

WHYTE REVIEWS

"Whyte's benchmark trail-blazer
is still on point"
T-130S 2018 on bikeradar.com/MBUK Magazine



"Whyte has again delivered the
blueprint for the next generation"
mbr Magazine

"WILL MAKE YOU BEG
TO RIDE EVERYDAY"
S-150C RS Pinkbike.com



"EXQUISITELY
BALANCED SUSPENSION
AND GEOMETRY"

S-150C Works in MBLUK Magazine



"Superb handling,
suspension, longevity and
aggro attitude"



T-130C RS What Mountain Bike

"The 905 is the best hardtail
we've ridden, period"
mbr Magazine



"Do believe the hype"

Wessex - Best in Test, BikesEtc Magazine



"FAST AND FUN IN EQUAL MEASURE..."

G-170 S Test Winner - mbr Magazine



DETAILS

ONE'S ENOUGH

Whyte were one of the first brands to offer a single-ring-specific frame, and it's the ideal host for SRAM's outstanding new GX Eagle group

WHAT A REVELATION

The 2018 RockShox Revelation is a totally new fork that's based on their 35mm stanchion Pike chassis for a much stiffer and more accurate ride

DURABILITY DETAILS

A threaded BB, rubber-sealed seatpost clamp and cable routing, and lifetime-warrantied pivot bearings make the Whyte as UK proof as possible

Winner
MBUK
WHYTE T-130 S
(2018)

WHYTE T-130S (2018)

£2,750 Whyte's benchmark trail blazer is still on point

Whyte haven't changed the multi-award-winning T-130 rolling chassis this year, but SRAM's latest transmission and suspension tweaks take its addictively flat-out performance up an extra level for 2018.

The frame

Behind the chunky convex head tube, the big top tube tapers and curves away over the top of the shock. A dramatically ovalised bridging piece connects it to the top of the seat tube, with Whyte's neat internal seatpost clamp set into the junction. The subtly S-shaped down tube has Crud Catcher as well as bottle cage bolts, with the controls entering into well-sealed plugs at the top end. Whyte's broad SCR (Single Chain Ring) main-pivot architecture is

carried by the threaded BB block. Out back, pocketed Boost dropouts lead onto tapered seatstays.

With a curved seat tube and no bridge, there's masses of clearance despite the short rear end and plump rubber on broad rims. The stays are directly aligned with the shock, with a chainstay pivot for neutral pedalling and a small, kinked, H-shaped link on the seat tube to alter the shock rate and orientation slightly. As usual with Whyte, all the pivot bearings are lifetime warrantied.

The kit

The 2018 T-130 S leaps up £200 compared to this year's bike but you're getting a lot for the extra outlay. SRAM's GX Eagle transmission, with its 500 per cent, 12-speed gear range, is levered round by stiff Truvativ Descendant cranks. Reasonably wide tyres sit on 29mm (internal) rims to give 58 and 59mm widths that help float the Whyte

JARGON

ROLLING CHASSIS

The combination of frame, wheels and tyres that makes up the heart of any vehicle before you fine tune it with the rest of the components.

CRUD CATCHER

Classic (although these days not that common) UK-designed mudguard that's mounted on the underside of the down tube.

over stutter bumps, with extra traction up front courtesy of WTB's 'High Grip' compound. The Whyte 760mm bar and 40mm stem (the large size gets a 50mm) are well-proportioned for rowdy riding, and the RockShox Reverb dropper post sorts seat height out with the press of a plunger.

Up front, the Revelation RC fork is stiff and well connected to the trail, through the sensitive initial stroke and into the impressively supportive mid stroke. While the 'Motion Control RC' damper isn't as sophisticated and seamlessly controlled as the 'Charger 2' cartridge in the Pike, the position-sensitive 'Rapid Recovery' rebound means you can push it hard before it starts bucking around. That only leaves the twin-pot SRAM Level brakes (which are less powerful and communicative than their quad-cylinder Guide stoppers) and the tendency of the tyres to crumple at low pressures to complain about.



IT FEELS BOTH GLUED TO THE GROUND AND INSTANTLY (AND ADDICTIVELY) RESPONSIVE, THROUGH THE STEERING AND THE EASE WITH WHICH YOU CAN THROW ITS WEIGHT AROUND

HIGHS

Super-responsive but surefooted handling

Suspension is easy to set up and offers impressive control

Mostly excellent, bang-up-to-date kit package for the money

LOWS

Heavy

Tyres and brakes hit their limits earlier than the rest of the bike

The ride

Those glitches can't stop the Whyte being an absolute blast on the trail though. Reach isn't as extreme as on the Mondraker, but at 467mm (large) it's long compared to most bikes, and the head angle is fairly slack at 67 degrees. The grippy front tyre on a wide rim and the low (330mm) BB add to the totally planted confidence. While it's heavy for a 130mm 650b bike and can't match the Trek and Scott 29ers for fast-rolling efficiency, the wheels are still responsive out of corners and the short (420mm) chainstays keep rear suspension reactions quick. The proven Whyte kinematics keep it connected and ready to drive hard or spin efficiently too, whatever the trail is doing.

Both the fork and the shock have a really broad bandwidth of acceptable tune too, so you can just set up basic sag and rebound and hit the trail flat out, rather than fussing around with pressures and settings until you find

the sweet spot. The result is a bike that paradoxically feels both glued to the ground and instantly (and addictively) responsive, through the steering and the ease with which you can throw its weight around on the trail. Even though the brakes and tyres aren't quite as good as the Trek's – which is what prevents a perfect score – our final head-to-head showdown days always ended up with the Whyte ahead on our favourite 'flat out, foot out' trails. If fun is your principal riding priority, then the T-130 S is still the affordable benchmark to beat.

MBLUK VERDICT

Dynamic-riding frame, max-fun geometry and kick-ass kit make the Whyte our full-gas fave



FOR A LITTLE MORE

WHYTE T-130 RS £3,150

If you're not a SRAM/RockShox fan, then the RS gets a Fox 34 fork and DPS shock, Race Face cranks and Shimano XT kit.



FOR A LITTLE LESS

WHYTE T-130 SR £2,250

The latest addition to the T-130 family has a Fox Rhythm fork, DPS rear shock and Shimano SLX/Race Face transmission.



Whyte T-130C RS

Whyte's carbon mainframe T-130 C firmly established itself as one of our all time favourite bikes last year. The 2017 edition adds the latest next level stop and go kit from SRAM and an excellent wide wheel pack to create a stunning all round aggro trail bike.

The Whyte stuff

We've got plenty of prior knowledge of the way that Whyte's bikes ride but it's always an absolute joy to get behind the bars. It's not that the own brand 760mm bars and 50mm stem (40mm on the medium) are unusual these days and the 67-degree head angle could almost be considered conservative compared to some raked out radicals. It's the distance Whyte moves them forward of the rest of the bike that gives the T-130 its trademark unshakeable stability and scything cornering ability. Keeping that head angle responsive rather than silly slow means that when you push hard enough to break the super grippy trail hold of the triple compound High Roller II front tyre it can react fast enough not to tuck under and spit you out highside. Add a 420mm chainstay and it whips round climbing trail centre turns like a ballroom dancer. Drop the Reverb post and it's super easy to get your weight back and sky the front end over drops and ditches.

The suspension provides a huge amount of control from just 130mm of stroke too. The high volume DebonAir air can and four-bar linkage give a supple start to the stroke for traction but ramp up perfectly to keep the bike level and consistent through corners and eager to jump on the power at the exit. It'll suck up drops and blocks impressively without spilling too much speed, and while there's a firmer compression mode and a full lock, we never really felt the need for them except on long Tarmac slogs. While it's not as supple and traction sniffing as the RCT3, the Charger RC damper in the Pike fork never spikes or chokes and Whyte fit two Bottomless Tokens as standard for the ideal amount of progression to match the back.

