

SANTA CRUZ BUTCHER

TRAIL BIKES HAVE SEEN MANY SIGNIFICANT JUMPS IN TECHNOLOGY SINCE THE RISE OF SANTA CRUZ'S POPULAR SUPERLIGHT AND BULLIT SINGLE-PIVOT DESIGNS OF THE LATE 1990S. IN FACT, ONE COULD ARGUE THAT SANTA CRUZ'S OWN VIRTUAL PIVOT POINT (VPP) SUSPENSION SYSTEM HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF TRAIL BIKES. HOWEVER, THE DESIRE FOR A SIMPLE DESIGN AND LOWER PRICE TAG HAS KEPT SANTA CRUZ'S SINGLE-PIVOT FRAMES IN THEIR LINEUP. AS SANTA CRUZ HAS CONTINUED THEIR FRAME DEVELOPMENT, EXPLORED NEW MATERIALS LIKE CARBON FIBER AND BECOME MORE EFFICIENT WITH MANUFACTURING, THE PRICE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR SINGLE-PIVOT AND VPP FRAMES HAS GROWN. REALIZING THERE WAS A VOID IN THEIR PRODUCT OFFERINGS, SANTA CRUZ HAS DEVELOPED A MORE ADVANCED SINGLE-PIVOT CHASSIS THAT TAKES A FEW NOTES FROM THEIR VPP SYSTEM. HERE'S A LOOK AT THE 150MM-TRAVEL BUTCHER, AN ALL-MOUNTAIN STEED THAT OFFERS TRAIL PERFORMANCE THAT MANY MULTI-LINK DESIGNS WILL ENVY.

THE TECHNOLOGY

The technology of the Butcher takes a few notes from Santa Cruz's other suspension designs. It features manipulated tubing with stylized linkage,

bottom bracket and dropout pieces. The frame has an oversized tapered head tube, ISCG-05 chainguide tabs, cable routing for an adjustable height seatpost and water bottle cage mounts

(which can be rare on a Santa Cruz chassis).

APP The guys at Santa Cruz like to joke about marketing schemes, acronyms and people's desires to know every little detail about a frame design, so it's no surprise that they called their new suspension design "APP," which stands for Actual Pivot Point (as opposed to a "virtual" pivot point). On the Butcher, the main pivot is on the down tube, closely inline with the middle chainring. What separates the APP design from a basic single-pivot is the shock linkage. Santa Cruz uses the same shock linkage design on the Butcher that can be found on bikes like the Blur LT and Nomad to produce a specific shock rate that improves bump absorption.

X.0 AM 1x10 This might be unusual for some riders, but when we talked to Santa Cruz about which Butcher model to test, we agreed that the X.0 AM 1x10 kit that comes with a single chainring up front and a 10-speed cassette in the back was a good idea. Many riders in the Santa Cruz area love this setup because it matches up well with the

terrain and provides excellent chain management on downhills. Highlights of the kit include e.thirteen cranks, SRAM X.0 Trigger shifter and rear derailleur, Formula The One brakes, Thomson stem and post, and DT Swiss rims laced to a front Chub hub and rear DT Swiss hub.

Fox Suspension Our test bike came with a Fox 32 Talas FIT RLC fork and Float RP23 shock to regulate the 150mm of travel in the front and rear. The 32 Talas has a two-position travel adjuster that changes from 150mm to 120mm and offers adjustable low-speed compression and rebound damping. It also has a lockout and a lockout threshold adjuster. The RP23 has an on/off ProPedal adjuster to increase pedaling efficiency that offers three ProPedal threshold settings. It also has adjustable rebound.

THE RIDE

Santa Cruz named the Butcher chassis after a trail in Downieville, California called Butcher Ranch. That trail is one of our favorites and the roughest part of the Downieville Classic downhill course, marked by high speeds, loamy turns and jagged, rocky terrain. A trail bike named after that singletrack sets some high expectations, but the Santa Cruz boys have been riding in that area for years and the excellent performance of the Butcher is proof that they know what it takes to get the job done.

The Butcher is an outstanding all-mountain bike that blends the simplicity of a single-pivot suspension system with the sophistication of a linkage-activated shock design. The best way we've heard riders describe the bike is to say that it feels like a single-pivot bike with better suspension performance. That means it rumbles through rock gardens better, navigates technical climbs well and carves grooves through flowing singletrack.

