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That said, it's hard to deny the arresting effect some of these lights' daytime running modes can have when you see them in person. These lights sell at a premium and have premium features such as programmable flashing modes can have when you see them in person. These lights sell at a premium and have premium features such as programmable flashing modes can have when you see them in person. These lights sell at a premium and have premium features such as programmable flashing modes can have when you see them in person. lumens by the end of its 90-minute claimed run time. The light also doesn't have a lockout mode. The Magicshine Allty 1000 offers a daytime running light as well as an interesting method of attachment (which helped win the light a Red Dot design award in 2019): It fits into a Garmin-style bike-computer mount, which is a secure yet easy way to take the light on and off. When it comes to understanding how bike lights work and what to look for in a great light, review is second to none (skip past the prightness of those modes depending on the ambient light, so you don't need separate day and night modes. As a result, even dimmer dynamo lights can effectively light up the road ahead for several car lengths. Call around. You can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there—primarily written by and for Europeans—that you can find many buying guides out there were a supplied to the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find many buying guides out the first that you can find m because it's also the primary US distributor for most of the components. You can also find a few lights that offer fast charging without using USB-C (two and a half hours instead of the typical four), but this feature comes at a steep premium and is handy only if you forget to charge your lights overnight, or during a workday. As for stuff to avoid, pay no heed to smart features. The Franklin 3 is recommended by The Strategist. But we think such things go above and beyond commuting needs. The Bontrager Ion Pro RT is Switchback Travel's top pick for the best headlight, and by all accounts it is an excellent light. Mountain bikers are likely to prefer something with a taller, circular beam that can illuminate branches and other low-hanging trail obstacles not found on the road—sometimes supplementing that with a helmet-mounted light for better depth perception. Lights can also help during the daytime. They do indeed flash. Having a bit more battery life and a simpler mount would be nice, but the overall package works well for a wide variety of situations. Live in a walk-up apartment without bike parking? If you can find the 700 Tundra on sale for closer to \$50 (rather than \$70, as is typical), it's worth considering. (Spoiler: They're only as good as their price would lead you to believe.)In many ways, not much has changed since Wirecutter published the first version of this review in 2013. This variety allows you to choose between maximum visibility and total courteousness, with shades of gray in the middle. Water resistance, some kind of low-battery indicator, and a clip for attaching the taillight to clothes or bags when there's no good place to mount it on a bike are also handy features to look out for. We Test Lights and Road.cc already publish independently verified figures for brightness, battery life, and beam patterns for almost every light we were considering for testing; we consulted these, of course. Add in the free weekend night and you're looking at upwards of 27 free nights. We think this is okay since its mount can find purchase on a wider variety of locations on a bike than most competitors can. They can walk you through finding and building a wheel for your specific bike, picking a set of lights to suit your riding needs, and figuring out what, if any, additional mounting accessories you might need to make your setup work. By comparison, the Cygolite Metro Plus 800 also starts at 924 lumens but holds steady above 800 lumens for almost the entirety of its 60-minute claimed run time before dipping below 700 lumens. The Cateye Volt800 comes highly recommended by the British publications Road.cc and Cycling Weekly, but we passed on it because it's pricey and not easy to get ahold of in the US. The Exposure Sirius series is another highly regarded headlight line from Europe that doesn't have much of a US presence. Light & Motion markets it as being a quick-release mount, but in reality it's more like a "random release" mount, and security deposit, I had to write a check for almost \$7,000 on the day I got the keys to my new apartment — a very bad day for my checking account. Because wheel diameters, braking needs, and tire widths vary from bike to bike, there's no one wheel that will work for most bikes. First is a high-flash 50-lumen scorcher that's meant for use during the daytime. And we benefited from explanatory essays on light construction and beam qualities, especially those written by bike-industry veteran Peter White of Peter White Cycles, a custom-build bicycle and lighting-system shop in New Hampshire. Every cyclist should use lights when riding in gloomy or dark conditions, but the focus of this review remains on commuting bike lights that are meant to be mounted onto a bicycle. The Franklin gets 5 stars from approximately 97% of the customers who reviewed it on the Brooklyn Bicycle Co. site. It's the only light we found that offers this much mounting