lifts. Number one is durability. Built with 4130 chromoly steel tubing, this trailer can take all the abuse you're willing to give it — year after year. You've got a 70-pound weight capacity on this so you don't have to hold back when drawing up your packing list.

As far as simplicity goes, hooking the trailer up to your bike is about as easy as it gets. Just replace your rear wheel's standard skewer with BOB's quick-

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BOB Yak Plus

release attachment skewer, position the trailer's fork dropouts so they latch onto the skewer, and slide in the locking pin to keep everything in place. At this time, BOB does not have a skewer to accommodate rear wheels with 12 mm through-axle hubs. Fortunately, the Robert Axle Project (robertaxleproject.com) has created some adapters that will allow you to use your BOB trailer with a 12 mm through-axle hub.

If you have a plethora of bikes sitting around your garage, there's a good chance this is going to work for you. The BOB Yak is compatible with road bikes on up to 29er mountain bikes. The Yak Plus model that was reviewed for this piece includes a 5,600-cubic-inch capacity BOB Dry Sak, which is fully waterproof and will keep your gear dry through the harshest of rainstorms. It also comes with a fender, flag, and rolls

on a 16 x 1.75-inch tire.

Handling was very predictable. On the road, it tucked in nicely behind me and wasn't greatly affected by crosswinds. On dirt it needs to have some weight to keep it from bouncing around too much. I had no troubles taking this on singletrack trails, and when it got tight, as long as my handlebars could fit through a gap, the trailer came through as well. On fast descents over loose surfaces, be aware the trailer can push you when you hit the brakes hard and in some cases jackknife. It's best to keep your speed in check in these situations.

This is a stellar all-around trailer. Use it for daily errands around town or take it around the world. It's ready if you are.

Aevon L-80

(\$895, aevon.com, 458-206-9853)

Aevon is a relatively young company that was founded in Bavaria less than 10 years ago. They've got a fresh and innovative take on bicycle trailers, and their products are currently being distributed in the U.S. by Stoker (stokerproducts.com).



Aevon L-80

JOSH TACK

JOSH TACK

Instead of mounting at or near a bike's rear axle, this trailer mounts to the seatpost and includes an air/oil rear shock. There are mounts and shims for various seatpost diameters, and you'll want at least a couple inches of straight seatpost sticking out of the frame to ensure enough real estate to clamp down on. Aevon claims that this can be built up or broken down in four minutes. It's not likely that you'll break the four-minute barrier your first time assembling it, but the second time around is a snap. If you envision yourself packing this up for airline flights, you'll appreciate that it breaks down to fit a 30" x 30" x 6" space.

While putting this together, the build quality really jumps out. There's not a component on this that doesn't feel

solid. The oversized aluminum tubing helps minimize flex as well as maintain a high degree of strength, and there are no puny attachment surfaces or undersized bolts. In fact, I would almost say it's overbuilt if it weren't for the fact that it weighs in at 12.5 lbs. — pretty impressive considering that includes a rear suspension shock. And it's even more impressive when you factor in the 85-lb. carrying capacity. I don't think many people will be maxing that out, but it's nice to know it's there. Included is a custom dry bag that is form fitted to the trailer basket and velcros down for security.

Handling this trailer on the bike is a blast. The suspension helps you maintain great traction on rough roads, and it's incredibly nimble in tight areas

such as congested cities or singletrack. It shines at high speed as I had a really hard time jackknifing it on steep forest road descents.

This is another great all-around trailer but I have to emphasize its performance in dirt touring. The suspension, durability, and stability at high speed make it a lot of fun on challenging terrain. The only thing holding it back might be the price tag, which is significantly higher than any other trailer reviewed in this piece. **AG**

Josh Tack is Adventure Cycling's Membership Coordinator and a regular contributor to Adventure Cyclist. If you have questions or comments for him, he's happy to respond at jtack@adventurecycling.org.

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