

TRANSITION PRESTON FR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK LAMBERT

Transition Bikes is based in Washington State in the north-west corner of the USA. A relatively high annual rainfall keeps the state's forested mountains wet and slippery almost year-round and encourages mountain bikers to develop their technical bike handling skills. Being just over the border from the freeride-loving Canada Transition Bikes also leans heavily in that direction with their bikes. Although like grunge music that emerged from the state (or more precisely Seattle for those music aficionados) in the early '90's; Transition have a few different ideas when it comes to designing bikes. The range includes short travel freeride and slope-style bikes that you won't find in many other manufacturer's lines.

This brings us to the subject of this review: the Preston FR. It's a five inch travel freeride bike that will take up to an eight inch travel fork (head angle is 67.5 degrees with a six inch fork). The Preston FR is available as a frame only for \$2099 (with Fox Vanilla R shock) or as a complete bike from \$4699. As well as colour options there are multiple shock and fork options. Our test bike came with a Fox DHX Air and Rockshox Lyrik 2-Step fork which are at the higher end of the upgrades list and would cost \$6600, although there were a couple of other upgrades to the brakes and drivetrain that aren't reflected in the price. While not everyone is going to spend that much on their bike it does accurately represent the custom build options and upgrades that many riders will perform on a bike of this nature to get the products they favour.

Transition Bikes are a rider-owned company that emphasise quality well-designed value for money products without fancy marketing hype. The frame and suspension design on the Preston follows those lines. It's a simple 'faux-bar' linkage running large easily serviced bearings. With square section seat stays, even larger square chain stays and solid looking welds holding the chunky main tubes



TRANSITION'S OWN WHEELSET COMBINED WITH THE LYRIK FORK AND AVID JUICY SEVEN BRAKES MAKE FOR A SOLID FRONT END.



THICK 15MM ROCKER PLATES HELP KEEP THE REAR END FLEX-FREE.



LOW ROLLING + AGGRESSIVE RESISTANCE + CORNERING

THE MAXXIS ADVANTAGE

CROSS COUNTRY

Ramped and countersunk rectangles deploy with parallel knobs to provide a superior, fast-rolling tire that ejects debris and gives you a tactical ADvantage at the point of attack.

FREERIDE

Combat-ready side lugs provide top-level traction — giving you the confidence to target corner sections faster without eroding your command of the straightaways.

MAXXIS.COM

From single-track black ops to a full-scale alpine assault, the ADvantage has the weaponry to see you through the battle unscathed! Large volume and aggressive lugs camouflage a deceptively fast-rolling tire suitable for all your search and destroy operations. **The ADvantage from Maxxis: Mission Accomplished!**

together it looks overbuilt and the 15mm thick rocker plates reinforce that this bike is built to last.

With a 22.4 inch top tube that puts the rider in an upright ready for action position the Preston feels more freeride than trail bike. And it doesn't take long in the saddle to figure that with a weight the wrong side of 35 pounds this is not a bike for those epic back country rides. It could be built lighter for that type of riding, but then you'd be missing the point and short-changing the potential of this bike. The bike is happiest charging hard, boosting of any lip or drop you can find and being thrown into corners like you don't care. Ridden like this the Preston will reward the rider with good trail feedback, the rear end is stiff and flex-free, allowing the rider to feel the trail and just what the bike is doing.

What the Preston won't do like longer travel bikes often do though is save your ass when you get a bit too keen through a rough line or land a jump with less than textbook style. Where eight inches of travel will mask sloppy riding with the extra travel this bike

demands you stay alert and actually apply some skills. And that's the beauty of it. It's the thinking man's (and woman's) freeride bike. It encourages the rider to hit the hard lines but asks the rider to also have some input.

The Lyrik fork definitely helps in keeping the Preston on the right track with a super smooth action and likewise we couldn't fault the DHX Air in the rear and both being air adjustable means they are easily firmed up for when you decide to hit the jumps or go street riding. Out of the saddle efforts reward the rider with forward speed to hit the next obstacle, rather than being lost in extra travel.

The Preston FR is not a bike for every rider and if you are merely after a five inch travel trail bike then you may be disappointed (the Transition Covert is a better choice there) But for freeriders coming off hardtails or those wanting to downsize from longer travel bikes to gain more versatility and hone their skills rather than mask them the Preston FR is a solid handling package that will handle all the abuse you can throw at it.



SPECIFICATIONS - TRANSITION PRESTON FR

FRAME	6061 Aluminium
REAR SHOCK	Fox DHX Air
FORK	Rockshox Lyrik 2-Step
STEM	Truvativ FSA FR230
HANDLEBAR	FSA Maximus
GRIPS	ODI Rogue Lock on
HEADSET	FSA Orbit XLII
SHIFTERS	SRAM X-9
FRONT DERAILLEUR	SRAM X-9
REAR DERAILLEUR	SRAM X-9
CRANKSET	Gravity Gap w/bashguard
WHEELSET	TBC Revolution 32
CASSETTE	SRAM PG-950
CHAIN	KMC Z-9000
BRAKES	Avid Juicy Seven
SEAT POST	Amoeba
SADDLE	TBC Park n' Ride
PEDALS	NA
TYRES	Maxxis Minion 2.35
COLOUR	White
WEIGHT AS TESTED	16.6kg (36.5lb) without pedals
SIZE TESTED	Medium (17 inch)
REAR TRAVEL	5 inches (125mm)
FRONT TRAVEL	6.4 inches (160mm)
RRP AS TESTED	NA. Complete bike from \$4699, Frame only \$2099
BIKE SUPPLIED BY	Revolution Products www.revolutionproducts.co.nz