flexibility without requiring you to use tools to switch between various modes. And, you can pick from cardinal red, sea glass, gloss black, matte coral, and ivory as color options. If programmable flashing modes or the ability to check your light's battery life on your cycling computer screen appeal to you, this guide probably isn't for you. High flash is best suited for daytime use because it's almost too bright at night. But so do other lights that offer better side visibility and daytime visibility and have more versatile mounts. All that aside, the mount we tested with the PWR Trail was just horrendous. Torch-style bike lights are designed around batteries of a certain size because using smaller ones severely limits run times and using larger ones adds unnecessary weight. There are also two sizes: large and medium/small. This process included installing and removing each mount, checking quick-release functionality where it existed, evaluating the color and spread of the beams while we were in motion, checking visibility from all angles—including during daylight hours—and going on a nighttime group ride with the New York Pizza and Dynamo Society to check how courteous these lights were to fellow cyclists' eyes. But it can be less visible in the daytime than our top taillight in our testing. You'll also find a high solid mode that maintains a 50-lumen beam for just over 90 minutes according to We Test Lights's test. It's too dim to be useful, even at night, and it lacks any kind of flashing modes. The Hilton Honors Surpass Card doesn't slack off when it comes to travel perks, either. Also, despite the additional lumens the Hotshot Pro 200 offers, its off-angle visibility in our tests wasn't as good as that of the cheaper Hotrod 50, especially during the daytime. As a result, the stuff that gets imported to the US tends to be pretty spendy. Moreover, that was just the start of my overall divorce expenses. Just don't count on the included "Free Rear Back Tail Light" to do anything for you. Most lights also have capacitors that store energy and allow for about five additional minutes of illumination after you come to a full stop. When paired with a high-end light, a dynamo system can generate more than 700 lumens of steady output. The best taillight designs feature clear or red-translucent casings that allow light to spill out in every direction. Versatile and easy-to-use mount; but we are slightly inclined toward those that mount with hooks and a rubber strap. This design isn't quite as convenient as a single strap that can adapt to different widths, and having to remove and keep track of all the rubber bits to charge the light can get tiresome, but the added versatility is nice to have. The Brooklyn Bicycle Co. Franklin 3 is an excellent choice when you want an attractive bike that is durable and comes fully assembled. I was a daily visitor to Target and racked up several thousand dollars more in completely unexpected expenses. Also, it liked the single-speed look since the gears are hidden within the hub. (We've compared the latest version of the Vis with recent Urbans we already own, and the mounts appear to be unchanged. Co-author Hannah Weinberger was an editor at Bicycling magazine and has been an all-weather bike commuter for much of her adult life. In addition to going by our own experience, Hannah emailed with Darlene Edewaard, a graduate student at Clemson University who conducted research (through a partnership with Trek Bikes) that explored how well drivers responded to rear lights. The reason why the Hilton Honors Surpass Card earns a high spot on this list of top hotel cards is because of how easy it is to earn a free night via credit card spending. (Spoiler: They're only as good as their price would lead you to believe.)We also included input from our own commenters, as well as customer reviews on various retailer sites, to decide how to prioritize our criteria for narrowing down our testing pool. Although it's still very bright and noticeable from many angles at night thanks to an effective diffuser lens, it's not as visually arresting as other lights with multiple LEDs, especially during the day. At this writing the Ascher USB Rechargeable Bike Light Set is the best-selling bike-light set on Amazon (other, identical-looking sets abound, but this one is typically at or near the top of the list), and it's easy to see why: For less than \$15, you get both front and rear lights that mount easily with a rubber strap and charge via USB and ship same day via Amazon Prime. It's bright enough. Recreational road cyclists and e-bike riders may need something that's brighter and thus capable of keeping up with their faster pace (many of our picks come in brighter configurations suitable for these purposes). When I consulted with lawyers before filing divorce paperwork, I was advised to reserve \$15,000 for legal fees. While some cards require upwards of \$40,000 for a free night at a top-tier hotel, it takes just \$31,667 on the Hilton Honors Surpass card. And Road.cc reviews dynamo lights and hubs as part of its broader bike light coverage. Among the lights we'll be testing for 2022 is the new version of NiteRider's Sabre 80 taillight, the Sabre 110, which now includes flashing and pulse modes. If the Light & Motion's Vis line (recently renamed; it used to be called the Urban line) made it a perennial favorite in past iterations of this guide. The first was that the integrated USB-A "fin" that you use to charge it (there's no