

UPGRADE CLINCHER DEAL

WE SAY...

The 303 Firecrest is the best all-round wheelset available

ZIPP 303 FIRECREST CCL

£1050 (front) £1250 (rear) > Carbon clincher wheels

The original 303 is Zipp's most successful wheel, having been ridden to victory in the Tour de France, Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix, and this new version looks likely to continue that success. Using the Firecrest principles in clincher form, it's claimed to be faster and better handling.

Zipp's Firecrest rim shape has a wider than standard tyre bed to produce a more rounded tyre profile that matches the curve of the carbon rim's spoke bed, resulting in more balanced aerodynamics. The shape copes better in blustery conditions, with the front wheel being nearly immune to the effects of the wind. You can feel a pressure on the rim in a strong sidewind, but it's more gentle push than violent jolt. In fact, we noticed a significant improvement in windy riding over a test bike with standard wheels.

Broadening the tyre bed also means the sidewalls are less prone to dramatic deformations when hitting a pothole or through high-speed cornering. Zipp claims that means

fewer pinch-flats, and over the hundreds of miles we've been testing these we haven't had any. At 1579g a pair they're pretty light too; you can find lighter standard road wheels, but none with aerodynamics to match.

It's not just the rims that have received a makeover: the 88/188 hub set is lighter, with the 188 rear having a complete redesign. The non-drive-side bearing has been spaced further out by 7.5mm to add stiffness, and the non-drive-side flange (where the spokes attach) is now canted by eight degrees, putting less stress on the spokes.

We recommend that after your first few long rides you take some time to check the hubs – we had to retighten them after a couple of hundred miles.

www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk

HIGHS Light, stable in the wind, robust
LOWS Needs Zipp's tyres for best results

CYCLING RATING ★★★★★



BENCHMARK

EASTON EC90 SL
£1675

Easton's latest carbon wheelset weighs in at 1532g (just over the claimed 1530g), which is impressively light. Build tension and bearing quality is impressive too; the tension is on the high side, but even throughout, while the bearings are hybrid ceramic cartridges and run beautifully smoothly. The sealing is top notch too. To add to the aero qualities of the 38mm deep rim, Easton has chosen to use bladed double-butted spokes from Sapim laced to its own R4SL hub set. The braking, which combines heat-reducing TCT brake track treatment and the supplied Swiss Stop pads, is superb. It's progressive, smooth and highly controllable – in fact it's easily the equal of modern aluminium rims.

www.extrauk.co.uk

★★★★★



PERFECT PARTNER

ZIPP TANGENTE CLINCHER 23MM £59.99

Designed to work with Zipp's Firecrest concept, these tyres have dimples on the sidewalls to match those on the rims. With a supple 290tpi casing and soft rubber they are tenaciously grippy. They include a puncture protection strip and are still light at 260g each.

www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk

ALSO CONSIDER...

FOR ALL-ROUNDERS

VISION TRIMAX T42
£699.95

These handbuilt wheels have a 42mm carbon section bonded to an aluminium brake track. They weigh 1720g but still spin up fast. (See page 30 for more details.)

www.windwave.co.uk

★★★★★



FOR LIGHT WEIGHT
MAVIC KSYRIUM SLR
£1200

Mavic's lightest ever Ksyriums are 1400g a pair but still manage to be super stiff. The Exalith brake surface requires dedicated pads but offers incredibly powerful braking once the pads are set up correctly.

www.mavic.com

★★★★★



FOR AERODYNAMICS

HED JET 6 £1149

These wheels fly. Like Zipp, Hed has also chosen to go down the wide rim bed path. Unlike the Zipps, they have an aluminium brake track – good for braking but it's reflected in the overall weight (1899g).

www.hedwheels.com

★★★★★

