



Words: Jake Ireland
Photos: Russell Burton

DROP THE BOMB

Can Nukeproof's entry-level trail bike really battle the big boys?

Since the introduction of the Mega to Nukeproof's line-up back in 2012, the range has evolved into the 160mm AM and 130mm travel TR. Don't let the badges or numbers distract you though, as both bikes are 650b wheel-wielding weapons that will happily smash the trails with the best. We got our hands on the cheapest bike in the range, the TR Race, and took it out for a beating.

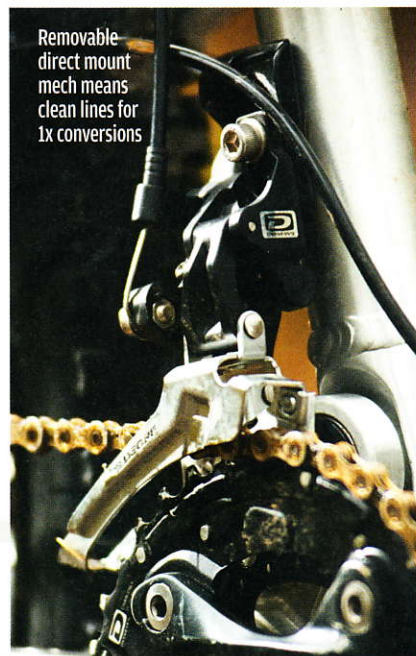
Numbers game

A large part of the bike's 14.5kg (32lb) weight is held in the frame, but there's a lot more to it than most 130mm travel whippets. ISCG mounts give full chainguide compatibility, while chunky double welds give that burly look and the strength to back it up. All the features you'd expect from an aggressive trail bike are there too, like the 44mm any-steerer headtube and 12x142mm rear axle.

It's when you take a look at the numbers that you get an idea of what the designers were thinking when they put pen to paper for the Mega TR. A 67.5-degree head angle combined with short 440mm chainstays and comfy cockpit length

suggests fun times in the woods, and the TR delivers.

Into the hills, the TR's heft doesn't get in the way on climbs, with the relatively lightweight wheelset helping the bike roll. The Monarch R shock lacks any compression adjustment but we didn't feel the need for it, as the Mega remained controlled and there wasn't enough pedal bob for it to become noticeable until plugging in the granny ring. Even then it wasn't enough to be an annoyance.



Removable direct mount mech means clean lines for 1x conversions

AT A GLANCE

NUKEPROOF MEGA TR RACE

PRICE £2000

TOPTUBE LENGTH 588mm

SEAT TUBE LENGTH 432mm

HEAD ANGLE 67.5°

SEAT ANGLE 74°

BB HEIGHT 333mm

CHAINSTAY LENGTH 439mm

WHEELBASE 1145mm

SIZES S, M (tested), L, XL

WEIGHT 14.5kg (32lb)

FRAME Hydroformed double-welded T6 6061 alu

FORK RockShox Sektor GRL Solo Air, 140mm

SHOCK RockShox Monarch R, 130mm

WHEELS Novatec Disc hubs, WTB SX23 rims

TYRES Schwalbe Hans Dampf Snakeskin TrailStar (F), PaceStar (R), 650bx2.35in

CRANKS Shimano Deore

GEARS Shimano M610 shifters, SLX mech (R)

BRAKES Shimano Deore

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The Hans Dampf tyres aren't super-fast rollers, but the speed they'll trundle along at is respectable considering the amount of grip they have. They slide in a predictable and easy to control manner when traction does start to become a luxury.

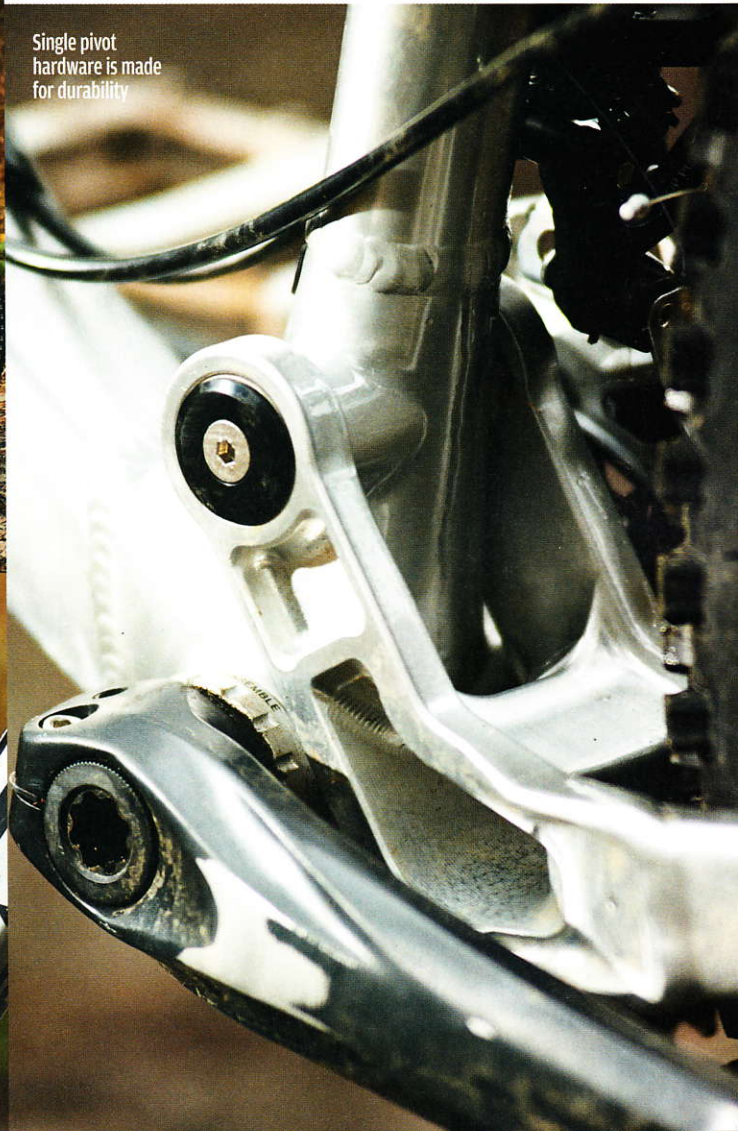
We've used the Shimano M615 brakes on loads of bikes and can't help but be incredibly impressed with their performance, and that's before we consider how well priced they are. Predictable stopping with consistent lever feel and total reliability is all we ever experienced.

