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Rapid R A Fuck

BMC TRAILFOX

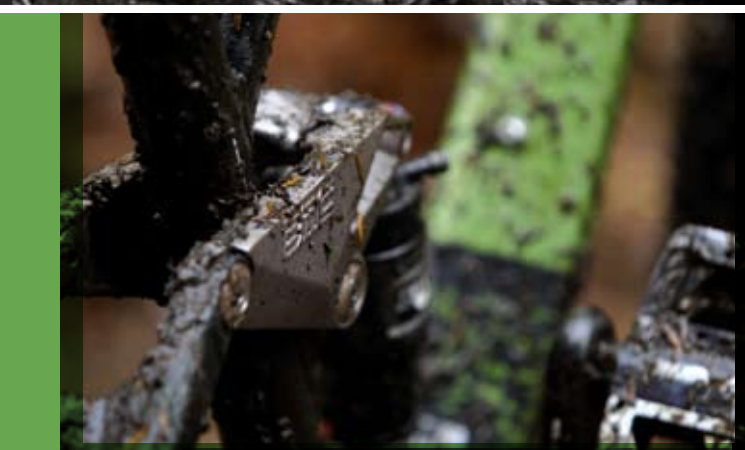
The Trailfox might well want to cunningly capture the fast line of dirty conifer woods with its balanced 150mm travel and military paintwork, but hell it still has a whole bunch of townie acronyms giving the frame a make over. There are some scholastic levels at work here – aps, nbp, isc. Such stuff obviously works on websites but how exactly did it cope in the shit and muck of wettest Wales?



SPEC

Sizes	BMC Trail Fox	Brakes	Avid Elixir X.0, 185mm
Fork	Fox Talas RL FIT, 120-150mm	Handlebar	Easton Haven, Low Rise
Rear Shock	Fox RP2 (RL)	Stem	Easton Haven
Gears	2 x 10	Seatpost	Easton Haven
Crankset	Sram X.0, 39-26	Saddle	Scor
Cassette	Sram PG, 12-36	Hubs	Easton Haven
Front Derailleur	Sram X.0	Rims	Easton Haven
Rear Derailleur	Sram X.0	Tyres	Schwalbe, Nobby Nic 26x2.40
Shifter	Sram X.0	Colour	Deerhunter/Deep Forest, Matte
		Sizes	XS/S/M/L/XL

Price: Trailfox TF01 in £3849.99
www.evanscycles.com



It's 7.30, Friday night, just driven back from Afan. I'm keen to get the first impressions of the BMC down in ink but feel impelled to drive the approach work down first – the usual chit chat about componentry, design features that every company seems to put their own spin on. This frame is laced with memo's to the rider – natural born postmount, initial load indicator, single bone, advanced pivot system, full travel range, swiss design and development (except without a capital S). Just bear with me a minute.

Listen, the reality is it's a pair of welded aluminium triangles linked together by two one-piece links and four pivots. There are many similar designs on the market, each claiming to do similar things. In the case of the BMC it offers a suspension system that "ensures comfort, unsurpassed traction and efficient power transmission in any biking situation."

Maybe it's the mean wind in the air today but this bike makes me want to take a tin of black paint to it...although you know what, my first impressions have since gone. I've actually got used to this bike – it sits low, slack...and soon its gonna be very black...to match its darker side.

In fact its primary side. Why? Because the Trail Fox is an all-action bike so much more suited to the murky depths of our increasingly dis-repaired trail centres or searching around the base of conifer trees rather than poncing around on websites. Uphill? There's a fair bit of movement on the rear of the BMC. An active rear hunts for grip yes, but in this instance it transfers into significant movement on the crank. Yes you can deal with it and as mentioned it's excellent at clawing into the hill, but it's debateable whether its efficiency is affected. Surely its 28lb weight is where the conversation should go, because that's pretty light for a 150mm bike.

And the cockpit. Even on the medium it's pretty short with a 50mm stem that we swapped in, and we're looking to get a lay back seat post and go out to 60mm upfront to give more space and leverage on climbs. The stupid short bars were slung out early doors, and whilst on the subject, the Nobby Nics were also binned. We peeled on a pair of 'first ride' Continental Mountain Kings – the best trail centre tyre? Not far off I reckon. Point is old Mr Fox needs a bit of cash forking out to get it ready for the things it does best.

Still climbing, with suspension continually having a good working out there was a small amount of crank clipping, although on the suspension sag indicator the ride was still on the hard side at 35%. Nevertheless this hinted at good cornering at higher speeds, but possibly a weak circuit for harder hits.

But it was very good news. On the descents the numbers really begin to come alive. The suspension JUST holds on the descents providing an incredibly stable ride with endless traction. It's very, very good, and quite different to what I was expecting – and the harder you ride it the less it moves, holding perfect poise as you hit berms, corners, fly-offs, rocks, at full tilt.

Whatever the factors at work are that enable this, its stability on downhills and in corners is exceptional. The steering is precise and on the nail, the riding position is good, with very little noise. The BMC always goes in the exact direction and the Fox FIT fork is class.

With a full Sram X.0 groupset and Easton wheel combination the Trail Fox is almost ready for action – hard action. Pick up is good, pick-up and place is reasonable (although not quite as good as some), but then on square edge hitting and grip it rules. Given a choice of 150mm bikes this is certainly one I would go for without any hesitation. Nice to have a new bomber in the fleet. **✓**