

19 October 2009

**[bikefix Initial Review: Effetto Mariposa CaffelateX sealant](#)**  
by Marc of Bikefix.net



I've been putting off this review for quite some time. It's not because I have nothing good to say about CaffelateX- it's that I have so little to say. Generally, it's my opinion that boring products can make for bad reviews but very good riding. That's certainly the case with tire sealant- if it's doing its job, you shouldn't have to think about it at

all. Sealant-wise, drama is something I tend to avoid. It wasn't until asked recently about CaffelateX that I thought about the stuff that'd been keeping air in my tubeless-ready (rather than true tubeless) rear tire for three months. The tire itself is starting to show some wear and slip, so I decided to turn it around to the "traction" rather than "speed" position. I was impressed with what I found.

As regular Stans users know, that company's sealant tends to need refreshing every few months. It's not a bad thing, but as the sealant fills little (and big) holes, it is depleted, and hot weather seems to speed the process up. What impressed me when I went to turn my tire 'round was the fact that there was still liquid CaffelateX inside. A *lot* of liquid CaffelateX. Of course, Geax's TNT casing deserves some credit, but as far as I can tell, there's just as much sealant inside my tire as there was before a summer of hot desert riding.

The main reason that I decided to try CaffelateX was the stories I was hearing about the way that ammonia-rich sealants can corrode aluminum. This isn't a big deal when rims' protective anodization is intact, but can be a very big deal when the sealant finds a hole (such as a spoke or valve hole) or scratch.

I'd also had sealants cause trouble with previous generations of Schwalbe tires (the tires de-laminate, allowing the knobs to tear off) that has been attributed to my sealant as well. I haven't had that problem in quite some time, but when it does happen, it can be expensive. Effetto Mariposa claim that, thanks to an ammonia-free

formulation, their sealant is "100% tire and rim friendly."



As demonstrated at distributor Canitoe Road's Interbike stand, CaffelateX has the interesting property of foaming to fill the entire rotating wheel. The company claims that this property makes the sealant better able to close sidewall punctures. It's a neat thought, but I can't remember the last time I saw a sidewall cut *smaller* than 6mm (the largest size cut Effetto Mariposa claims CaffelateX will seal on mountain bikes). In fact, most of my sidewall cuts are more or less catastrophic. I could imagine the foaming action meaning less sealant is available at the outside of the tire (where most sealable punctures occur), but as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the proof of the sealant is in the sealing- when all is said and done, I've had no issues whatsoever with how CaffelateX seals punctures. I haven't even *noticed* any punctures. All that I have noticed is that my tires are ready to go whenever I am and rarely need topping off.

While, at \$14 for 250ml (3-5 tires' worth) and \$30 for 1,000ml (four times that), CaffelateX is around 40% more expensive than Stan's sealant, my impression is that it will last longer and carries fewer risks to tire and rim. Is it worth it? Given the price of good tires and lightweight rims, I can't help but think so. The fact that it stays liquid (and thus effective) longer than other sealants I've tried also means that it's more likely to be there when I need it. The less tire- and sealant-related drama I have to deal with, the better.

*marc*