As well as giving space to pull the back wheel right into the kinked seat tube for handling reasons the 148mm Boost axle spacing also increases frame and wheel stiffness. The SCR (single chainring) specific frame design also allows a much wider main pivot stance than a dual ring compatible design, netting Whyte another serious stiffness gain as well as a cleaner look.

Its very early commitment to single chainrings with chassis designs means it's no surprise that Whyte has loaded its carbon bike with a particularly cost effective version of SRAM's Eagle 12-speed transmission. To keep expenses low Whyte has opted for the hollow alloy arms of SRAM's 1400 series crank rather than carbon X01. It adds 180g but at the bottom centre of the



Our favourite shaped trail bike with the kit to make the most of it

AT A GLANCE

FRAME

Monocoque carbon mainframe, alloy rear swingarm

FORK

RockShox Pike RC

SHOCK

RockShox Monarch DebonAir RT3

WHEEL SIZE

27.5in

DRIVE TRAIN

SRAM X1 / X01 Eagle 12-Speed

BRAKES

SRAM Guide RS

HEAD ANGLE

67 degrees

SEAT TUBE ANGLE

73 degrees

REACH

467mm

WEIGHT

13.63kg size large

bike where you'll notice it least and you won't burst into tears if you keep smashing the end of it on rocks. Critically you get the superb double hook profile X-Sync2 chainring too. This isn't just very secure but also eerily quiet and smooth even in filthy weather. A 34t chainring also gives plenty of top end for warp speed descending and even on our two day trail epic (see page 36) we still didn't need to use the 50t crawler except for the steepest hills. Eagle isn't just a ratio and drivetrain smoothness upgrade either, the lever feel is flawless through the sealed cables and that hasn't changed on sets we've been using for months. The shifters share the bars with SRAM's Guide RS brakes complete with SwingLink leverage change cams for super precise, consistent fingertip control even in wet and slippery root situations.

Impressive ride weather-proofing doesn't just extend to the stop and go either. All of Whyte's bearings are hidden behind highly evolved seals under protective top caps preloaded with grease. If you ride it enough to finally wear the bearings out then Whyte will replace them for free anyway. The same weather beating wisdom is applied to the sealed internal cable routing inserts, the neat, quiet lines of the cables themselves, the rubber seatpost gaiter and the side loading clamp embedded in the top tube. The threaded, external bearing bottom bracket is a deliberate durability boosting decision not just a retro throwback too.

Braaaaaarp!

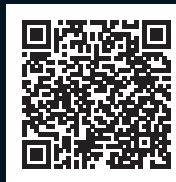
So how does it ride on the trail? In short, it takes every bit of enthusiasm and skill you've got and makes the absolute most of it in a superbly poised, punchy, imaginary throttle twisting riot of a ride. Not just that but it always made us take the most aggressive option, whether it was tyres skimming the top of a berm, an airborne straight-line short cut or a brakes-off pump and drift attack rather than an anchors-on back-off.

We couldn't fault it mechanically either and while the overall weight is on the high side for a semi-carbon, mid-travel machine, the pure drive feel of the Eagle transmission meant we never felt bogged down and it blasted from back of pack to front between corners whenever we got bored of following and fancied leaving others behind instead. Considering there's nothing we'd replace on the supplied spec in terms of actual performance not just perceived pose value it's excellent value too, making a super rare five out of five score the only logical number to go with.



Superb handling, suspension, longevity and aggro attitude with a cost effective kit mix.

BUYER'S GUIDE For more mid-priced trail bikes see p101



WHYTE T-130

Hit any popular trail centre and you'll see an ever growing number of bikes from Whyte. Designed in the north Cotswolds here in the UK, they've very quickly become a brand whose frame designs have gained a huge amount of respect.

'Progressive geometry' is a phrase thrown around repeatedly at the moment but there really are only a few brands that have instilled this thinking throughout their range – not just on the longer travel bikes. The T-130 trail bikes are a great example of this and really are an exceptional design.

As the model name suggests, the frame dishes out 130mm of rear wheel travel, matched up front by a fork dishing out the same. The SCR (single chainring) frame design takes advantage of the latest '1x' transmissions and along with Boost spacing front and rear gives great mud clearance along with increased stiffness. The sizing is a breath of fresh air too. So often with these mid travel bikes we're seeing dimensions that are stuck in the past – hanging onto their XC roots. With the T-130 there's a very generous reach based around the standard spec 40mm or 50mm stems. The four sizes offered should cover most riders with little or no tweaking needed.

'The T-130 is all about snapping into a crisp line through singletrack, hitting downslopes with precision'

Geometry is a strong point with Whyte, and this, along with the sorted sizing has given this bike the ride and handling that it's so well known for. A 67 degree head angle and a low 331mm bottom bracket height are key pointers to how this bike rides. The rear stays of the T-130 are kept short, giving the pop and agility you need to bring the trail alive. Combine this with a purposeful fork and well-tuned rear shock and you have a tight and fast feel that is very capable when the trail turns rough.



This all-aluminium bike doesn't mind a touch of abuse – and why not? That's what it made for after all.

'Yet again we see Whyte pushing to the front of what's happening not just in the UK but worldwide.'

The T-130 is a truly brilliant trail bike.'



The Whyte T130 S and RS are our picks from the five bike aluminium line up. At just shy of £3K you would expect a good spec and the RS certainly has that. The wheel package sports a rear Hope hub with 29mm wide rims giving a good shape to the chunky WTB tyres – ideal for the intentions of this hard-hitting trail bike. XT eleven speed is driven from a Raceface single 32T ring crank, a proven combination. XT brakes, a hit in last year's Dirt 100 are also good to see. With a Reverb dropper fitted as standard and a 760mm width handlebar, Whyte have got all the details covered. The cheaper S model, pictured in our photo shoot, is cracking value too. With a RockShox Yari fork up front, 1x11 transmission and dropper post it leaves very little in need of upgrading or swapping out.

SPEC

Frame Carbon fibre front triangle, aluminium rear end, 150mm (5.9in) travel

Fork RockShox Pike RCT3, 150mm (5.9in) travel

Shock RockShox Deluxe RT3 DebonAir

Drivetrain SRAM XX1 Eagle (1x12)

Wheelset Whyte 30mm carbon hookless rims on Hope Pro 4 hubs, Maxxis High Roller II 3C EXO TR (f) and Maxxis Minion SS EXO TR (r) 29x2.3in tyres

Brakes SRAM Guide RSC, 180mm rotors

Bar/stem Race Face SIXC, 800mm/Whyte Gravity, 50mm (40mm on size M)

Seatpost/saddle RockShox Reverb Stealth 170mm dropper (150mm on M and L)/Whyte

Weight 13.4kg (29.5lb), XL size without pedals

WHYTE S-150C WORKS

£5,499 UK-designed trail pinner that thrives on almost any trail

Whyte's latest trail bike is a do-it-all ripper. It's a 150mm travel, plus-compatible 29er that can take on virtually any trail with aplomb.

The frame

A tried-and-true Horst Link design delivers the S-150's 150mm of rear wheel travel. The suspension is slightly progressive all the way through the stroke. Whyte say it'll work well with a coil shock, but the leverage curve complements the stock air shock too. The layout offers decent pedalling efficiency without too much pedal feedback.

