

# TRAIL TESTED

## £850-£1300 HARDTAILS



**DIAMONDBACK APEX** £899



**MARIN WHITE LINE** £900



**CUBE LIMITED TEAM** £949



**SPECIALIZED ROCKHOPPER SL EXPERT** £949



**BOARDMAN PRO** £1000



**CANNONDALE TRAIL 1** £1000



**GT ZASKAR ELITE** £1099



**MONDRAKER PODIUM** £1196



**GARY FISHER X-CALIBER** £1200



**GENESIS CORE 50** £1200



**TREK 6700** £1200



**NORCO NITRO** £1279



**ORANGE P7S RECON** £1284





**£850-£1300**

# HARDTAILS SUPER TEST

Looking to buy a hardtail between £850 and £1300? This comprehensive 13 bike test will show you where your money is best spent, and where it's not →

Words: **Guy Kesteven** Photos: **Seb Rogers**

# GENESIS CORE 50 £1200



**All-round rubber**

Continental's Mountain King tyre is rapidly becoming a classic UK all-rounder to rival the much-loved Vertical Pro from a few years back. The versions here aren't the expensive (but worth it) Black Chili compound but they still key into most situations well to unlock the Core's potential.

**20:20 vision**

Genesis not only provides mudguard mounts under the down tube, the bike also comes with a CycraGuard included to keep your face clean and your vision clear in the filth.

**Top transmission**

We're massive fans of Shimano's SLX groupset and the brakes and hubs here add significant control. You'll soon scuff the Deore chainset up though even if actual performance is hard to differentiate from the cosmetically tougher SLX on the trail.



**AT A GLANCE**

- ▲ **HIGHS** Light enough to race, but capable enough to tackle a black run full throttle.
- ▼ **LOWS** We'd probably change the handlebar if we owned it, but that's a personal thing.
- **BUY IF...** Because it's the best all-round, tackle anything trail bike here.

## Sorted geometry and a screw-thru fork make this all-rounder unbeatable

**W**e've been big fans of the UK-designed Genesis range ever since it first appeared. The top-drawer Core mixes the responsiveness of its cross-country bikes with the poise of its all-mountain range to create a superb UK all-rounder that beat everything else on our favourite trails.

**The facts**

The frame is a mix of classic and modern. A conventional head tube is backed up with throat and top tube gussets and relatively standard tubes. The centre seamed D-section wishbone seatstays are a proper piece of art, with loads of mudroom around the 2.2in tyres and space for bigger if you need them.

It's the geometry that's interesting though as Genesis has gone noticeably slacker than average for a cross-country trail bike up front. It has teamed this naturally more confident front end set-up with one of our favourite forks: the RockShox Recon is an impressively stiff fork anyway, but screwing a hollow 20mm Maxle axle through the tips makes the front end inspiringly precise.

The SLX brakes provide serious servo wave power that increases trail confidence. DT Swiss rims and SLX hubs are a durable wheelpack, and the Continental Mountain King tyres – more predictable in the 2.2in size than the 2.4in balloon option – are reliably surefooted in all weathers without weighing the bike down. In fact the overall

weight of the bike is something of a shock, in a very positive way.

The 27.2mm seat post takes the sting out of rear end wallops and the new Ritchey-style twin side bolt seat post is easy to use. White grips, saddle and fork all match nicely. The bar could be a bit wider and flatter but otherwise this bike is ready to tackle pretty much everything.

**The feel**

'Tackle anything' is exactly the feeling the Core takes to the trail. Heading down to the test areas, its light weight and well-balanced ride position mean it hums along nicely. In fact while we were willing to trade a bit of speed for confidence, it's as fast as anything else on tarmac bar the Boardman Pro HT and Gary Fisher X-Caliber.

As soon as the technical dial gets turned up a few notches, though, the Genesis shows its Core values. We've been banging on about Motion Control versus TurnKey damping on RockShox forks all test, but you only need to hit one long rocky or stepped descent to know exactly what we mean. It's not as controlled as the Black Box damping on the top Revelation and Reba forks but it comes through the rough in far better shape than anything else here bar the P7.

