

## Harmonic elliptical chainrings

### first look

Chris Bell's Eggrings have been around for some time now and for those who want the elliptical option — and can afford the high price — they have been the only game in town since the demise of Shimano's Biopace rings (which Chris always said were aligned the wrong way round).

Now Harmonic, a small development company in Monte Carlo, has launched its own elliptical version.

Properly-aligned elliptical rings are meant to lengthen and hence optimise your power stroke with each pedal revolution, and also even out dead spots. With a round chainring, so the theory goes, your power transfer goes through peaks and troughs, with peak power occurring for only a brief portion of the complete pedal rotation. With elliptical rings, peak power is meant to be sustained for a longer period, and the power drop-off is significantly reduced.

Okay, so that's the theory, how's the ride? Well, the Harmonic rings prompted a reaction of 'that will never work.' I've tried Eggrings before and the Harmonic rings ride just the same, ie they feel very odd at first.

But in the interests of journalism I stuck with them. Was it worth it? Surprisingly, yes, but not without reservations. On the road I was able to use a higher gear and make less effort for the same speed, and my legs did not feel like lead after a day's ride on an MTB. The rings also seemed to help when accelerating away from a standstill, an impression confirmed by others who tried them. They also help off-road on slow climbs but at high speed the pedal stroke becomes very choppy. You do need to be pretty close to top speed for this, but it's frustrating when you pedal out at 48mph.

Chainrings are not exactly a glamour component but many have felt moved to express an opinion about them, mainly negative and unprintable. If this product is to be a success the company will need to overcome a lot of prejudice; after the fiasco of Biopace it will be difficult to convince people that they work.

All in all they are a good idea that needs a little refinement. These were 'development samples', sent across to us from Monte Carlo. There are no prices available as yet and no UK distributor.

*Chris Bush*