On the two S-150C models, a carbon front triangle is mated to an aluminium back end. There's room for a full-size water bottle and clearance for 27.5x2.8in plus tyres.

The kit

The Works is the top-end model, with SRAM's XX1 Eagle 12-speed gearing (though you don't get the bling gold cassette). RockShox provide the solid suspension units and long-travel, size-specific Reverb dropper post. You also get Whyte's own 30mm carbon 29er rims, laced to Hope hubs and shod with skinny Maxxis tyres.

Whyte spec 170mm crank arms – as opposed to the usual 175mm – on all sizes to reduce the chance of pedal strikes due to the super-low 335mm BB height. They also use a short custom fork offset of 42mm to increase the trail figure (how far the contact patch of the front tyre sits behind the steering axis) and calm the steering, making the bike handle as if it's even slacker than it is.

The ride

The first thing we noticed riding the S-150C is how well it corners.

JARGON

PEDAL STRIKE

Clipping a pedal or crank arm on the ground or a trail obstacle, usually because of low ground clearance.

FORK OFFSET

The distance between the centre of the front axle and the steering axis, which is an imaginary line that runs through the mid-point of the fork's steerer tube. Offset affects the speed of the steering.

We immediately felt comfortable carving turns and exploring the limits of grip, thanks to the low BB, short fork offset and impressive chassis stiffness. The BB height makes it feel fighter-jet nimble when banking from left to right, while the weight balance and composed geometry make for predictable, confident cornering. In rougher sections the S-150 keeps its composure well. The reach is pretty roomy (459mm on the medium, 490mm on our XL) and the head angle is moderately slack, at 66 degrees, but the low BB and shorter fork offset help here too, calming down the handling and helping the bike remain confident and fast. Because the linkage builds in firmness throughout the suspension stroke, small-bump sensitivity is excellent, but there's plenty of support deeper in the travel to hold you up in corners or when pumping and jumping. This means traction over trail chatter is excellent, yet



**THE WHYTE CONFIDENCE-INSPIRING
GEOMETRY AND SUPPLE SUSPENSION
MAKE FOR AN IMMENSELY CAPABLE
ROUGH TERRAIN TAMER**

HIGHS

Stable yet agile geometry makes the Whyte a riot in the rough

Suspension balances subtle sensitivity with big-hit composure and pedalling-friendly manners

LOWS

We weren't big fans of the own-brand saddle and grips

the rear end still swallows big hits without blowing through its travel. The Pike fork is a good match up front, offering impressive sensitivity and support.

While the suspension does bob a little when pedalling hard, it doesn't noticeably sap energy on trail centre-type terrain, and it's easy to toggle the shock's 'climb' switch on if you want maximum sprightliness. The Works model is nice and light so it climbs fast, but a steeper seat angle would make tricky ascents easier.

Thanks to its fast-rolling tyres and stiffness under power, the S-150 feels eager and fun on mellower terrain. It responds well to hopping and pumping, building and maintaining speed remarkably well. Despite having 150mm of travel, it never felt like too much bike. At the same time, the confidence-inspiring geometry and supple suspension make for an immensely capable rough terrain tamer. We fitted a

higher-rise bar and a shorter stem (40mm) to make it even more authoritative on steep descents. You could also fit beefier tyres, and even a coil shock, to turn it into a true enduro weapon, but the S-150 rarely felt out of its depth in stock form. A 650b+ wheelset with 2.8in tyres will be available separately from Whyte. This adds extra grip and even better rough-terrain speed sustain, and drops the BB below 330mm. The result is an even more agile feel in corners, though you have to be careful of pedal strikes. **SEB**
www.whyte.bike

MBLUK VERDICT

Exquisitely balanced suspension and geometry translate into a fast, capable yet playful package



FOR A LITTLE LESS

WHYTE S-150C RS £3,850

The carbon-framed S-150C RS doesn't get the top tier fork or shock of the Works, but keeps the 1x12 transmission, albeit in the slightly weightier GX flavour.



FOR A LOT LESS

WHYTE S-150S £2,850

This alloy version has the same shock as the S-150C RS, but the fork is the cheaper, less sophisticated RockShox Revelation RC. It also keeps the 1x12 GX Eagle gearing.

WHYTE S-150 C WORKS

£5,499 / 29in / whyte.bike

NEED TO KNOW

- 29er trail bike with 150mm travel
- Custom fork offset restores the true head angle and trail measurements while reducing steering flop
- SCR frame design increases stiffness by eliminating the front mech
- Boost dropouts and ample tyre clearance make the S-150 Plus compatible and Whyte even offers aftermarket wheel sets to make swapping easy
- Alloy S-150 S kicks off the range at £2,850

Whyte's fusion of cutting-edge geometry and 29in wheels is a marriage made in heaven

Whyte has never shied away from innovation. From the early days of its PRST-1 linkage fork, to being one of the very first brands to completely abandon the front derailleur, it's always been at the coalface of development, and is showing no signs of slowing down in its exploration to extract performance gains.

So what does the new S-150 bring to the table? Whyte has been pushing the boundaries of sizing and geometry for years now, so it should come as no surprise that its new 150mm-travel 29er is long, low and slack. To put that into perspective, the size L has a 475 mm reach measurement, the BB is ground huggingly low at 335mm, and the head angle is tilted back to 66°... very similar numbers to the new Scott Genius then, but old news for Whyte.

In line with other brands, Whyte is using Boost dropouts and ample tyre clearance to make the S-150 compatible with 29in and 27.5 Plus wheels. In fact, 'S' stands for switchable, and Whyte even offers aftermarket 27.5 Plus wheelsets, with tyres and rotors fitted, to make that change even easier. It has missed a trick, however, by not incorporating a geometry adjust feature, such as the flip-chip on the new Scott, that changes the BB height to compensate for the slight difference in wheel diameter.

It's what sets the Whyte S-150 apart that's more interesting though. While the rest of the bike industry has marched on, blindly increasing fork offset with every jump in wheel size, Whyte is one of a handful of brands to stop and ask why. As such, the new S-150 gets a shorter 42mm offset fork.



Quad 4 suspension with 150mm of rear travel

Whyte S-150 C Works:
the ultimate 29er?



SPECIFICATION

Frame Monocoque carbon/aluminium rear, 150mm travel
Shock RockShox Deluxe RT3 Debonair
Fork RockShox Pike RCT3, 150mm travel
Wheels Hope Pro 4 hubs, Whyte 30mm carbon rims, Maxxis High Roller II/Crossmark II 29x2.3/2.25in tyres
Drivetrain SRAM XX1 Eagle 34t chainset, XX1 Eagle r-mech and shifter
Brakes SRAM Guide RSC, 200/180mm
Components Race Face SIX C 800mm bar, Whyte Gravity 40mm stem, RockShox Reverb Stealth 150mm post, Whyte Custom Team saddle
Sizes M, L, XL

GEOMETRY

Size ridden M
Rider height 5ft 11in
Head angle 66°
Seat angle 74.7°
BB height 335mm
Chainstay 435mm
Front centre 777mm
Wheelbase 1,212mm
Top tube 421mm
Reach 459mm



RockShox Pike
with custom 42mm
reduced offset



Single-ring specific frame
gives stiffness gains

And while I could quite easily turn this first ride into a mind-numbing dissertation on steering geometry, instead I rode the S-150 with the more common 51mm offset RockShox Pike back-to-back with Whyte's 42mm offset to see if it offers any real-world advantages.

The most apparent benefit of the shorter offset is that the steering feels less floppy at slower speeds, especially when climbing. Which probably has more to do with bringing the centre of mass of the steering assembly closer to the steering axis than any difference the offset makes to the trail measurement.

