



K-Edge top tube mount

£44.99, freewheel.co.uk

Trends seem to indicate a well-considered bar bag (see p.28) is often preferable to the Bento box-style mounted on the top tube. So what should we use those specific mounting points for? K-Edge has developed a great solution. Its typically high-quality, CNC-machined, anodised computer mount bolts directly to the top tube, with two obvious benefits. First, if you are using a bar bag you may struggle with out-front style computer mounts, and secondly, as an added benefit your computer will likely be far better protected in this location in the event of a crash.



Kinesis Grip bar tape

£20, upgradebikes.co.uk

The purpose of bar tape should be to provide a secure and comfortable grip, but surprisingly that's not always the case, especially in wet and grimy conditions.

Kinesis's Grip tape promises an assured grip whatever the conditions thanks to its tacky PU material and the rows of raised dots. Kinesis says the middle layer of the tape is shock resistant to help absorb impacts while the Vex Gel bottom layer adds further comfort while also adhering to the bars without leaving a sticky residue.

Factor LS

£6,999, factorbikes.com

Factor is best known for its top-level road race bikes so when it entered the gravel market with the LS, the brand says it chose to step in with the same focus on efficiency and reactive handling.

The company claims the LS has a frame weight of 950g and says its experience in carbon frame manufacture - the company owns its own factory in Taiwan - helped it to achieve a low weight while still making the frame robust enough for the rough-and-tumble of gravel riding.

The geometry chart supports the bike's racy premise. Stack and reach figures of 585mm and 391mm respectively (for a size 56) are certainly at the longer and lower end of the gravel bike spectrum.

What's more, the head tube angle and trail figures are only marginally different to Factor's lightweight road race bike, the O2, so expect the LS to be a popular choice with the more competitive gravel racers.

Despite that, the bike has all the attributes required to make it as versatile as other bikes in the gravel sector. The frame can accommodate up to 700x43mm tyres and is compatible with 1x and 2x shifting. It includes mounts for three bottle cages, there is a Bento box mount on the top tube and the frame even has concealed mounts for mudguards.

Factor's owner, Rob Gitelis, tends to name bikes after people or events that have influenced him. 'The LS is named after someone who lived the ethos of gravel long before it became popular,' he says. 'Larry Shahboz ran a bike shop that welcomed and created a space for other "misfits" who loved bikes and supported a long list of up and coming athletes.

'I feel gravel is founded on similar principles, and while he may not be here to witness its emergence I know Larry would have loved its core values.'

