





JIMMER'S ORANGE FIVE PRO £2,800

Jimmer gets the Orange ready for the 'Ard Rock and learns the importance of checking tyre pressures

This year's 'Ard Rock Enduro, set among the brutal hills of Swaledale, Yorkshire, was to be the proving ground of the Orange Five Pro and it coincided nicely with some changes I've made over the past month.

First up, I fitted a new wheelset. E*thirteen's TRS+ hoops are tubeless ready and, with a 28mm internal width, gave me the chance to try out a wider rim. I slapped the same tyres back on – the stock Maxxis High Roller II EXO TR out back and an upgraded 3C Maxx Terra version up front. Foolishly, I forgot to check the pressures.

Hitting the first rock garden in practice with what felt like less than 18psi in the rear, I dinged the rim, tore the sidewall and ended up having to bung a tube in. Two punctures later, I conceded I'd have to run much higher pressures (not much fun over the rocks) or change the tyre. Guy came to the rescue with a Maxxis Tomahawk and Seb (one of our testers) managed to bend the rim back enough that I could run it tubeless. With its low but aggressive profile, 3C compound and tougher DoubleDown (DD) sidewalls the Tomahawk worked really well.

I also got my hands on an ex-test set of Hope cranks fitted with a 32t

chainring. Upgrading my 11-40t SunRace cassette to the 11-42t version meant I retained a similar 'granny' gear to my previous set-up (with a 30t ring) but with a slightly wider overall range, and the narrow/wide direct-mount ring kept the chain in place through the roughest rock gardens. My Highline post only needed a little tweak of the barrel adjuster to keep it running smoothly, so that gets a big tick too.

The thing that struck me most during the race was how well the mid-level Performance series Fox suspension worked. There are a lot of nasty high-speed compressions at the 'Ard Rock to suck up or screw up, but I managed to clean every stage, no crashes. A composed, fluid race saw me come a respectable 60th out of 226 in Vets (yes, I'm that old!) and 278th overall, out of 895. www.orangebikes.co.uk

SPEC CHECK

- CrankBrothers Highline dropper post** £274.99 www.extrauk.co.uk
- SunRace MX3 11-42t cassette** £69.99 www.ison-distribution.com
- Hope cranks (spiderless, 32t)** £270 www.hopetech.com
- Maxxis High Roller II 3C EXO 27.5 x2.4in** £54.99 www.extrauk.co.uk

MY MONTH

HIGHS

It was a blast riding the Five at the 'Ard Rock Enduro. The CrankBros Highline dropper works really well.

LOWS

Maxxis's EXO protection tyres are fine for my local trails but tougher sidewalls were needed to fend off the Yorkshire rocks.







ALEX'S GIANT ANTHEM ADVANCED 27.5 1 £3,249

The Anthem's been letting Al pedal longer and harder

The Anthem just loves plugging on and on. I've been clocking up some longer rides recently and can't get enough of those fireroad and bridleway climbs. When I'm hitting up mega XC loops around my home county of Dorset (think our Seatown Big Ride loop in issue 332, times five), the bike really comes into its own. Churned up and sun-dried bridleways are consumed by its 100mm of rear suspension. That's not something you'd normally say for a bike with this amount of travel, but that's the magic of the Anthem – it's in its element on long XC adventures but doesn't feel out of its depth even if you find some gnarly cliff edges.

You can even huck it (albeit while wincing slightly).

The frame isn't the only resilient part of the bike – the stock build has fared well too. I've only changed the saddle, stem and grips and added a POWA DFender mudguard, and so far the bearings haven't needed any attention. There's just one thing I feel this bike could do with – bigger wheels. Giant used to make a 29er Anthem X but it looks to have been discontinued. This is a shame. If they could combine the speed and agility of this bike with the improved rollover and traction of 29in wheels, it would be even better.

www.giant-bicycles.com

MY MONTH

HIGHS

Clocking up the miles on epic coastal paths

A maintenance-free bike

LOWS

Al's longing for bigger wheels on this XC machine



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It's back to familiar rubber

After last month's 'Ard Rock Enduro, I've needed to swap the rear Maxxis Tomahawk tyre back to the original High Roller II. It's fair to say dusty and dry conditions aren't its forte. With the familiar grip of the High Roller II out back it's been a great finish to a damn good summer. I've changed nowt else, as unfortunately my time with the Five is nearing its end, and it really doesn't need it. That said I'll be riding it as much as possible into the ensuing shitty weather with as much excitement as the first time I rode it.

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