It's odds-on to become the new benchmark 29er

Point the bike downhill, however, and the benefits aren't so cut and dried. Swapping from the 51mm offset to Whyte's custom 42mm fork made the bike feel slightly smaller, forcing me into a more hunkered position, even though the cockpit and frame size remained unchanged.

The trails we were riding at the launch were bone dry, and there was plenty of traction to be had, so I can't comment on how the reduced offset fork handles in the wet. That said, I know from experience that it could be these very conditions where the shorter offset has the greatest advantage, as it stops the front wheel from tucking under so rapidly in loose, wet turns.

Fork offset is set to be the latest topic for debate, but it's not the real story here, because we could absolutely rip aboard both offsets, and that's simply because the S-150 is such an accomplished bike. It was super-easy to get a good ballpark suspension set-up, and combined with the generous sizing

and dialled geometry, we were up to speed in the blink of an eye.

Whyte's Quad 4 suspension brings the poppy, playful nature of the T-130 to a longer-travel 29er platform, and the end result is a heady mix of speed, fun and outright rowdiness. The Whyte S-150 C Works feels more solid than the YT Jeffsy and more capable than the Specialized Stumpy, making it odds-on favourite to become the new benchmark 29er trail bike.

Alan Muldoon

mbr 1ST IMPRESSION



HIGHS

Great geometry, sizing and suspension. Keen pricing too, given that you can still walk into a shop and sit on one.



LOWS

No geometry adjustment to raise the BB height for 27.5 Plus wheels.



DESIGN &
INNOVATION
AWARD 2018



W H Y T E S 1 5 0 C R S

The gnarlier and trickier the trail, the more the Whyte S150 C RS shines brightly amongst the rest of the trail bikes out there. The UK brand has excelled in engineering certain key traits into this bike: we're talking about ultimate confidence and mountain goat agility. It all stems back to the unique shorter fork offset (42 mm instead of the more conventional 51 mm): the increased trail figure stabilizes the steering and results in a bike that charges through rough terrain and rails turns – however technical – with ease. Combined with a fairly progressive rear end that gives a lot of ground feedback and offers the perception of having limitless reserves – hallelujah! With its long and slack geometry, the Whyte is a mean contender on everything from flow trails to bike park days. There's comfort and traction on the climbs, but the S150 C RS isn't likely get you any Strava KOMs. Point it downhill, however, and you can rake them in – this bike is a weapon of choice!

Weight 13.99 kg **Website** whyte.bike

PINKBIKE REVIEWS

Whyte S-150 Carbon RS - Review

Jul 17, 2017

by Richard Cunningham



Pinkbike's Take:

“

Whyte's S-150 Carbon RS is as up-to-the-minute as a trail bike can get. It's carbon, it has big wheels, it ticks all the long, low and slack boxes, and hey, that's wonderful, but what makes the S-150 stand out in the present long-travel trail bike mosh pit can only be experienced by riding it. It pedals, steers and handles less like a bicycle and more like you have zipped on a mountain bike super power suit. In less flowery language: "For sale: 150-millimeter-travel dual-suspension 29er that will make you beg to ride every day. Needs nothing"

-RC

FULL REVIEW

27.5in



With Maxle Ultimate quick-releases at both ends, you can fix a puncture in record time

Whyte's Drop.it post has a neat under-bar remote lever and 150mm of adjustment

The G-170 S comes with a high-volume WTB Convict 2.5in tyre up front and 2.4in Riddler on the rear, but 2.6in tyres would help raise the BB a hair

The basic RockShox Deluxe R only has external rebound adjustment, but it's so well tuned you don't need anything more

WHYTE G-170 S

£2,399

SPECIFICATION

Frame 6061-T6 aluminium, 170mm travel
Shock RockShox Deluxe R
Fork RockShox Yari RC, 170mm travel
Wheels Sealed hubs, WTB STp i29 rims, WTB Convict/Riddler 27.5x2.5/2.4in tyres
Drivetrain Truvativ Descendant 30t chainset, SRAM GX r-mech and shifter
Brakes SRAM Guide R, 200/180mm
Components Whyte low-rise 780mm bar, Whyte Gravity 40mm stem, Whyte Drop.it 150mm post, Whyte saddle
Sizes S, M, L, XL
Weight 15.54kg (34.26lb)
Contact whyte.bike

GEOMETRY

Size tested L
 Head angle 64.4°
 Seat angle 66.1°
 BB height 321mm
 Chainstay 427mm
 Front centre 810mm
 Wheelbase 1,237mm
 Down tube 742mm
 Top tube 620mm
 Reach 478mm

Launched recently, the G-170 is Whyte's response to the ever-increasing demands of gravity-fuelled enduro racing. As the name suggests, it's got 170mm of suspension muscle, and the S model represents the entry point to a three-strong range.

Sculpted from 6061-T6 aluminium, the frame shares the same progressive geometry and suspension layout as the more expensive moulded carbon bikes in the line.

It's got Boost dropout spacing front and rear, with clearance for up to 2.8in tyres. And while that may sound like overkill, the G-170 S would probably benefit from 2.6in tyres to help elevate the ground-hugging 322mm bottom bracket height (measured with 2.4/2.3in Maxxis High Roller II control tyres).

Whyte pioneered the 1x frame design with its SCR (Single Chain Ring) design, but the G-170 S also benefits from SCS (Symmetrical Chain Stays) and the stiffness improvements of the wider pivot stance that goes with them.

SUSPENSION

The latest geometry tweak that Whyte has introduced doesn't show up on the geometry chart, but take a look at the spec on the back of the 170mm-travel Yari RC fork and you'll notice it has less offset: 42mm instead of 46mm. It's a subtle difference but has a similar effect to slackening the head angle a touch without increasing steering flop.

On the rear, Whyte uses the latest Metric RockShox Deluxe R shock size, where a shock yoke similar to that found on the Specialized Enduro and

Orbea Rallon eliminates the lower shock bushing for increased sensitivity. It doesn't sound like it would make a big difference, but the improvement in small-bump sensitivity and grip is noticeable. All it needs now is an asymmetric insert in the shock eyelet for adjusting the BB height between all of the different tyre sizes the frame can accommodate.

COMPONENTS

Both of our entry-level enduro bikes have great cockpit layouts, but in terms of contact points, Whyte wins hands down — the thicker grips and extra padding in the saddle providing some additional isolation and comfort from high-frequency trail vibrations.

The full 150mm drop of the Whyte Drop.it seatpost is also welcome, as the 120mm Trans X post on the Mega always felt like it needed to go lower.

When it comes to the drivetrain, there are staunch SRAM and Shimano supporters, but both 11-speed options here have 11-42t cassettes, and offer the same gear range and slick shifting. Whyte, however, fits a slightly smaller 30t chainring so it has lower overall gearing, and that probably better suits the fitness level of the riders typically buying these bikes.

PERFORMANCE

At mbr we love bikes with low BB heights. But we also appreciate that they aren't for everyone. So if you pedal more than you pump, and get your heart rate racing on steep technical climbs rather than fast, hairy descents, the Whyte G-170 S probably isn't the bike for you.

With that cleared up, the G-170 S is an amazing enduro bike for the money. The suspension is superbly tuned, so it's a breeze to set up. Simply run the sag at about 30 per cent, and the rebound at three or four clicks from fully open and you're good to go.

Given that it has 170mm of travel at both ends, it doesn't bob much under power, so you can ride it uphill too. What's more surprising though, is that it can be ridden every bit as fast as the £6K 29ers that make up the other half of this test.

