

# 5 Most Innovative Bikes

Why They Changed Cycling Forever

# MOUNTAIN BIKE ACTION

MARCH 2013

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## 8 Ways To Justify A New Bike

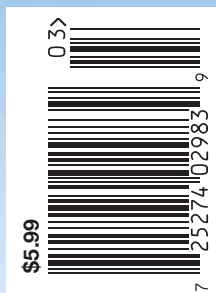
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# So You Think You're Tough?

## The Kona Process

**T**here seems to be an unwritten mountain biking law that says if you ride a Kona with over 4 inches of travel, you are expected—no, required—to abuse it beyond reason. Kona owners expect their steeds to be tougher than they are, and complaining or whining is not tolerated. Kona seems to understand this better than anyone (maybe they wrote the unwritten law), and the all-new Process is built to keep the Kona loyalists happy—and hopefully welcome a bunch of new loyalists.



### WHO IS IT MADE FOR?

The Kona Process walks a tightrope between a pedal-to-the-top trailbike and a lift-ticket or shuttle-ride gravity sled (with plenty of pedaling chops). A young charger in good shape can use the Process as a do-it-all trailbike, while riders who currently have trouble on their technical trails (especially descents) will find the Process up to the task.

### WHAT IS IT MADE FROM?

The only material tough enough to stand up to the Kona faithful—and the frame's lifetime warranty—is Kona's own 6069 aluminum-butted tubing. You get a tapered head tube; Kona's walking-beam, four-bar linkage rear suspension; and 12x142-millimeter rear-axle spacing. The front derailleur is direct-mounted in line with the chainstay's pivot point, so its

relationship with the chain and chainrings does not change as the bike dips into its travel.

### WHICH COMPONENTS STAND OUT?

Kona includes a Crankbrothers Kronolog dropper seatpost (required on a bike like this), meaty Maxxis High Roller 2 tires, a long-stroke RockShox Monarch shock and—are you ready for this?—pedals! And not just some slap-them-on junk; they are Kona Wah Wah pedals.

### HOW DOES IT PERFORM?

**Setup:** RockShox's patented gradients on the fork's stanchion tube and shock shaft make measuring suspension sag easy. RockShox offers fork springs in five different weights so lighter or heavier riders can dial in their fork's sag, and the fork uses internal spacers to set the spring preload. The shock is an air-sprung unit. The fork and shock both have external rebound adjusters that we set in the middle of their range.

**Ergonomics:** You expect some pedaling interference with stays, linkages or oversized tubing on a long-travel trailbike, but the Process tucks in everything tightly without compromising tire clearance. The bar is a slight riser with plenty of width. The rider, in classic trailbike position, is centered between the wheels.

**Moving out:** The Process is a firm-pedaling bike that doesn't feel anywhere near its weight when getting up to speed. The shock and fork have no pedaling-platform adjustments, and we never found ourselves wishing for them. The 2x10 drivetrain was invented for this bike. There was always a gear that felt right for the trail.

**Cornering:** The coil-sprung Lyric fork is a bulldog that refuses to unclamp its jaws from the chosen line. Backing up the fork's performance is a meaty Maxxis High Roller 2 that rolls along great and still offers lots of side-knob bite. The rear suspension falls right into place for a balanced feel that puts the rider in a total-control frame of mind.

**In the rough:** The Process comes alive in the rough. Sections that cause hesitation on a 4-inch-travel bike will inspire the Process rider. The operative word here is "predictable." You always know how the bike is going to handle a rough situation, and that inspires confidence.

**Climbing:** While the suspension is not firm enough and the bike is too heavy to be a factor on long, smooth climbs, watch out on loose, technical climbs. The Process simply motors over terrain. Stay seated and committed and you will be rewarded.

**Descending:** What we experienced in the rough was magnified while descending. The Process eats up the downhill in a controlled and confident manner. The dropper post gets your center of gravity lower, and, as an extra bonus, the bike descends quietly. There is no annoying chain slap on any of the stays.

