

# MARIN ALPINE TRAIL CARBON 2

The mountains were calling, so Marin answered

It's almost surreal reminiscing about the old days of mountain biking—the “old days” being not so long ago when we rode 26-inch wheels, steep head-tube angles and non-tapered steer tubes. Fast-forward to now, and we have slacked-out trail bikes that we can use to plow through technical rock gardens or slam downhill and not even think twice. Remembering the old bikes makes us that much more thankful for what the industry is offering us today—beefier, longer-lasting bikes that, as Marin says, are made for fun.

Marin has stepped up its Alpine Trail bikes in some big ways, including adding a carbon version for 2021 that could very well be one of the best bang-for-your-buck bikes of the year. So, let's take a look at an offering from an early innovator of mountain bike technology.

## THE FRAME

The Alpine Trail Carbon 2 starts with a really stiff, high-modulus carbon fiber frame and monocoque front triangle with internal cable routing. The rear is aluminum. This model comes in a black and grey fade paint scheme. It is very humble and low-key looking with a hint of stealth to it.





Marin's Alpine Trail Carbon comes with everything you want, right out of the box. It's rough and ready to rumble, with high-level components at a price that can't be beat.

Photo by Pat Carrigan



## BIKE TEST / MARIN ALPINE TRAIL

Marin is using its MultiTrac suspension design, which offers more independent suspension when braking. A one-piece forged rocker link that is extra beefy with heavy-duty hardware creates a lot of strength and stiffness, which makes the bike more predictable, especially when cornering. You'll also notice it has a bridge-less seat stay for maximum tire clearance and movement of the suspension.

The head tube angle is enduro slack at 63.5 degrees and is matched up with a steep, 78-degree seat tube angle. One water bottle mount is conveniently included, and there is another set of bosses on the underside of the top tube for an air pump or a multi-tool.

### COMPONENTS

The Alpine Trail Carbon is an absolute bargain at \$4099. Starting with the drivetrain, you'll find a 12-speed Shimano XT derailleur with an SLX 10-51-tooth cassette and an FSA 32-tooth direct-mount chainring. The shifting is handled by a Shimano SLX system. The wheelset is Marin's house brand, 29-inch, tubeless-compatible, with Shimano hubs. The wheels come fitted with a Maxxis Assegai 2.5-inch Maxx Terra tire in the front and a Maxx Grip in the rear.

The brakes are the very-capable Shimano SLX 4-piston models with a 203mm rotor in front and 180mm in the rear with SLX levers. Marin went with a beefy Deity Copperhead 35mm stem with

wide, 800mm Deity Ridgeline handlebars. The dropper post is an X-Fusion Manic with 125mm of travel on the large-size frame we tested.

### SUSPENSION

For suspension, you get Fox 38 Performance Elite forks with 160mm of travel and the Grip2 damper. The shock is a 150mm Fox Float DPX2 Performance. Generally speaking, the

Grip2 damper is the more desirable of the Fox fork dampers, although this damper can take more time to

dial in with the degree of tuneability it offers. We ran a little less psi in the front and rear for more traction and stability on rougher, steeper trails.



CATEGORY	SUSPENSION
Enduro	160mm front
WHEEL SIZE	
29"	150mm rear



The Fox 38 Performance Elite with the Grip2 damper offers a ton of control over rebound and compression.

Added protection to the downtube prevents rocks from chipping the paint under the frame.

## DOWN AND DIRTY

The Alpine Trail really excels in enduro situations but can be pushed to handle downhill-style riding as well. The wider, 800mm bars provide more stability and confidence on straighter, more flowy trails, but that width can be a bit much around hairpin switchbacks with bushes or trees to maneuver through.

The way Marin has developed its single-pivot rocker link suspension design is very practical. You're able to set up the suspension for the downhill but not have it squat out too much when climbing. The Alpine has a relatively short chainstay of 480mm and a head tube angle of 63.5 degrees. That combined with a seat tube angle of 78 degrees allows a longer reach while still creating a nimble feel through bowl corners or technical switchbacks. So, between the DPX2's three-position adjustment and the MultiTrac design, you can get the dynamics needed for everyday riding.

A relaxed geometry gives riders confidence when flowing down rocky trails.