Sure, you take more of a beating, as the RC damper in the Yari fork lacks the sophistication of the pricier RockShox Charger RCT3 units, but it doesn't seem to slow you down much.

VERDICT

Whyte has produced some amazing bikes of late, but it has always struggled to nail its longer travel G-series models. Not any more.

The new G-170 S is smooth and composed. It is easy to set-up and even easier to ride flat-out, but it still pedals well enough that you don't feel like you're lugging a 170mm anchor up every climb.

It's not some long-legged trail bike, though, it's a full-blown gravity focused race weapon.

And with that comes a word of caution; the low BB is a double-edged sword, that cuts both ways.

10

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

dhb

HIGHS

Fast and fun in equal measure

LOWS

The BB is certainly low

**TEST
WINNER!**

27.5in

Maxle Ultimate QR dropouts for easy trailside access

Reduced offset on Yari fork has similar affect to slacking head angle

Tyre clearance aplenty makes Plus rubber a possibility



WHYTE G-170C WORKS — REVIEW

A new benchmark in the lightweight, long travel, 27.5" wheel category?

Words and images: Ieuan Williams

WHYTE G-170 CARBON (C) WORKS: REVIEW

With the resurgence of 160-170mm travel bikes with single crown forks, we are seeing both coil sprung machines like the Propain Spindrift in the mix along with lighter weight carbon options such as the Pivot Firebird and the incredibly popular YT Capra CF. This new Whyte stands in a good place, with a lightweight carbon chassis and a 170mm fork balancing out the rear travel. It has lines as clean as sheets washed with Daz and looks ready to pack a serious punch.

COMPONENTS

There's a full SRAM arsenal with the 1x12 X0 Eagle drivetrain and X0 carbon crank (using a threaded bottom bracket) giving climbing ability along with good chain retention and transmission silence in all conditions. The four piston Guide RSC stoppers, a Dirt favourite, keep the reliability when you need to slow the old girl up. A RockShox Reverb stealth dropper with the new 1x lever gives a clean look and improved ergonomics.

Some carbon goodies are on show from RaceFace with the SixC 800mm handlebar, along with the all-new Whyte carbon rims. These are a 30mm wide hookless design with a 28 hole configuration and spin on Hope Pro4 hubs. They also have the very trick decals that match the bike's aesthetics.

SUSPENSION AND CHASSIS

More RockShox on show here with a pair of 170mm Lyrik RCT3 forks that have been a high performing component for the past few years and a Dirt 100 pick. At the rear there is a metric RockShox Super Deluxe Debonair RT3 damper giving the same travel as the front at 170mm.

Whyte's Quad 4 suspension platform is something that has been refined over the past few years and with the G-170 some extra progression has been built in to give extra support when needed in the tough conditions.

SHAPE AND FIT

The size large frame is once again bang on for riders around and just above the six foot mark. The reach numbers of 478.8mm give some good indication of this and matched with the 820mm bar there really is plenty of room.

The 65° head angle some may think is a bit on the steep side for a long travel bike like this but the G-170 held its own and gave a super-nimble feel when in the tight stuff.



FULL REVIEW

FEELING

Before getting the Whyte on the hill it was apparent that this was a bike built with going fast downhill in mind. With a bottom bracket height of 329mm this really is a super low set up even with the stock 2.4" Maxxis rubber fitted. Silent, easy speed is one way to describe the G-170, hitting some very demanding tracks at a fair pace. Not once did I question whether the bike would cope; it just eats the obstacles up.

The rear stays' aluminium construction seem to contribute some flex to the picture in this often full-carbon world. The wider rear construction (a single chainring specific frame with a 148mm Boost rear hub spacing) also gives the option of running some high volume rubber with no worry of clearance so there's some future-proofing on the go here.

FOR 2018 WHYTE HAS COME OUT FIGHTING WITH THE RELEASE OF TWO KEY NEW MODELS, THE RECENTLY FEATURED S-150 29ER AND THE G-170C, A BIG HITTING 170MM ENDURO BEAST ROLLING ON 27.5" WHEELS.



LIMITATIONS

There isn't much to say here really and that's a good thing. If I was being picky it would be nice to see the option of a coil damper option out of the box.

Also the 150mm Reverb on the size large bike means that the post needs to be out of the slammed position to get a nice climbing height. This is being picky but the 170mm option would sort this out.

VERDICT

A long travel single crown bike built to pedal back up the hill and weighing in at the 30lb (13.6kg) mark it says it all really.

With clean cut lines, silence and a solid build it's hard to think of reasons why not to like the G-170. I'm looking forward to getting some time in on this bike with a coil damper fitted.

PRICE: £5499 whyte.bike

BIKE TEST

Whyte combines a fast-rolling, harder compound 2.8in Maxxis Rekon rear tyre with a softer 3C High Roller II up front for maximum grip

Hidden inside the top tube is Whyte's InterGrip expanding seat clamp for optimum weatherproofing

The RockShox Revelation RC on the Whyte gets a custom offset and the more robust Maxle Ultimate QR

The new 905 frame has been designed around 2.8in Plus tyres, but there's nothing to stop you fitting 29in wheels with mud tyres

WHYTE 905

£1,699

SPECIFICATION

Frame 6061-T6 aluminium
Fork RockShox Revelation RC, Boost, 130mm travel
Wheels Sealed bearing hubs, WTB STp i35 rims, Maxxis High Roller II 3C/Rekon 27.5x2.8in tyres
Drivetrain SRAM Descendant 32t chainset, SRAM GX 11 r-mech and shifter
Brakes SRAM Level T 180/160mm
Components Whyte low-rise 760mm bar, Gravity 40mm stem, Whyte Drop.it 150mm post, Whyte saddle
Sizes S, M, L, XL
Weight 13.38kg (29.49lb)
Contact whyte.bike

GEOMETRY

Size tested M
Head angle 64.6°
Seat angle 72.2°
BB height 296mm
Chainstay 431mm
Front centre 762mm
Wheelbase 1,193mm
Down tube 716mm
Top tube 635mm
Reach 446mm

Whyte has been at the forefront of hardtail development for as long as we can remember; its original 900 series bikes racking up multiple test wins and awards.

In recent years however, the class leading Whyte 905 lost some ground to bikes like the Orange Crush and Ragley Blue Pig. It's time to wipe the slate clean however, as Whyte has released a brand new version of the 905. With updated geometry that's been designed specifically around fatter 2.8in Plus tyres, the 2018 Whyte 905 looks set to raise the bar once again.

Even if we ignore the increased traction, comfort and control of the chunky 2.8in tyres, the sizing on the Whyte is the most progressive here. Like the other hardtails in this test the 905 comes in four frame sizes, but Whyte's size Medium almost has the measure of the size Large Nukeproof, and it's only a tad shorter than the Orange, so there's no need to upsize.

Even with the extra girth of the fatter rims and tyres, Whyte has still managed to produce the lightest bike in this test.

SUSPENSION

By moving to Plus-size tyres, Whyte has increased the suspension component of the wheels on the 905, but it's kept fork travel fixed at 130mm. That's not to say that Whyte hasn't been tinkering with the RockShox Revelation RC though. In fact, the fork gets a slightly shorter offset, just like on Whyte's full-suspension bikes.

Without getting lost in the weeds of steering geometry, the basic idea is that by reducing the offset you increase trail,

so you get the same stabilising effect as slackening the head angle without having to chopper the fork out further. Given that the Whyte also has the least fork travel, the dynamic steering geometry is by far the most progressive. More importantly, it was also the easiest bike on which to achieve a really good set-up with the new Revelation RC.

