

TRAIL TESTED LONG TERM



TEST DURATION: 20 MONTHS **0950** TRAIL MILES

Santa Cruz Blur LT £1699 frame only

The bike that turns 'I'd like to' into 'I can do'...

It's almost two years since we went to see Santa Cruz in, er, Santa Cruz and came back with a brand new bike. So how is the Californian after two years' hard labour in Yorkshire?

go anywhere near. The more you ride it the more effortless it seems, and the BLT has set some frightening precedents on pretty much every techy trail we've ridden it on. It's continuing to do so too,

As well as being locked into place with coned collets and protected by metal shields and labyrinth seals, the bearings are fitted with grease ports. This lets you slap on a grease gun and pump the bearing assembly with fresh grease. It should push old, dirty grinding paste gunk out in the process, but the bearings are so well sealed that there's been very little contamination.

In fact, we've never even had to strip them down and clean them – and they're still running silky smooth and wobble free. The only wear and movement we've seen is in the rear shock bush, which we had to replace after a year.

Fragile paintjobs were another frequent complaint by Santa Cruz owners. Happily, our BLT has shrugged off multiple crashes, general

despite the fact that we've been upgrading it with lighter components since summer.

Long-term tests are about longevity though, so what have we learnt in the last 24 months that we didn't know in the first 24 hours? The biggest change, in terms of lifespan, is the new bearings that Santa Cruz introduced on the BLT and has rolled out across every new chassis it has introduced since.

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Well, it's still impressing the hell out of people – not because of any particular technical aspects, just the sheer amount of fun it is.

The relatively compact size frame and the easy rider-reactive compression of the rear suspension make it a hop-and-pop fiend. Despite only 140mm of rear wheel travel, it'll convince you that you can launch and land things you wouldn't normally

YOUR TESTER SAYS...



You could build the Blur LT up with a light 140mm fork and cross-country kit to make a tough all-day bike, but I always seem to gravitate back to sticky tyres, wider bars and a shorter stem to exploit its potential for causing – and then escaping – mayhem unscathed. After two years in its company, I'm still very much in love. *Guy*

AT A GLANCE

- PRICE £1699 (frame only)
- TOP TUBE LENGTH 22.5in
- SEAT TUBE LENGTH 17in
- HEAD ANGLE 69°
- SEAT ANGLE 72.5°
- BB HEIGHT 13.5in
- CHAINSTAY LENGTH 17in
- STANDOVER 28in
- WHEELBASE 42.7in
- SIZES S, M (tested), L, XL
- WEIGHT 28.7lb (13.0kg)
- FRAME 6069 alloy 140mm travel
- FORK Fox 32 TALAS 150 QR15 FIT 150mm travel
- SHOCK Fox Float R
- WHEELS Hope SPAM 4 on Stan's Flow rims
- TYRES Continental Rubber Queen Black Chili 1.2in
- CRANKS Truvativ Noir 3.3
- GEARS SRAM X.O
- BRAKES Avid Elixir CR
- OTHER STUFF Funn Fatboy handlebar, ODI grips, Thomson X4 stem and Elite seat post, SDG Bel Air saddle
- CONTACT Jungle 01423 780088 www.santacruz bikes.co.uk

careless treatment and weeks in the Alps without any cosmetic damage apart from a few cable rubs and scuffs on frame stickers.

However, we are starting to wish it had a Maxle-compatible rear end and a tapered 1.5-1.125in head tube – like its recent carbon version – to make the most of the latest component developments. There's still definitely plenty of flat-out fun to be had well beyond the 1000-mile mark though. *Guy*

www.santacruz bikes.co.uk



"The Blur LT goes straight onto our all-time favourites shortlist."

ONGOING TESTS...



Garbun Merino Socks £8 per pair



A great set of bike-specific Merino socks. They're very comfy, wearing well after three

months of daily use, and they keep feet toasty (though temperatures aren't sub-zero yet). They also keep their insulating properties when wet. *Matt* www.bikemaps.co.uk



Shimano XT disc brakes £120 each



The XT has been a hardy performer about to end its second year of use without need of any

attention other than a wash and occasional pad change (three so far). They continue to look like new despite regular use in wet, gritty conditions. *Justin* www.madison.co.uk