

Best hardtail



ON-ONE SCANDAL XT £1000

This taut bike – which comes as a 26er or a 29er and with either a rigid carbon fork or a RockShox Reba – absolutely flies up the climbs. The main frame tubes are lightweight scandium-aluminium alloy and while stuttery singletrack can kick you about in the saddle with the rigid fork fitted, comfort is fine on most other surfaces and control is even better. Everything is pin-point sharp and predictable while XT kit is as good as you'll get on a £1000 bike. Several builds available.

Rating

www.on-one-shop.co.uk



SARACEN ZEN 1 £650

An upgradeable 6061 alu frame and excellent kit make the Zen a superb ready-to-rip package at an unbelievably good price. It's willing and able to tackle the most technical challenges, and a relatively steep seat angle means you've always got plenty of weight on the bars to guarantee front-end grip and authority. RockShox Tora 302 Solo Air forks provide 130mm of front-end travel, while Shimano's LX and Deore kit takes care of shifting just fine. A ton of XC-freeride fun.

Rating

www.saracencycles.com

Sub-£1000

For thousands more reviews bikeradar.com



3



GENESIS CORE 40 £900

Genesis bikes certainly prove you don't have to pay a massive amount to get an effective hardtail that's perfect for UK riding. The neatly detailed triple-butted frame gets totally sorted geometry for tackling the twistiest singletrack or trail centre switchbacks, as well as masses of mud room and other British-condition bonuses. Kit includes Shimano XT/LX groupset components, Continental tyres and a RockShox Recon U Turn fork for up to 130mm of front-end-travel.

Rating

www.genesisbikes.co.uk

Best of the Rest...

MARIN ROCKY RIDGE £999

The Rocky Ridge is an aggressive XC machine that combines a super-tough build with an agile ride-character. The 6061 hardtail frame is a superbly balanced star, while Fox's Vanilla R fork offers 140mm of plush coil-sprung travel. A decent component mix, too.



Rating

www.marin.co.uk

GARY FISHER BIG SUR £999

A Platinum Series ZR9000 internally and externally butted alu frame seats the heart of this lion of a bike. The Big Sur benefits from Genesis geometry for tight handling, plus a Shimano LX/XT mix, Fox F100 RL fork, Avid Juicy 5 brakes and Bontrager kit.



Rating

www.fisherbikes.com