

Rider Owned And Operated

Riding the Transition Dirtbag

The Transition Bike Company is a two-man operation out of Seattle that prides itself on providing aggressive riders with affordable bikes that meet unique demands. Owners Kyle Young and Kevin Menard listen to their customers' feedback with the goal of evolving the Transition designs into the best big-hit bikes possible.

Kyle and Kevin's company offers three bikes: the long-travel DirtBag, the five-inch-travel Preston, and the Trail-or-Park hardtail. Each Transition bike can be built with one of their ready-to-roll build kits for less than many custom makers charge for only a frame.

THE TYPICAL DIRTBAG

The DirtBag big-hit bike we've been riding has six or seven inches of travel and was set up with a seven-inch-travel Marzocchi Super T fork. It's not a downhill race bike; rather it's a durable, long-travel, black-diamond bike that can handle the torturous terrain of a downhill race course, insane mountain chutes, cliff drops and man-made stunts.

The DirtBag frame features Dangerboy CNC-machined rocker arms and a Romic D double adjust shock. Our medium-sized test bike had a SRAM X.7 drivetrain, a Blackspire chainguide, and FSA Xtreme cranks. The wheels were built up with Sun Rhyno Lite rims and 2.5-inch Maxxis 60a High Roller downhill tires. The cockpit includes a Funn FatboySlim handlebar and a WTB Rocket V saddle. If you're interested in a DirtBag like this, it will set you back \$2599. For 2005, the spec has changed a bit. The DirtBag is available as a frame with Romic shock for \$959, and the build kits include either a Marzocchi 66 fork or Manitou Sherman.

THE GOOD

We dragged the DirtBag to our local downhill shuttle and showed this Pacific Northwestern rig how we roll in SoCal. Here's our quick impression of the Transition DirtBag.

The front and rear suspension rode very balanced in the seven-inch-travel mode. We're quite familiar with the Marzocchi Super T fork and Romic shock and didn't hesitate on drops or in rock gardens. The proven four-bar design operates on sealed bearings at all pivots, and the stout chainstays add rigidity to the back-end. The DirtBag really shines when charging the three Rs—roots, rocks and ruts—and is nimble in technical switchbacks and tight singletrack.

The DirtBag pedals well on the flats and would probably be sufficient on short climbs if set up with the optional dual chainring up front. The Maxxis High Roller downhill tire has long been a top choice for the dry and hard-packed terrain of Southern California. With about 25psi front and rear, the DirtBag stayed hooked up as usual.

The SRAM X.7 drivetrain worked almost as well as the high-end X.0 and is a good choice for a bike not specifically built for racing. The Hayes HFX brakes have an eight-inch rotor up front for maximum stopping power and a six-inch rotor on the rear to save rotational weight.



Have it your way: The Transition bike company offers three designs, and several ready-to-roll build kits. The seven-inch-travel DirtBag sells complete for \$2599.

THE NOT SO GOOD

For as nimble as the DirtBag was in tight terrain, it felt twitchy on steep, technical runs due to the 21-inch top tube and short-feeling cockpit. When the going gets rough, lay off the brakes or the rear-end stiffens. The bike is built for maximum reliability and strength, and that often results in excess weight. At 43 pounds, the DirtBag is husky for a seven-inch-travel bike.

MAKE THE TRANSITION

The DirtBag is a fun big-hit bike on any terrain, and with Transition's variety of build options, it is possible to customize a ride perfect for your style. If we were to keep one on hand, we'd swap the Super T for a Marzocchi 66 fork and run a dual chainring for more mobility.

Even though this DirtBag calls the Pacific Northwest home, it's welcome to ditch the hacky sack, grab a surfboard, and move into our neighborhood any day. You can contact Transition at (206) 353-0007. □