

WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE LONG TERM



Jon's **Mondraker Foxy Carbon XR** £2699 (frame only)

How much is too much? And just when is enough, enough? These are questions that need to be answered, and not just when you're considering another pint down the pub. The Foxy comes out of the box with 140mm of travel on offer from the rear end and you can choose to pair it with either a matching 140mm fork or go to 160mm up front. That does bring it somewhat into conflict with its bigger brother, the Dune Carbon (see *WMB178*). That gets a matching 160mm at the back, plus adjustable geometry and the ability to run a piggyback shock. In terms of weight, if you compare the similarly priced Foxy Carbon XR to the Dune Carbon RR, there's only 200g between the two bikes.

So which should you have? In terms

of flat out descending performance, it's hard to beat the Dune. The rear end offers more support, using a piggyback shock means it'll stay consistent for longer and the whole machine feels stiffer and harder edged. On the flipside, 500g might not sound like a lot but I reckon you could ultimately build the Foxy much lighter and it's definitely got a faster and more flighty feel to it. It wants to work with singletrack rather than just destroying it, while the Dune's answer is just to encourage you to ride the trail faster. Well, if you live in the mountains and are an Alps twice a year sort of person, it's got to be a Dune. If you're trail centres, local trails and a little bit of everything else, then it's a Foxy. My problem is deciding which one I want to be.

Reynolds Black Label 27.5 AM wheels £1800 ★★★★★

(1) This is Reynold's top carbon fibre rimmed wheelset and as you'd expect for this sort of money, it uses pretty much the best of everything they could lay their hands on. The MR5 carbon rim

itself isn't new-school wide at 23mm internally and 31mm externally, but it gave a good profile to tyres around 2.3-2.5in width. The DT Swiss 240 hubs have Centrelock rotor mounts and your pick of XD or standard driver body at the rear, though you are limited to a 15mm through axle up front. They use 28 spokes in a three-cross pattern at both ends and the result is a wheelset tips the scales at a very respectable 1,525g.

The feel is spot on too. They're accurate without being harsh and they make your bike feel very lively, like it's drunk a pint or two of very expensive coffee. After a solid season of hammering them they're still dead true and rolling smooth, while once fitted with the supplied tubeless tape and valves they've held air perfectly. Unlike their slightly heavier and even spendier rivals, the ENVE M60s, the graphics are decidedly low-key too. That might be a minus point for the more ostentatious, but when it comes to ride feel, weight and durability, these are probably the best high-end carbon wheels out there. www.upgradebikes.co.uk