

NEW
KIT

CYCLING PLUS
MOST WANTED



UPGRADE

EASTON EA90 SLX

★★★★★ £419.99 front, £549.99 rear > Less is more

EASTON'S EA90 SLXs were always regarded as solid workhorse wheels, used by pro teams for daily training and cyclo-crossers for their robustness. Their latest incarnation has been revised, with wider, tubeless-ready rims and a new rear hub design.

Our test set including the tubeless valves, but minus quick release skewers weighed in at 1437g, and with skewers, just 1578g. There's no need for a rim tape if running them with tubes, as the rim bed is completely sealed, and that's a bonus in two ways. As well as permitting the fitting of tubeless tyres, undrilled rim beds are much stronger and more rigid, creating a more responsive and durable wheel.

We set our wheels up for testing with a pair of Hutchinson Fusion 23mm tubeless tyres and a dash of sealant. Due to the need for a very snug fit to avoid air loss, fitting required three metal core tyre levers to coax the final portion of bead in to place, but the tyres seated first time with a quick blast from a track pump.

On the road, the Eastons feel swift and lively. The 23mm Generation 5 rim design makes the most of the grip available, and the 25mm height is oblivious to wind and extremely nimble.

Responsiveness is electric, thanks to those rigid rims and a taut build on to Easton's Echo rear hub, which shifts the driveside bearings outwards and in to the freehub body, considerably increasing wheel stability and bearing durability.

Alongside great reactivity and acceleration comes excellent road feel, with a floaty sensation not too dissimilar to tubular tyres. Even with 23mm rubber there's a marked increase in the feel and comfort from the same sized tyre on another rim. The tyre seems better able to conform to the surface, rolling resistance feels lower and speed has certainly increased. So far they've been a revelation, and our new favourite all-round wheelset, our only worry being how easy it'll be to remove and refit the tyre out on the road, should we ever need to.

WE SAY
Excellent high performance wheels that excel with tubeless tyres

HIGHS

Weight, speed, comfort

LOWS

Necessarily tight fit might cause problems

BENCHMARK



HED ARDENNES PLUS £999

★★★★★

Hed's enormously wide 25.5mm rims are just 24.5mm tall, and supplied tubeless-ready. Weighing 1503g without skewers, and 1589g with, they're competitive, especially considering their girth. The finish of both the rims and super shiny hubs is superb, and they have ride quality to match. Undrilled rim beds and fine build produce stiff wheels, and when combined with the lower pressures possible thanks to the extra air volume, they deliver a rewarding and refined ride that's not short on comfort or speed.