



## Ritchey Z-Max Shield WCS

£45.99 **Paligap** [www.paligapltd.co.uk](http://www.paligapltd.co.uk) **Size tested:** 2.1in **Weight:** 543g  
**Also available:** Comp

**THE SHIELD'S SIDE** knobs have Ritchey's characteristic multi-faceted, curved shape. They're not big knobblies, but they're reasonably effective when you crank the tyre over. The dual compound tread, with softer rubber on the edges, helps here. That said, you won't be surprised to learn that the Shield's performance is heavily biased towards firmer trail conditions. On

hard surfaces it flies along. It can work in loose, soft or sloppy conditions, but you'll have to apply a degree of *finesse*.

Braking on anything other than hardpack is a little unconvincing – we'd be tempted to keep the Shield in the back and pop something a little more aggressive up front.

**MBUK** ★★☆☆☆☆



## Charge Splashback

£32.99 **Cycling Sports Group** 01202 732288 [www.cyclingsportsgroup.co.uk](http://www.cyclingsportsgroup.co.uk)  
**Size tested:** 2.1in **Weight:** 630g **Also available:** 1.8in

**ALL TYRES USED TO BE** amberwalls, with no rubber on the sides, but it's a rare sight nowadays. That'll make the Splashback attractive to fans of older bicycles, but it's not just a retro novelty.

The Splashback doesn't excel anywhere, but is OK nearly everywhere. You may encounter its limits a little earlier than some tyres, but you'll get plenty of warning and

it's predictable enough that you quickly get to know how it'll behave.

The central blobs don't dig in too well on loose ground, but they're effective on softer terrain – mud-clearing ability is impressive. It's not wide, but is taller than most tyres of comparable width, delivering useful cushioning volume.

**MBUK** ★★☆☆☆☆



## Geax Barro Mountain TNT

£31.99 **Chicken CYCLE Kit** [www.chickencyclekit.co.uk](http://www.chickencyclekit.co.uk) **Size tested:** 2.1in **Weight:** 655g  
**Also available:** 26x2.3in TNT; 26x2.1in wire bead; 26x2.0in folding

**GEAX ISN'T ONE OF** the first names that comes to mind in tyres, but they have an impressive array of treads in their range. The Barro Mountain is described as a "cutting edge multi-purpose tyre", and it's certainly a decent all-rounder. Geax's TNT beads make it tubeless-ready.

The tread blocks are neither closely packed or widely spaced, and the overlapping centre knobs make

for fast rolling. The 2.1in tyre tested isn't all that big (measuring up at just over 2in on our test rim) but the rounded section gives predictable cornering and it's got robust sidewalls for a tyre this size.

If you're looking for better performance on rocks and roots, take a look at the 2.3in AM version.

**MBUK** ★★☆☆☆☆



## Michelin Wild Rock'R Advanced

£39.99 **Hotlines** [www.hotlines-uk.com](http://www.hotlines-uk.com) **Size tested:** 2.25in **Weight:** 885g  
**Also available:** 26x2.1 tubeless; 26x2.1/2.25/2.4 folding

**DON'T READ TOO MUCH** into the weight here – Michelin sent us UST full tubeless samples, which are heavier than regular or tubeless-ready tyres. They're also a pig to get on and off rims, although you shouldn't have to do that very often.

Once mounted up, the Wild Rock'R proves itself pretty capable on all sorts of terrain. The tread design is an evolution of Michelin treads going

back to the Comp 16, with big, angular knobs and the Michelin trademark of no knobs actually on the centreline of the casing. This is supposed to help them hold a line, which they do, but no better than other tyres. They're also one of the more undersized tyres in the test, coming up narrower than claimed.

**MBUK** ★★☆☆☆☆