

Wandertec Cello The Cello is one of the more creative products to hit the touring market in recent years. Elegantly solving the problem of transporting a bike and a BOB trailer, the Cello functions as a bike/BOB travel case that breaks down and stays attached to the BOB, allowing you to ride away from the airport or train station with the Cello and BOB integrated as one unit. In bike-case mode, it can



us, he had his pack along too. It looked small — really small, in fact.

Every now and then, we all get to have a valuable lesson from someone far more experienced than we are. This was one such occasion. Martin patiently explained that all the stuff we had thought to bring was excellent, but there was simply far too much of it. We only needed about half of what we had thought was the absolute minimum of gear. How could this be? Weren't the conditions harsh? Wasn't this about far more than just one's comfort? Well, yes, but as Martin explained, with the correct technique, it was possible to get by with far less than we had previously thought possible. Ten days later, we were all converts to this new way of thinking, having endured wicked days up high in relative comfort with half-full packs. Bingo!

This is an feature about gear. During the last decade, there has been a revolution in materials, design, and construction methods that has radically changed outdoor and cycling gear for the better. Gossamer fabrics and seams welded together with ultra-high-frequency radio waves now allow manufacturers to construct weatherproof/breathable shell clothing that is half or even sometimes a quarter the weight of previous offerings and still fully functional. Less material also means that the item will take up less room inside your panniers or trailer. The advent of new technologies has revolutionized the abilities of small forward-thinking companies to execute designs that were only dreams a few years ago. It has finally become possible to understand exactly where material

could be shaved away and where it had to remain to create designs that were both strong and light. Witness the proliferation of carbon fiber as the material of choice for many bikes and parts.

Touring cyclists aren't always looking for the absolute lightest gear. Dependability is typically a higher priority miles from anywhere, but the trickle-down effect has even given highly dependable gear the ability to virtually float above the gram scale. Another upside of the new gear is increased comfort. For instance, a clever new Swiss design should particularly appeal to persons who find the prospect of a long trip's worth of sleeping on the ground daunting (The Exped Airmat will be included in an upcoming issue). An updated version of the classic air mattress, it is three times as thick as a conventional self-inflating sleeping pad, and yet is thirty percent lighter and twice as compressible. You have to love technology like that! Huge strides have been made in high-performance fabrics. Single-wall shelters that are waterproof and bugproof are now much lighter than previously thought possible. New softshell garments provide a high degree of breathability and comfort heretofore unheard of in foul-weather gear. As they say, it's all good.

If your gear is more than ten years old, you might want to look at the new offerings. Gear in general has gotten fundamentally better in that time. That said, remember Martin's advice, to take less and use it more. Most of all, have fun.

-Rod Kramer

also be shipped.

Execution is superb throughout — quick release fork and rear dropout-mounts are securely and ingeniously attached to the BOB, allowing you to mount your bike on the trailer much like a car-rack. The bike is protected by an included frame cover, and the bike and trailer wheels (along with a parts bag that holds the pedals, seatpost, and handlebars), are all strapped securely to the frame. ABS plastic side-panels connect to the trailer's sides and provide protection equal to a hard-shell bike case. Inside, your bike and trailer are very secure.

When you arrive at your destination, simply peel back the ballistic nylon top covering, undo the cross braces, fold down the side panels, reassemble your bike, and ride away. A disassembled Cello can be packed into its parts bag as well, allowing you to easily store or ship it ahead to your tour's end point — something you'll likely want to do as it does weigh twenty pounds. At that weight, it's clearly not designed for use during extended touring, but it can help minimize your reliance on cars by eliminating the need for taxis or buses when first reaching your destination.

All in all, the Cello is an impressive and highly functional product. Consider that when packed, it's smaller than most hardshell bike cases — no small feat, given that it also contains your BOB. Its entire contents are visible through the BOB's metal mesh bottom, streamlining security screens. You can also fit a fair amount of extra gear in the Cello — like shoes, hydration packs, and helmets — making it likely that you could travel with simply your BOB bag and the Cello. Pull-handles and wheels that easily attach to the bottom of the trailer make it a snap to cart around. And, once you get the hang of it, building up or breaking down the Cello only takes about fifteen minutes.

The Cello costs \$399 and comes with a one-year warranty on parts.

-Aaron Teasdale