**Braking:** Kona gives you a 7-inch front rotor matched with a 6-inch rear rotor, and the Avid Elixir 5 brakes like that combination. The braking power was easy to dole out. The rear suspension felt active under braking, and these guys remained silent throughout our testing.



**Progress with the Process:** Not every trail is tough enough to challenge the Process' capabilities. If your current bike has you walking down technical sections (and that bums you out), the Process will keep you in the saddle.

# Think You're Tough?

## TRICKS, UPGRADES OR TIPS?

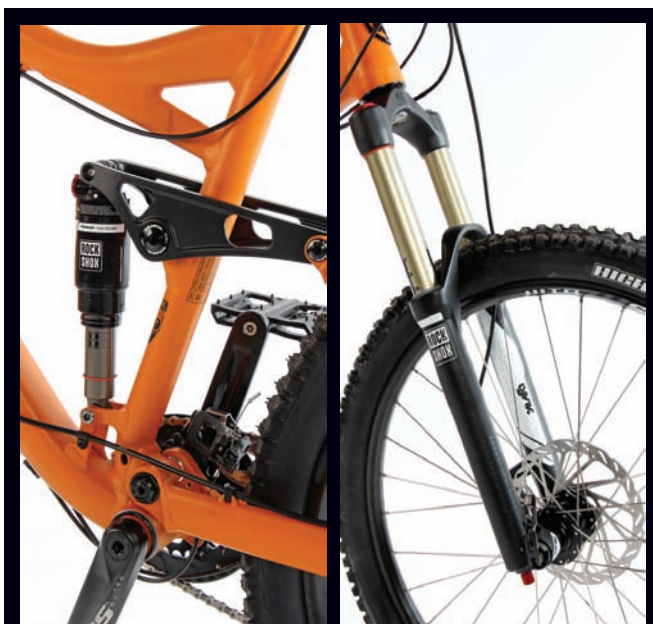
We used the platform pedals for the entire test without complaint. If you do a lot of climbing, a clipless pedal would be a sensible upgrade (but not mandatory).

RockShox offers fork springs in five different weights so lighter or heavier riders can dial in their fork, but it appears that Kona and RockShox have done their homework. Unless you are heavy or light for your height, you shouldn't have to mess with swapping springs.

## BUYING ADVICE

The Process is simple to set up, and it should not require a lot of attention to maintain. From its handlebar grips to its tires, it doesn't need a thing off the showroom floor. The Process is ready to rock.

It is too much bike for smooth, rolling trails, but take this baby to the rough world of big mountain riding and you have a bike versatile enough to charge the descents and then climb back up them. And, Kona has put it all together at a great price. □



**Clean, simple and tough:** Kona's walking-beam, four-bar-linkage rear suspension, a direct-mount front derailleur and a coil-sprung fork.



**Ready for landing:** The Process is a versatile trailbike that can't wait to get on the gravity-assisted part of your loops. Kona gives you plenty of stopping power, a fork that reminds us why we miss riding coil springs and a frame that backs up the components.

## KONA PROCESS

Price	\$3099
Weight	34.2 pounds
Frame tested	19" (Large)
Bottom bracket	13.75" (high)
Chainstay length	16.75"
Top tube length	26"
Head tube angle	66°
Seat tube angle	73.3°
Standover height	30"
Wheelbase	47.5"
Suspension travel	6.3" (front)
Suspension travel	5.9" (rear)
Frame material	Aluminum
Fork	RockShox Lyrik R Coil
Shock	RockShox Monarch R HV
Rims	WTB ST i23 TCS (26")
Tires	Maxxis High Roller 2 (2.4")
Hubs	Formula
Brakes	Avid Elixir 5
Crankset	SRAM S1000
Handlebar	Kona XC/BC riser (29.5")
Shifters	SRAM X7
Front derailleur	SRAM X7 direct mount
Rear derailleur	SRAM X9 Type 2
Chainrings	SRAM (38/24)
Cassette	SRAM 10-cog (11-12-15-17-19-22-15-28-32-36)
Tallest gear	23.5 feet (per crank rotation)
Lowest gear	4.5 feet (per crank rotation)
Pedals	Kona Wah Wah