



Adventure bike

BOMBTRACK BEYOND 1

Mountain biker **Julie Rand** tests a drop-bar expedition bike on the Dorset Gravel Dash – and beyond...

UNLIKE MOST gravel or adventure bikes, the Bombtrack Beyond 1 has mountain bike tyres rather than narrower cyclocross ones – 29×2.1in on the test bike, 650B×2.1 on the smaller frame sizes. But I was still sceptical. Why would you want a drop bar and road-style controls off-road? Why would it be any better for adventure riding than a rigid mountain bike with plus-size tyres?

My first rides fed my doubts. With a rigid fork, a narrow bar (in off-road terms), and my weight forward, rutted, rooty and rocky terrain was a challenge, and my hands weren't strong



Above: The Bombtrack was well suited to the Dorset Gravel Dash, a 100-mile journey on road and off

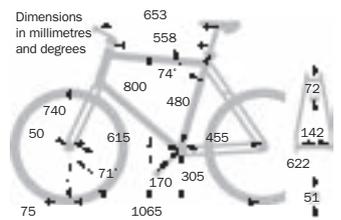
enough for the cable disc brakes when it was really steep. Then I stopped treating it like a mountain bike.

The merit of a bike like this is that it rides equally well on non-technical dirt and gravel tracks as on tarmac, swapping easily between the two. On the bone-dry 35-mile Downs Link, the Bombtrack lived up to its name and really bombed along. The chunky WTb Nano tyres felt grippy apart from, ironically, on the looser, more gravelly sections. The slightly flared handlebar made it easy to adjust my hands on the bike, so my back didn't feel too stretched out, and the saddle was comfortable. It felt just as quick on the NCN tarmac route from Shoreham to Brighton.

The Beyond 1 is ready for bikepacking, with all the braze-ons you could need for attaching bags, bottle cages, and racks. Having ridden it fully-laden for the 100-mile on and off-road Dorset Gravel Dash, I can say that the handling isn't much affected by a large load. It's still fun to ride, once you get used to the drop-bar position.

I particularly like the understated bluey-grey frame. It's unobtrusive enough for urban use. This isn't just an adventure bike: it will handle commuting and utility cycling as well, transitioning easily between bumpy roads, towpaths, and trails, and still carrying all your shopping home. It's a go-anywhere, do-anything kind of bike with the notable exception of more technical mountain biking. I loved it! **G**

Tech Spec



BOMBTRACK BEYOND 1

PRICE: £1,750 **SIZES:** XS-XL (M tested)

WEIGHT: 12.44kg (without pedals)

FRAME & FORK: Columbus Cromor butted steel frame, tapered head tube, 73mm threaded BB, dynamo cable routing, and fittings for three bottles, top tube bag, mudguard, rack. Chrome-moly fork with fittings for mudguard, rack, two bottles/Anything Cages.

WHEELS: 29×2.1in (52-622) WTb

Nano Race tyres, WTb STp i19 tubeless-compatible rims, 32×3 spokes, Bombtrack through-axle disc hubs (15×100mm front, 12×142mm rear).

TRANSMISSION: 170mm Sram X5 cranks, 42-28 chainrings, Sram GXP BB, Sram PG1020 11-36t 10-speed cassette. Sram Apex shifters, X5 front derailleur, GX rear. 20 ratios, 23-111in.

BRAKING: TRP Spyre mechanical discs.

STEERING & SEATING: 31.8×460/600mm flared drop bar, 7°×80mm stem, FSA threadless headset. Bombtrack saddle and 27.2×350mm seatpost.

WEBSITE: bombtrack.com

OTHER OPTIONS



1 Genesis Vagabond £1,099

Crome-moly 'monstercross' bike with 29er wheels, flared drop bar, TRP Spyres, a 40-28 chainset, and bar-end shifters. genesisbikes.co.uk



2 Sven Pathfinder 1x11 £3,400+

Beautiful Reynolds 921 stainless steel all-rounder with 27.5in tyres, 1×11 Sram Force gearing, and TRP Spyre brakes. svencycles.com