Add a more relaxed front end, which means you can properly get stuck in without worrying about jackknifing or going over the bars, and the Genesis just loves to be ridden as hard as possible as often as possible. The low weight and positive steering of that

short stem make it easy to flick and hop about from line to line too. In short, this is a bike that doesn't just simplify normally technical singletrack – it looks for whole new lines of entertainment.

The decent sized tyres, skinny seat post and those seductive stays mean you're not getting the battering you'll often get from longer travel hardcore-style hardtails either. That means more traction at the rear wheel and, while you have to get your weight forward to keep the front end from wandering, it whips up technical climbs.

**Summary**

Occasionally a bike comes through that really does offer everything you could want for UK trail riding. The Core is one of the lightest bikes here with responsiveness and smooth trail speed to match. It's also more than happy to roll up its sleeves and get properly stuck in when all hell breaks loose ahead of you. It didn't matter which bike we tested it against, as long as there was some properly entertaining techy stuff involved, whoever was riding the Core not only came through first but also grinning the most.

WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE ★★★★★

"Light, responsive and with a 'tackle anything' capability, the Core 50 is a classic UK bike and a clear winner."



**UNWRAPPED**  
**MAXLE AXLES**



Maxle first appeared on the legendary RockShox Pike fork a few years back, but it's finally gaining momentum across more and more fork platforms. The 20mm axle standard is the stiffest around (with wheels to match) and the 'screw in, then flip the cam lever' installation and removal process couldn't be simpler (once you've had it explained). Genesis still deserves a pat on the back for going out of the way to dig deep into the RockShox range and spec it on a mid-range fork that normally comes with a quick release (QR).

