



claimed to help reduce pinch flats by increasing the distance that the tire and/or tube must travel before bottoming out.

Stan's user-friendly online ordering system allows customers to mate the ZTR rim of their choice with a variety of hubs (disc or conventional), spokes and nipples. My XC-racer-style wheels use V-brake compatible ZTR 355 rims laced to a set of American Classic hubs using WheelSmith XL15 spokes and alloy nipples. The tubeless rim tape and special valve stem are both included with all of Stan's built wheels.

Out of the box I'm impressed with the feathery weight of these wheels. I grab a fresh set of Geax Barro Marathon tubeless compatible tires, add a dose of Stan's sealant for added insurance, crank the air compressor to 60psi—and everything snaps into place.

With the rims' short 8.8mm sidewalls, adjusting the V-brake pads is a bit of an adventure. I can't align my Kool-Stop (cartridge style) pad without a minor bit of pad overhanging the bottom of the rim. The brake works fine, but the fact that I have to periodically sand the pad to remove the lip that forms on the overhanging edge gives me a nit to pick. Stan's tells me that customers have had luck with Thinline pads by Kool Stop or Avid Rim Wrangler pads as they seem to be slightly more narrow.

Four months of hard racing and riding in the books, and the wheels are still running true, with a minor touch-up truing along the way. I know it's subjective, but these wheels do "feel" light—acceleration feels a bit snappier than average. Yet they carve high-speed turns and pummel rocky terrain without flopping around like a wet noodle (under my 150lb. weight). The hubs feel like they could roll forever and there is no significant bearing slop. My testimonial for the sealant: During a stop I spy a huge hawthorne tree thorn sticking in my front tire, I pluck it out, start riding again, and the tire seals almost instantly.

I mount up several different conventional tires and they all work well with the Stan's system. I find that cranking the compressor up to 60psi is crucial—lower pressures just don't blast the bead onto the rim. Sometimes it takes a bit of persistence, shaking the sealant around, to get the bead to seal (I chalk that up to tire bead variations). I should point out that Stan's website recommends against using certain manufacturers' tires without a tube because, according to Stan's, they have weaker beads which can severely stretch or snap when run tubeless.

In summary, the Stan's ZTR 355 ABT Wheels represent a simple, elegant tubeless design that has proven durable, reliable and trouble free. Four months, many miles, zero flats. —Karl Rosengarth

STAN'S ZTR 355 ABT WHEELS

Weight w/skewers: 660g F/ 760g R

Price: \$585

Wheel size: 26"

Intended use: Cross country racing

Braking: Rim

Tubeless compatible: Yes (UST or standard tires)

Spokes: Stainless steel 32 F/32 R

Nipple material: Aluminum

Rim width: 24.4mm

Stan's handbuilt tubeless-compatible wheelsets feature their proprietary ZTR line of rims. When the 6061-T6 aluminum alloy ZTR rims are sealed with the Stan's plastic rim tape, and the special Presta valve stem is installed—voilà! tubeless compatibility. Remove the special valve stem, and you've got a conventional tubed setup.

ZTR rims use Stan's Bead Socket Technology™, a curved rim sidewall that is the same shape as the bead of the tire, which Stan's says creates a tighter seal than conventional rims. The China-made ZTR rim sidewalls are 2-3mm lower than most conventional rims, which is