cable) didn't fit in our Anker USB multiport wall charger (a fairly common model). Hilton Gold status perks are equivalent to what most other reward programs offer top-tier elites: Free breakfast, room upgrades based on availability, bonus points, and the possibility of club lounge access (assuming you've been upgraded to a Club room). Analog Cycles is another East Coast shop specializing in bespoke dynamo setups. Road.cc, a British publication, maintains a regularly updated database of tested lights, complete with a beam-comparison tool. The Hotrod 110 headlight has the same all-angles visibility as the taillight. Most lights have an LED indicator on or near the power button that glows red when there's less than 20 to 25 percent charge left. Some other nice-to-have, but unnecessary, features include GoPro mount compatibility for use on helmets or on the underside of a handlebar-mounted GPS unit, user-replaceable batteries to allow for longer rides and to extend the useful life of a light, and USB-C charging, which cuts down on charging time and allows you to juice the light up using the same charger as for your phone or tablet. Such bikes almost all use dynamo lighting setups, which convert rotational energy from the front wheel into electricity using a special hub. And just for good measure, we threw in a few of those Amazon best sellers that are so cheap, they seem too good to be true. She also talked to Megan Hottman, an attorney focused on cycling safety, to learn about how brightly enough to be visible during the day. But everything is relative. Its grid of many LEDs is brightly visible both at night and during the day, its 44-lumen brightness is just as eye-catching as the 50 lumens of the Hotrod, and its two and a half hours of battery life at high steady is actually better than the Hotrod 50's. Unlike those cheapo lights, such as the best-selling Ascher USB Rechargeable Bike Lights, the Hotrod lights feel sturdy, they're backed by a warranty, and their beams have a consistent quality-control resources that go into designing and making decent bike lights. If step-through frames aren't your thing, check out the Bedford 3, which has a parallel-to-theground top tube. It has a slightly below-average battery life. The white Hotrod 110 headlight uses the same, visible-from-all-angles design as the taillight. After testing a few of those sets against our other picks, we think you're much better off spending just a little more on something like the Cygolite Hotrod Front 110 and Hotrod Rear 50 USB Combo. Photo: Michael MurtaughIf you've ever ridden a bikeshare bike and wondered how its lights manage to stay charged, it's because they don't need charging. Although the issue hasn't been as extensively studied for cyclists, a Danish study from 2012 found that cyclists who used lights all the time had a 19 percent lower incident rate compared with those who didn't. That being said, as Joe Lindsey lays out in his 2017 story for Bicycling magazine titled "The Science of Being Seen: A Guide to Safer Riding," merely being visible isn't always enough. Low flash is a dimmer, less frequent strobe that is still plenty visible at night and goes for 30 hours between charges—a good option for rural roads with less traffic. But this model is missing a pulsing mode, which many cyclists prefer because it catches the eye while also allowing viewers to better judge distance. Yes, that's only a third of the initial estimates, but even so, it's a lot of money when you don't have a ton of liquid assets in the checking account. It comes with three differently sized silicone straps so you can mount it to a seat post, an extra-wide aero seatpost, or a skinny seat stay. That means it is rain- and spray-proof but not designed to tolerate being submerged. It has enough modes that you'll find one you like. Even if you opt for a top-tier redemption, you've got at least two free nights covered with this welcome bonus (assuming one is a weekend night). Insider Picks tested and recommended the Bedford 3 because of the effortless online buying process and it comes completely assembled. However, we found that allowing the light to pick its own brightness level could be distracting to other riders—it's liable to jump between flash modes (erratic for daytime, steadier for night) if you turn it on and off a few times in the same light environment. Offering 300 lumens and 11 modes, the Lezyne Strip Drive Pro Rear is a strong and effective light, but it offers so many flash patterns that we felt like we were sorting through a fireworks display. After considering 38 models and testing eight top contenders, we're confident the Topeak Explorer is the best rear rack for the average bike commuter. After spending three years testing dozens of panniers, we've chosen eight that'll be great for daily duty no matter what you're toting or where you're going. After riding with 23 smartphone bike mounts over 90 miles' worth of smooth and rough roads, we'd trust our phones to the mounts from Quad Lock. Dave Atkinson, The best 2019/2020 front lights for cycling, Road.cc, October 30, 2019The Geeky Cyclist, December 6, 2019Switchback Travel Staff, Best Bike Lights of 2019, Switchback Travel, May 24, 2019We Test Lights Frequently Asked Questions, WeTestLights.comPeter White, The Perfect Dynohub Headlight, Peter White Cycles, April 23, 2014Darlene Edewaard, graduate student at Clemson University, email interviews, August 29, 2017Joe Lindsey, The Science of Being Seen: A Guide to Safer Riding, Bicycling, January 