COMPONENTS

Whyte has gone all in with SRAM Level brakes and a 1x11 GX drivetrain. But because the cassette uses a standard freehub, not the more compact SRAM XD driver body, the smallest cog is an 11t so the gear range is almost identical to the Shimano-equipped bikes.

All of the bikes in this test are running short 170mm crank arms, but the Whyte's low BB height makes it the only one to warrant the additional pedal clearance.

Details like the fatter grips and comfortable saddle are also on point, as is the 150mm dropper post. If we're being really picky, however, we'd like a slightly wider bar with more rise, because you can't use the last 5mm of the grips and we had to run the 40mm stem at maximum height.

PERFORMANCE

Testing bikes is a tricky business. You have to factor in changes in trail conditions, mood, the influence of rider fatigue, and the fact that the human body is so good at adapting that you get used to any bike in a very short space of time.

But no matter where, when or how we tested the three bikes in this test, the Whyte 905 always managed to enthrall

us to ride harder and take more chances. In the process, it opened up new lines and opportunities that were invisible, or out of reach, on the other bikes.

And we don't think this is entirely down to the Plus-size tyres, even though there's no denying that the bigger rubber gave the bike more pop, making it less effort to skip over a root or clear a set of doubles. The fatter tyres are faster too, as all of those little bumps in the trail are seamlessly absorbed.

With the slackest dynamic steering geometry, lowest BB height and the best sizing, Whyte has the all of the fundamentals in place for a great hardtail. The Plus-size tyres simply take it to the next level.

VERDICT

Whyte has never been afraid to follow the path less travelled. And while it's not the first brand to go down the Plus-size hardtail route, it's one of the only brands to implement the more extreme geometry that make hardcore hardtails so much fun.

The combination of the chunky 2.8in Maxxis tyres, custom offset RockShox Revelation fork and dialled geometry made the new 905 an instant hit.

Whyte claims that this is the best 905 it's ever built, and we agree. It's also the best hardtail we've ridden, period, and easily deserving of a perfect 10 rating.

10



HIGHS

Unmatched speed, comfort and control

LOWS

Still needs a higher rise bar

Plus point: 2.8in
Maxxis tyres get a
big tick in our book

InterGrip seat clamp
is weatherproof, neat
and functional

SRAM Level brakes
for assured stopping

Conclusion

The hardcore hardtail category has been reasonably static for a number of years now. In fact, since making the switch to 27.5in wheels, the biggest changes have been half a degree on the head angle here, a different profile tube there, and the same bikes always seemed to come out on top. Not this time.

Fatter tyres have turned this category upside down, and the fallout will be wide and far-reaching. We've been impressed by lesser Plus hardtails, but when you combine a stiffer fork with progressive geometry and 2.6in or 2.8in tyres, it's a whole new world.

You can ride harder and further with less fatigue, and the pop from the bigger volume tyres actually makes the bikes feel more agile, not less so. They look totally normal too, and we predict more hardtails will make the move to 2.6in and 2.8in tyres in a very short space of time. Orange will probably be first in the queue.

It's not that the Crush S is a bad bike, it's just had the rug pulled out from underneath it while it's been napping. And while jumping from 2.3in to the 2.6in rubber on the new Nukeproof Scout doesn't sound like a massive change, on the trail the benefits are instantly noticeable. Factor in the slacker geometry and superior build kit on the Nukeproof, and the Orange was quickly relegated to third place.

Picking the winner wasn't quite as straightforward. But even after spending way more time fine-tuning the set-up on the Nukeproof, we'd jump straight back onto the new Whyte 905 and instantly feel more in control. The lower BB really puts you right in the bike, while the 2.8in Maxxis tyres do an amazing job of ironing out creases in the trail. Make no mistake though, this is no straight-line monster truck. The Whyte 905 also carves corners, boosts jumps and rockets up climbs better than any hardtail that's come before it. So once again Whyte has delivered the blueprint for the next generation. This time, however, we suspect it won't take as long for everyone else to catch on.

Whyte has again delivered the blueprint for the next generation



RANGE FINDER

Our test winner's stablemates

WHYTE 909

£2,150

Want the most up-to-date hardtail with the best ride quality and stand-out kit? Well look no further. The Whyte 909 gets a Fox 34 Float fork, Hope Pro 4 rear hub and wide-range SRAM GX Eagle drivetrain. Sorted!



WHYTE 901

£1,350

The entry point to Whyte's 900 series hardtail range is the 901. It doesn't get the same frame as our test-winning 905 but Whyte has also moved it forward with 2.6in Maxxis Forecaster tyres to deliver similar benefits at a lower price point.

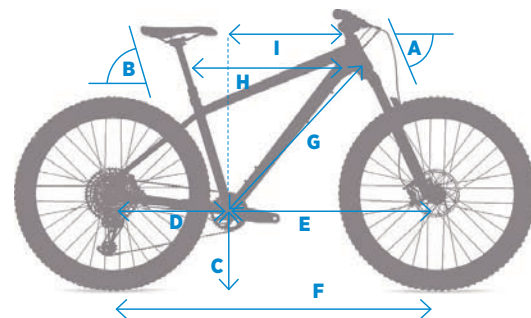


NOTES ON THE NUMBERS

Slacker head angles

It would be easy to take one look at the super-slack head angles on our three homegrown hardtails and decide they are not for you. And that's understandable as sub-65° head angles are more commonly associated with EWS-level enduro bikes.

But it's a static measurement, a snapshot if you like. When you jump on a hardtail, only the fork compresses, so the dynamic head angle is actually steeper. The greater the fork travel, the bigger the effect. At no point during this test did we think that any of the bikes were too slack. In fact, the opposite is true, and the Orange Crush could quite easily be a full degree slacker.



A Head angle

B Seat angle

C BB height

D Chainstay

E Front centre

F Wheelbase

G Down tube

H Top tube

I Reach

Nukeproof	Orange	Whyte
64.2°	64.7°	64.6°
72.9°	72.4°	72.2°
305mm	305mm	296mm
432mm	427mm	431mm
772mm	774mm	762mm
1,204mm	1,201mm	1,193mm
714mm	721mm	716mm
635mm	636mm	635mm
450mm	452mm	446mm

Mighty Whyte =
dough well spent

SPECIFICATION

This month's bikes at a glance

Make/model	Nukeproof Scout 275 Comp	Orange Crush S	Whyte 905
Price	£1,699.99	£1,700	£1,699
Weight	13.7kg (30.2lb)	14.13kg (31.15lb)	13.38kg (29.49lb)
Contact	nukeproof.com	orangebikes.co.uk	whyte.bike
FRAME			
Sizes	S, M, L, XL	S, M, L, XL	S, M, L, XL
Size tested	L	L	M
Frame material	Scout aluminium	6061-T6 aluminium	6061-T6 aluminium
Suspension fork	RockShox Revelation RC	RockShox Revelation RC	RockShox Revelation RC
Rear shock	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front travel	140mm	150mm	130mm
Rear travel	N/A	N/A	N/A
WHEELS			
Hubs	Nukeproof Horizon 110/148mm	Formula 110/148mm	Whyte Sealed 110/148mm
Rims	Nukeproof Horizon 27.5in	Kore Realm 3.0	WTB STp i35
Spokes	Stainless steel	Stainless steel	Stainless steel
Tyres	Maxxis Minion DHF 27.5 x 2.6in	WTB Vigilante/Trail Boss 27.5x2.3/2.4in	Maxxis High Roller II/Rekon 27.5x2.8in
GROUPSET			
Shifters	Shimano SLX 1x11	Shimano SLX 1x11	SRAM GX 1x11
Front mech	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rear mech	Shimano SLX Shadow +	Shimano SLX Shadow +	SRAM GX
Crank	Shimano SLX 32t	Race Face Aeffect 30t	SRAM Descendant 32t
Bottom bracket	Shimano	Race Face	SRAM GXP
Brakes	Shimano SLX M7000	Shimano MT500	SRAM Level T
Rotor sizes	180mm	180mm	180/160mm
COMPONENTS			
Saddle	Nukeproof Vector AM	Kore Conex	Whyte
Seatpost	Brand X Ascend 120mm	Kore 150mm	Whyte Drop.it 150mm
Handlebar	Nukeproof Neutron 800mm	Kore Durox 780mm	Whyte low-rise 760mm
Stem	Nukeproof Neutron 50mm	Kore Cubix 50mm	Whyte Gravity 40mm
Rating	9	8	10

