



New ETRTO/ISO 507 wheelset means greater choice of tyres is available. Below right: Quick release removable bars are great for folding or even stowing the bike. Bottom right: SRAM dual-drive 3x8 hub gear and cassette means great gear range



**Airnimal Joey Explore** £Prices see below

Back in C+163 the Airnimal Joey got an enthusiastic write-up (the Joey being a simpler-folding more price-conscious cousin of the original road orientated Chameleon line). The original Joey, with its eight-speed gripshift / cassette combo was great for commuting and leisure riding but lacked a wide range of gears (41-104 in). Similarly the ETRTO/ISO 520 rims were also a bit limiting as available tyres tended to be narrow profile, so trail riders in particular might have started to look elsewhere.

Enter the new Joey Commute / Explore range with 3 choices of hub gears as listed above. I tried the relatively unusual SRAM Dual Drive 3x8. A maintenance-free three-speed hub effectively replaces a triple chainring whilst the 8 speed cassette remains giving an approximate gear range of 540%! The big gear range and more intuitive shifting are the immediate advantages over a triple chainring design with only a negligible weight penalty. As shifters are both on the right side of the bar and use different methods (twist-

grip and index lever) gear changing felt genuinely more natural. Switch between the three hub gears using the index shifter according to the general nature of the terrain then use the gripshift to iron out gradients. The other main change is the introduction of new ETRTO/ISO 507 rims to accommodate wider profile tyres. Our test bike, the Explore, was equipped with the well-established, quality Schwalbe Marathons with Kevlar belting as an upgrade. They roll pretty well and will make a big difference to trail riders, along with the extended gear range, opening up a much wider variety of riding possibilities. Elsewhere the Joey Explore retains the positive features highlighted back in November 2004 – here's a brief recap. The easy 30-second fold is a matter of removing the front wheel before a quick release allows you to jack-knife the back wheel into the front forks. The folded package is then held in place by dropping the telescopic seatpost. Finally the bar stem is Q/R removable – a great feature which will also get used on its own to slip the

bike into a hall or a train corridor. Not as compact as a Brompton fold but almost as quick, and the relatively light weight and range of cover bags mean it can also now be considered a genuine competitor for potential Brompton purchasers – especially as it wins out in the handling and gear department. *Richard Peace*  
**Weight:** 12kg\* **Folded size:** L71 x W71 x H29 (cm) (or 79x63x33 for the longer suitcase fold).  
**Prices:** Joey Commute (Nexus 8 speed) £750 / Black  
 Joey Explore (SRAM Dual Drive 3x8) £895 / Black  
 Joey Explore Elite (Rohloff 14 speed) £1495 / Black with white rear triangle  
 \*Note on weight: Average around 12kg depending on exact spec (pedals not included)  
**Airnimal:** ☎ (01223) 523973, www.airnimalfoldingbikes.com info@airnimalfoldingbikes.com

With the gear range and tyre choice sorted the Joey goes from strength to strength **9**

Light sprockets for those with a fixed fetish **8**



**On-One Track Sprocket** £15

The fixed-wheel bike once the reserve of bike couriers, track racers and geeky bike journo's seems to be everywhere, and building one couldn't be simpler with so many specific hubs now available. What are often hard to get hold of though are track sprockets. Well the good blokes over at On-One who make the Pomino, an off-the-shelf fixer, also sell the sprockets too. They're available in two versions. A lighter 7075 T6 aluminium hard anodized number which comes in both 3/32 and 1/8 chain fittings with teeth in the 13-18 range. And a burlier chromoly steel version.

To save time and money changing front rings On-One also produce larger rear sprockets with up to 21 teeth in the chromoly version. This means you can run a sensible gearing and they're extremely durable too. Fitting couldn't be easier in that you simply screw them straight on to the hub. You will need a lock ring too for safety. *Ian Osborne*

**Weight:** 21g (7075 16t)  
**On-One:** www.on-one.co.uk, ☎ 01302 724000

**Sugoi RS Flex Shorts** £75

Sugoi's top range RS Flex short gets a make over for 2006 and the most striking difference is the Ultra Aero material used. This stretchy material is dimpled to be more aerodynamic and create less friction in a similar way to a golf ball. Whether this makes a huge difference in terms of speed for most of us mere mortals is debateable though. That said they're lightweight, soft, stretchy and super comfy against the skin.

This Ultra Aero material is divided into 10 panels held together with contrasting flat lock stitching making for a superior fit without irritations. Inside is the welcome sight of the Formula Flex chamois made up of several layers of differing densities of padding with the highest density padding where your sit bones are located. Each of these layers is bonded together to do away with any uncomfortable seams. The outer most layer uses four types of stretch material so contours well to your body and the whole lot does a great job of wicking. Add to this subtle logos and comfy leg grippers and you have the ingredients for a top quality short. Long stints in the saddle go unnoticed and they still look as good as new after a few months wearing and washing. They might be expensive but they're a great short and worth it if you have the cash. Also available in a bib and women's versions. *Ian Osborne*  
**Weight:** 140g **Sizes:** S-XL  
**Sugoi** www.sugoi.ca, ☎ 00800 4321 3350 (toll free)



Top quality short with added aero effect **9**