12, 2017Frequently Asked Bike Light Questions, Bike Light DatabaseThe Bicycling Test Team, The Best Bike Lights for Every Kind of Ride, Bicycling, October 7, 2019 We are still looking for a headlight that can maintain over 200 lumens of brightness for at least 90 minutes, with a mount that doesn't suck. This is somewhat mitigated by the inclusion of a GoPro mount adapter and a helmet mount in the box. If you want the absolute brightest taillight with the longest battery—and you live in an arid climate: The Cygolite Hotshot Pro 200 USB was a Wirecutter top pick for a long time, and if you don't often ride in the rain, it should work just fine. Rather than focus on boosting one or two LEDs to maximum brightness, it has a whole strip of 20 tiny LEDs grouped closely together to shine in unison. These kinds of features can be convenient, but they don't make lights any brighter or more visible and aren't worth the premium for most commuters. The features that constitute a great taillight follow a similar set of priorities: All-angle visibility: Taillights aren't meant to light the road behind you. It has a daytime flash mode. Photo: Michael MurtaughRoad.cc concludes in its 8/10 review that the Dayblazer 65 is a "usable and bright small-form-factor rear light" and that "it's great value and well worth your attention." We agree. Click here to learn more about the Hilton Honors American Express Surpass Card. Page 3Because we opted for a mediator and never had to get lawyers, see a judge, or spend time in court, our divorce was no doubt a relatively painless experience. No problem: The 33-pound bike is light enough to take up and down the stairs. If you live in a midsize to large US city with an active bike culture, odds are, at least one shop in your area will be able to help you out. For example, the Lumina Micro 850 starts out at 924 lumens and then begins dimming immediately. And, Brooklyn Bicycle Co. uses high-quality parts from top manufacturers. Thankfully, the best lights we've found automatically remember and default to their last used mode so you don't have to do this every time. Articulating mount: Not all handlebars are straight, so it helps to be able to rotate the mount so that it faces the direction you want it to. Battery-life indicator: This doesn't need to be anything fancy, just a way of letting you know when to charge the light. These lights assist riders in seeing ahead of them as well as in being seen from ahead, behind, and either side. Of course, not everyone is looking to redeem their points at a low-category hotel. Love yourself enough to spend a little more on something that'll actually hold up against light pollution. The NiteRider Sabre 80 has only three modes (low, medium, and high), but it handles those three modes well, providing decent visibility at 50 feet. That extra money buys you extra brightness (1,300 lumens max) that is useful only for recreational trail riding at night, as well as Bluetooth integration (the ability for commuters. Zoom mode oscillates smoothly between low and medium brightness to help you stand out in urban settings, and SteadyPulse achieves the same effect by blasting two short flashes followed by a long one on medium brightness. Bicycling magazine published a fresh comparison-test review in 2020. Additionally, the data from We Test Lights on brightness and battery life based on controlled testing conducted by engineers using calibrated equipment under the ANSI FL-1 standard is an indispensable resource for comparing manufacturers' claimed specs against their lights' actual performance. Flashing modes help you stand out but don't help you see. The first is to work closely with a shop that's willing to ship stuff to you. NiteRider has since introduced the Sabre 110, which is stronger and does have flashing and pulsing modes; we've added it to our list of lights to test. The Cygolite Hotshot Micro 30 USB offers many of the same modes as its Hotshot big siblings. However, this style of mount also prevents you from aiming the light anywhere but straight forward, a dealbreaker for us. As for the Blitzu Gator 390, we need to preface this mention by saying we would not buy this Amazon best-seller, nor would we recommend it to anyone else. (After some rummaging around, we did eventually find a USB-A slot that could accommodate it, but still.) Second, we found it easy—too easy—to dislodge the main body of the light from its mount by mistake and send it flying while fiddling with our bike's seat or saddlebag. Knog's Blinder Mob V Kid Grid is comparable to the Cygolite Hotrod 50 in almost every way. Setup is also far more complicated than simply screwing a mount onto your handlebars or slapping a strap on—you have wires to splice, tires and tubes to swap, mounting points to consider, and so on. Photo: Michael MurtaughYou can clip this waterproof blinker onto your clothes or bag or mount it to any part of a bike without the hub it's wired to, and the hub is built into your wheel, thieves have little incentive to mess with your stuff. When we say "dynamo," we're not talking about those little doodads that look like a hot-sauce bottle and rub against a bike tire's sidewall to generate a modicum of barely usable light. The downside to dynamos is that the traits that make them unappealing to thieves are the same traits that make it prohibitively difficult to recommend one specific setup for a broad group of people. If you're like us, you've wondered whether that can possibly be true. On its own, it has a built-in clip that you can attach to clothes or bags. You can now switch it through three modes—high erratic pulse (six-hour battery life), low erratic pulse (six-hour b \$5,000 instead. They are not, however, very bright. This is in the name of daytime visibility, but that degree of brightness doesn't come cheap, and it can be downright dangerous at night. It's not a bad light, but the included quick-release mount is dreadful. This affordable strap-on taillight is an exceptional value and easily mounts to almost any part of a bike.