

ALCHEMY

{Speedplay SYZR}

There are few products that truly stand out to a tech editor. More often than not, we draw fine lines and measure by the half-gram. But the moments that truly surprise us are why we do this. The first time we shifted a Shimano Di2 front derailleur, out of the saddle at 800 watts, was a jaw-dropper. Rolling out on Zipp 808 tubulars was another. And just last month, finally clicking into a set of long-awaited Speedplay SYZR pedals, provided just such a moment. It's a Shimano SPD killer.

The SYZR is Speedplay's answer to the 'cross or MTB pedal. Pedals designed for nasty conditions need to do all the things a road pedal does, but at the same time clear dirt, mud and debris for the inevitable lousy conditions and dismounts. SPDs and two-bar pedal designs do half of this very well. They clear mud, providing consistent clip-in and clip-out performance, but compared to road pedals, they provide a wobbly, vague power platform. This mediocre performance has become the accepted norm.

The reasons are simple. A stable platform is created with tight tolerances, and tight tolerances with light materials hate nasty conditions. If two hardened-steel surfaces meet in the wet and mud, they "cold weld," making it tough to separate them. That's bad when those two surfaces are cleat and pedal, which is why SPDs and two-bar pedals rely on power transfer through squishy shoe lugs. This presented Speedplay with a major problem. Everything

it does well—dual sided entry, micro-adjustable float, stable pedaling platform—is due to exacting tolerances.

The solution is akin to alchemy. Knowing that the elimination of tight tolerances for a stable power platform was non-negotiable, Speedplay had an "eureka" moment. Instead of steel on steel, it used steel on ceramic to give the SYZR that unmistakable Speedplay feel. Like the ZERO road pedal, the magic is in the cleat. Ceramic rollers lock you securely into place, but will not cold weld with the steel pedal, for consistent release in any conditions. The pedals are simply immune to mud, yet provide more stable power transfer, by light years, than SPDs or two-bar pedals.

Of course, there is more to the pedals than just ceramic rollers and stable power transfer. The cleats use two steel outriggers to guide you into the pedal, making quick remounts easy no matter how hypoxic you might be. They feature micro-float adjust and are, of course, double sided. Speedplay has just made the last 25 years of MTB- and 'cross-pedal development obsolete and it takes a single ride in the SYZR to realize it. \$229 (stainless), \$420 (titanium); 312g per pair (stainless), 275g per pair (titanium); speedplay.com 

