

# Whyte Sterling £999

**N**ow, it's fair to say that £1,000 is at the expensive end of the spectrum for a hybrid bike, but to put things in context, the Whyte Sterling's big brother, the breathtakingly luxurious Montpellier (see 'Alternative'), costs three times that. If you bear in mind the Sterling is essentially the same chassis with a downgraded spec, it looks like rather more of a bargain!

Of course, to justify a £3,000 hybrid, Whyte has lavished only the lightest and prettiest components on the Montpellier, but even on the Sterling, at a third of the price, a high level of quality is maintained throughout the bike, from its anodised orange security skewers and grip cuffs, through the scuff-resistant saddle and carbon fork blades, to the roadie SRAM Rival chainset and Red rear mech (yes, the same SRAM Red Tour de France riders use).

## Curiously urban

A road bike 10-speed double chainring set-up on a hybrid is quite unusual, and the 25c tyres are also slimmer than we've come to expect from these 'urban' bikes, so it's clear this is a bit of a curiosity.

Whyte is keen to emphasise this is no flat-bar road bike, but instead a fresh approach to hybrid design, going via mountain bike technology, which Whyte knows a thing or two about. It says the geometry comes from its mtbs, and standing the Sterling in front of a short-travel Whyte hardtail at the London Cycle Show, we could see the resemblance in the angles and geometry, except it looks like someone has taken a potato peeler to the tubes and pared them down to a delicate minimum.

Other mtb features have been carefully adapted for on-road application — notably the placement of the tabs for the rear disc brake inside the stays, meaning the rotor won't interfere with mounting mudguards or a rack, for which there are eyelets aplenty.

## Super stopping power

These skinny frame tubes, along with the classy groupset choice, probably take most credit for the Sterling's low weight, which certainly helps it haul ass. It's especially impressive when you consider it has hydraulic disc brakes front and back, which provide superior all-weather stopping power.

Those wanting the arch-backed riding position of a road bike with a flat bar will be disappointed in the

**Model** Sterling  
**Manufacturer** Whyte  
**Price** £999  
**Weight** 9.25kg (20.39lb)  
**Size tested** M  
**Size range** S, M, L, XL  
**Frame material** 6061 hydroformed T6 aluminium  
**Fork** Carbon  
**Transmission** SRAM Apex/Rival  
**Wheels** Alex Race 28

Sterling, but get used to its heads-up, stretched out stance and it's great for blasting through the traffic.

The Sterling sits you far back, with the fork seeming to extend miles out in front. Whyte points out that this avoids any toe overlap problems and it also gives a great deal of low-speed control. In fact, the ride characteristics of the Sterling can probably best be described

as 'taut' — plenty stiff and eager but wavy rear stays and carbon fork blades take the sting out of poor surfaces — though this unique geometry does let it down a bit on bends at higher speeds — it doesn't quite have the snap of a road bike.

A bike like the Sterling will only appeal to a certain market — some will never be convinced to relinquish their drop bars and compact geometry — but it's a beautiful demonstration that an urban bike doesn't have to be about hefty utilitarianism. It's not just a flat-bar road bike, it's certainly not a rigid-forked mtb with 700c wheels; it genuinely brings something new to the packed hybrid sector. If you're more comfortable on a flat bar and like to have a decent view of the road ahead, the Sterling's a gritty, mean-looking number, draped in the best luxury bling from both the road and mtb camps.

**We liked...**

Super light and packed with urban features



**“The Sterling’s a gritty mean-looking number, draped in the best luxury bling”**



Tough saddle scuff guards



Curvy stays  
for comfort



Excellent  
all-weather  
braking



Top-quality  
SRAM kit

## ALTERNATIVE

BLING-TASTIC BUDGET BUSTER

### Whyte Montpellier £2,999

A 7.5kg hybrid, with hydraulic disc brakes. OK, Whyte isn't exactly looking at volume sales with this flagship bit of bling, but this is about as souped-up as a hybrid gets. Don't leave it leaned on a lamppost while you nip into the newsagent, though.

