

## 1 Stoptheft electronic tagging system.

**Price: £12.00**

**From: [www.stoptheft.co.uk](http://www.stoptheft.co.uk)**

**Tested: Three months**

Not a day goes by without someone getting their bike nicked. Some little toerag taking the opportunity to half-inch your favourite steed and sell down the local boozier for a couple of quid.

We know that other than guarding your prized possession with extreme security, the chances are that you too could one day fall foul of such a heinous crime.

So what can you do to deter such events happening? Well StopTheft have developed an electronic identification tag, that uniquely codes your bike, making it extremely easy to identify as your property. A small passive transponder is fitted to your bike, by yourself and is tamper proof. Warning labels are supplied to be fitted in prominent positions on the frame to warn off potential thieves that the bike can be traced to its rightful owner. A number of labels bearing another unique code are provided so individual parts can also be marked. The idea being that no potential opportunist thief would be bothered to find all the labels and strip them off when he could just nick the unstickered bike next door.

Your personal details and bike information are stored in a dedicated central government-run database, accessible 24hrs a day by police countrywide.

It's not a tracker and you still need to use all the usual means of keeping your bike out of the hands of little scumbags, but as a deterrent it's proving very effective. I know of at least a couple of experiences where a criminal has been convicted and the rightful owner reunited with their property after a theft has occurred. We'll never know whether it works or not, 'cos it's a deterrent and hopefully you'll never find out. Well worth the small price to pay for a lifetime of protection and not forgetting there is no annual fee and no hidden extra charges. Oh and should you want to sell the bike, you can transfer the new owner details over, before splashing out on another one for your new bike.

**Jools**

## 2 Magura Louise brakes

**Price: £139 per wheel**

**From: Magura UK**

**01530 837195**

**<http://www.magura.com>**

**Tested: Four months**

Behold the new, second generation Magura Louise brakes. Magura have been busy in the last year and have revamped their brakes, introduced wheelsets and a complete new fork line.

The Louise has been redesigned from the ground up. The calipers are now one piece, the rotors are wavy (and are currently the only wavy discs you'll see in 2004 what with Galfer clamping down on their 'invention'). The levers are chunky, but neat and workmanlike nevertheless.

I had Tony from Magura UK fit the brakes to my Soulcraft to make sure they were set up properly and he managed to discover that even my custom steel frame needed a fair amount of aligning to get it to work perfectly. After a few breaking-in stoppies, the brakes were up to full power and have worked reliably ever since.

The chunky bodied lever has a comfortable blade and offers a surprising amount of power. The wavy rotor is self-cleaning and is borrowed from trials motorbikes. I've not had a squeak or squeal out of the brakes in four months, though at low speeds the rotor makes a disturbing 'Skibbly, skibbly, skibbly...' noise as the wave scrapes over the surface of the brake pads. It's preferable to squealing, but off-putting if you're not expecting it.

If you don't mind the slightly industrial looks you'll be rewarded with power, modulation and something a little different.

**Chippo**

## 3 Crate Works - Pro XL-C Bike Box

**Price: £150 (includes P&P)**

**From: 01288 356 099**

**Zoogz - [www.zoogz.co.uk](http://www.zoogz.co.uk)**

**Tested: Verbier and back**

When organising my trip to Verbier this year I suddenly realised that I hadn't really thought about a bike bag. In the past I'd usually cobbled together a cardboard box from the local shop and hoped for the best, with various consequences. This

time I decided I wanted something more permanent, but not wallet-busting or heavy.

I was pointed in the direction of Crate Works and duly rang them, though I wasn't sure of what to expect and when the parcel came, it was apparent this was a DIY flatpack affair. I carefully opened the packages and started carefully constructing the contents. It took me about an hour to sort it out, but was confident that when doing it again it would be a doddle. The beauty is that it does come flatpacked and is easily disassembled for easy storage when not in use, but is very tough, strong and light when in use.

The construction of the box itself is in a high-density, strong corrugated polyethylene, with a rigid frame plate, six frame locator tie-downs, two wheel straps, re-inforced hand-holds, fully lined, complete with foam pads and an outer H-strap system. The bike fitted in a layer system with the frame secured to the base plate and the wheels secured above, all neatly sandwiched between the polythene outer. I also managed to stow away my helmet and various other bits of riding kit.

When packed the entire box measured about 286mm x 770mm x 1155mm and complete with bike and bits weighed in at around 23kg (box itself came in at around 8kg).

On arrival in Verbier, I checked the box and noticed a few deep impressions but nothing that penetrated the outer reaches. One of our party was not so lucky with her padded bag and found that her brakes and been mangled in the journey.

Not the cheapest option out there, probably one of the better 'hard boxes' around, if you're intending to travel a lot and value your bike I would definitely recommend this option.

**Jools**

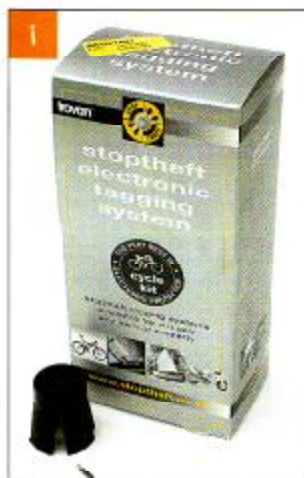
## 4 Surly Hipflask

**From: Ison 01223 213800**

**Price: £25**

Our night rides wouldn't be the same without a quick nip of whisky at the top of a well earned climb. This stainless steel Surly flask is big enough to share around and comes with a captive lid so you won't lose it in the gloom. A top purchase.

**Chippo**



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