**“Tackle anything’ is exactly the feeling the Core takes to the trail”**

# TRAIL TESTED



## HOW THEY COMPARE

	CANNONDALE TRAIL 1	DIAMONDBACK APEX	MONDRAKER PODIUM SCANDIUM	NORCO NITRO
<b>VERDICT</b>	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>PRICE</b>	£1000	£899	£1196	£1279
<b>CONTACT</b>	CSG 01202 732288 www.cannondale.com	Raleigh 01773 532600 www.raleigh.co.uk	Silverfish 01752 843882 www.silverfish-uk.com	Fisher 01727 798345 www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk
<b>SIZE TESTED</b>	M	18in	M (16.5in)	17in
<b>SIZES AVAILABLE</b>	S, M, L, X, XL (Jumbo)	18in, 20in	M (16.5in), L (18.5in), XL (20.4in)	15in, 17in, 18.5in, 20in, 22in
<b>WEIGHT TESTED</b>	11.3kg (25.0lb)	12.9kg (28.5lb)	11.9kg (26.2lb)	12.3kg (27.0lb)
<b>FRAME</b>	Trail SL S.A.V.E	DB Vectra 6061	Podium Extrolite hydroformed scandium	Double-butted 6061 alloy
<b>FORK</b>	HeadShok Super Fatty Ultra DL80, 80mm travel	RockShox Tora 302 solo air, 130mm travel	RockShox Recon SL Coil Poploc, 100mm travel	RockShox Recon SL coil w/Poploc remote, 100mm travel
<b>MAX TYRE SIZE</b>	2.2in	2.3in	2.1in	2.2in
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>				
<b>CHAINSET</b>	Shimano Deore 22/32/44T	Truvativ FireX 3.2	FSA Moto Megaexo 22/32/44T	Race Face Ride XC 22/32/42T
<b>GEAR SHIFTERS</b>	Shimano SLX	Shimano SLX	Shimano Deore	Shimano Deore
<b>DERAILLEURS</b>	Shimano Deore, XT Shadow rear	Shimano SLX	Shimano Deore, Deore XT rear	Shimano Deore, XT rear
<b>CHAIN</b>	Shimano HG53	Shimano HG53	Shimano CN-HG53	KMC X9 gold
<b>BOTTOM BRACKET</b>	Shimano HT II	Shimano HT II	FSA Megaexo	Race Face X-Type external
<b>CASSETTE</b>	Shimano HG50 9spd, 11-32T	Shimano HG50	Shimano CS-HG50 9spd, 11-32T	Shimano CS-HG50 9spd, 11-34T
<b>WHEELS</b>				
<b>FRONT</b>	Mach 1 Sub Zero Disc Xtra Lite rim on Shimano M525 hub	WTB Dual Duty XC rim on Shimano disc hub	Onoff Rail Wheelset	Mavic XM117 rim on Shimano Deore hub
<b>REAR</b>	Mach 1 Sub Zero Disc Xtra Lite rim on Shimano M525 hub	WTB Dual Duty XC rim on Shimano disc hub	Onoff Rail Wheelset	Mavic XM117 rim on Shimano Deore hub
<b>TYRES</b>	Hutchinson Toro, 2.15in	Michelin AT Expert, 2.25in	Kenda Karma, 2.0 (in)	Continental Race King, 2.0in
<b>FINISHING KIT</b>				
<b>BRAKES</b>	Avid Elixir 5, 160mm rotors	Quad QHD-1 Sting, 180mm/160mm rotors	Formula ORO K18, 160mm	Shimano Deore BR475, 160mm
<b>BAR</b>	Cannondale C3 riser, 660mm	Outland Solo D31Eight riser, 680mm	Easton EA30, 580mm	Double-butted alloy riser, 580mm
<b>STEM</b>	Cannondale XC3 HeadShok, 90mm	FSA OS, 75mm	Easton EA30, 90mm	3D forged, 90mm
<b>GRIPS</b>	Cannondale dual density	Outland	Colour-matched semi mushroom	Norco lock-on
<b>SEAT POST</b>	Cannondale C4	DBR	Easton EA30	Nitro Lateral Clamping
<b>SADDLE</b>	Cannondale Stage	WTB Pure V Race	Mondraker XC SL	WTB Silverado Comp
<b>HEADSET</b>	Cannondale SI HeadShok	FSA	FSA Th-848 Semi cartridge	FSA ZS-4D
<b>PEDALS</b>	N/A	Alloy flats	OnOff MTB SPD	Shimano PD-M505 clipless
<b>GEOMETRY</b>				
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>				
<b>AT A GLANCE</b>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Superlight SAVE-stayed frameset could be the basis for a great speed bike.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> The wooden feeling Headshock fork limits control and kit is okay rather than outstanding.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want a stiff 'emergency only' fork feel and a light frame to race on.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Stiff accurate trail frame with some nice detailing, sorted cockpit and quality stop/go kit.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Stiff frame can be uncomfortable and it deserves a better fork and tyres.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You're looking for a decent trail frame for upgrading with a better fork and your favourite tyres.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Light and tight scandium race frame with some decent race-style componentry to match.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Very limited tyre clearance for UK conditions and heavy fork for a race bike.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> If you base your race season on the weather forecast and never run fat tyres anyway.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Fast tyres and handling, compact frame agility and lots of detail bling.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> A better controlled air fork and better brakes would help you go up and down with more speed and control.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want a hyperactive, high-speed hardtail and you're a fan of goldie lookin' chains.</p>

