

SCOPE O2 REVIEWED

SCORE
★★★★★



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SCOPE O2 WHEELSET

Netherlands based Scope Cycling have been around for a few years now. They have been quietly developing road wheelsets and have gained a reputation for an obsessive attention to detail and performance. The O2 is their first off-road specific wheelset. Pitched squarely at the MTB XC racer, its light weight makes it well suited to gravel cycling..

FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY STING LIKE A BEE

And I do mean light. 1,380 grams for a pair of 29er MTB wheels is pretty impressive. They have a 31mm outer (rim) width, and a 25mm internal width. Tyres mount up on the Scope O2 rims with a fat, square, profile. Simply put, the wider the rim, the lower the

pressures you can run. This translates to extra comfort and the confidence that you will not ding the rim on rocky surfaces nor will you burp the tyre off the rim.

When it comes to spokes, Scope have gone for the 'less is more' approach. The asymmetric rims are laced with 24 spokes at the front, and 28 in the back. More weight saving is achieved by laying extra carbon only around the spoke holes rather than the entire rim bed. This results in a claimed 10% drop in weight. Do not worry though, these rims are in no way 'dainty'.

If you like the deep section aero look, you are going to be disappointed. The Scope O2 come in at a very shallow 23mm. The rationale for this is simple – comfort. Deeper profile rims are harsher. They may be fine for the road but less so on dirt. Scope have sensibly selected compliance over style!

WHEEL SYSTEM

Scope design their own hubs. This lets the company develop an integrated system where rim, spoke and hub work together for the best results. The centre-lock hubs feature extra wide flanges to accommodate the massive offset.

All bearings are SKF as standard, and have stood up to all the dirt and water I could throw at them.

Pickup is fast and the bearings just keep on spinning and spinning... If you want even less friction, and correspondingly less money in your pocket, Scope offer a CeramicSpeed bearing upgrade! Every type of thru-axle endcap, Shimano or SRAM XD bodies and boost or non-boost hubs are catered for.

Scope supply their wheels pre-taped and with tubeless valves. All you have to do is mount up your tyres, pour in some goo and you are good to go. Scope designed their hookless rims in conjunction with Schwalbe and predictably enough, inflation proved to be simple and painless with multiple tyre sizes and brands.

PERFORMANCE.

For those thinking that 24 spokes sounds like a recipe for a wobbly front wheel, fear not! It feels as stiff as



SCOPE



any 32 hole wheel I have used. After having been subjected to some very poor line choices in the Lake District, while bikepacking, it has been fine. Even loaded up for a weekend of riding, there was not a hint of flex.

The elephant in the room however is this. Are you really going to buy a wheelset like the Scope O2 for bikepacking? The answer is probably...no!

Throw the bike bags away, fit some fast rolling tyres and experience how much a top flight pair of wheels can improve your ride. Even the most pedestrian of 'bicycle shaped objects' has come alive when fitted with these wheels. They make a dramatic difference to any ride, particularly if you like riding fast!

Acceleration is instantaneous and with no apparent

flex, they hold all your speed through the corners. The ride is direct – just point the front wheel where you want to go and the bike will follow.

The low profile rims means they are not fazed by cross winds.

As we have established during numerous group rides, a noisy freehub is not to everyone's taste. The Scope is not the most noisiest in the world, that award goes to Halo Wheels, but it still creates enough chatter to irritate some riders.

WIDER IS BETTER!

The wide profile of the Scope O2 fattens up the profile of skinny gravel tyres nicely. You can expect at least 2-3mm extra width. But be careful, you may foul your chainstays if you go too big. On my Lauf True Grit, a 45c WTB Riddler proved too wide whereas I have never had a problem with this tyre when using narrower rims.

CONCLUSION

In 4 months of rigorous testing, the Scope O2 have exceeded my expectations. They have shrugged off the effects of crashing down rocky Lakeland trails better suited to a 2.4" than a skinny 40mm tyre, riding through streams and getting blasted by jet washers more often than is strictly healthy.

The wheels have started to accumulate a 'gravel patina', maybe a little sooner than I expected. Signs of a hard life are however, honourable battle scars. More importantly, they are performing just as well as they did, first day out of the box.

As an overall package we are struggling to come up with an alternative wheelset that offers as much as the O2o. Light, fast, strong. Most brands promise at least one of these attributes but Scope seem to deliver them all, wrapped up in one very cool package.