



Left: A much wider front tyre will fit in the fork. This is a 29x3 Minion DHF on a 50mm (external) rim
Below: Through-headset cable routing. Madness!



reinforcement where the top and down tubes meet the head tube. Mounts are limited to one bottle cage and some odd additions to the left-hand chainstay: mudguard and rack eyes on that side only, plus what looks like a kickstand mount.

Both bikes have 140mm forks that incorporate technology from higher-tier models, while being simpler and heavier. The RockShox Psylo of the Merida has 35mm stanchions, and in this Silver RC model they're steel. It's accordingly heavy – about 2.8kg. The damper and air spring, RockShox says, “take cues from our premium series forks” (Lyrik, Pike). Adjustments are limited to: compression damping (firm or open); rebound damping (so it doesn't pogo back over bumps); and air pressure, so you can set the fork sag for your weight. Heavier, harder-riding folk can also add fork tokens if they're bottoming out the suspension.

The Voodoo's Marzocchi Bomber Z2 is more than half a kilo lighter than the Psylo as it uses aluminium stanchions. Its air spring is similar to those in Fox 34 forks and its seals have negligible stiction. The adjustments are like the Psylo's: air pressure, compression damping, rebound damping, and tokens if you want them. The Rail compression

“STEEP SEAT
ANGLES –
MERIDA 76.5°,
VOODOO
75° – TIP YOU
FORWARD AND
WEIGHT THE
FRONT WHEEL”

damper ramps up and down gradually rather than switching only between open and firm.

Components

Both bikes have inexpensive but effective dropper seatposts: 200mm for the Merida, 170mm for the Voodoo. Long-drop posts give you more freedom to move around the bike. But

when fully extended the Merida's 200mm post put the saddle too high for me. I'd like to see trail bikes sold with a dropper post length to suit the frame size. Whyte does this (see p52).

Although both bikes come with innertubes, their wheels and tyres are tubeless ready. The tyres are well chosen: both have a Maxxis Dissector on the rear and a Minion on the front, DHF for the Merida, DHR for the Voodoo. Aggressive riders might want tyres with a stiffer or dual-ply casing, but I prefer the more pliable 120tpi EXO casing these have.

Tyre widths are fine for trail bikes: 2.4in or 2.5in. If you want to fit wider rubber, both have room for a

Tech spec

Merida Big Trail 500

Price: £1,500.

Sizes: XShort, Short, Mid (tested), Long, XLong.

Weight: 15.5kg (M, no pedals).

Frame & fork: Double-butted aluminium frame with 73mm BSA BB, 148x12mm thru-axle, UDH gear hanger, ISCG05 mounts and fittings for 3 bottles/bags and Merida rear mudguard. RockShox Psylo Silver RC fork, 140mm travel, 110x15mm thru-axle.
Wheels: 63–622 (29x2.5in) Maxxis Minion DHF EXO TR front tyre, 61–622 (29x2.4in) Maxxis Dissector EXO TR rear, 622x29 Jalco tubeless-ready rims, 32x3 spokes, Shimano TC500 thru-axle Centerlock hubs.

Transmission: 170mm SAMOX chainset with 32t chainring, unbranded external BB, KMC xGlide chain, Shimano LG300 11–48t 10–speed cassette. Shimano CUES U6000 shifter and derailleur. 10 ratios, 20–85in.

Braking: Shimano M4100 levers and MT410 callipers (4–piston front), 203/180mm f/r Shimano RT30 rotors.

Steering & seating: Merida Comp EC grips, 780mm Merida Comp TR riser bar, 40mm x 3° stem, Acros ICR Merida External headset. Merida Comp SL saddle, 34.9mm Limotec dropper post with 200mm drop and no layback.

Equipment: Chain guide.

merida-bikes.com

Dimensions in millimetres and degrees

