proved they're plenty strong too.

There's a bit of flex through the skinny double butted-spokes when you work them hard but nothing too disturbing for an XC wheel.

RACE
TRAIL
LIFE
VALUE

7

Bit flexy and the price doesn't include QR skewers, but hub durability is good

£280 Bontrager Race Lite

TREK UK 01908 282626 WWW.TREKBIKE.CO.UK **WEIGHT** 1,918G

Bontrager are currently overhauling their entire wheel line, but these versatile old favourites still have understandably loyal fans.

These are the heaviest wheels here but the sturdy rims are supplied with a snap-in tubeless strip that's a bonus for the cost. They'll take a thrashing before they buckle, but the alloy nipples do make any tuning work nerve wracking.

Bontrager branded DT hubs are slightly slow to engage but they run and run through the worst conditions. The broad lever Bontrager QRs are easy to use and double up as emergency tyre levers if the tighter tubeless rims put up a fight. They're one of the few stock wheelsets available in 29er or Maverick fork 24mm through-axle versions.

MBUK VERDICT

RACE
TRAIL
LIFE
VALUE

7

Heavy but durable with useful tubeless ready 29er and Maverick fork options

£269.98 Quad Equipe Pro XC

RALEIGH 01773 532600 WWW.RALEIGH.CO.UK **WEIGHT** 1,770G

Following the impressive Quad brakes, come Quad wheels to put them on, but they're facing stiff opposition from established similar price competition.

Despite some almighty twangs on the first few rides they settled down OK. They're slightly flexy but never frighteningly so, and the only signs of a proper hardtail hammering were the denting of a rim and a bit of wobble.

The rear hub gets a six-pawl system, and pick up is reasonably quick and reliable. Machined detailing on the flanges looks neat too and you get a set of QR skewers. You'll need to crank the cassette lockring down tight though, because any movement will scar the freehub and make removal hard.

MBUK VERDICT

RACE
TRAIL
LIFE
VALUE

7

Tough mid-weight trail wheels that are rapidly building a reputation

£285 Hope Pro 2 on DT 4.2D

HOPE 01282 851200 WWW.HOPEGB.COM **WEIGHT** 1,803G

Hope's decision to do complete wheels has certainly been a popular one. The DT XR4.2D rim is tough for its low weight but relatively narrow, so trade up to the 5.1 option for tyres over 2.2in. The wheels are handbuilt in the UK with double butted DT spokes for outstanding stiffness and lifespan.

The Pro 2 hubs are a bit heavy and noisy but tough – we've only just had to replace our first bearing on a set that we've been beasting for three years. Compatibility with 15, 20 and 24mm front axles and 10, 12mm or bolted rear axles makes them uniquely versatile for an XC wheel. Each set comes with spare spokes, rim tape and replacement stickers and they're still great value despite a recent price rise.

MBUK VERDICT

RACE
TRAIL
LIFE
VALUE

9

Outstanding hub reliability and versatility in a tight, high quality wheelset