Photo by Pat Carrigan



## BIKE TEST / MARIN ALPINE TRAIL

Marin built a truly enduro-ready race bike for a few thousand dollars less than the competition.

Photo by Pat Carrigan

### MARIN ALPINE TRAIL CARBON 2

www.marinbikes.com

Price	\$4099
Weight	35 pounds
Sizes	S, M, L (tested), XL
Frame tested	Carbon, 150mm travel
Shock	Fox Float DPX2, Performance, EVOL air spring, 3-position compression adjustment, rebound adjustment, 205x65mm, trunnion upper mount, 25mm x M8 lower mount
Fork	Fox 38 Performance Elite, 160mm travel, 29", 110x15mm Boost Kabolt thru-axle, 44mm offset, integrated Fox fender
Rims	Marin, double-wall alloy, 29mm inner, welded joint, disc specific, 32h, tubeless compatible
Rear hub	Shimano HB-MT510B, 148x12mm, Centerlock, Microspline freehub body
Front hub	Shimano HF-MT410B, 110x15mm, Centerlock
Spokes	14-gauge black stainless steel
Front tire	Maxxis Assegai 29x2.5", Maxx Terra, EXO+, tubeless compatible
Rear tire	Maxxis Assegai 29x2.5", Maxx Grip, DoubleDown, tubeless compatible
Seatpost	X-Fusion Manic, size S 125mm travel, size M and L 150mm travel, size XL 170mm travel, 30.9mm, Shimano MT500 1x Lever, I-Spec EV
Saddle	Marin Trail Speed Concept Pro
Handlebar	Deity Ridgeline, Stealth finish, 35mm clamp, 800mm width
Stem	Deity Copperhead 35mm, black ano
Grips	Marin single-clamp locking
Brakes	SLX 4piston hydraulic disc
Rotors	203mm front 180mm rear
Shifters	Shifters Shimano SLX 12-speed, I-Spec EV
Crankset	FSA Gradient, Modular, Mego EXO spindle, Boost spacing
Bottom bracket	MEGAEVO BB, 73mm BSA threaded
Cassette	Shimano SLX M7100 cassette, 12-speed, 10-51T
Chain	KMC X-12 silver and black
Chainrings	1x, 32T direct-mount chainring, MegaTooth technology

#### GEOMETRY

Head tube angle	63.5°
Reach	480 mm (18.9")
Stack	632mm (24.9")
Head tube length	115mm (4.5")
Effective seat tube angle	78°
Seat tube length	425mm (16.7")
Top tube effective	615mm (24.2")
BB height	BB height 342mm (13.5")
BB drive	BB drive 35mm (1.4")
Chainstay	430mm (17")
Wheelbase	1256mm (49.5")
Stand-over height	695mm (27.4")
Fork offset	44mm (1.7")
Seatpost diameter	30.9mm (1.2")
Crank length	170mm (6.7")



#### CLIMBING

On super-long, steep climbs, the Alpine Trail tended to remind us of its weight, but on techy climbs with rocks or ledges to go up and over, it really stuck, giving us great traction. Again, the MultiTrac suspension system is more than just a fancy term when it comes to climbing. With that and the adjustment control of the DPX2, you can tame big climbs and then readjust for the descent in a second.

#### THE FLOW

Sometimes with really slack head-tube angles, you get an uneven balance point that tends to pull you to one side or the other when turning. That is not so much the case with this bike. It's more dependent on the rider's input, which to us feels more natural and secure on faster, rough descents. The cockpit area leaves you plenty of room to move around as well as get really low due to the dropper post and the low top tube.

#### MODS AND UPGRADES

We threw a lot at this bike, including fast-and-rough and steep-and-technical trails. It was tough to find anything we could pick apart. SLX brakes are not known as high-end brakes, but they are nothing to scoff at and did their job well. If you're looking for a little more bite for enduro racing or just bite in general, you could upgrade to something a little next level. You could also upgrade the rear rotor to 203mm.

#### BOTTOM LINE

If you are more about downhill performance, this bike is going to be tough to beat for the money. In fact, this bike basically comes enduro race-ready right out of the box. Fox 38 Performance Elite forks are a rare find at this price point, and they play a big part in the bike's performance. This is a heavy bike, but for enduro racing or just downhill prowess, it's actually an advantage. Don't let the weight get in your head, though, as this would be a fine everyday bike as well. ☐