



**PIVOT SWITCHBLADE
TEAM XTR**

£9,000 Could this be the only bike you need to own?

The Switchblade was last updated in 2016 and, since then, the trend for longer, slacker and more aggressive geometry has become ever more prevalent. This latest model is built around the premise that one bike should do many things, and seeks to blur the line between trail and enduro with a bump-busting 142mm of rear wheel travel, a 160mm fork and relaxed geometry that's compatible with both 29in and 650b+ wheels.

The frame

Both the swingarm and front triangle are built from hollow-core carbon fibre, with a size-specific lay-up used for the mainframe to help maintain the same ride feel. Pivot claim the vertically-mounted shock and relatively straight tubes make the frame compact, light and stiff, as well as allowing plenty of standover height. All sizes have room for a water bottle.

The 142mm of travel is controlled by Dave Weagle's dw-link suspension platform and a Fox Float DPX2 shock that's been custom-developed for the bike. It's compatible with coil shocks too. With the geometry flip-chip in the 'low' setting, the large size

has a 66-degree head angle, 75.5-degree seat angle, 431mm chainstays, 1,216mm wheelbase and 470mm reach. Flip the chip to 'high' and the angles steepen by 0.5 degrees and the BB rises by 6mm.

The kit

The Team XTR model merits its high price tag thanks to a great kit selection. Fox's impressive 36 Factory GRIP2 fork sits up front, with 160mm of travel. Shimano provide their four-piston XTR brakes and top-end, 12-speed XTR drivetrain – and Pivot up the ante even further by subbing in carbon Race Face Next R cranks. Reynolds Blacklabel carbon rims laced to Industry Nine hubs come as standard, with both wheels wrapped in triple-compound Maxxis Minion rubber. Even the dropper post is a top-spec Fox Transfer unit.

The ride

From the saddle, the Switchblade feels more like a long-travel enduro bike than a short-travel trail bike. While far from sluggish, it certainly isn't lightning-fast. High-cadence pedalling revealed some pedal bob. The lockout on the shock fixed this, but made climbing less comfortable and reduced grip.

On the downhills, the Pivot feels like it has more travel than the numbers suggest. The suspension

SPEC

Frame Carbon fibre, 142mm (5.5in) travel

Fork Fox 36 Float
Factory GRIP2, 160mm
(6.3in) travel

Shock Fox Float DPX2
Factory

Drivetrain
Shimano XTR M9100
(1x12)

Wheelset Reynolds
Blacklabel Wide Trail
349 Hydra rims on
Industry Nine hubs,
Maxxis Minion DHF 3C
MaxxTerra EXO TR
29x2.5in WT (f) and
Minion DHR II 3C
MaxxTerra EXO TR
29x2.4in WT (r) tyres

Brakes Shimano XTR M9120, 203/180mm rotors

Bar/stem Phoenix
Team, 780mm/

Seatpost/saddle Fox Transfer Factory

dropper/Pho
Team Vigo

Weight N/A

The large frame gets a 175mm-travel Fox Transfer Factory dropper post



This trail/enduro hybrid is designed to get you through any terrain

is impressively supple at the start of its stroke, with plenty of ramp-up through the rest. You can ride aggressively through rock-strewn chunder as the bike works overtime to smooth out the terrain. The rear end didn't choke over successive bumps and only the roughest sections put it out of shape. However, with the stock volume spacer set-up, the ramp-up can be quite abrupt as the shock approaches the end of its stroke, which can make it hard to access the last bit of travel.

The geometry feels good on flatter terrain and the bike inspires confidence to shred. We never struck the pedals or cranks, thanks to the 346mm BB height – a figure normally found on bikes with much more travel. The high BB did make the bike feel a little awkward to turn in tighter, front-brake-heavy switchbacks though. Overall, Pivot seem to have nailed the Switchblade's feel, especially on rough terrain. **ALEX EVANS**

www.pivotcycles.com

MBUK VERDICT

A punchy little bike that bridges the gap between hardcore trail riding and enduro