

PRICE
£999.99

DAWES

Coast2Coast

Dawes Cycles might be best known for its Galaxy tourers, but for 2015 it has done something a little different and come up with this 26in wheel adventure machine

Most touring bikes roll on full size 700c/29in wheels, but this year Dawes – which knows a thing or two about tourers with its legendary Galaxy range – has introduced a pair of 26in-wheeled adventure bikes. The theory is that smaller wheels are stronger and slightly more manoeuvrable than bigger hoops, meaning these would make perfect machines for crossing the world on asphalt, trails, and anything beyond. This Coast2Coast model is the least expensive of the pair, coming in below the Cycle to Work threshold at £999.99.

Dawes's touring bikes are inextricably linked with Reynolds steel tubing, and even though the Coast2Coast's wheel size is a little unusual, it's still Reynolds pipes at its heart. The smartly joined frame is put together using Reynolds 520 tubing – a very sensible material for expedition touring, as it offers a forgiving ride quality with the ability to be fixed by anybody with even rudimentary welding skills. The Coast2Coast also comes with a chromoly steel fork with mounting points for front racks, while a Move Ride Lorry rear rack and SKS Chromoplastic mudguards come fitted as standard.

Super value

Dawes might not have the buying power of global firms such as Trek or Specialized, and can't cut margins in the same way as direct-to-customer brands, but it's hard to see how anybody could offer more for the sub-£1k asking price. The gearset is made up of a Shimano Sora front mech that combines quite a refined action with good reliability; a very hardy Alivio rear mech; and you even get a taste of Dura-Ace with the bar-end gear shifters. The triple chainset and 11-34t cassette makes almost any slope conquerable, even weighed

down with your life in pannier bags. Brakes are very impressive Shimano BR517 mechanical discs operated by Tektro levers on both the drops and secondary levers on the flats.

The spec doesn't even take much of a hit when you reach those 26in wheels. The Alex rims feel plenty tough enough and run on smooth Shimano Deore hubs, while the Schwalbe Marathon tyres offer grip for anything up to paths or hardpack trails, without sacrificing much speed on the road.

Feel the steel

The Coast2Coast is decently comfortable, although those stiff 26in hoops do go a little way in counteracting the natural compliance of the steel frame. It's not quite as super smooth a ride as, say, a Dawes Galaxy on full-size wheels but you do still benefit from steel's natural reaction to bumps. So bangs don't arrive in one hit as they would on an aluminium or many carbon frames; the shock builds up a little slower and disperses more gradually. Essentially, it lets you roll with the punches.

One benefit of those 26in wheels, though, is a far more lively ride than with a typical steel touring bike. They seem to accelerate a lot quicker and control is a lot more direct than the relaxed handling you'd find with tourers. In short, it's a lot of fun, although not so lively that you've got to be on your pins the whole time. **END**

Focus on
The benefit in fitting 26in hoops to adventure tourers is increased wheel strength

“Another benefit of those 26in wheels is a far more lively ride than with a typical steel touring bike”

VERDICT

COMFORT

★★★★★

HANDLING

★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★

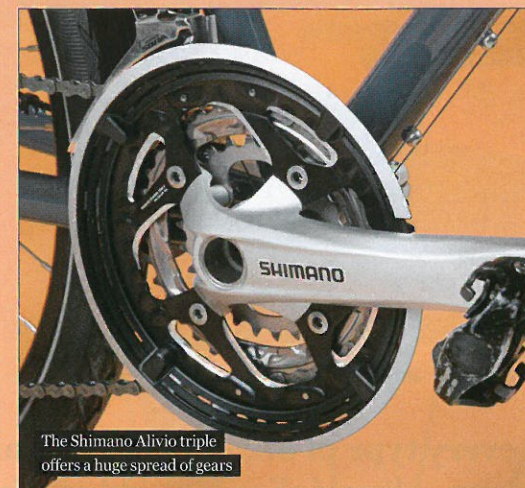
OVERALL RATING...

★★★★★

The Dawes Coast2Coast is an exciting tweak on some old ideas. The spec is superb, the frame is great, and it's just a little bit different from most run of the mill drop-bar bikes. You could even use it a lively little commuter when you're not crossing the Himalayas.



Reynolds 520 steel tubes are tried and tested touring bike ingredients



The Shimano Alivio triple offers a huge spread of gears



Schwalbe Marathon tyres will cope with almost any surface



SPECIFICATION

Frame: Reynolds 520 chromoly steel

Fork: Chromoly steel

Gears: Shimano Sora (f), Alivio (r) with Dura-Ace bar-end shifter

9-speed, 11-34t

Brakes: Shimano BR517 mechanical discs

Chainset: Shimano Alivio triple, 48/36/26t

Wheels: Alex DP17 26in rims

on Shimano Deore hubs

Tyres: Schwalbe Marathon 1.75in

Bar: Dawes aluminium flared drop

Stem: Dawes aluminium

Saddle: Dawes Comfort Touring

Seatpost: Dawes aluminium

Size range: 48, 53, 58cm

Size tested: 53cm

Weight: 14.1kg / 31lb (without rack)

Extras: Move Ride Lorry rear rack,

SKS Chromoplastic mudguards

www.dawescycles.com