

# JAMIS DAKAR XCR EXPERT

The 2007 model year sees Jamis give their popular Dakar chassis a major redesign, dubbing the new set-up MP3 as it represents the third generation multi pivot suspension system from the American company.

By shifting the swing-link and shock mount from the top tube to the seat and down tubes Jamis have been able to use a lighter top tube at the same time as moving mass lower down on the bike. The rear triangle has become more compact to drop weight and increase stiffness. The net result is the new Dakar XCR frame weighs just 5.5 pounds (2.6kg). The near vertical axle path of the rear wheel delivers 100mm of travel and this is matched to the 100mm travel Fox fork.

While the top line Dakar XCR Pro is loaded with light weight top line components, at \$7500 it is reserved for serious riders only. The Dakar XCR Expert instead manages to pack in a solid mix of performance components that won't hurt the piggy bank as much with a price of \$4400. These parts include the new Fox RP2 shock and 32F fork with lock-out, a full Shimano XT drivetrain, Avid Juicy Five brakes, Shimano 525/Mavic 317 wheelset, and Easton EA50 cockpit topped with a Fizik Gobi saddle.

We started with Fox's recommended shock and fork pressure settings being 25% sag in the rear and 105psi in the fork for a 90kg rider. On the trail the rear end felt very active, tracking the trail smoothly and we found ourselves switching the Propedal lever to the 'on' position and leaving it there for extended periods to bring a firmer XC racer feel to the ride. This works well when the need for speed arises firming up the rear end just enough to stop any pedalling effort being wasted through bobbing and was an advantage climbing or when hammering flat trails. Flicking the Propedal to the 'off' the bike could be felt settling into its travel before pounding the next downhill.

The handling of the Dakar XCR is very neutral, it's best to remain centered and allow the suspension at both ends to do the work. Through corners it felt incredibly stable with the active suspension working together to hold traction often times in places that we'd normally only be pushing on larger tyred trail bikes. Despite the relatively long 110mm stem the riding position is roomy without being stretched. Our test riders were still comfortable cornering aggressively with the longer stem but weren't happy with the fact that it only had a two-bolt face plate, especially after it started creaking half way through our time with the bike. One rider, having stripped a two-bolt stem before said he would change it for a sturdier four-bolt stem.

The wheelset on the Jamis is more working class than racing class thanks to their weight hovering around the 2kg mark. Combined with the Maxxis Ignitor tyres at 615g each the Dakar would gain some more zip if it shed some fat from this area. Lighter tyres and a tubeless system would be a cheap and easy option for a start and likely to save 400g, but if you were serious about your racing then a new wheelset could potentially wipe another 400g of weight.

The new XT trigger shifters reminded us just how light and smooth Shimano's shifting action can be. They shifted quietly and efficiently the entire review period, however we're not a fan of the dual release



TWO-BOLT STEM COULD BE A LIABILITY WHEN WRENCHING ON THE BARS - IN THE WORKSHOP AND ON THE TRAIL.



TWO-BOLT SEAT CLAMP IS OVERKILL IN OUR EYES AS IT JUST ENCOURAGED OUR HAM-FISTED TEST RIDERS TO OVER-TIGHTEN IT.



WELDED TIE ROD BELOW THE SHOCK ADDS STIFFNESS TO THE NEW LIGHTER FRONT TRIANGLE. FOX RP2 HAS TWO DISTINCTIVE PROPEDAL SETTINGS.



COME FLY WITH ME. JUMPING IS NOT SOMETHING YOU NORMALLY ASSOCIATE WITH CROSS COUNTRY BIKES BUT THE DAKAR HANDLES SMALL TRAIL JUMPS AND DROPS WITH EASE.

## BIKE REVIEW

levers allowing operation with thumb or forefinger. The thumb lever surface is boxy and uncomfortable and the shifting action is vaguer than when operating with the forefinger. They're simply a compromise to try and appease users that have converted to the competition's dual thumb shifters.

Other components that stood out were the WTB grips, being very wide and slim. Initially we weren't comfortable with our hands seeming to wrap one and a half times around the small diameter, but on longer rides being able to adjust hand positions was a bonus. The Maxxis Ignitor's are not the lightest or fastest rolling tyres around, but the sharp hexagonal knobs know how to bite into the earth – especially after a mid-summer thunderstorm when the soil is damp – lovely. Cable rub was an issue with both gear cables and the rear brake line rubbing the seat tube – cover that area from new if you want to protect the awesome metallic blue finish. The bottle cage has been relegated to the underside of the downtube due to the new frame design making it too much of a stretch to be useful as a bottle holder any longer – save it for your night light batteries.

During the period of our test we lowered the pressure in both fork and shock, running around 30% sag in the rear and 15psi less than recommended for the rider weight in the fork which did two things: firstly we



THE DAKAR CORNERS WITH CONFIDENCE THANKS TO A NEUTRAL RIDING POSITION AND SUPPLE SUSPENSION PACKAGE.

started achieving full travel at both ends and secondly it made our riders enjoy the all round trail riding ability of this bike even more. The ride is so smooth it's easy to think there's an extra inch of travel.

The Dakar XCR Expert is a very capable endurance-come-trail bike. With a couple of tweaks it'll handle everything from cross country racing to general trail riding. The neutral handling and excellent suspension package provide a ride that is as much fun as it is effective.

### SPECIFICATIONS

FRAME	Kinesis Alloy w/7005 seat and chainstays
REAR SHOCK	Fox RP2
FORK	Fox 32F 100RL
STEM	Easton EA50 110mm
HANDLEBAR	Easton EA50 MonkeyBar riser
GRIPS	WTB Mototec clamp-on
HEADSET	FSA Orbit Z, internal cup
SHIFTERS	Shimano Deore XT
FRONT DERAILLEUR	Shimano Deore XT
REAR DERAILLEUR	Shimano Deore XT
CRANKSET	Shimano Deore XT 2 piece
RIMS	Mavic XM317
HUBS	Shimano Deore M525
CASSETTE	SRAM PG-970 11-34
CHAIN	Shimano HG93
BRAKES	Avid Juicy 5
SEAT POST	Easton EA50
SADDLE	Fizik Gobi
PEDALS	Crank Brothers Candy C
TYRES	Maxxis Ignitor 2.1 folding
COLOUR	Monterey Blue
WEIGHT AS TESTED	13.3kg (29.3lb)
SIZE TESTED	Large (19 inch)
REAR TRAVEL	4 inches (100mm)
FRONT TRAVEL	4 inches (100mm)
RRP	\$4400
BIKE SUPPLIED BY	Adventure Brands sales@adventurebrands.co.nz

THE 2007 DAKAR XCR REPRESENT A NEW GENERATION SUSPENSION DESIGN FOR JAMIS. IT FOUND FAVOUR WITH NZMTBR TEST RIDERS.

