

# ORANGE G3 TORA £835



**Finishing touches**  
You can lash pretty much anything onto your bike with zip ties and they'll do the job fine, but it's neater with proper mounts. You get an extra top tube guide to keep the rear brake hose tidy, but you also get two bolts under the down tube for a Crud Catcher.

**Fork travel**  
The extra 20mm of suspension stroke in the Tora fork is definitely worth the £35 upgrade for shrugging off rocks and stabilising the handling. If you're feeling really flush you can get RockShox Recon or Fox F32 upgrades too.

**Chassis expertise**  
While its top full-suss frames are built in Halifax using a mix of on-site manufacturer monocoque and imported tubing, its hardtails are all imported. The way Orange shapes and specs its bikes produces a standout ride whatever you can afford though.

**AT A GLANCE**  
▲ **HIGHS** A balanced, nicely detailed frame with an aggressive cockpit package creates a great all round technical trail bike.  
▼ **LOWS** Short stem is perfect for tight stuff but makes the steering rather light.  
► **BUY IF...** You want a real taste of Orange's legendary ride quality at a reasonable price.

## The G3 proves it's sometimes worth digging deeper into your pockets

Orange was the first manufacturer to respond to our test so sneaked in before the price level dropped lower, but if you can afford it the G3 is a winner from singletrack to summit.

### The facts

The G2 and G3 framesets are the latest in a long line of entry-level Orange chassis (previously known as the Gringo, Halifax history fans). The complete bikes are a subtle mix of traditional styling and state-of-the-art trail handling. The short ring-reinforced head tube is backed up by a long throat gusset, with a shared top and down tube seam increasing front end integrity further. The main tubes are custom butted to save weight.

Out back oval to round chainstays end at small cowed drop-outs. Skinny round-to-oval seatstays complete the chassis circuit via a short stub wishbone section behind the extended seat tube. The rear-facing seat slot needs more regular cleaning to stop the post seizing than a forward-facing one, but practicality is impressive otherwise. Mud room is reasonably generous and you get bolted mounts for a Crud Catcher and twin bottle cages.

The Orange is the most expensive bike in this test, but it's not as much of a result bender as you might think. While the £650 G2 (same frame) comes with a Dart 2 fork it can be upgraded for £60 to a 100mm Tora SL. Going for the G3 gets you a Shimano Deore/SLX transmission (rather than SRAM

X4/5), Avid brakes (rather than Funn) and higher grade Shimano hubs, which will all shave weight. You also get pimplier finishing plumbing in the shape of Race Face Ride kit. Otherwise tyres, saddle, hand-built wheel quality and the four frame size options are the same.

### The feel

What makes the Orange one of the best bikes here is not the extra money spent though, it's the handling pack and overall ride character. Like Marin, Orange has gone for a super short stem that's a perfect match for ultra-technical riding. Where immediate reactions are essential to control a tyre slide or keep you on line, having such a light steering feel keeps you constantly involved and informed. The Race Face Ride bar is wide enough for reasonable leverage and a great shape too.

While the standard G2/G3 geometry is relatively steep, the extra 20mm of fork travel slackens it just enough to stop the whole bike being too twitchy and attention seeking. That said, nervous or novice riders could go for a longer stem to add stability. If you're thinking the short stem might make breathing space cramped, don't worry as there's plenty of stretch to get into your rhythm on climbs without the front end constantly popping up. Weight comparison is unfair against most of the cheaper bikes here but there's no denying its lightness is a real bonus when you're heading uphill or accelerating out of corners.

The Continental Mountain King tyres are a good choice for UK use, with reasonable traction in all conditions and not too much drag on hardpack. They're light too, which adds to the Orange's refreshingly responsive feel, as does the RockShox Tora SL Air fork: the extra 20mm of travel gives it a real control edge over the 100mm version on the Genesis so it's well worth the upgrade.

The Tora is in a different class to Dart forks, letting you take the attack to the trail rather than going on the defensive as soon as things get rough and dirty. The combination of slim frame tubes and a 27.2mm seat post is enough to take the sting out of rocky sections too. Cue more technical control to match the fork and greater comfort on longer rides. The twin-bolt Ride seat post will survive plenty of abuse via the SDG saddle as well.

### Summary

Orange has a well-deserved reputation for producing some of the best riding bikes around. The G2 and G3 bring that enhanced enthusiasm and enjoyment right down to economy class, proving you're paying for much more than just the name.

WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE ★★★★★

"A decent frame with a cracking ride character, detailing and sorted kit, make the G3 a great British trail bike."



"A subtle mix of traditional styling and state-of-the-art trail handling"

### UNWRAPPED BUILD OPTIONS



Most of the manufacturers here use the same frame across several models. It's a great way to share the development costs of a new chassis while giving buyers several different specification levels to choose from. Orange's G2 and G3 bikes are different colours (the G2 is orange) but use the same 6061 custom-butted frame with two different levels of kit bolted onto them. Orange also offers buyers the choice of different upgrade options: on the G2 and G3 there are only different fork options but on more expensive bikes you can choose forks, brakes, wheels, bottom brackets and even custom colour-matched paintjobs.