

SCOPE R5C REVIEWED



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FAST AND WELL-PRICED CARBON CLINCHERS WITH EXCELLENT BRAKING BUT HEAVIER THAN CLAIMED

Dutch wheel company Scope spent more than two years developing their debut range of hoops before unveiling them at the end of 2014. These 55mm-deep R5c carbon clinchers are the deepest in their range and come in £1,199. Deep rims without the need for deep pockets? They're not quite as light on the scales as they are on your wallet, but these are fast wheels with an aero advantage and impressive braking.

Wheels often represent an obvious upgrade to most riders. Bikes are specced to fit a price point and

wheels usually bear the brunt of the economies. That's why there's a glut of new brands cropping up to exploit this lucrative after-sale market. More brands mean more competition for our cash – and the chance to get more for our money. This is true of Scope and their three-wheel range. The R5c hoops here, the 45mm-deep R4c wheels and the 30mm-deep R3c wheels all come in at £1,199. It's a competitive price point and Scope is sparring with high-profile brands like Mavic and Fast Forward, but that doesn't mean that we should overlook the newbies.

Investing in a decent wheelset can make a significant difference to how a bike rides, particularly given the budget wheels specced on bikes costing thousands of pounds. Generally speaking, you have three choices: to focus on low weight, aerodynamics or a middleground between the two, and that's reflected in Scope offering three wheel depths. The deeper you go, the bigger aero advantage you can pick up and at 55mm, the R5c hoops are designed with speed and aerodynamics in mind. While a deeper wheel often comes with increased stiffness, improved aerodynamics and faster straight-line speed, but there's also a weight penalty, which in the R5c does blunt acceleration and responsiveness a little. It takes a bit more puff off the line but, once up to speed, the gap we were losing on the way to the town sprint sign, we were making up by the finish, when the

aero advantage and ability of the wheels to hold that speed paid off. (We changed our tactic and went from further out, in case you were wondering). At a claimed 1.555g the Scope R5c wheels are pretty much about right for their depth – a little heavier than some, like the Token TK-C55 hoops at 1.448g, but lighter than others, including the 1.740g Vision Metron 55s. However, we weighed our set at 1.700g (770g front and 930g rear). Not too heavy for wheels of this depth, but a little heavier than the claimed weight than we'd like. Still, for a flat circuit race or time trial, when wheels like this will really come into their own, weight isn't as big an issue as you would expect. On top of that, the aero benefit increases the faster you're going, and once over the 40ph mark, they were really at home, holding that speed very well.

So, what's in the wheel? The rims are produced from



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unidirectional carbon fibre, with a 3K carbon weave used on the areas of stress, including the tyre bed and at the spoke nipples. Scope have also used a proprietary blend of carbon fibre and resin on the braking track to combat two key issues associated with carbon clincher wheels: heat build-up and braking performance. In fact, the braking – even in the wet – was impressive. Carbon wheels often struggle to match alloy rims when it comes to braking but Scope have done a good job, helped by developing their own brake pads.

One of the biggest trends for aero wheels is the shift away from flat-sided V-shape profile and towards a toroidal shape. Again, this has had some effect on weight – the new design is often a smidge heavier – but modern rim designs behave infinitely better in the wind.

The R5c is at about the limit of general use at 55mm. Any deeper and a wheel is too specific for anything other than racing and begins to struggle in the wind regardless of the design. However, due to that bulbous rim profile, which measures 24mm externally and 16,4mm internally, we found, compared to flat-sided aero wheels, handling wasn't the struggle it used to be in crosswinds.

Of course, there is a limit and if there's a strong crosswind gusting off the coast (as is often the case where we do our riding) then you're going to feel it and may be better off with a shallower wheel, but in typical conditions these wheels behave well. This wider rim profile also means compatibility with wider tyres, another of the latest trends in cycling, is superb. Due to the time of year of the test, we ran these with 25mm Vredestein Fortezza Senso Xtreme Weather tyres and that proved to be an ideal match. The wheels are built around a sealed hub with 120 pick-up points, making for quick engagement, and laced with Sapim's premium CX-Ray spokes, with 18 in the front and 21 in the rear. The rear also has a super-wide

If you're in the market for a relatively affordable set of aero hoops to race on, or time trial wheels which remain usable when you're not up against the clock, then these are a good option.

They're not especially light (and heavier than claimed), but in reality you won't be buying a 55mm wheelset for outright low weight and long rides in the hills. What you do get is a stiff wheelset which, once wound up to speed, holds that pace very well, with a rim profile which is on-trend and excellent braking, even if the wheels aren't especially comfortable.

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PROS

- + Once up to speed, they held it well
- + Well priced
- + Impressive build
- + Good braking

CONS

- Heavier than claimed
- Pretty harsh

SPECIFICATION

Price: £1,199

Weight: 1,700g

Depth: 55mm

Rim width: 24mm

Website: www.scopecycling.com

UK distributor: Oneway Distribution