WHYTE 605

£699 / 27.5in / whyte.bikes

HIGHS Best all-round ride quality, sorted suspension fork
LOWS Skinny tyres, narrow handlebar, square-taper crankset

SPECIFICATION

Frame 6061 aluminium
Fork RockShox XC30, 100mm travel
Wheels Alloy hubs, WTB SX-19 rims, WTB BeeLine 27.5x2.2in tyres
Drivetrain Shimano M3000 chainset, Acera f-mech and shifters, Alivio r-mech
Brakes Tektro Auriga, 160mm
Weight 12.93kg (28.5lbs)
Sizes S, M, L, XL
Size tested L

Whyte completely redesigned its 600 series hardtails for 2017, so the 605 gets a slightly toned-down version of the aggressive geometry featured on the more expensive 800 and 900 series bikes. Compared to the 905, the size Large 605 is a bit tall and upright, but it still features a long top tube and a relatively short stem.

There are also a couple of unique features on the 6061 aluminium frame, like the Get A Grip seat clamp system. This forward facing design keeps mud out of the seat tube, and the broad lever makes it easy to loosen the QR. Unfortunately the seat tube wasn't reamed properly, and after one ride the post was already sporting some deep scratches.

SUSPENSION

Although the RockShox XC30 only has 100mm of travel, it's air-sprung, so you can set the correct sag for your body weight or riding style. It also has adjustable rebound damping, for further tuning the ride quality, and a lockout just in case you want to stiffen the fork for climbing.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Sombrio

mbr
HARDTAIL
of the YEAR
WINNER
 £750 CATEGORY

COMPONENTS

Whyte's approach to geometry is based around using a short stem, but we reckon it's missed a trick fitting a bar that's only 700mm wide. Another 40mm would add a bit more control and some much-needed resilience, as extra width would mean more flex too.

Whyte has saved money with a cheap square-taper crankset and nine-speed gearing, but to be fair, these parts are relatively easy to replace when they wear out. The hubs on the 605 are cheap too, but once they go, the wheels are also toast. The 2.2in WTB BeeLine tyres

are fast-rolling, but we'd like to see a front tyre with a bit more volume and grip.

PERFORMANCE

In terms of geometry, the £750 category is split into two camps, with the Nukeproof and Kona being more contemporary, and the Canyon, KTM and Cannondale featuring a more traditional XC profile. With its long wheelbase and relatively slack head angle, the Whyte 605 sits somewhere in the middle. It's not as dynamic as the Nukeproof or Kona, but it's still stable and surefooted when it gets steep. It's livelier on singletrack, definitely has more give in the rear end, and is still agile on the climbs.



VERDICT

The Whyte 605 is our Hardtail of the Year in the £750 category, but it isn't perfect. There are a couple of iffy component choices, like the square-taper crankset, non-branded hubs and summer-only WTB tyres, but what really stops the 605 getting a perfect 10 is the fact that Whyte's award-winning 800 and 900 bikes are totally dialled. If Whyte could trickle-down the geometry and handling from those models, and fit a proper front tyre and a wider bar, the 605 would be on a completely different level to any other bike in the category.

9



Whyte 605 £699.00 ★★★★★

A quality frame and confidence-inspiring geometry make for a superb all-round machine

Jon Woodhouse | Jun 19 2017 Photos: Russell Burton



What's good?

Modern geometry gives confidence inspiring handling
High quality aluminium frame doesn't beat you up
Works amazingly well as a package



What's not?

Coil sprung fork isn't adjustable for weight
You'll want a more aggressive front tyre in the wet

'Whyte's affordable 605 hardtail might not break the bank, but when it comes to on-trail performance it blows most rivals out of the water thanks to a frame sporting bang-up-to-date geometry and well-chosen components.'

The British brand has always been known for pushing the boat out when it comes to the design of their bikes, being a major driver of the long reach, low bottom bracket and slack head angle revolution in frame geometry. While many high-end bike brands have a similarly modern approach to geometry, Whyte is one of all too few that apply it to their entry level bike range.

Modern geometry makes for great handling

On paper, the 605 looks like most other hardtails at this price. It's got a 100mm travel fork up front, an aluminium frame and 650b wheels, but the devil really is in the detail. Despite the short travel, the frame sports a head angle of 68.5°, a figure more commonly associated with trail bikes with travel around the 130-140mm mark. The reach - the distance between the bottom bracket and the head tube, measured horizontally - is also much greater than usual, at 465mm on a Large frame. That means that when the going gets steep, you're less likely to be pitched over the front of the bike and the handling is much calmer when the speed starts to pick up. It also means that you can move about on top of the bike much more, meaning that you have much more scope to adjust your weight balance without fear of falling off the back or going over the front. Chuck in a short 60mm stem and 700mm handlebar and the results are impressive, whether you're a novice rider or highly experienced.

The bike is stable without feeling sluggish or slow and that allows you to push the speeds and gradient much more than would feel comfortable otherwise. It's a bike that encourages you to experiment with the edges of traction without punishing you when you do overstep the mark. After a quick lap on my usual trail centre loop, it was so confidence inspiring that I quickly left that behind to throw the 605 down stuff that usually has much more expensive machines struggling.

In summary

All in all the Whyte 605 is hugely impressive for the money. Yes, you can buy bikes at this price point that come with much better bits bolted to them, the bendy coil sprung fork and lightly treaded tyres being the ones you might feel most keenly, the latter especially in the winter. However, if you're looking at the bike as a complete package then it's bloody hard to beat. In fact, I've ridden bikes that cost significantly more that have felt nowhere near as well sorted. If you want a bike that's going to allow you to push your riding onwards, boost your confidence both uphill and down and you aren't fussed about what's written on the components then the Whyte is a superb machine - and not just by the standards of 'budget' bikes.



WHYTE WESSEX ROAD BIKE

THINK YOU'VE SEEN THE IDEAL ALL-ROUND ROAD BIKE? NOT UNTIL NOW, YOU HAVEN'T...

Put simply, the Whyte Wessex is a bike that's had us redefining our own conceptions of an 'all-rounder'.

Sure, we've seen bikes that match an endurance geometry with racy responsiveness and no short amount of prodigious speed, or race-ready bikes fitted with the latest and greatest ride-softening innovations, but the Whyte Wessex is quite possibly the king of them all, with no stone left unturned in its goal for the perfect 'four season' bike.

Let's start with Whyte's own marketing spiel, where they claim the Wessex is "conceived to be the perfect 21st Century British road bike and designed from the outset to excel in all conditions, proving once and for all that you no longer have to sacrifice speed and award-winning performance for everyday reliability." That's quite a claim, so where's the evidence.

