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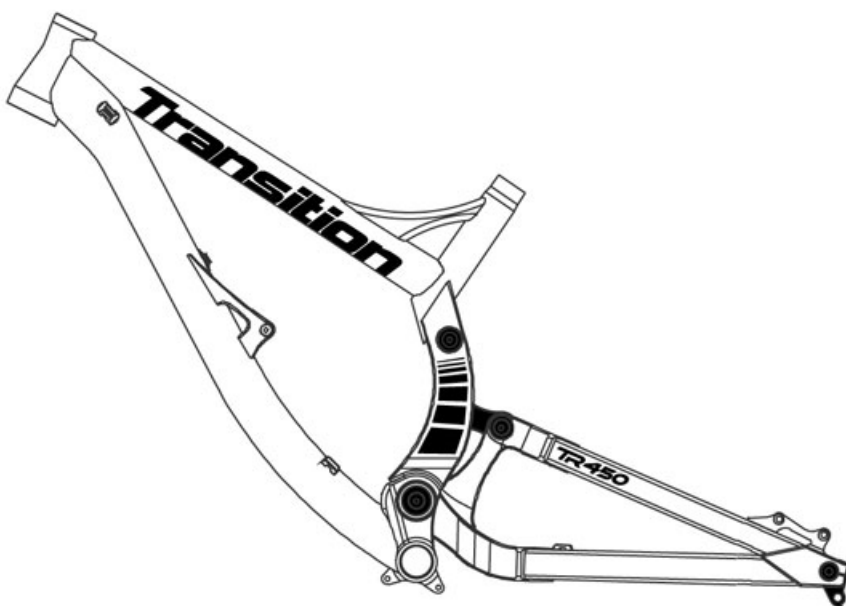
Transition TR450 - First Ride

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You may have heard the rumblings of a new bike from Transition on the horizon. Videos are everywhere, along with mocked up computer images of a very, very good looking bike.



I'm going to continue that trend as I was lucky enough to spend a day on one of the prototypes the Transition guys flew over with.

Cwmcarn was the venue for my day of riding and chilling with Kyle, Kevin and Sam-squatch from Transition.

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But we didnt have a camera that day, images from second ride...

I'm 5'10" and only had the choice of the large frame which was Sam's very own bike with the '09 Boxxer Team and a DHX RC4. Both were set up brilliantly and needed little or no input from me. Minion tyres are the norm and work really well on the solid ground of Cwmcarn. The medium was there too (pictured) but Rob from MountainBikingUK ran off with that, but he's only little. From then on we both rode them like we stole them.

Being used to smaller bikes my first thoughts were 'f\$\$!' this things long and banging into corners initially needed me to set up a little earlier but after a few corners I was on it.



The thing that really grabs you is the amazing ability to hit rocky, bumpy sections without the rear shock flinching. It dealt with every size hit in the same, composed way. The travel felt limitless but you knew exactly what it was going to do. This meant that you could concentrate on getting the line you want and even work the bike to pop off a lip. A good example of this is the 3 steps with embedded rocks before the fire road crossing, some of you will know the loss of control down there. The TR450 laughed at that section. The secret behind it is a carefully designed linkage system to allow a constant progression to the shock. This stops a punch-through effect of some other link bikes which then violently ramps. This can feel harsh on big hits and unsettle your feet if running flats. I was riding it back to back with my '09 Commencal Supreme DH which had the 2010 Boxxer Team and a DHX RC4. The shock was set up basically the same as the Transition but dealt with the bumps in a much less controlled way.

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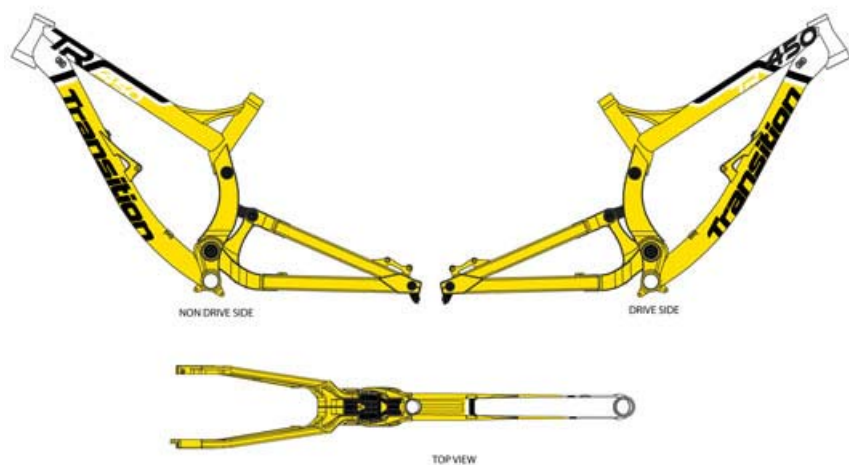
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The BB height can be changed and with it, the head angle (63, 63.5 and 64). These settings mean you can dial the handling for tight tracks or slam it for fast, flat out riding.

The TR450 rode like a light, tight bike even though it is heavier than others. Sub 40lbs is a possibility but will cost you. After speaking to the guys it was clear that weight wasn't really on their list of 'wants' but it was a consideration. They are a small company who spent a large amount of time, effort and money on a bike that rides amazingly. The TR450 is overbuilt and deliberately so. This means less returns, less cost in after sales service and a very happy customer who is still riding when their mates on lighter bikes are waiting for warranty repairs. A perfect plan and I commend them for it especially with all the light trends coming back.

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The frame looks real clean with smooth lines, neat cable routing, no interruptions and no annoying nooks and crannies that spray water at your face when hosing it down. The tapered head tube allows a super low front end and increased strength. The usual bolt through rear with massive linkage bearings makes a back end that can stop a tank. All the weight is low down too allowing precise flip flop handling.



I can see this bike being raced no problem and lasting the season with just uplift scars. It rides so unbelievably well and fulfils the DH frame wish list these modern times require.



I would like to talk about the guys behind it as much as the bike itself as they are awesome blokes. They are all riders and have ridden countless prototypes all over the world. They also happen to be very handy on their push irons too with Sam getting regular podium slots in the States. As mentioned previously they are a small company and made a DH bike that they would want to ride as much as everyone else.

Conversation just flows between the guys and they are always excited about where they are and what they are doing. Riding with them a few days later you couldn't get them off their bikes and they constantly rode a free-ride line in trains just for a laugh. They even threw in a few times too, just to show they could hang with the racers. Although they did doctor their times a little.

Transition bikes are not just a bike company, they are also a reflection of you and me playing around on our bikes.

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First bikes are due to land in the UK in January 2010 with a frame price tag of around ?1900

Words - Neil Cousins

Pictures - Tom Rickuss

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