*At the time of publishing, the price was \$27. The Cygolite Hotrod 50 USB is our pick for the best taillight because it's clearly visible from almost any angle, even in broad daylight. This sounds neat but has little utility in the real world. Either of the other two modes is fine for nighttime use. Here, the Dayblazer 65 is attached to one of our bike's seat stays—the two skinny metal tubes—with one of the included silicone loops. Any more than that is just overkill. Solid, strobe, and pulse modes; A great light should at the very least offer a low and high solid mode, some kind of visually arresting strobing or flashing mode, and an oscillating glow. But the reflectors make it appear brighter at night—especially on its flashing modes. We also like that the Dayblazer 65 has multiple mounting options. Add in the generous category bonuses on everyday spending, and earning free nights becomes even easier. However, it lacks a steady-on mode, which can be useful in group rides. This model offers one mode (erratic pulse, eight hours); the motion-activated light turns off by itself when you stop moving. This is a solid card for those who want elite status perks and the ability to rack up free nights quickly. He has been participating in this Wirecutter review in one way or another since it was first assigned in 2013—including the time senior staff writer Eve O'Neill had her lights confiscated by the police in the middle of testing that bright also include ambient-light sensors to prevent them from blinding fellow road users in dark settings.) For a red taillight, we found that a maximum brightness of 50 lumens was more than enough to stand out during the day, and that 30 lumens or so was already very bright at night. It uses a combination of hard plastic and stretchy rubber in a way that highlights the worst characteristics of both materials; it makes installing the light and finding a tight grip difficult. Shops that offer this kind of service tend to specialize in higher-end setups, and shipping wheels can be pretty costly, so you can expect to pay at least \$500 to go this route (and possibly a good bit more for shipping). The fact that the Micro-USB charging port is located on the back of the unit, where it's covered by a rubber seal and protected by the body of the bike when in use, makes it less likely for road spray to infiltrate and short-circuit the unit—a problem we've run into over the years while long-term testing the Cygolite Hotshot and Hotshot Pro (two previous top picks). The Hotrod 50's three-and-a-half-hour battery life on high flash mode is low compared with the five hours you can expect from the similarly designed Serfas Thunderbolt 2.0 or Cygolite's single-LED Hotshot line of taillights, but that's still enough to last most commuters a week between charges, so we don't think it's that big of an issue. The Hotrod 50 also lacks a clip for attaching to clothing or bags. No matter what you are wearing, the step-through frame allows you to get on and off easily. You'll also find a rubber-strap mount that you can dock it into. Drivers will ignore it, and so should you. It's finicky to install and operate (doing so involves twisting a dial a bunch of times every time you move the lights, it's flimsy feeling, and multiple owners report that their lights suffer from a much steeper decline in brightness over time than similarly equipped and priced lights. But he was able to replace it under warranty (for the cost of shipping); it then broke again after he used it for just a few weeks. With that in mind, we did not see a reason to replicate existing testing only to come to the same conclusions. Instead, our testing focused on usability and the experience of riding with the lights in person. Cycling About, a blog maintained by an Australian bike tourer who has traveled more than 100,000 kilometers around the world by bike, has the best basic overview of how to get started in choosing your components. Even so, if there was any upside to all that, it's that we were able to save a substantial amount of money by working with a mediator instead of a lawyer. It appreciated that the chain remains in place when switching gears, which makes it easy to operate and maintain. The site and its associated testing are operated by Light & Motion's internal testing gears, which makes it easy to operate and maintain. The site and its associated testing are operated by Light & Motion's internal testing gears, which makes it easy to operate and maintain. The site and its associated testing are operated by Light & Motion's internal testing gears, which makes it easy to operate and maintain. The site and its associated testing are operated by Light & Motion's internal testing gears, which makes it easy to operate and maintain. transparency. This modular system allows you to choose between three light heads of varying brightnesses and three battery packs of varying capacities—all of which can also charge your