

# ROLF & MTBAction USA



## **Rolf entra nel mondo della MTB.**

la prestigiosa rivista MTB Action in edizione americana ha testato le fantastiche ruote artigianali made in USA - ROLF Ralos9 29".

Tale è il livello qualitativo che vengono perfino messe a confronto con la resa di ruote in carbonio.

## Product Test: Rolf Prima Ralos 9 Wheelset

Posted Date: 8/29/2013



# MBA FIELD TEST



Rolf Prima is known for their road bike wheelsets, but they have recently expanded into the mountain bike market with their Ralos 9 wheelset. Utilizing proven resources and hand-building the wheels right in Eugene, Oregon, Rolf Prima wants to ensure that the quality of their products is something riders will notice.



**Tech features:**

The Ralos 9 wheelset is designed for cross-country use. It borrows some technology from industry leaders and incorporates some Rolf Prima signature technologies as well.

At first glance, the most noticeable feature of the Ralos 9s is the paired spoke-lacing pattern. Rolf Prima explains that their trademark lacing pattern neutralizes the lateral forces of the left- and right-side spokes, which are naturally trying to pull the wheels out of true. According to Rolf Prima, neutralizing these forces allows them to use fewer spokes and achieve a lower weight.

To further lower the spoke count, the Ralos hubs, made in the USA by White Industries, use Rolf Prima's Differential Flange Diameter technology. According to Prima, this spreads the driving load more evenly across the rear, thus engaging more spokes in the pulling process.

Rolf Prima recognizes the benefits of tubeless technology in the mountain bike world and wisely licensed Stan's NoTubes tubeless technology on the Ralos. The wheels come with tape installed and tubeless-ready valves.

The Ralos is available in either standard QR or 15-millimeter thru-axle options up front and 135-millimeter standard QR or 142x12-millimeter rear thru-axle options. Our Ralos wheelset for 15-millimeter front and 142x12-millimeter rear thru-axle options weighed 3.7 pounds with the tape installed. The wheelset retails for \$900.

**Field test results:**

Cross-country riders have a fairly straightforward list of demands when it comes to wheels. They need them to be stiff, smooth (as in zero friction) and as light as possible. Additionally, they have to be durable enough stand up to the occasional hit that even cross-country riders are bound to experience.

Mounting tires on the Ralos wheels was easy, and we appreciated that they came pre-taped for tubeless use. We have long been fans of Stan's NoTubes' wheelsets, and given that the Ralos wheels essentially use a Stan's rim, they felt familiar right away.

On the trail, the Ralos wheels felt plenty snappy and lively. The freehub engagement was reliable and trouble-free. We've ridden numerous carbon wheelsets over the years, and the Ralos wheels don't approach that level of stiffness; however, given the cost of carbon fiber wheels, the Ralos wheelset is a great value. You get a lot of performance bang for your buck.

Of course, the true test of wheels is how well they are holding up after a year of hard use. Sadly, few wheelsets ever stay on our bikes that long. During our test period, however, the Ralos wheels ran true and didn't require any additional tensioning.

While the Ralos 9 wheelset performed as well as expected, the benefits of their proprietary lacing pattern are tough to distinguish on the trail. Given that some options, such as Stan's Crest ZTR wheelset, cost a few hundred dollars less, the Ralos 9 wheels will not appeal to everyone. But, for those who are willing to pay a premium for a product that is hand-built in the U.S. and are intrigued by the uniqueness of the lacing pattern, the Ralos 9 is a solid first offering from Rolf Prima. Welcome to the mountain bike world.

<b>MBA FIELD TEST RATING</b>	
★★★★★	<b>Perfection</b>
★★★★☆	<b>Delivers above-average value and performance</b>
★★★☆☆	<b>Recommended for intended application</b>
★★☆☆☆	<b>Shows potential but has drawbacks</b>
★☆☆☆☆	<b>Save your hard-earned bucks</b>