

KINESIS RISE SLX

£3,200 / 29in / kinesisbikes.co.uk

NEED TO KNOW

- Aluminium e-hardtail that uses the Fazua Evation drive system with removable motor and battery pack
- X-Fusion's E-Slide 34 suspension fork delivers 130mm travel and comes with the shorter 44mm offset
- Three off-the-shelf builds available, with prices starting at £3,200 and topping out at £4,500
- Weight is 20.2kg with the Fazua motor and battery fitted

An e-bike that looks and rides like a cutting-edge hardtail? Sound intriguing...

One of the first e-bikes we tested at **mbr** was an e-hardtail, but we've not tested one since. Why? For the simple reason, we don't think they really work. Yes, we understand they're lighter, simpler and cheaper than full-suspension e-bikes, but with that first and only test, we quickly realised that the extra power and associated increase in speed means you take a battering uphill as well as down. It's a pretty simplistic view, but one that's reinforced by the distinct lack of e-hardtails out on the trails. Why then has Kinesis just launched an aggressive e-hardtail and, more importantly, why are we featuring it?

The Kinesis Rise isn't just any e-hardtail. It uses the modular Fazua Evation drive system, with its low-power motor and compact battery. The motor and battery combine to form the Drivepack, a unit that can easily be removed from the frame and replaced by a blanking plate, quickly transforming the Rise into a conventional hardtail — albeit a heavy one at 16.73kg. Add the Drivepack and this increases to 20.23kg — only about 10 per cent lighter than many full-sus e-bikes.

And while it's lighter than a conventional e-hardtail, it also has less power, so we wanted to find out if this concept makes more sense. By toggling through the top-tube mounted Remote FX control, you have access to three power modes: Rocket, Breeze and River, offering a claimed 400, 250 and 125 watts of assistance respectively.

This is around 150W less than a regular e-hardtail and the motor also has less torque — 55Nm compared to 65-90Nm. So even in Rocket mode, the power of the Rise doesn't feel as strong as Eco mode on some regular e-bikes.

The 250Wh battery has around half the capacity a conventional e-bike, but Kinesis claims it'll manage 1,000m of climbing with a 55km range. Mixing power modes on our first few rides delivered roughly a 2.5-hour run time, but obviously this will vary with rider weight and trail conditions.

The reduced power means you have to work a bit harder, and it also doesn't have that surge of acceleration you feel with a conventional e-bike. In fact, the Fazua motor has a really smooth power delivery, so you rarely wheelspin. But you also can't take any liberties with this bike, as you have to ride the Rise more like a conventional bike. Which is exactly what it's been designed for. In some ways the Kinesis Rise is like the new Specialized Levo SL: a bike that is going to make climbing a little bit easier but with a more normal ride quality on the way back down.

It's lighter than a conventional e-hardtail but has less power

The drive unit is impressively compact





Feels more like a non e-bike when the trail heads downhill



Unprotected wires are not an issue according to Kinesis



Drivepack is a cinch to remove



Battery state clearly indicated

SPECIFICATION

- Frame** Kinesis aluminium
- Fork** X-Fusion E-Slide 34, 130mm travel
- Motor** Fazua Evation 250W, 55Nm
- Battery** Fazua Evation 250Wh
- Display** Remote FX-Rocket, Breeze and River modes
- Wheels** Sector 9E E-specific hubs, Sector 9E WT 35mm rims, Maxxis Minion DHF/Aggressor 29x2.5in tyres
- Drivetrain** FSA 32t chainset, Shimano SLX r-mech and shifter
- Brakes** TRP Slate T4, 180mm
- Components** Alloy low-rise 780mm bar, 45mm stem, X-Fusion Manic 150mm post, DMR saddle
- Sizes** L1, L2, L3, L4,
- Weight** 20.23kg (44.6lb)

GEOMETRY

- Size ridden** L2
- Rider height** 5ft 10in
- Head angle** 65.3°
- Seat angle** 74.5°
- BB height** 325mm
- Chainstay** 442mm
- Front centre** 803mm
- Wheelbase** 1,225mm
- Down tube** 740mm
- Top tube** 630mm
- Reach** 461mm

You can remove the battery and motor for a pure ride

It may seem trivial but what I really like about the Fazua system is you can clean it without too many issues. Kinesis has also developed a neoprene down-tube wrap to stop mud getting inside the system, and it also recommends flushing out dirt from inside the bottom bracket driver after cleaning. Best of all, you can remove the Drivepack in seconds if you want to take the battery indoors for charging, swap in a spare out on the trail, or just want to ride the bike around like a conventional hardtail.

In fact, that's the beauty of this system, it just feels so normal. There's very little extra friction in the drivetrain and when you're flowing down a section of singletrack the Rise responds just like a regular hardcore hardtail. It looks like one too, and I reckon that its clean profile has generated the most interest. Like the Specialized Levo SL, the Kinesis is closer to a regular trail bike — not just

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in terms of power output and assistance, but also in its aesthetic.

As the name suggests, this model has a Shimano SLX build, although the crank is from FSA and the brakes are four-piston TRP Slate T4s. The bike is fitted with a 130mm-travel X-Fusion E-slide fork and gets a grippy 3C Maxxis Minion DHF up front and a fast-rolling Aggressor tyre on the rear. Both are the 2.5in WT (Wide Trail) versions to add extra cushioning and comfort.

Rather than using conventional seat-tube sizing, Kinesis offers the Rise in 'Size by Reach,' which means four different lengths called L1, L2, L3 and L4. Our test bike was an L2, which roughly translates to a medium with a 461mm reach.

But let's get back to the core discussion. The reason we don't think high-powered e-hardtails work that well is because you tend to sit down more on an e-bike when climbing, and with only the rear tyre for comfort, they really have a harsh ride when going uphill faster than normal.

The Rise isn't really like that though; less power means you're not slamming into stuff at the same speed on the ascents. Sure there were times, especially on the steepest climbs, when I missed the jet fuel you get from a regular e-bike, but if you want to earn your turns, the Kinesis Rise lets you do just that.

So the Kinesis Rise joins the Focus Raven, a 14kg e-hardtail, the fully-suspended Lapierre eZesty and, more recently the new Specialized Levo SL in a select club of low-powered e-bikes that adopt modern technology without losing the ride quality of a traditional mountain bike — all that remains to be seen is if this is what riders actually want.

Paul Burwell

mbr 1ST IMPRESSION

HIGHS
Simple modular drive system, removable battery for home charging, doesn't look like an e-bike.

LOWS
Not particularly light. Tall bottom bracket. Seat quick-release is unnecessary.