phone. But its solid black border inhibits off-angle visibility, and it often costs about twice as much as the Cygolite model. The Cygolite Dice TL 50 USB is a basic, single-LED taillight that does its job but doesn't stand out in any meaningful way. The Micro-USB charging port is on the light, which means it's pressed up against your bike when it's in use and protected from the elements. My wife and I split a lot of the furniture and other household items, but starting out as a newly single guy for the first time in 30 years is sort of like being born — you are starting fresh. They're meant to be as conspicuous as possible—without being annoyingly bright to those who witness them. If you don't already have a good idea of what you're doing, this process is best handled with the help of a professional. If all of that sounds expensive, that's because it is. Pros: Comfortable to ride, heavy-duty construction, attractive design, the price includes assembly Cons: Only has three speeds Buy the Franklin 3 from Brooklyn Bicycle Co. for \$499.99 Read our full guide to the best commuter bikes you can buy. Page 2Welcome bonus: 130,000 Hilton Honors bonus points and a free weekend night reward after you spend \$4,000 in purchases in the first four months. This Amazon review and dozens like it indicate that his was not a unique experience. Then again, for about \$125, it better be. The most helpful reviewer loved that she could maneuver her bad leg over the step-through crossbar. Switchback Travel's review features thorough testing across a wide range of models, including "smart" lights, although its picks are aimed more at bike enthusiasts than commuters. Photo: Michael MurtaughThese lights offer all-around visibility at night and during the day, but the headlight (110 lumens) does nothing to illuminate a dark path ahead of you.*At the time of publishing, the price was \$50. Anyone who has thought about buying bike lights on Amazon has seen the sub-\$20 sets of lights that claim to have specs as good as the brand-name models. So long as you're moving (above 5 mph or so), the hub sends enough power to the light to produce a visible beam. Its rubber-strap mount isn't limited by a bracket and can attach to almost any part of the rear half of a bicycle—including seat stays, which are typically too thin for most light mounts to grip onto. For good measure, we tested a few of those Amazon best sellers that are so cheap, they seem too good to be true. The shop's website also offers beam pattern images for all the lights it sells, as well as email and phone contact info to get the process started. Unlike in Europe, where dynamos are mainstream and can accommodate a wide range of needs and budgets, American dynamo demand is primarily driven by enthusiasts who are willing to pay a premium for high-performing gear. Although we don't cover such accessories in this review, we may look into them at a future date. As always, we began our research this time around by taking a look at what our colleagues at other publications had already established in their reviews and testing. (In 2020, the Gator 390 vanished from Amazon's pages, and the Gator 320 appeared; it's less powerful but costs more—go figure.) Knog's Lil' Cobber Rear Bike Light hugs your bike's seat post, offering wider visibility from the sides than our pick. And because the lamps themselves are much larger than your typical all-in-one torch light, the mirrors and lenses that shape the beam are bigger and more effective at focusing the light where you need it. Additionally, many of the lights we tested already comply with ANSI FL-1 standards. Its battery life on high flash mode, just three and a half hours, could be a bit longer, but overall it's a great light at an affordable price. Most newer taillights these days (including some from Cygolite) rely on only one or two bulbs, adding parabolic reflectors and larger batteries in an effort to chase ever higher lumen counts and the ability to advertise them as being "visible from up to 2 km away." That's not the Hotrod 50. But, it particularly liked that the Franklin 3 has a sealed bottom bracket, a chainguard, a durable KMC chain, and fenders to help with long-term durability and to keep from kicking up mud and water. But not all cyclists need that capability. Both LEDs are enhanced by parabolic reflectors and are covered by a clear dome-like case, which allows light to leak out in every direction, not just directly backward. Several buyers liked the fast and easy ordering and pick-up process. Where it falls short, though, is in its rubber mount, one of the flimsier designs we saw in testing. The Bontrager Flare R City emits a wide, strong beam for its size, and it has only two modes to sort through: steady and flashing modes makes sense for nighttime riding but greatly impedes daytime visibility. If you need USB-C charging and a swappable battery: Consider the Serfas True 1300 TSL-1300M, which is, as far as we know, your only option. Still, we might recommend the Cobber as a good alternative were it not for two failings. Wirecutter senior editor Christine Ryan has seen her Urban 500 fly off her handlebars after hitting a bump on multiple occasions—and we've seen the same issue reported in customer reviews. The fact that they're encased behind a domed enclosure allows their glow to reach onlookers from almost any angle. If you want one light to do it all, including trail riding, this seems like a good option, but commuters are better off applying that amount