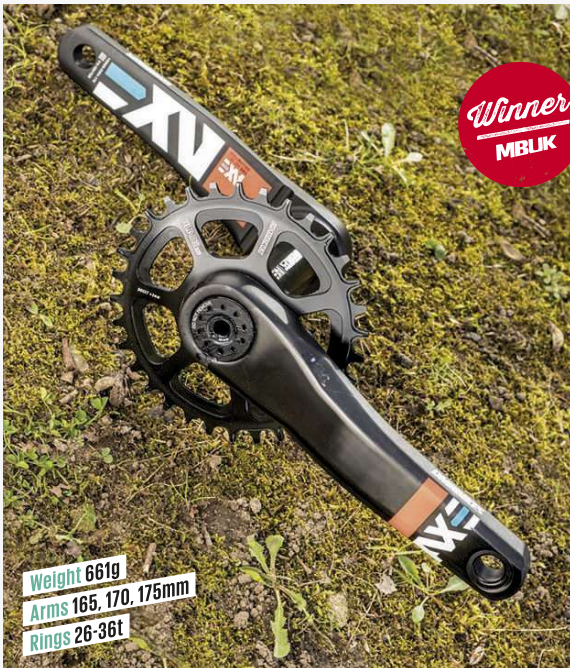


WINNERS



TESTER SAYS...

WE'RE RIDING HARDER THAN EVER, SO IT'S A TOUGH TIME FOR CRANKS RIGHT NOW, BUT THE BOMBER-STRONG DMR AXES ARE A CUT ABOVE



Weight 661g
Arms 165, 170, 175mm
Rings 26-36t

DMR Axe £179.98

DMR's **Axe cranks** were our surprise winners last year and they've battled off the latest opposition to retain their crown, especially if you get creative with your chainring choice. The high-volume hollow-forged arms are big enough to noticeably boost stiffness, no matter how hard you land or lever them round. They're not so fat they'll clatter the ankles of pigeon-toed pedallers though, and while they will scuff in time, they're more rub-resilient than most. On long, rough, rocky descents they're just the right side of stingingly rigid and unforgiving, so you can run them in a day-ride bike without waving your cartilage goodbye. This arm stiffness is matched by the 30/28mm axle, which runs in excellent Praxis BB cups that are available to fit any frame (although

the fitting tools add £14.99 if your shop doesn't have them) and last well even in press-fit formats. Built-in tightening/extracting bolts make maintenance a cinch and we've had no issues with loosening or creaking over a year of relentless hammer in a bike with a particularly low BB. Unlike the actual Praxis cranks, the Axes disconnect on the driveside, making it easy to swap the direct-mount rings, which are sold separately in a wide range of sizes. While DMR's own Blade rings are as good as most, the SRAM-style three-bolt fixing lets you create a real killer combo by fitting the latest SRAM 'X-SYNC 2' rings for the ultimate in transmission smoothness and security.

www.upgradebikes.co.uk

MBLIK ★★★★★



Weight 783g
Arms 155, 165, 170, 175mm
Rings 30-38t

SRAM NX £103

SRAM's **entry-level 11-speed cranks** aren't light but they're super-durable and offer clean, efficient and secure single-ring running at a bargain price. The arms are solid-forged with a scooped back for an acceptably stiff feel under power or hard cornering, and the numerous sets we've ridden have stood up well to heavy-duty trail use. They're some of the only budget cranks with a 30mm axle option, and have a good range of

arm lengths as well. Boost and fatbike options exist too. There's a choice of alloy or steel chainrings, and while both run quietly and smoothly with reliable chain security even in the worst conditions, the 84g heavier steel version shown here definitely improves long-term wear life, as long as you keep it lubed to stop rust at bay.

www.zyrofischer.co.uk

MBLIK ★★★★★



Weight 441g
Arms 170, 175mm
Rings 24-42t

Race Face Next SL G4 £449

The **Next SLs** won 'Most Wanted' last year and the new G4s are even lighter but still outstandingly stiff and surprisingly tough. Reshaped hollow carbon arms with lighter alloy pedal inserts help make them the lightest cranks available, outside of German carbon exotica. Race Face still clear them for enduro use though, and that toughness claim is backed up by our own experience with several sets. They're impressively stiff when it comes to driving the pedals round or

carving corners and off-cambers too. The wave-splined 'Cinch' system lets you switch axles to fit different bikes and there's a vast range of direct-mount rings, from 24-42t. Ring security and durability are on point too, making the G4s the clear current performance champions. Black tip protectors are included. Coloured tips, bolts and graphics are available.

www.silverfish-uk.com

MBLIK ★★★★★