



Published on August 23rd, 2013 | by Luke

Troy Lee Designs Ace Shorts Review



Troy Lee Design's sterling reputation in the mountain bike world comes from their dedication to protecting the sport's fastest and hardest-charging descenders. With a twenty-year reign as the first choice for DH gear, there is no denying that when the terrain gets gnarly, TLD helmets and clothing are the kit to wear. As today's bikes evolve into machines capable of hammering uphill for an hour and then blasting back down through steep and technical terrain, Troy Lee has emerged as one of the major players in the all-mountain category with lightweight, yet durable clothing and helmets. At the top of their all-mountain clothing line-up is the **Ace Short**, made for all-out riding, both up and down the mountain.

When first donning the TLD Ace Shorts, the most obvious characteristics are their stretch and lack of weight. Fit is near perfect; loose enough for style points while cut just right to avoid catching on your saddle. I usually wear size large shorts, and the 34's require only a slight tightening of the low-profile waist adjusters for a slip-free fit; a nice surprise, since Troy Lee's template for girth has required me to size down in previous years. When riding, the Ace's behave as close to lycra as possible, staying out of the way and never restricting rider movement, attributable both to the short's cut and the four-way stretch fabric. While I usually wear bib shorts under my baggies, the liner of the Ace Shorts fits very well, and the chamois is one of the nicer examples found in baggy shorts, although in my opinion it could be a bit less bulky. Nonetheless, I often use the stock liner short with no complaints. Knee pad compatibility is not an issue either, with the hem hitting about mid-kneecap when standing on the ground, the shorts don't grab and are flexible enough to conform around knee guards with zero pedaling interference.



Troy Lee Design's Ace Shorts feature two cooling vents and three pockets.

A huge plus of the Ace Shorts is their storage capacity. Three pockets—two front hip pockets and a rear pocket below the waistband, all zipped—provide enough space to comfortably carry energy gels/bars, a phone, and whatever else is needed for a self-sufficient trail ride. Objects placed in the front pockets tend to slide to the inside of the legs, but the pockets are deep enough so that there is no saddle interference, and the cut of the shorts prevents the pockets' contents from jiggling.

Let's not fool ourselves; style is a major reason for the Troy Lee brand's widespread popularity, and while not as provocative as TLD's "traditional" graphics, the Ace Shorts still provide the goods. If you want to stand out, the Ace Shorts are available in eye-catching fluorescent green, bright red, and white, in addition to grey and basic black. Subtle styling features like the contrasting zipper trim of the pockets and vents, along with well-placed TLD logos give the shorts a smooth visage, matching up with your own calm countenance in the face of hectic sections of trail.

One of the obvious reasons for the first-choice status of TLD's **Moto** and **Sprint** Shorts among downhillers is their abrasion resistance, which comes at the price of increased weight and less breathability. Built to be light and comfortable, the Ace Shorts will never be found at a World Cup DH race, but like the **Ace Glove**, they are far more resistant to abuse than it would seem. After many forays into the spiky chaparral, which is ubiquitous on our trails, my Ace Shorts are no worse for wear. Additionally, thanks to the feathery fabric and large zippered vents at the thigh, the Ace Shorts do an excellent job of managing heat, making them a top choice for riding in all but the most extreme temperatures.