



THE SPEC

- Frame** Santa Cruz Actual Pivot Point platform with 150mm (5.9in) of travel
- Fork** RockShox Lyrik Solo Air 160mm (6.3in) travel
- Shock** Fox Float RP23
- Drivetrain** SRAM X.O shifters and rear mech with XTR front mech
- Wheelset** DT Swiss EX500 rims, 240s hubs
- Brakes** Avid Elixir CR, 185mm front rotor and 160mm rear rotor
- Bar/stem** Easton Monkey Lite XC/Thomson 70mm stem
- Seatpost/saddle** Thomson/WTB Devo



The Panaracer CG tyres are speedy rollers considering their width



The RockShox Lyrik Air fork was well matched with the rear end of the bike



The new APP swing link produces a variable shock rate

FIRST RIDE!

Santa Cruz Butcher

- 150mm (5.9in) of rear wheel travel
- Santa Cruz's APP technology
- Variable shock rate to enhance feel

Santa Cruz may be renowned for their virtual pivot bikes, but how about a more cost-effective version? Enter the Butcher and Nickel – two bikes built around a single pivot with a linkage activated shock. We took the Butcher for a spin to see if it lived up to the hype.

The frame

Santa Cruz's APP (Actual Pivot Point) is designed to produce a variable shock rate similar to that of their more expensive virtual pivot designs. This means that at the beginning of the stroke the shock rate falls slightly, making it supple and sensitive, in the middle it flattens out, and towards the end it rises to produce a more progressive, big-hit eater.

The hydroformed top and down tube meet with one solid weld before plugging into the tapered head tube, ensuring the steering department remains flex-free and looking good to boot.

The main pivot and APP swing link pivots rotate on 15mm aluminium axles with angular contact bearings. Santa Cruz claim that their bearing and axle design is not only super stiff but also easily maintainable.

The detail

Our total build, including pedals, weighed in at 13.7kg (30.1lb), which is pretty impressive considering how much travel this rig has. Easton's carbon Monkey Lite bar and Truvativ's Noir cranks no doubt played their part in

keeping the scales happy. The RockShox Lyrik Solo Air fork offers 160mm (6.3in) of travel and complements the rear end well. The Avid Elixir CR brakes were dependable and Panaracer's CG 4X/AM 2.35in tyres rolled surprisingly fast.

The ride

Rolling into the hills and winding on the power, it's clear the Butcher is more than happy to be pedalled hard. Beneath your feet lies a firm platform to push against, and getting the power down was never a problem. Flick the ProPedal lever and things stabilise even more.

Size-wise, our medium – with the 70mm stem – was just about right for our 5ft 8in test pilot, but you may find it slightly on the short side if you prefer a more stretched-out climbing position.

The APP system produced a supple beginning stroke that traced the ground's contours as

the rear wheel took on smaller bumps and obstacles. As the hits get harder, you can feel the bike working beneath you and doing a good job of eating up the terrain – you can feel the full 150mm (5.9in) travel, although we did feel there could have been a little more support in the mid-stroke of the shock. We did bottom-out the bike on a few occasions, but there was no harsh bottom-out clunk, thanks to the progressive ramp up toward the end of the stroke.

Aggressive riding is what the Butcher loves best, and the 66.4 degree head angle on our test rig made for a nicely stable ride and a bike that could really be pummelled hard. *Rob*

THE ESSENTIALS

PRICE £1,299 (frame only) with Fox Float R shock or an additional £110 for a Fox Float RP23 shock
CONTACT www.santacruz bikes.co.uk
WE SAY... The Butcher loves to be hammered about and can handle the abuse admirably well