Ready to roll

When you're up to speed out on the trails the Mega is incredibly stable, yet still ready to spring into action with its lively feel begging to be thrown around and pushed hard. The stock Nukeproof handlebars are comfortable at 760mm wide, and the short 50mm stem length provides another insight into what the bike is going to be most comfortable doing. The short stem didn't have a detrimental effect on the climbs, and definitely made the flat, flowing trails and downhill a lot more fun. It made the most out of the stability



It's short, sturdy and built for fun



Single pivot hardware is made for durability



A RockShox Monarch controls 130mm of travel

“The Mega’s lively ride rewards you the harder you push it”

of the 67.5-degree head angle with fast, agile handling without a hint of twitchiness.

Although most riders will find the toptube a comfortable length for out of the saddle work and smashing downhill runs, long stints in the saddle may see you wanting more toptube room than the 588mm (on our medium test bike) gives, especially considering the bike’s travel and namesake. If you’re debating size, definitely go larger.

The Erosion Linkage-driven single-pivot back end handles trail conditions with ease. The Monarch R’s initial feel isn’t as supple as that of the bigger canned Debonair shocks, but isn’t harsh in any way and has a good amount of progression later on

in the travel. Square edges are dealt with well, although bigger holes do seem to slow the bike down and choke the suspension slightly.

That said, tip the Mega TR into territory unknown for most 130mm travel bikes, and it really starts to shine. Turning down into a steep section of downhill track usually ridden by 8in travel monsters, the Mega remains composed with its lively ride rewarding you the harder you push it. The 130mm of back end bounce doesn’t give in, with controlled predictable progression through the stroke, and bottoming out was a rarity.

The bike remains balanced and in control, with the only weakness being the Sektor fork when pushed really hard. The chassis stiffness of the Sektor is totally fine when used for normal cross-country and trail duties, but it does hold the Mega back as the geometry is so capable. The same goes for the Sektor’s basic RL damper. It’s a consistent



Own brand OKLO dropper is a bargain



“In territory unknown for most 130mm travel bikes, it starts to shine”



performer and gives sensitive response along with a good amount of support, but push it really hard and you will see harshness. It's not bad enough to warrant a new fork, and it's only noticeable when pushing really hard at high speed, which is a rarity.

We had repeated issues with the Deore chainset dropping the chain all the way through the test period, even with adjustments made to the SLX rear mech's clutch and being wary with pedalling anywhere rough. This would be an easy issue to fix. If we were keeping hold of the bike, we would go for a single ring setup straight away.

Nukeproof's own OKLO dropper seatpost was impressive, especially on a bike of this price. Lacking the refinement of a Reverb, the OKLO's lever gives a slightly vague feel, but it's easy to get used to.

Summary

Let's not beat around the bush; if you


WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE ★★★★★

“The Mega TR Race is amazing value for money and is seriously capable on the descents.”

are after an out and out fast trail bike, the Mega probably isn't for you. If you're happy to winch the climbs to smash the descents and generally push a short travel bike harder than you thought it could be pushed, then the Mega TR might just tick your box.

Despite being clutch equipped, we still dropped the chain on wilder terrain

TESTER SAYS



The Mega TR has been designed with descents at the forefront of Nukeproof's collective mind, and that approach has paid off. Although climbing is a compromise, the TR can dominate the descents. A longer toptube would be welcome and increase downhill performance and climbing svelte. If you're a DH rider who wants a fun bike for longer rides, you could hit the jackpot with this, especially at the price. **Jake**



RockShox Sektor fork is good, but can be pushed too far on rough stuff

ALSO CONSIDER

Whyte G150 £2500

Slightly upping the travel to 150mm, the Whyte is a versatile beast. The geometry is sorted and translates into a stable ride that's at home up hill or down (gnarly) dale.

www.whyte.bike



Cube Stereo 140 HPA Race £2499

A similar ride to the Mega TR, with fun and DH ability featuring highly. It's a climber too, and has a longer toptube to suit days in the saddle and stability on the descents. www.cube.eu

Nukeproof Mega TR 275 Comp £2500

The model up from the Race gains a single ring drivetrain and a fork with damping that can be pushed harder. The £500 extra solves some of our gripes with the Race.

www.hotlines-uk.com