				
<b>TREK 6700</b>	<b>GT ZASKAR ELITE</b>	<b>SPECIALIZED ROCKHOPPER SL EXPERT</b>	<b>CUBE LIMITED TEAM</b>	<b>BOARDMAN PRO</b>
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>£1200</b>	<b>£1099</b>	<b>£949</b>	<b>£949</b>	<b>£1000</b>
Trek UK 01908 282626 www.trekbike.co.uk	CSG 01202 732288 www.hot-wheels.co.uk	Specialized UK 0208 3913500 www.specialized.com	Cube UK 01905 798692 www.cube-bikes.de	Boardman 08450 579000 www.boardmanbikes.com
18.5in	M (18.5in)	17in	18in	M (18in)
15.5in, 17.5in, 18.5in, 19.5in, 21.5in	XS (15in), S (16.6in), M (18.5in), L (20in), XL (21.5in)	13in, 15in, 17in, 19in, 21in, 23in	16in, 18in, 20in, 22in	S (16in), M (18in), L (20in)
12.1kg (26.6lb)	11.7kg (25.8lb)	11.9kg (26.1lb)	12.3kg (27.1lb)	10.8kg (23.9lb)
Alpha Black aluminium	GT/Kinesis Superlight custom frame	M4 fully manipulated alloy	Superlite AMF 7005 double-butted aluminium	Ultralight super butted alloy
RockShox Recon SL Solo Air, 100mm travel	RockShox Tora SL Coil, 100mm travel	RockShox Recon SLite, 80/100mm travel	RockShox Recon SL w/ Motion Control and PopLoc, 100mm	RockShox Reba Race, 100mm travel
2.35in	2.2in	2.3in	2.35in	2.1in
Shimano Deore XT 22/32/44T	Shimano Deore Octalink	Shimano Deore	Shimano Deore	Truvativ Stylo GXP 22/32/44T
Shimano SLX	Shimano Deore	Shimano Deore	Shimano Deore	SRAM X.9
Shimano SLX, Deore XT rear	Shimano Deore, SLX rear	Shimano Deore, Deore XT rear	Shimano SLX, XT rear	SRAM X.9, X.0 rear
SRAM PC 95	HG50	KMC X9	Shimano CN-HG53	Shimano HG-73
Shimano HT II	Shimano Deore Octalink	Shimano BB-ES25, Octalink	Shimano HollowTech II	Truvativ GXP
SRAM PG950 9spd, 11-34T	HG53, 11-32T	Shimano HG50 9spd, 11-34T	Shimano CS-HG50 9spd, 11-32T	SRAM PG950 9spd, 11-32T
Bontrager Ranger rim on Bontrager Select hub	XC Speed Disc Cross Country rim on Shimano Deore 525 hub	DT-Swiss 445D rim on forged alloy disc hub	RFR ZX24 rim on Shimano M525 hub	Ritchey WCS Disc rim on cartridge bearing disc hub
Bontrager Ranger rim on Shimano M525-L hub	XC Speed Disc Cross Country rim on Shimano Deore 525 hub	DT-Swiss 445D rim on forged alloy disc hub	RFR ZX24 rim on Shimano M525 hub	Ritchey WCS Disc rim on cartridge bearing disc hub
Bontrager XDX, 2.2in	Kenda Karma L3R Pro 'Sticke', 2.0in	Specialized Fast Trak LK Control, 2.0in	Schwalbe Nobby Nic, 2.25in front, Racing Ralph, 2.25in rear	Continental Speed King, 2.1in
Avid Elixir 5, 160mm rotors	Avid Juicy 3, 160mm rotors	Avid Elixir 4, 160mm rotors	Formula RX, 180/160mm rotors	Avid Elixir R carbon, 160mm rotors
Bontrager Race Lite, 660mm	Ritchey Pro flat, 600mm	Butted alloy riser, 660mm	Easton EA30 low riser, 640mm	Ritchey Pro Rizer, 660mm
Bontrager Race Lite, 105mm	Ritchey Pro, 90mm	3D forged, 90mm	Easton EA30, 105mm	Ritchey Pro, 90mm
Bontrager	GT lock-on	Specialized Enduro dual density	Cube dual density	Boardman dual density
Bontrager Race Lite	Ritchey Pro	Alloy two bolt	Easton EA30	Ritchey Pro
Bontrager Race	WTB Rocket V saddle	Specialized Rockhopper XC	Selle Italia Q-Blk	Cboardman with cro-mo rails
VP-A41AC	FSA Integrated	1.125in threadless, Campy style	FSA No 10 semi-integrated	FSA Orbit integrated
Wellgo alloy platform	Clipless	Alloy	Fasten aluminium	Alloy platform
				
<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Well-balanced overall ride that's ready for anything from commuting to marathon racing</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> TurnKey-damped fork is disappointing considering the cost.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want an enjoyable long haul all-rounder with rack mounts rather than flashy kit.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> An impressively smooth, surefooted ride for a lightweight alloy framed racer.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> The component spec is low for a £1000+ bike, particularly the fork.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> If you're looking for a classic all-rounder that's got serious upgrade potential.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Great lightweight, fast, balanced ride and mostly well-equipped ride for the money.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Needs winter tyres and deserves a better fork if you can afford it.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want an understated looking, but always enjoyable and naturally rapid all round ride.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Excellent fork and brakes on a tight, fast riding frameset.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Relies on tyres and fork for comfort and narrow race cockpit restricts singletrack potential.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You're after a fast marathon race/epic ride hardtail with standout looks and kit spec for the money.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Slick featherweight race frame with barely believable component spec.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Skinny, fragile tyres and flexy wheels mean it rattles in the rough.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want a clear race day advantage at a gift of a price and you don't ride rocks much.</p>

