

JAMIS DAKAR XCT 3

IN 2008, JAMIS' MOUNTAIN BIKE LINEUP INCLUDED THE 100MM-TRAVEL XCR, THE 150MM-TRAVEL XAM AND THE 200MM-TRAVEL BAM. WITH MANY OF THEIR DEALERS AND RACERS ASKING FOR A 130MM-TRAVEL DESIGN, JAMIS SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A SPECIAL TRAIL BIKE. WHILE THEY LIKED THE ALL-AROUND EFFICIENCY OF THE XCR CHASSIS, JAMIS DIDN'T WANT TO JUST BUILD A 130MM-TRAVEL XCR. INSTEAD, THEY TWEAKED THE GEOMETRY, GIVING IT A SLACK HEAD ANGLE AND LOW BOTTOM BRACKET TO MAKE IT THE ALL-AROUND TRAIL RIPPER.

CHETECHNOLOGY

Jamis builds the Dakar XCT using a Kinesium aluminum main triangle and 7005 aluminum rear end. It features Jamis' 130mm-travel "mp3" linkage design with cartridge bearings at all of the pivots. The frame has an integrated headset with a gusset at the down tube, a full-length seat tube and a brace under the rear shock that links the seat and down tubes. The brace adds strength to the frame, allowing Jamis to use a lightweight butted down tube while providing a lighter and stronger frame overall. The down tube is also curved to help preserve the pivot locations of the mp3 linkage design.

Jamis sells three versions of the Dakar XCT and we tested the XCT 3, which is the top model. The XCT 1 and XCT 2 use the same chassis design but come in at lower price points.

Suspension Jamis equipped the XCT 3 with Fox suspension, using a 32 Talas

R fork and Float R rear shock. The 32 Talas R features a 15mm thru-axle and adjustable rebound damping and travel. The Talas travel adjuster works on-the-fly, keeping the fork active in all three travel settings: 100, 120 and 140mm. The rear shock uses 10mm oversized hardware and has adjustable rebound damping. **Parts Kit** All of the XCT bikes are budget-minded with carefully chosen parts to give the bikes a solid ride while keeping the price reasonable. Along with the Fox suspension components,

the XCT 3 comes with a Shimano XT gruppo, Ritchey bar, post and stem, FSA V-Drive MegaExo cranks and Shimano XT hubs laced up to Mavic XM317 rims.

CHERIDE

The name "XCT" means Cross-Country Trail and that's a perfect description for the character of the bike. Made for ripping sweet singletrack, it comes equipped with 130mm of rear travel, 140mm of front travel, an XC-length stem, steep seat angle and a slack head angle. It's a bike that caters to high-paced riding, whether you're motoring up a long climb or blazing down a flowing trail. The XCT's forte is its ability to cover ground like a cross-country bike while offering comfortable geometry on descents.

Shake It Up The XCT is an anomaly when compared to similar trail bikes. Unlike most bikes in the 130mm-travel range, it has a rare combination of a steep seat angle and a slack head angle. The 73-degree seat angle (sizes 15, 17 and 19") puts the rider in a good position for pedaling while the 67.5-degree head angle and low 12.87-inch bottom bracket height cater to fast, rough riding. It's a cool setup for riders that want a bike that can maintain a high tempo on trail rides.

Automatic For The People The XCT has a great pedaling chassis that feels more "cross-country" than most all-mountain bikes. The seat angle caters to aggressive pedaling and the uninterrupted seat tube allows for a full range of saddle height adjustment. The head angle will prompt you to make use of the Talas travel adjuster on climbs and you might even like using it on

slower terrain to provide quicker handling.

Jamis designed the XCT to be a bike that you "set and forget," so once you set the shock sag, the bike is ready to ride. The Float R shock doesn't feature a ProPedal lever and comes set up with the ProPedal threshold level already tuned. The stock setup gives the bike a firm feel at the pedals that propels it forward with minimal bob from the suspension.

Would the XCT be a better bike with a ProPedal adjuster? Probably not. It might allow for a slightly more sensitive setup but it would change the character of the bike by requiring the rider to manually turn the ProPedal adjuster on and off rather than the automatic feel of the stock setup.

Greatest Hits The low BB and relaxed head angle make the XCT much more comfortable at speed than typical 130mm-travel bikes. In fact, it may take a little adjustment time before you tap into the potential of the bike, especially when speeding down rugged trails. It skips over rocks and roots, and carves high-speed singletrack like it's on rails. The firm feel of the suspension tiptoes the line between cross-country and all-mountain, creating a well-balanced ride that can handle rowdy terrain. We were impressed with how well the front end navigates steep sections and plows over bumps. Even though the BB is lower than most bikes, it only takes a little awareness to avoid whacking the pedals on rocks and it make the bike feel very stable. Overall, the XCT is a bike made for technical trails that wills you to pick up the pace.

OVERVIEW

Born from the efficient XCR chassis design, Jamis gave the XCT 130mm of travel, a slack head angle and low bottom bracket height to make it an all-around trail machine. With the help of the adjustable travel fork on climbs, the suspension has a firm feel that effectively covers terrain while the geometry makes the bike more comfortable on rough trails. ■

PRICE: \$3,050; **WEIGHT:** 30.71 lbs.;
SIZES: 13, 15 (tested), 17, 19, 21";
COLORS: 2-Phase Black;
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