



**Grouptest**

# Road bike mudguards

Bikes without clearance or fixings for normal mudguards can still be fitted with road-bike-specific ones. **Emma Silversides** tests four sets



**EMMA SILVERSIDES**

Since retiring from professional road racing, Emma continues to cycle daily, with touring being high on her agenda

**A** decent set of guards can make for an infinitely more comfortable ride in wet conditions. They stop road spray from flicking off both wheels, keeping your feet, lower legs and back drier for longer – not to mention your kit cleaner. Your frame, components and drinks bottle get protected from the grit, salt and pollutants that sit in standing surface water. Last but not least, they save the kit and eyes of the person riding behind you if you venture out with groups.

While some folk are lucky enough to have dedicated winter bikes with conventional guards, others rely on temporary measures for a single bike that they use all year round. However, an increasing number of modern road bikes don't have sufficient clearance or fixings for guards. Designs of 'quick-release' options have improved hugely to match the rise in minimal-clearance, race-orientated bikes.

All the guards I've tested are designed to go on and off quickly, so taking them off for dry days, as well as bike cleaning or fettling, should be a two-minute job – likewise putting them back on.

## Cycle's test promise

At Cycle, we are proudly independent. There's no pressure to please advertisers as we're funded by **your** membership. Our product reviews aren't press releases; they're written by experienced cyclists after thorough testing.

## Details WHAT TO LOOK FOR



### 1 Coverage

A guard offering generous coverage will protect you, your bike and riders behind. Some extend in front of the brakes, while others offer nothing at all here. If you ride alone, you can get away with something shorter at the rear.

### 2 Fixings

Are you willing to use straps/bands/adhesive strips directly on your frame? While there are some designs that don't touch your paintwork, many attach directly to the fork and seatstays, which could compromise the frame's finish.

### 3 Stability

Guards not using eyelets are likely to have a degree of play. Incessant vibrations from rough surfaces can result in shaking, rattling and rubbing. Fine adjustments can

avoid this but if you have wider tyres it might be unavoidable.

### 4 Fitting

Check manufacturer websites for videos and hints. Some written instructions are vague, so watching an expert do the job can save you time and hassle. When you receive your guards, never assume that any bolts already fitted to them are secure.

### 5 Adjusting

Check every fixing before heading out and take necessary tools for minor adjustments. Very few guards will be perfectly fitted before your first outing. If mounting requires pads/adhesive/straps, take spares out with you. Don't forget to clean guards frequently to avoid a build up of dirt and debris.