## HOW THEY COMPARE



	<b>ORANGE P75 RECON</b>	<b>GARY FISHER X CALIBER</b>	<b>MARIN WHITE LINE</b>	<b>GENESIS CORE 50</b>
<b>VERDICT</b>	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>PRICE</b>	£1284	£1200	£900	£1200
<b>CONTACT</b>	Orange 01422 311113 www.orangebikes.co.uk	Gary Fisher 01908 282626 www.fisherbikes.com	ATB Sales 01424 753566 www.marin.co.uk	Genesis 0870 0347226 www.genesisbikes.co.uk
<b>SIZE TESTED</b>	17in	M (17.5in)	17in	17.5in
<b>SIZES AVAILABLE</b>	15in, 17in, 19in, 21in	S (15.5in), M (17.5in), L (19in), XL (21in)	17in, 19in, 20.5in	16in, 17.5in, 19in, 20.5in
<b>WEIGHT TESTED</b>	13.36kg (29.5lb)	12.3kg (27.1lb)	12.4kg (27.3lb)	11.9kg (26.3lb)
<b>FRAME</b>	Reynolds 631 Double-Butted Cro Mo Steel	Platinum Series 6066 butted and hydroformed aluminium	6061 triple butted aluminium	6069 ALX-9 T6 triple-butted aluminium
<b>FORK</b>	RockShox Recon 351 Solo Air Motion Control, 130mm travel	Fox F80 RL 29, 80mm travel	RockShox Tora SL Solo Air, 100mm travel	RockShox Recon Race Coil w/ lockout and Maxle, 120mm travel
<b>MAX TYRE SIZE</b>	2.4in	2.3in	2.3in	2.35in
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>				
<b>CHAINSET</b>	Race Face Ride XC X Type	Shimano Deore M521 Octalink, 22/23/44T	Shimano Deore, 22/32/44T	Shimano Deore HT11, 22/32/44T
<b>GEAR SHIFTERS</b>	Shimano Deore	SRAM X.7	Shimano Deore	Shimano Deore
<b>DERAILLEURS</b>	Shimano Deore, Shimano SLX rear	SRAM X.7 front, X.9 rear	Shimano Deore front, SLX rear	Shimano Deore front, Deore XT SGS rear
<b>CHAIN</b>	Shimano HG53	SRAM PC950	Shimano HG53	Shimano HG53
<b>BOTTOM BRACKET</b>	Race Face X Type	Shimano Octalink	Shimano integrated	Shimano HollowTech external bearing
<b>CASSETTE</b>	Shimano HG50	SRAM PG950 9spd, 11-34T	Shimano HG54 9spd, 11-34T	Shimano HG50 9spd, 11-32T
<b>WHEELS</b>				
<b>FRONT</b>	Mavic XM317 rim on Shimano 525 Disc hub	Bontrager Duster Disc 29 rim on Shimano M525 hub	Mavic XM-117 rim on Shimano Deore disc hub	DT Swiss X430D rim on Shimano SLX disc hub
<b>REAR</b>	Mavic XM317 rim on Shimano 525 Disc hub	Bontrager Duster Disc 29 rim on Shimano M525 hub	Mavic XM-117 rim on Shimano Deore disc hub	DT Swiss X430D rim on Shimano SLX disc hub
<b>TYRES</b>	Maxxis Advantage, 2.25in	Bontrager XDX, 2.1in	WTB Prowler MX Folding, 2.1in	Continental Mountain King Kevlar, 2.2in
<b>FINISHING KIT</b>				
<b>BRAKES</b>	Avid Juicy 3, 185/160mm rotors	Avid Juicy 3, 160mm rotors	Shimano M475 Deore, 160mm rotors	Shimano SLX, 180/160mm rotors
<b>BAR</b>	Orange Supercross +, 680mm	Bontrager Race Big Sweep, 620mm	Double Butted 6061 Alloy riser, 670mm	Genesis 2014, 660mm
<b>STEM</b>	Orange Stalk +, 75mm	Bontrager SSR OS	Marin OS Alloy, 90mm	Genesis OS 75mm
<b>GRIPS</b>	Orange Friction addiction	Bontrager Race Lite	WTB Moto Grip	Genesis Diamond file lock-on
<b>SEAT POST</b>	Orange Stick Up	Bontrager SSR	Comp Alloy Micro Adjust	Genesis 2014 micro
<b>SADDLE</b>	SDG Bel Air	Bontrager Race	WTB Silverado Comp	Genesis MTN2
<b>HEADSET</b>	Tange TG8	Semi-integrated, semi-cartridge bearing	FSA internal	FSA Aheadset
<b>PEDALS</b>	Alloy flats	Toeclip	Ritchey Logic Mountain clipless	Shimano PD-M520 clipless
<b>GEOMETRY</b>				
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>				
<b>AT A GLANCE</b>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Smooth riding, sweetly balanced singlespeed and DH-ready frame in a good value complete bike format.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> The stronger 2010 frame is significantly heavier, which you'll feel when climbing and sprinting.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want a totally surefooted high control bike.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> A tight, balanced showcase of the smoother, faster and control enhancing benefits of big wheels.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Not as fast to accelerate or change direction as a 26in wheeled bike.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You want to open a can of whup-ass on your mates whenever the trail turns technical.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Finely tuned comfortable yet responsive frame with great handling and a mostly supportive kit selection.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> Deserves a better fork and the brakes are crap.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> You value ride quality and upgrade potential more than Top Trumps kit comparison.</p>	<p>▲ <b>HIGHS</b> Light enough to race, but capable enough to tackle a black run full throttle.</p> <p>▼ <b>LOWS</b> We'd probably change the handlebar if we owned it, but that's a personal thing.</p> <p>► <b>BUY IF...</b> Because it's the best all-round, tackle anything trail bike here.</p>