of money toward a dynamo setup. The compact Cygolite Dash 460 USB performed very well in our visibility testing, but it can't adjust side to side, and it's liable to tip forward when you use the on/off button. Photo: Michael MurtaughTwenty LEDs are more visible than one—especially during the daytime. It's highly effective at cutting through bright daylight or even dense British fog. Over the years, multiple studies (PDF) have shown that using daytime running lights (DRLs) on cars can significantly lower crash rates, which is why many countries (but not the US) require all newly sold cars to use them. They never run out of battery power because they don't need batteries. When we say "dynamo," we're not talking about those little doodads that look like a hot-sauce bottle and rub against a bike tire's sidewall to generate a modicum of barely usable light. Here's the Dayblazer 65, with its silicone loop, off the bike. Kitchen table, silverware, dishes, a TV, bathroom supplies, a mop — there was almost no end to the mundane things I had to buy in my first few weeks on my own. We see little reason to invest in a light that isn't fully waterproof as a precautionary measure. Strobe and pulsing patterns: Solid beams are helpful for lightscape. But in recent years, some minor flaws revealed by our long-term testing—as well as increased competitive pressure—have pushed it out of the top tier. The experience was relentlessly, soul-crushingly sad, and nearly two years afterwards, I honestly still haven't stopped grieving. But if you want that flexibility, consider one of our other picks. There are single-, three-, and seven-speed versions of the Franklin. The second problem is the mount. The bike's looks also received numerous positive comments. There's also some evidence to suggest that these kinds of lighting modes boost rider safety. Michael Zhao is a daily bike commuter who has been building and riding bikes since he was 13. Nevertheless, we still think that anyone seeking to commit more than \$100 on a rechargeable light should look seriously into investing in a dynamo setup instead. The easiest way to navigate all this is to establish a relationship with a local bike shop that is familiar with dynamo lighting setups. She also felt like a kid again thanks to the enjoyable and comfortable riding experience. And be aware that the Hotshot Pro 200 is now available in a redesigned, "flexible mount" version, which customer reviews report is more prone to slipping compared with the tried-and-true hard mount (the version we tested)—steer clear of it. The Knog PWR series has a clever design that should've stayed as a clever design. Because the cover is now made of plastic instead of rubber, the hinge weakens over time and eventually breaks However, its lack of a flashing or pulsing mode is a dealbreaker. We wouldn't tell you to avoid it, but it's not the first (or second, or even third) light we'd recommend. Light & Motion's Vya Smart Taillight is the company's set-it-and-forget-it option. We'll keep using the new one to see if it stays attached any better.) You can avoid the problem by installing the (included) screw-in security pin, but at that point it's no longer a quick-release mount. We found that a light of about 200-plus lumens was bright enough to be noticeable during the day, and that flashing modes were more conspicuous than solid or pulsing modes. Side cutouts or lights: Models that have cutouts or additional LEDs on either side of a headlight provide more visibility from more angles than those with a single wide beam alone. Waterproofing (not just water resistance): Light & Motion was among the first to release a fully submersible IP67 commuter bike light with its Urban series, but now almost every major light maker offers waterproofing at no extra cost. Also, although you don't need a cable to charge it—the built-in USB plug goes directly into a USB-A port—we found that if you don't seat the light just right in the port, it won't charge at all, and that's something you don't want to discover right when you're about to head home at night. The newer Light & Motion Vya Switch feels like it was made in direct response to some of our nitpicks about the original. (Full disclosure: This is the shop that guide writer Michael Zhao used for his own wheels.) And in Portland, Oregon, Joe Bike offers a wide range of dynamo components, including more bargain-oriented brands. Your other option is to do your own research to determine what kind of wheel you need, what your mounting choices are, and which light(s) you'd like to use. It doesn't have a strip of LEDs, but it does have one at either end of its body. The Industry Outsider tested the Bedford 3 and Franklin 3 and recommended both. But we can confirm that, unlike the anemic Ascher two-light combo, the Blitzu Gator 390 punched well above its sub-\$20 sticker price. And it's waterproof (IP67), not merely water resistant—a rarity among taillights. The Dayblazer 65's two-bulb design isn't quite as noticeable as the Hotrod 50's strip of LEDs during the daytime. If you go this route, you can get a good setup sent from Europe for under \$250 including shipping, but returns are prohibitively difficult, so proceed with caution. And we're still looking at taillight options that deliver at least three hours between charges (Flashlight options that deliver at least three hours between charges a circular area, which means a lot of brightness ends up in fellow road users' eyes.) Daytime visibility: Although