



No dropper post, but the Crush frame has stealth routing and a forward facing slot in the seat tube to keep the mud out

There are four frame sizes to choose from, but only one colour. Orange Soda it is then!

A 50mm Kore stem and matching 760mm bar give ultimate control

Shimano's Deore brakes are faultless — with a 180mm rotor up front there's no shortage of stopping power

ORANGE CRUSH S

£1,650
(Pike upgrade)

SPECIFICATION

Frame 6061 T6 aluminium
Fork RockShox Pike RCT3, 140mm travel
Wheels Formula 15/142mm hubs, Alex MD23 rims, Maxxis High Roller II 27.5x2.3/Ardent 2.25in tyres
Drivetrain Race Face Ride 30t chainset, Shimano SLX Shadow Plus r-mech and Deore shifter, MRP 1x Guide
Brakes Shimano Deore, 180/160mm
Components Kore Durox 760mm bar and Cubix 50mm stem, SDG Falcon Orange saddle
Sizes S, M, L, XL
Weight 12.82kg (28.26lb)
Contact orangebikes.co.uk

GEOMETRY

Size tested L
Head angle 65.9°
Seat angle 73.1°
BB height 310mm
Chainstay 427mm
Front centre 753mm
Wheelbase 1,180mm
Down tube 722mm
Top tube 640mm
Reach 453mm

The Crush is something of a stalwart in the Orange range. But given how many revisions there have been to the frame for 2016, Orange could quite easily just have renamed it.

The riding position and geometry are now more in keeping with bikes like the Five and the Alpine, and if you're familiar with either of those you'll instantly feel at home on the latest Crush S.

The key changes that have brought about that transformation include the chainstay length, which has shrunk from 443mm down to 430mm. And even though the rear end is now shorter, Orange has managed to retain plenty of tyre clearance, by switching from a 135mm QR rear end to a 142x12mm bolt-thru design.

It's the sizing of the front end that's made the biggest difference though. The top tube measurements are now in line with the Alpine, and just like the suspension bike they now grow in 20mm increments with each frame size.

There have been some visual changes to the frame, too. The 1.5in head tube has been swapped for a smaller XX44 design to better match the tubing profiles of the top and down tube. The top tube has also been lowered, to increase standover clearance, and there's also internal routing for a dropper post. All in, it's a very different proposition to last year's bike.

SUSPENSION

The stock Crush S comes with a 140mm-travel RockShox Revelation to hit its £1,400 price point. One look at the revised geometry, however, and we knew that the spindly 32mm fork would be the weakest link. Fortunately, Orange offers a Pike RCT3

Solo Air upgrade option for an additional £250. It's still got 140mm travel, so as not to mess with the geometry, but the jump in performance and stiffness makes it worth every penny. Orange is currently working on a Yari option to replace the Revelation, and if it can keep the price at £1400 the Crush S will be untouchable.

COMPONENTS

Orange has budgeted wisely on the Crush, focusing on components that offer genuine performance gains, not just bragging rights. So instead of going for a flashy rear mech, you get a solid 1x10 Shimano SLX set-up. The frame is hardwired to accept a front mech too, but Orange specs a narrow-wide 30t single-ring, Race Face cranks and MRP guide instead. A belt and braces approach to chain retention? Possibly, but given how wild the back end can get on a hardtail, we think it's a bloody good idea. Granted, the spread of gears is nothing like as wide as the 2x10 drivetrain on the Ragley, or the 1x11 SRAM kit on the Whyte, but an expander cog could easily remedy that.

It's Orange's choice of top quality rubber that really lets the Crush shine though. With a triple-compound 3C Maxxis High Roller II up front, you can load up the side knobs and carve corners to your heart's content. And with the faster rolling Ardent on the back, you never feel like you're sacrificing rolling speed on the more sedate sections of trail either.

PERFORMANCE

Whether by design or default, there's a distinct softness to the alloy Crush frame that makes it feel less harsh than the Whyte 905. We got the exact same sensation when

we tested the Clockwork 120 S over a year ago, but we criticized that bike for having dated geometry.

With the increased reach and slacker head angle on the Crush taking care of business up front, and shorter chainstays that guarantee to keep the party rocking out back, we had no such concerns with the new Crush S. Sure, it sounds a bit like the mtb equivalent of a mullet, but the cut of this bike is bang up to date.

With the higher front end, the proportions feel better balanced than the Whyte, too, and there's simply no disputing the advantage that the top-quality Maxxis tyres and the Pike RCT3 bring to the party.

The Crush S really is a fire starter.

VERDICT

Orange has made a raft of revisions to its do-it-all hardtail for 2016. With a longer front end, slacker head angle and shorter chainstays it's much closer in form and attitude to its full-sus cousins than it's ever been.

This is evolution, not revolution, though, and as such it's not so radical as to feel odd or require a lot of getting used to. In that respect, the essence of the Crush S remains unchanged. It's still very much a bike designed to crush every trail — the latest version just let's you do that more easily and with way more confidence. It is the perfect trail hardtail.

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TEST
WINNER!
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HIGHS
Every ride is a high on the Crush S

LOWS
Limited gear range with the 1x10 drivetrain



We never dropped the chain, thanks to a narrow-wide ring and chain device

Controlling the Crush is easy, with a sorted wide bar and short stem set-up

Unleash the Crush's full potential by upgrading to a burly Pike fork