



Tom Bannister's Bronson

Despite the use of only one arm, 27-year-old **Tom Bannister** is a downhill mountain biker. He's adapted his Santa Cruz to suit



When I was 19, I had a horrific crash on my bike. I tore all five of the nerves in the brachial plexus: C5, C6, C7, C8 and T1. This left me with a paralysed left arm. It was a traumatic time but I'm not the type of person to let it stop me doing things. Six weeks after surgery I was on a bike...

I didn't know what else to do with my time. I started out on a hardtail just riding around the street. A month later, I was back riding in the forests of South Wales on a custom-built Specialized SX Trail. I'm now riding a carbon fibre Santa Cruz Bronson. At 29.5lb, it's about 8lb lighter than the SX.

As I ride one-handed, I obviously can't have any of my controls on the left. Using a 750mm handlebar instead of the 710mm I used before helps accommodate all the controls on one side! To help centre the

steering, I use a Hopey All Mountain steering damper. For anyone riding one-handed, it is a godsend! Simply screw in the knob on the top to increase the resistance of the steering and help to keep you on the straight and narrow.

I run my rear brake the most outboard; I pull this lever with my second finger. My gear shifter is mounted between the two brake clamps; both up and down shifts are done with my thumb. My front brake is inboard of the gear shifter clamp; I pull this with my first finger. The remote for my

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Rock Shox Reverb Stealth dropper post is the most inboard clamp; I use my thumb to operate this when required.

I tried SPD pedals on this bike for the first time. They give me vastly more control. Instead of the bike skipping around in between my legs on rougher terrain, the SPDs hold my feet firm and I can use my legs to throw the bike around with greater ease.

After my first proper technical night ride on the Bronson in the Garw Valley, South Wales, I realised I wasn't as comfortable as I would like on steep and technical stuff. So I tipped the handlebar back and changed the shuttle bumper in the fork back up to 160mm to give a better ride height on the front for the steep stuff. I also changed the shifter from a Shimano M670 to an M660-10R shifter fitted with a Trickstuff Sram-Shimano Adapter onto a left-handed Formula Mixmaster clamp. This has pulled the shifter out of the way of my thumb when I grip the bar in some positions.

I prefer to ride steep and very technical tracks, as I've come from a downhill background. Riding for me is a very social thing so I want to ride what my mates ride, and I give them a run for their money. I've recently been riding a lot at Bike Park Wales, Cwmcarn and Afan in preparation for the Megavalanche that I will be competing in this July. ●

Tech spec: Tom's customised Bronson

FRAME & SHOCK: Large Santa Cruz Bronson Carbon with Fox Float X CTD Kashima shock 200mm×57mm **FORK:** Fox 34 Float 650B CTD FIT 15QR fitted with 160mm shuttle bumper **WHEELS:** 650B×2.3in Maxxis High Roller II 3C EXO tubeless, Hope Hoops Pro 2 Evo hubs with Stans Flow EX rims. Handbuilt by Howard at Bromley Bike Co **TRANSMISSION:** Shimano M785 XT SPD pedals, SLX Hollowtech II 175mm crankset, e.thirteen G-Ring 33T, KMC X10 chain, Shimano HG81 SLX 11-36 cassette. Adapted Shimano SLX M660 shifter, Shimano SLX medium cage rear derailleur **BRAKES:** Formula T1 Disc Brake Set 203mm front, 180mm rear **STEERING & SEATING:** ODI Ruffian Lock On grips, Easton Havoc carbon handlebar 750×35mm, Easton Havoc 50mm stem, Hopey All Mountain steering damper, Chris King tapered headset. Charge Scoop saddle, RockShox Reverb Stealth seatpost **EXTRAS:** e.thirteen CX+ ISCG 05 chain guide

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