The frame, which has been specifically designed to mirror a full-bore road bike in terms of shape and geometry, has been constructed with a serious amount of thought towards the British winter rider. This means you'll spot acres of clearance – enough for 30c tyres, plus space for Whyte's own mudguard system – or 33c rubber if mudguards just aren't your thing.

The mudguard system is integrated too with dedicated eyelets installed in the frame, with Whyte's own proprietary system taking a lot of the finger-pinching fuss out of installation. It's not like they're an eyesore, either – they're concealed underneath small rubber seals when not in use, and are completely in-keeping with the svelte looks that naturally come from the internal cable routing.

That, plus a uni-directional carbon layup, results in a frame that looks and responds with the vigour and verve of a more stripped-down road bike stallion, yet has the creature comforts of, well, a cyclo-cross or adventure bike.

It even appears eminently purposeful in a road-race sort of way, managing to retain a comparatively short headtube length thanks to clever integration between the fork crown, downtube and headtube, yet all the while can roll on tyres at home in the 40-50psi range. The result? A quick and sharp ride, that simply glides over rutted terrain. Whether you're heading for the hills or searching out gravel roads, the Wessex is at home.

The reality is the enormous tyre clearance wouldn't be realistic without the use of disc brakes, which naturally free up space for the 30-33c tyres. With a Shimano BR-805 hydraulic setup with 160mm rotors installed to suit the slightly bulkier (and real-world) rider, stopping power and modulation in all conditions is assured, while the ability to ride up inclines that take your fancy on a bike tipping the scales at 8.8kg is simple enough with an 11-32 cassette matched to a compact chainset.



The parts that complete the drivetrain fluctuate, but none are sub-standard. The Wessex features a mix of Shimano Ultegra and 105 components, and matches this to an FSA Gossamer Pro chainset. Knowing as we do that Ultegra and 105 are closely matched in terms of outright shifting performance (the rear derailleur is Ultegra, while the front is 105 spec), you'll never look down and think you're missing out, while the FSA chainset fitted to the FSA EVO-8681 bottom bracket is much the same story versus a 105 equivalent: stiff and efficient.

Comfort is boosted by a 27.2mm seatpost of Whyte's own design fastened by a tidy integrated clamp, while the compact handlebar is easy to grip under Whyte's own anti-slip bar tape – it's plusher and, importantly, tackier than most yet doesn't manage to rub your skin away even under the repeated onslaught of potholes and – dare we say it – cobbles. The saddle is also Whyte's own design, custom made for the wide-ranging demands of the Wessex rider.

Interestingly though, it's the wheelset that confounds the most. Here we have a road bike that isn't particularly light overall at 8.8kg (before you've added any common paraphernalia) yet responds like one that could be significantly lighter. And it's at the doorstep of excellent Easton AR-21 hoops that this ability must be laid.

Given no need for a brake track, their shallow rim depth, quality alloy double-sealed cartridge bearing hubs and the native ability to run tubeless, the rotational weight is kept low enough that even the relatively vast volume of 30c tyres can't drag it down. Those tyres are Schwalbe's excellent, gravel-ready S-One rubber, which roll among the smoothest on the market even with their grip-enhancing nibbed tread pattern. Acceleration is excellent while you still get a tyre capable of mixing it off-road.

Which is just as well, because we've got some seriously epic riding to do.

Whyte Wessex

Price: £2,250

WEBSITE: Whyte.bike

UK DISTRIBUTOR: ATB SALES

WHYTE Wessex

£2,250

British-designed bike, specifically for our rough and challenging roads



British firm Whyte is best known for its MTBs, gravel and commuter bikes but the Wessex, launched last year, is its first foray into the world of performance road bikes. At first glance, though, it's clear that much of Whyte's expertise in those other sectors has crossed over to the Wessex, in particular the chunky 30mm tyres, which are supported on wide Easton AR21 rims.

The Wessex has been designed and tested in the UK, with UK roads in mind, and that's evident when riding. The ride is smooth and comfortable on even the roughest of lanes, the type that we have all over Britain, and with mounts front and rear, it's ready to accept mudguards to fend off the worst of the British weather. Another big plus is how quiet the bike is, regardless of road surface, with no noise at all detectable from the internal cables – which can be heard rattling on some bikes.

While this wasn't the only one of our three test bikes to come with tubeless-ready wheels, it was the only one to come fitted with tubeless tyres as standard. Increasingly popular on road bikes, this is another feature that aids comfort due to the fact that the tyres can be run at lower pressures without the risk of puncturing, although the rear tyre did lose traction a little on some of the steepest climbs, particularly on the less-used 'green' roads on our ride.

The mix of components suits the style of the bike, with a near-full Ultegra groupset – the only exception being the FSA Gossamer chainset that still does its job perfectly well. The wheels are superb, being stiff and fast, and despite having the biggest tyres fitted they were also the lightest on test, which helps on the climbs and when sprinting.

The geometry is the most relaxed of the three bikes on test and did take some time to adjust, with slightly slower steering and a feeling that you needed to move your body around a little more to get the best out of it. Once we got used to it, however, the stability proved impressive and makes even the tightest, twistiest of descents a whole lot of fun.



The Whyte Wessex is a masterclass in how to make an endurance bike

**GOOD**

- **Comfort** – Smooth ride from front and rear.
- **Confident handling** – Its stability and slacker geometry make descending a dream.
- **Versatile** – One bike for all seasons and all styles.

**PRICE:** £2,250**WEIGHT:** 8.8kg (size 54)**FRAME:** Uni-directional, multi-monocoque carbon, Straight bladed carbon fork**GROUPSET:**

Shimano Ultegra 6800

BRAKES: Shimano BR-805**CHAINSET:** FSA Gossamer Pro, EV0386, 50/34**CASSETTE:**

Shimano 105 5800, 11-32

BARS:

Whyte Road Compact

STEM: Whyte alloy**SADDLE:**

Whyte Custom Road

SEATPOST: Whyte alloy**WHEELS:** Easton AR-21**TYRES:**

Schwalbe S-One, 30c

CONTACT: whyte.bike**NOT SO GOOD**

- **Tyres** – The S-One tyres did slip occasionally on steeper hills on backroads.
- **Sizing** – Feels longer than most similar sized bikes.
- **No Di2 routing** – Not designed for Di2, preventing an upgrade.

**CONCLUSION**

It may sound like we've swallowed the marketing guff, but Whyte's Wessex truly lives up to the claim it's designed to eat British roads. Outstanding comfort and versatile design make this a great bike for long rides, all year round – it'll have you seeking out the roughest roads for fun! 🚴

Rating

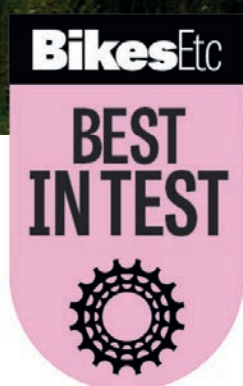
FRAME	██████████
COMPONENTS	██████████
WHEELS	██████████
THE RIDE	██████████

OVERALL
8.8
10



Whyte Wessex

Do believe the hype – this proved outstanding on all roads!



**WHYTE
WESSEX**
£2,250

“Whyte has impressed us before with its commuter and gravel bikes and it’s done it again with the Wessex, which is the fastest, most focused bike they produce.”

For those who only want one bike – one that is perfect for British roads and weather – we can’t think of many ways to improve it. With comfort, speed, stability, value and practicality it simply makes all riding more enjoyable



Rating

FRAME	██████████
COMPONENTS	██████████
WHEELS	██████████
THE RIDE	██████████

OVERALL
8.8
10