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FLO Cycling Production Wheels

article & images (usage.php) by Nick Salazar

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Last year, I had the privilege of putting together the world's **first in-depth review**



(galleries.php?id=2012_04_FLO_Cycling_Review&num=7)

The FLO production wheels have arrived.

(http://www.tririg.com/articles.php?id=2011_05_15_Flo_Cycling) of FLO Cycling's aero wheels. The wheels I got were prototype samples, but represented a fully-finished, rideable product. FLO's product represents something new and unique to the cycling industry: an affordable aerodynamic wheel set with a highly-technical design pedigree. Basically, they have ivy league brains with community college prices.

A lot of athletes waited patiently as FLO marched through production hurdles, facing one setback after another. But FLO founders Chris and Jon Thornham persevered, and at long last, the wheels are here. Again, I have the privilege of showing you some very early samples from their final production line.

Production Quality + Changes

For the most part, these wheels are exactly what I reviewed **before (http://www.tririg.com/articles.php?id=2011_05_15_Flo_Cycling)**. A wide, alloy clincher rim laces into FLO's proprietary hubs via industry-standard Sapim CX-Ray spokes. The rims are mated to a

carbon fiber fairing that creates a wide, toroidal airfoil that begins at the leading edge of the tire, and ends with the rounded inner edge that is the hallmark of the wide-rim trend. As other manufacturers have **made clear (zipp)**, this thinking lends itself to wheels with previously unheard-of aerodynamic prowess, and superlative crosswind handling. I've found the marketing hype to be true in my experience.



The biggest difference between the prototype hoops I reviewed and the production sample is the overall refinement. The fairings are now perfectly smooth all the way down the sidewall, and some very minor construction issues present in the prototypes are now gone. The spoke holes, oversized on the production samples, have gotten smaller to eliminate unnecessary gaps. These wheels are ready to compete with just about anything on the storeroom shelf in terms of production quality.

But there's one issue I noticed, that readers will want to know about. On the prototype rims, the carbon fairings had some imperfections in the edges, which were exposed because the fairings were simply bonded on to the outside edge of the alloy rims. The new wheels use a much smarter process in which the fairing slides into a little slot just below the rims, so that the edge is hidden, and the bond is more secure.

(galleries.php?id=2012_04_FLO_Cycling_Review&num=1)

The new construction introduces this tiny gap, but CFD analysis shows almost no effect on aerodynamics.

However, that means that there is a tiny little step down from the rim to the fairing (we're talking about 0.5mm). It's pictured adjacent to this paragraph, and the picture actually makes the gap look bigger than it is. Anyway, because aerodynamics are a curious subject, and any change can introduce unintentional and even counterintuitive effects, I asked the FLO engineers whether they had considered what this change might do to the wheel's aerodynamics.

So FLO founder Jon Thornham dutifully went back to do another round of CFD with the final shape, and found that "there was 0.013% difference on the FLO 90 and the FLO 60 actually improved by 0.021%." So, that turned out to be much ado about nothing, but I knew that the picky aero geeks among you would want to know.

Ready to Roll







FLO has already begun to sell these wheels directly via their **website (<http://www.flocycling.com>)**, and they'll be shipping out in short order. I can tell you that these wheels are worth a good look, especially if you're not concerned with wheel weight, which is the primary drawback of an otherwise compelling product. FLO has a bright future ahead of it, and I predict you'll be hearing about them a lot more as the year goes on.


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The new FLO 30 wheel represents the next logical step in FLO's growing product base. Here's our full review of the new hoops.



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FLO Cycling is changing the game with low-cost, high-tech wheels that deliver a lot of performance without breaking the bank.



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Last year, Mavic unveiled its new CXR aero platform, and is expanding it this year with new rim depths and clincher versions.

Specialized Shiv Build



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This Shiv is my personal ride, dressed to the nines and built with the finest gear in the sport. Enjoy the detailed writeup and supersized gallery.



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The boutique saddle maker from Boulder has a new seat on offer, as well as their first complete wheel, an 890-gram disc.



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Linsey Corbin is one of the hottest stars in pro triathlon, and recently PR'ed at Ironman Arizona aboard this Scott Plasma 3.

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