## THE VERDICT

**H**ammering this pack of bikes through one of the harshest winters we've had has been one hell of an undertaking. The 'middle eight' bikes all give a good ride so it's worth searching through as your perfect bike might well be in there. Of these, our all-round cross country and value champion is the excellent £1000 Boardman Pro, with the GT Zasker Elite being a great all-rounder for £1099. At the top of the list for aggressive riders is the £1284 Orange: great for technical downs but requires patience on the ups. However, if you're pushed to make the bottom rung of the budget ladder, the £900 Marin White Line is a great value all-round trail hardtail that's certainly not shortchanging you if you choose it. It's involving, entertaining and more than happy to keep up with pricier bikes.

Any of the bikes but two, that is. If you're out for hours and like nothing more than turning the screw through technical terrain then take a deep breath and try the X-Caliber. You'll be astonished at the difference big wheels can make.

However if you want a bike that's ready to rip it up and raise the bar in every situation from epic weekends to the sketchiest technical singletrack, there was a clear winner from the first time we hit the trails on it. Genesis really has got its Core trail bike values totally right with the outstandingly capable 50.

**£850-£1300 HARDTAILS SUPERTEST**

**WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE WINNER**

**"Light, responsive and with a 'tackle anything' capability, the Core 50 is a classic UK bike and a clear winner"**

**GENESIS CORE 50 £1200**

★★★★★

**2nd**

**WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE VALUE**

**"Sweet singletrack handling and infectious enthusiasm create a killer ride for the price."**

**MARIN WHITE LINE £900**

★★★★★

**3rd**

**"Outstanding smoothness, traction and speed make it a clear winner for wheels on the ground XC work"**

**GARY FISHER X CALIBER £1200**

★★★★★

## ALSO CONSIDER

**KHS Alite 3000 £650**  
It's not for the faint-hearted, but this snap responsive superlight 26lb race-ready ride would run rings round most of the bikes here at nearly half their price.  
[www.khsbikes.co.uk](http://www.khsbikes.co.uk)



**Marin White Line Pro £1499**  
For £600 more than the White Line one of our favourite frames here comes with a Fox fork and XTR/XT mix.  
[www.marin.co.uk](http://www.marin.co.uk)

**Boardman FS Pro £1300**  
Basically the same spec as the Pro HT but on a lightweight four-bar full-suspension frame, the Pro is an absolute bargain.  
[www.boardmanbikes.com](http://www.boardmanbikes.com)

**» THE GUIDE**

**Turn to The Guide on p153 for more top contenders**