

PLUS: THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED RAIN JACKET. SEE PAGE 24 →

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buyer's guide

SUMMER 2016



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Killer Deals!

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Mountain Biking's New Era
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Essential Summer Products

THE ULTIMATE GEAR RESOURCE

03 Mountain Bikes

Orbea Occam TR M-Ltd \$3,999 to \$7,999

BEST FOR: Going faster.

THE TEST: This full-carbon 29er epitomizes the new cross-country race bike, with more travel (120 millimeters instead of the traditional 100), wider bars for better control, and a slacker, shorter stance for descending confidence. "I never imagined a cross-country rig could be this self-possessed," marveled one tester. Historically known for staid wheelsets, DT Swiss came out swinging with the carbon XRC-1200s, which are nearly as light as road wheels yet exceptionally stiff. That said, we'd have liked for this rig to come with a Fox 34 fork, which would have added only a bit of weight: a few testers complained that the 32 felt anemic when pushed hard.

THE VERDICT: The Porsche Cayenne of mountain bikes. 24.8 lbs

Viral Skeptic \$5,000

BEST FOR: Rediscovering a love for rigid rigs.

THE TEST: From the mind of Niner founder Steve Domahidy, this 27.5+ oddity might be the plushest hardtail we've ever ridden. The titanium tubes feel like they're stuffed with Tempur-Pedic foam, and the three-inch WTB tires cut the rough like shag carpet. Inside the bottom bracket, the Pinion gearbox—a 12-speed with almost double the range of today's biggest 1x11 options—pushes a Gates Carbon Drive belt system. The result is a well-gearred machine that's quiet and low maintenance, with a relaxed posture that makes easy work of even the techiest trails. SRAM's new Level brakes proved reliable, and the Race Face Turbine dropper is a great addition. Our only quibble: it's quite heavy at more than 30 pounds.

THE VERDICT: An all-mountain play bike for your inner geek. 30.8 lbs

BMC Teamelite TE01 \$4,599 to \$10,599

BEST FOR: Winning XC races in comfort.

THE TEST: This carbon 29er is a race weapon, but thanks to an elastomer bumper built high on the seat stays and designed to take the edge off the rough, it dismantled the trail, not our backside. The setup yields just 15 millimeters of vertical compliance (also known as frame flex, a measure of comfort). That doesn't sound like much, but when one of our testers raced the Teamelite TE01 in a nine-hour endurance event, he experienced none of the backache or numb hands typical on a hardtail. Rear traction was grippier, too. The soft-tail design doesn't affect weight—the bike tipped the scales at just 20 pounds, even with the bar-mount-controlled 100-millimeter Fox Float fork. And while the SRAM XX1 1x11 drivetrain is the right choice for a racer, the 30-tooth front ring left us spinning out on flats.

THE VERDICT: Swiss precision and a touch of backside suspension equal a fast, surprisingly pleasant ride. 20 lbs