early studies indicate that running lights during the daytime may help prevent accidents, the evidence is far from conclusive. In an interview, Light & Motion CEO Dan Emerson cited this Ford Motor Company report (PDF), saying, "The data show that flashing lights create awareness but they destroy the driver's ability to judge distance to the lights." Last-mode memory: Having more modes is good for versatility but annoying when you have to shuffle through a dozen settings just to get to the one you want. A dynamic lighting mode that maintains a steady beam yet changes enough to be conspicuous is helpful for riding in urban environments, where bike lights compete with street lamps, house lights, LED advertisements, and other sources of light pollution. Modern dynamos are integrated into the hub of a bike's front wheel, and the best ones rotate almost as freely as a regular wheel. It's quite common for various bike accessories (or objects you might put on top of a rear rack) to block the intended mounting point for a hard plastic mount (typically the seatpost); a strap mount in contrast, gives you the flexibility to move the light to an unimpeded location on the seat stay or a rack stay. "Bright enough": It's possible to buy a taillight that puts out as much as 200 lumens these days. However, guide writer Michael Zhao saw his fail after he rode in the rain. Photo: Michael MurtaughThe Hotrod 50 also has all the flashing modes you could want out of a taillight. The difference now is that almost every bike light available fits those criteria, so it takes a bit more for a light to stand out. These were a few of the more important differences we kept an eye on as we decided which headlights to test: All-in-one torch style: Bike lights that rely on separate power sources (such as an external battery pack or dynamo generator hub) can be brighter and last longer, but for commuting use, a torch that has a built-in rechargeable battery makes the most sense because you have no cables to fuss with and you can easily put it on and take it off to avoid theft. Extra-wide beam: The primary reason to buy a dedicated bike light instead of a flashlight holster is to get a wide-angle beam that directs most of the brightness to the ground in front of you—this helps you see ahead without blinding oncoming traffic. Each of those lasts about six hours. The net effect is a light that isn't any brighter than its closest competitors but is a lot more noticeable from many more angles. However—and this is a big caveat—it is effectively useless for lighting the path ahead of you. The Hotrod 50 was more noticeable from most angles than other features were the same for the two bikes. The first flaw is its fragile charging-port cover. This model is easy to replace under warranty, but other lights with a rubber cover that we tested over the same time period haven't had this flaw. Style, comfort, and durability are the three main foci of Brooklyn Bicycle Co. The Franklin 3 embodies all of these characteristics. Cardholders receive instant Gold elite status, with the ability to upgrade to Diamond after spending \$40,000 in a calendar year. Photo: Michael MurtaughThe biggest knock against the Dayblazer 65, and the main reason it wasn't in contention for our top pick, is that it has only three modes: high flash (65 lumens for three hours), and low flash (30 lumens for six hours). And since bike lights last only about an hour or two on high, the idea that you would steal battery from your light to power your phone seems impractical—especially if you consider that a phone battery pack costs \$20 whereas these packs start at \$50. Offer ends August 28, 2019. "I've spotted other people's at a good 200 metres when driving along dual carriageways on grey midmornings," writes Shaun Audane in his Road.cc review. However, although both lights claim to provide 50 lumens, our pick is noticeably brighter when you look at it from directly behind. Annual bonus: Weekend night reward after you spend \$15,000 in a calendar year Category bonuses: 12x points at Hilton hotels, 6x points at restaurants, 26 free nights. Bike Light Database remains a good resource for controlled testing and beam-pattern photos, although it hasn't seen a proper update in several years. If you go this route, you can expect to pay at least \$400 for a new front wheel—which will likely need to be custom built—a decent set of lights, and the labor to get everything working. If no shops near you can help, you have two options. Explains Lindsey: "Conspicuity is seeing something, conspicuity is seeing what something is, which can change how we respond to it." So if your goal is to get drivers to behave towards you as a person on a bicycle instead of a mere object in the road, it helps to take further measures. As to what those further measures may be, in that same article, Rick Tyrrell, PhD, director of the Visual Perception and Performance Lab at the University of Clemson, explains in an interview that human sight is "is exquisitely sensitive to biological motion," and recommends placing reflectors or lights on parts that move when you're biking, such as your knees or feet. As such, pure brightness doesn't matter as much as the ability to be seen from more positions. Photo: Michael MurtaughWater-resistance information isn't published on the box or in any product listing, but Cygolite marketing manager Andrew Ibanez told us in an email interview that the Hotrod 50 is IP64 water resistant, which is typical of most taillights.

