

beat down

Stan's No Tubes ZTR Flow Wheels

\$655; 607-562-2877; notubes.com

After seven years of producing its namesake tire-sealant system, and a few years selling its own rims and wheels, Stan's No Tubes recently expanded its ZTR rim line to include two new, wider rim choices—the Flow and the Arch.

Stan's wheels are made to order with a variety of hub and spoke options. I ordered a set with 470-gram ZTR Flow rims, Hope Pro II hubs and 32 double-butted Wheelsmith spokes laced in a three-cross pattern to matching gold alloy nipples. The 28-millimeter-wide Flow rim is designed to work with Stan's sealant and intended for all-mountain riding, Super-D racing and general bashing about. They have a welded seam and a shallow triangular profile with three internal channels for strength. Compared to standard tube rims, the Flow's sidewalls are a few millimeters lower, making them lighter, and a little stiffer.



Stan's claims its system reduces pinch flats, decreases rolling resistance and can be run at lower tire pressures—and after a few months of testing, I'd agree. The wheels feel light for their width, making for impressive maneuverability and acceleration. Transitioning from stiffer, aluminum-spoked wheels, the Flow wheels felt a tad flexy, but overall the 2.0/1.7-millimeter steel-spoke wheels held up just fine. The spokes loosened up considerably after about 75 miles and required a few twists of a spoke wrench, but that's common for handbuilt wheels. And after some considerable abuse—including a few drops hard enough to leave tire tread marks on the rim's sidewall—the wheels are still spinning straight.

The Hope Pro II hubs were beautifully crafted, light, well sealed and durable. They can be adapted to fit standard quick-release or 20-millimeter thru-axle forks. The alloy cassette body and four-pawl ratchet system do create quite a racket—but maybe they're just screaming to be pedaled more. The idea of lightweight tubeless wheels with conventional spokes and high-quality hubs should pique any rider's interest. Factor in that they cost less than many high-end pre-built wheels, and Stan's custom wheels are definitely worth a look. —Alan Davis