Sizing Compared to most bike brands, Santa Cruz's sizing seems to be a on the small side, meaning the effective top tube length is shorter. There is nothing really wrong with this but be sure that you consult Santa Cruz's recommended sizing chart and take a test ride or two to be sure that you get on the proper size.

Geometry The numbers of the Butcher align with good overall trail performance. The bike has a 67.5-degree head angle, 17.1-inch chainstays and a 13.8-inch high bottom bracket, which translates to a bike that is comfortable on a variety of terrain and lets you hang it out on the downhill.

Climbing The single chainring setup certainly defined the character of the Butcher. We aren't strangers to single-ring trail bikes and understand that the gear ratio of a 34-tooth front ring up front paired with a large 36-tooth cog in the back is plenty for a rider with moderate fitness to conquer long intermediate climbs and get up steep pitches with a little grunt. There was hardly a time that we wanted a smaller gear and the single-ring setup made the Butcher feel ultra-efficient, but that doesn't mean this setup is for everyone. The main benefits of a single-ring setup come on the downhill and it's up to you to decide what makes sense for your riding needs.

We made use of Fox's Talas travel adjuster on the fork and ProPedal switch on the shock for any significant climb. The two-position travel adjuster is quick to use and drops the fork into the travel to provide a more comfortable climbing position. The ProPedal on the shock improves the bike's pedaling efficiency and offers three settings to coordinate with the terrain. The differences between each setting are ideal. Setting "1"






provides a very light platform feel, setting "2" is firm for effective pedaling but still able to take the edge off a bumpy climb and setting "3" is on the stiff side and ideal for smooth ascents and fire road climbs. We found ourselves swapping between setting 2 and 3 to better suit different rides.

Descending Doing its namesake justice, the Butcher is a great descending trail bike with a good blend of handling and suspension performance. The geometry gives it a comfortable feel that instills the confidence needed to pick it up a notch and let the bike do the work. The Fox suspension absorbs impacts well, sucking up trail undulations with ease and picking off multiple hits like a champ. The Butcher makes you feel like you're getting the most out of its 150mm of travel, allowing you push it, even being a bit abusive at times. The application of the rear brake can cause the rear suspension of the bike to squat into the travel a bit under heavy braking, which keeps the rear end from stink-bugging but takes away a bit of sensitivity. Some riders might notice it, but it won't be very perceptible to most. We appreciated the chain security of the MRP chainguide, particularly on rugged terrain that was rewarded with pedaling speed. Overall, we like the Butcher for its ability to cruise over baby head rocks without missing a beat, let you lay it over in corners with a big grin and pinpoint tire placement when wide-open. This bike loves a ripping-fast trail just as much as you do – you just have to point it in the right direction and let it take care of business.

OVERVIEW

Featuring their new APP suspension, the Butcher is Santa Cruz's sophisticated single-pivot design that offers a well-balanced ride for all-mountain trails. It comes in at an appropriate price that's in between their high-end VPP lineup and their budget single-pivot models and is offered in several build configurations. We tested Santa Cruz's single chainring 1x10 and loved the bike's aggressive ability and competence on diverse terrain. 

Price: Starting At – \$2,099, As Tested – \$4,843, Frame (w/ Float R Shock) – \$1,350; **Weight:** 27.72 lbs. (no pedals); **Sizes:** S, M, L (tested), XL; **Colors:** Black, White, Seabright Blue, Lime Green, Chocolate, Red; **Contact:** santacruz bicycles.com

SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS

FRAME: Aluminum
FORK: Fox 32 Talas FIT RLC; 150mm
SHOCK: Fox Float RP23; 150mm

COCKPIT

BRAKE LEVERS: Formula The One; 180/160mm
BRAKES: Formula The One
HANDLEBAR: Easton Haven Carbon
HEADSET: Chris King
SADDLE: WTB Devo SLT
SEATPOST: Thomson
SHIFTER: SRAM X.0
STEM: Thomson

WHEELS

HUBS F/R: Chub/DT Swiss 2405
RIMS: DT EX500
TIRES: Maxxis High Roller; 2.35"

DRIVETRAIN

BOTTOM BRACKET: e.thirteen XC
CASSETTE: SRAM XX; 11-36t
CHAINGUIDE: MRP G2
CRANKS: e.thirteen XC SS; 34t
DERAILLEUR: SRAM X.0
PEDALS: N/A