

# Royal Racing SP24/7 jersey



Price: £34.99

From: Royal Racing [www.royalracing.com](http://www.royalracing.com)

Tested: Four months

I must confess to being an unwilling tester for this garment. I've never worn tops like these before. Mainly because I think they usually look 'goalkeeper' naff. It was only when I ran out of other jerseys during a week's riding in Italy that I reluctantly pulled the SP24/7 Jersey on.

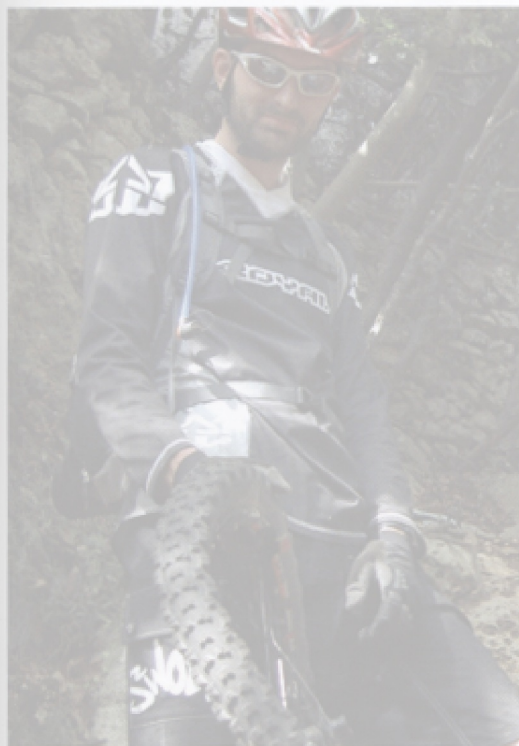
I was an instant convert. For riding in warmer weather this jersey is pretty much perfect for me. There's no zip to snag or feel bunchy – the material is light and breathable enough so it doesn't need further ventilation. The cuffs aren't the usual too tight and long affairs you normally find on 'freeride' jerseys – just tight enough to stay in place. The low-cut back doesn't ride up when wearing a hydration pack. The seams are flatlock and are 'invisibly' comfy. The lack of rear pockets suits me fine – lighter, comfier and I have a hydration pack for carrying stuff.

Having full arm coverage is good for preventing sunburn as well as a bit of protection against shrubbery. They also stop you feeling chilly if it gets windy or you find yourself riding back from the pub later than expected. The cut isn't overly baggy either so there was no undue flappiness.

It's 100% polyester and does a great job of wicking sweat away without getting damp and heavy. It's not something you can wear for a few days without stinking. Having said that, I rinsed it out under a tap after each ride and it dried out very quickly and was sink-free enough to wear the next day... and the next.

Overall: Apart from the vicar-esque collar, this is my ideal warm weather riding top. With a base layer on underneath and a gilet or jacket over the top I expect to be wearing it a lot over winter as well.

Benji



## Extra Wheel Trailer

Price: £150

From: [www.cyclesense.co.uk](http://www.cyclesense.co.uk) (01937 530303)

[www.extrawheel.com](http://www.extrawheel.com)

Tested: To Scotland and back.

If you want to load up a bike there are going to be compromises and handling will be affected. I've carried camping gear in a 35L rucksack on previous off-road trips. It was hard on my shoulders, made my bike top-heavy and when descending sometimes hit the back of my helmet. The Extra Wheel was an appealing alternative and for this test I did a 60-mile off-road epic through the Scottish Highlands, my destination being the Single Speed World Championships. Rather than just going by train to party and race, I wanted to make the journey into an adventure and I wanted riding my bike to be fun even with camping gear.

The Extra Wheel is basically one wheel hitched to the rear axle by a clever steel sprung bracket (you get both an adapted QR and 10mm axle nuts which will fit mountain and road bikes). Your kit is carried in two dry bags in cargo nets on either side of the wheel like saddle bags. Each side will hold a whopping 60 litres and a maximum weight is listed as 30kg. I can't imagine wanting to pull that weight or manoeuvre such volume though. My solo camping gear was fine and it was a joy to ride with nothing on my back. The construction is light and keeps the wheelbase of the whole rig as short as can be. There is a choice of 26in (tested) or 700c wheel. You don't forget that it's there because it does affect steering but with a bit of practice you learn to keep the bars weighted. With this technique you can easily hustle the trailer along. Sometimes, especially at high speed, it can get a bit of a wag on, but I was impressed with the overall handling. It did fulfill my need for the ride to be fun. On rough ground the trailer can skip about but I managed to keep the whole thing heading where I wanted it. For the record it didn't throw me off and I didn't throw it in a river with frustration.

Climbing is fine both seated and standing, you can lean over, turn in as tight a circle as you would without the trailer and even bunny hop and do endos! Technical terrain can be tackled and it will follow you down sketchy trails surprisingly well. The lightweight materials don't come out on top when bashed into rocks though.

Even though I made it to my destination I'm afraid I did test the trailer close to destruction. Abrasion against rock caused the cargo netting to sever in a couple of places and the dry bags had some small holes in. I also managed to break a fibre glass pole on one side which is the fixing point for the net. I have spoken to the UK distributor and he was clear that this is a camping trailer designed for use on rough tracks rather than the full-on techno route that I took. It also turns out that changes are being made to this model with stronger nets and metal rods. In addition a new model will be released in the next few months using hard panniers instead of dry bags. This is a modification that would be perfect for the riding I'd like to do. As an expedition trailer on dirt tracks and more open trails it is excellent as it is. Use it to get to base camp, un-hitch and then hit the harder trails. It's easy to store when not in use, only taking up the space of a pair of wheels and at £150 it's cheap for a trailer.

Overall: Hitch, ride, camp. Enjoy!

Ed Oxley