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## [Transition Bikes Bandit Review](#)



Colour fans, it also comes in a bonkers Lime Green.

**Price:** £2999 complete, frame only £1399

**Tested:** Three months

**From:** [Surf Sales](#)

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I've been looking forward to riding the Bandit since we saw the first pictures in April – there's something about Transition that appeals to a lot of us in the office, from the bonkers colour schemes of the previous years [Bottlerocket](#) (yes I'm a complete colour sucker, it was ace fun to ride as well) to their videos of people riding trails that look amazing and who are better than you are; but not so much better you can't imagine riding it.



Good In Provence - but just as good in The Valley™

So the Bandit is Transition's answer to the "jack of all trades master of none" which is probably what most of us have to ride. It's 130mm (and there's not many of those about) rear travel, up and downer, all rounder. Actually making non-lift assisted climbing on the way up with decent handling on the downs is hard – Holy Grail stuff. In fact it's a much harder tick to achieve than designing say, either an uncompromising XC race bike or a gravity assisted sledge; you have to make a choice at some point on your bias with trail bikes. Take a degree off here to make it more stable or add something there to make it climb better? Small differences can make so much of a bike's character.

The Bandit then comes with a steepish 74 seat angle and right in the middle 68 degree head angle – joined together with its 22.5 inch top tube gives a bike that appears quite short but actually feels quite roomy in use.

The rear suspension is a linkage driven single pivot (or faux bar) with a tiny swing link under the top-tube pushing the rear shock



Updated bikes will get interchangeable dropouts

through its travel. The rear is currently a standard 135mm QR backend although there is rolling change going on with Transition bikes so most of the Bandits you'll see will be interchangeable with either 142 mm, 135 x 10mm or standard QR. You can see it better here on their 29er Bandit.

Rest of the frame is swoopy hydroform – there's an ISCG Mount so you can ride a chain guide with a double or a 1x10 system, there's also cable routing for an uppy-downny post

### Components

Grouspet is a SRAM combo throughout (except the chain). While our model came with Kenda Small Block 8's and Kore XC bars and non adjustable seatpost, all future UK models will be coming with Maxis High Rollers, a wider and lower bar plus Reverb seatpost – uncannily like the changes we made to the bike.

Wheels are [Transition's own Revolution 25 wheel set](#), their own in house "all rounder" wheels with a front hub that's compatible with QR – 15mm and 20mm wheels and rear that's compatible with QR-135mm thru axle either 10-mm or 12mm – There not incredibly light (2070 Grammes) but after three months the wheels were still true.



Tapered for ragging - Not tapered for errr tapering.

What we really like is that clearly a lot of the budget has gone on the suspension, both front and rear provided by Fox with Float 32's at the front with FIT RLC cartridge and the super slippery slidey Kashima coating. Rear is tried and test RP23 with Pro Pedal and once again a Kashima coating – money is spent where it matters rather than an upgraded rear mech.

One thing I must mention is Transition's own saddle – the “Park & Ride” – which is easily the most uncomfortable (for me) saddle I've had the displeasure of riding. Of course saddles are a personal thing and it may fit you like ..well a really comfy saddle.

### The Ride

Apart from the normal steep up and down's of the Valley it also got dragged across the [Trans-Provence](#) race – I rode about two hundred kilometres of the race and whilst in theory I should have been a little under biked it actually copied admirably. Actually far more than admirably – it was a great fast fun bike to ride – there was nothing that I couldn't ride. Some stuff you just had to get off the gas a bit and slow the bike down (rock garden stuff where a bigger bikes travel and



Bandit tips downhill - but goes up too...

weight would help push you through stuff and keep a line) and pick your way through stuff. Uphill a late twenties weight (this was with a bigger bar, Reverb and chunky tyres) was hidden nicely by efficient pedalling position and the seat angle keeping your weight over the front uphill.

I guess though, after pushing a bike out of it's comfort zone is knowing “is it any good at what it's meant to be good at?”, namely singletrack. Absolutely. Fun quick handling loads of grip and a tendency for trying to find any little rock or drop to fly off – in fact I preferred doing drop off's on this than bigger bikes – it just felt really well balanced.

So is it a perfect all rounder ? Well, you can certainly ride it all day – there’s no reason why you couldn’t take part in a UK Gravity Enduro style race – and the next weekend ride a 100km cross country race on it. Of course at either end of this – the bike is going to be a bit outfaced on really technical stuff in a Gravity event and over a really long distance you’ll probably look enviously at the person on the 23 pound full susser – but on all the stuff in between...

I thoroughly enjoyed the Bandit; I’d say it was an all rounder tipped very slightly downhill – the kit got a complete battering in France and came back unscathed – I held on to it for a long as I could have and at the end I was grateful it hadn’t been sent in the Lime Green. If it had I’d have almost certainly ended up making an offer for it.

*Matt*

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[wors](#) said: On [December 8, 2011](#)

About time, i've been waiting for a review of this for ages!



[charliemort](#) said: On [December 9, 2011](#)

sounds like a direct competitor to yeti asr 5 to me – but a few hundred quid cheaper



[Kryton57](#) said: On [December 9, 2011](#)

I test rode on of these and found it to be exactly as described – fantastically accurate and comfortable, but slight DH orientated. Charliemort – I ended up buying an ASR-5, on th basis I use my FS for racing. The ASR-5 (with a 120mm) for is better uphill and uses its rear suspension better IMO, and had a longer TT as well as being lighter by several pounds. That Yeti with a 140mm fork would be a more direct comparison. I'd say the Yeti feels stiffer laterally also. However, if I didn't race I would have bought the Lime Green Bandit no question, as its a fantastically fun bike and I'm sure it would be an absolute hoot at Trailcentres.

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