

Reviews

Gear up

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Put to the test

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Write to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

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media.co.uk



Ravemen

PR1600

High-power headlight with alternative beams: full and 'dipped'

£139.99 bob-elliott.co.uk, ravemen.com

High-power lamps generally throw light everywhere, including into the faces of oncoming drivers and cyclists, with different modes only turning down the brightness. Not so Ravemen's PR1600. You can switch between differently shaped beams as its two LEDs have different lenses.

One is a standard torch-like beam. The other has a cut-off at the top so it only throws light down onto the road. It's like being able to choose between full-beam and dipped in a car. 'Dipped' uses

just the leftmost LED; full beam uses both.

Each beam has different power levels: low, mid, and high for the full beam (400, 800, and 1,600 lumens); flashing, eco, low, mid, and high for the 'dipped' beam (400, 100, 200, 400, and 800 lumens). Different buttons on both the lamp and its remote switch change beam and power, so you don't have to cycle through intervening modes to 'dip'.

Run-times range from 1.4 hours at 1,600 lumens up to 24 hours flashing. To ride confidently on

Pros & cons

- + Non-dazzling 'dipped' mode
- + Quality construction
- Short run time on max

unlit roads and trails I needed at least 400 and 800 lumens respectively. Lower settings were okay with more ambient light or while riding carefully. Off-road the full 1,600 lumens is best but 1.4 hours is short for night-riding, so I switched to lower settings when the lamp's countdown timer dictated. The PR1600 will run for longer if you plug an auxiliary 5V 2A battery (not supplied) into its USB-C port. Brightness then tops out at 800 lumens, which isn't always enough off-road. There's also a USB-A *output* port: when the lamp has power remaining it can charge your phone etc.

The PR1600 is well made, with a body that's largely aluminium. It survived a crash on tarmac with only scratches. The bracket, a weakness of many eBay lights, is pretty good too. It's designed to fit bars 31.8-35mm in diameter. Weight: lamp 217g, bracket 26g. ●
Dan Joyce

Other options



EXPOSURE STRADA MK10 SB £300

1,500-lumen all-in-one light with dual lenses: a flat, wider angle beam and a spot for distance. The latter can be dimmed for oncoming traffic via a wired remote switch.
exposurelights.com



BUSCH UND MÜLLER XON SPACE £215

StVZO-compliant 150-lux lamp with a controlled beam shape that doesn't need dipping. Has USB output so can charge your phone.
bumm.de/en

Verdict

Great on road, where the simple and effective dipped-beam facility puts other high-power lights to shame. A short run-time on the highest setting limits rides off-road.



Cycle's test promise

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Altura
Nightvision Storm Women's

A smart, waterproof commuting jacket in a less conspicuous colour

£79.99 zyrofisher.co.uk

As a city worker in northern climes, I coveted one of those smart cycling jackets that makes you look like a professional grown-up but is also practical for soggy cycle commutes. The 'navy' – I would call it more a beautiful teal – Altura Nightvision Storm Women's Waterproof Jacket seemed to offer just that. The fit is neat, the colour is gorgeous, and the subtle reflective silver squares on the shoulders and sleeves give night-time visibility.

The fit is 'relaxed', meaning I could comfortably fit a jumper and thin fleece as inside layers – no need for skintight lycra here. Despite the roominess, the tailoring on the Nightvision Storm

still feels classy. You could walk into the office (whenever that may be!) without looking like you had fallen off a mountain or stewarded a festival en route.

There are pockets at the chest, side, and back. The fleece lining on the collar is cosy, with enough space for a scarf to keep out drafts. Being a perennially cold person and testing this jacket in November, I could not assess the full extent of the breathability. But on a longer ride the underarm vents and fabric seemed to cope well. I didn't become sweaty.

However, the styling that's the jacket's most appealing feature wasn't so good on grey mornings, when the discreet colour made me feel invisible to drivers. While

the reflective squares are set off by headlights in darkness, winter daylight makes them almost invisible. On busy city roads, I found myself wishing for my unsophisticated hi-vis tabard to wear on top.

The lack of reflective squares on the back makes sense if you ride with a backpack, but as a pannier user I missed having a big reflective panel here for drivers behind to spot. To feel confident on busy roads, I went back to hi-vis. It's worth noting, however, that the jacket is also available in bright yellow, as well as either light blue (women's) or burgundy (men's). Sizes: women's 8-18, men's S-XXXL. ●

Corra Boushel

Pros & cons
 + Good fit
 + Useful pockets
 – Navy inconspicuous on dim days



Verdict

The navy colour is classy for city rides but left me feeling invisible on grey winter days. I'd prefer the hi-vis yellow version and would like even more reflectivity.

Other options

ENDURA WMS URBAN LUMINITE JACKET £99.99

Available in blue or yellow, this jacket has reflective panels on the arms, back, and collar. endurasport.com



B'TWIN 500 WATERPROOF URBAN CYCLING JACKET £54.99

Hooded jacket in hi-vis yellow with reflectivity on the chest, back, and arms. decathlon.co.uk





Pros & cons
 + 48t bottom sprocket
 + 10-speed
 – Not as slick as Shimano



Microshift Advent X

Wide-range 1x gearing at a wallet-friendlier price

£180 as tested microshift.com

More and bigger sprockets is the way of things with 1x drivetrains. It wins back some lower ratios lost by ditching the front mech. But thinner chains snap more easily as a rule, and durability as a whole can suffer. So kudos to Microshift for making a 10-speed 1x groupset.

Like 9-speed Advent, which is continued, Advent X is available with both flat and drop bar shifters – or rather ‘shifter’, since it’s 1x only. Advent could be run with double chainset; Advent X can’t in any practical sense. The rear derailleur capacity is 41t and almost all of that (37t) is taken up by the huge 11-48t cassette.

The cassette fits standard HG freehubs (that is, Shimano spline pattern) and it, like the derailleur, is compatible with any 10-speed chain. You’ll need to add your

own narrow-wide chainring. One caveat: if this chainring is too large and/or your bike’s chainstays are too long, a chain of 114 (half) links may be too short for that monster cassette.

I tested the Pro shifter (SL-M9605, £32), the aluminium-cage derailleur (RD-M6205AM, £78), and the part-aluminium cassette (CS-G104, £70). There are cheaper versions of each, costing a total of £144 for the set rather than £180.

Microshift says that the lightest version of Advent X is lighter than cassette, derailleur, and shifter of 10-51t Shimano XT and 10-50t Sram GX. Given that there are fewer sprockets, that makes sense. I weighed Advent X as follows: shifter, including gear inner, 134g; derailleur, 312g; cassette 418g.

The cassette goes 11-13-15-18-21-24-28-34-40-48. I didn’t think I’d need the 48 since I’ve previously

got by fine with 11-42 and 11-36 cassettes in 1x setups. But when you have lower gears you use them – and are grateful for them.

The shift levers are thumb-operation only; you can’t drop the chain onto a smaller sprocket with finger. Shifting works fine up and down the cassette. It’s not as whisper-smooth as higher end Shimano but it’s good enough for everyday riding – and likely to work that way for longer.

Dan Joyce

Verdict

Another sensible solution from Microshift: affordable, durable 1x gearing with a really big sprocket bailout gear. And there’s a drop-bar version. Why pay more?

Other options



SHIMANO XT M8100 1x12 £529.99

Includes a crankset and a chain as well, but Shimano’s slick-shifting 1x12 groupset is still a steep step up in price.

shimano.com



MICROSHIFT ACOLYTE 1x8 £139.99

Nominally aimed at beginners and children, this wide-range 1x8 groupset has a 12-46t cassette, a clutch derailleur, and an intuitive trigger shifter.

microshift.com